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LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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זכות רפואה שלמה
מלכה בת רחל

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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)



⌘ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ⌘

Shabbos Noam Haneshomos – Noam Elimelech

Dvar Torah

Loving Neighbors in Gan Eden

“He and his close neighbor should take (together) according to the number of souls” (12:4).

The *Noam Elimelech* explains the following phenomenon: sometimes we see that two people are very close friends, yet others, even if they study together, hate each other and are distant, or a single *Tzaddik* can have many followers. These scenarios play themselves out because they were neighbors and friends together in Gan Eden, and as neighbors and friends in this world, the same relationship is manifest.

This is what our *pasuk* refers to: “he and his close neighbor” refers to neighbors from Gan Eden. When a person who is a *Tzaddik* has a close following of people who love him greatly, this is a sign of what is called *hakorov el beiso* – (“close”); they were close to his heavenly dwelling in Gan Eden. Therefore the *pasuk* says, “according to the number of souls”. In which household or dwelling were they neighbors? In that heavenly chamber of souls called *guf* – there the souls sit, waiting to be born into this world. In that place, the souls dwell close to each other as loving neighbors; if they now follow him closely, their loyalty and dedication prove that he is a *Tzaddik*.

Sowing the Seeds of the Zera Kodesh addikim@gmail.com

Descending Into the Depths of Impurity in Egypt

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Come (with Me) to Paro...in order that I may place these signs of Mine within him'" (10:1).

Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer teaches in *Zera Kodesh* that *Hashem* did a wondrous *chessed* for us by entering Mitzrayim to take us out. This act of mercy and loving-kindness is one we must in turn emulate to our children when we teach and instill in them *emuna*. He sees this demonstrated by the *Medrash Rabba* (*Shemos* 15:5): "And I passed through Egypt":

Rav Shimon said, The love for Bnei Yisrael is so great that *Hashem* revealed Himself in a place of idolatry, a place of filth and impurity, in order to redeem them. Like a *moshol*, a *Kohen* whose *teruma* fell into the cemetery. He asked himself, What should I do? I cannot defile myself and go in; on the other hand I cannot leave the *teruma* in there either! Better that I defile myself once and later purify myself again and not lose my *teruma*. In this way, our forefathers were *Hashem's teruma* lost among the graves of the *bechoros* in Egypt, where "there was no household where there was none dead" (*Shemos* 12:30). *Hashem* said, I must descend into there to redeem them and save them.

We see, explains the Ropshitzer, that Egypt was a place of great *tuma* (impurity). It was *ervas haaretz*, a land of licentiousness and depravity, especially Paro's household, for that was the center and source of the *tuma*, where it was concentrated. Surely no *Tzaddik* [like Moshe] would ever wish to go there, into such a dirty, defiled place, especially to speak to such a *tomei* and despicable entity like Paro. *Hashem* therefore said to Moshe, "I know you do not want to go there and enter this impure household and speak with an impure person. Still I say, come together with Me to Paro, like a friend says to his fellow, "Bo - come together with me." That is why it says, "I hardened his heart and the heart of his servants" - I, *Hashem*, so to speak, dwell there and harden their hearts.

The Ropshitzer explains that *Hashem* accomplished this by being in Mitzrayim, yet placing a dividing barrier between Himself and the *tuma* of that unholy, defiled place. This concept is explained by the holy teachings of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*, which the Ropshitzer cites here in *Zera Kodesh*:

The *Ohr HaChaim* on *Bamidbar* 23:5 explains the *pasuk*, "Hashem placed *dovor* (something) inside the mouth of Bilom". *Hashem* placed a barrier into Bilom's mouth between his defiled, impure mouth and the divine words of holiness that *Hashem* wished him to speak. [Because Bilom was a horribly defiled and disgusting person, the spirit of revealing the future through *Ruach HaKodesh* could not descend upon him. Even the words themselves were holy and they could not dwell within an impure *goy*. *Hashem* therefore made a *tikkun* so that He would not need to dwell in a disgusting, impure place, a dividing barrier between the power of speech and the spoken word itself, and the mouth of that swine Bilom. This is what *Hashem* meant when the *pasuk* says that He placed "something" into the mouth of Bilom: *Hashem* placed a barrier to make a separation between them, and Bilom's mouth became a separate entity. When the *pasuk* says, "So shall you speak and say," it means the *Ruach HaKodesh* will speak.]

In a similar manner, *Hashem* placed a barrier here as well. *Hashem* used the 120 combinations of the name *Elokim*, which equals the *gematria* of the word *masach* (*mem samech chaf* = 40+60+20=120), which means a barrier. *Hashem* was willing to do this for the love of *Bnei Yisrael*, so He descended to that lowly place, so to speak, as it says in *Vayikra* 16:16, "He dwells with them within their impurities". This idea can be understood by a *moshol*, that when a well-learned scholar teaches a young child, he must lower his intelligence and contract his mind for the young student's benefit, so that he can understand. Similarly, *Hashem* acted this way for our benefit, and we also must do so "in order to tell this over to your son and grandson". We must lower ourselves and simplify our teachings for their sakes, to benefit them, *eis asher hisalalti beMitzrayim* (10:2) - "I, *Hashem*, acted like an *olel veyonek* in *Mitzrayim*! I acted like a young baby, an infant not yet weaned; I lowered myself," says *Hashem*. "I made Myself small for you and your needs, so to speak. So shall you emulate Me and act toward your children and grandchildren for their benefit."



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*

Keeping the Faith

The *Skverer Rebbe* testified that during the terrible years that he spent in the camps during WWII, three *seforim* kept his faith and *emuna* alive: the *Meor Einayim*, the *Zohar* and the *Ohr HaChaim*. In the merit of these three *seforim*, he remained strong. It is too awful to contemplate what would have been without the *zechus* of these three *seforim*. (*Mayan HaBerocha*, *Gilyon* 19 *Tammuz tav-shin-samech-bais* p. 4)



The *Baba Sali's* Weekly Seder

Every *Erev Shabbos* the *Baba Sali* would immerse himself in the *mikve* before *chatzos* and afterward sit at home and study the *sefer Ohr HaChaim* on the weekly *Parsha* from beginning to end. In this manner he had great *bekiyus* (wide knowledge) and an *amkus* (deep understanding) of the *Ohr HaChaim*. (*Chaim Kulchem Hayom*, p. 419)



The Holy Power and Influence of the *Ohr HaChaim*

The *Rachamstrivka Rebbe* of America once delivered a public speech in which he praised the study of the *sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*. One of the participants was a Jew who owned one of those technological devices that the sages do not approve of [called by the euphemism *kelim hamashchisim* or *tomei keilim*]. He was caught in its grip and powerless to disconnect himself from it. He was greatly awakened by the *derosha* urging the *Chassidim* to

study the holy *sefer Ohr HaChaim* and decided that he, too, would begin to learn the *Ohr HaChaim*. A short while later he came home one day and of his own volition he simply threw away that *kli* – that device.

When the *Rebbe* heard this he became very excited and exclaimed, “The *Ohr HaChaim* does not talk at all about getting rid of dangerous devices or impure technology. He doesn’t discuss the matter or even hint at it, so how was this Jew awakened to do so? What urged him on? The reason is that the study of the *sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* influences us and draws down a *shefa* – an abundance of sanctity and holiness – to a person, purifying and refining him and his soul. It is therefore no wonder that by learning the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*, the power of *kedusha* became entrenched and took root within this Jew, giving him the power to throw those *keilim* away!” (*Imros Tehoros Rachamstrivka, Beshallach*, p. 190)



The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim

“In order that you tell your son” (10:2).

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* explains that the primary purpose of the *makkos* was not to take revenge upon or punish Paro; rather, the *pasuk* testifies that their purpose was to instill *emuna* in the hearts of Bnei Yisrael in an eternal, unforgettable manner. The fact that these *makkos* occurred in the very heart of Egypt within Paro’s kingdom would ensure that their memory would never fade.

The *Ohr HaChaim* bases this concept on a *Maamar Chazal* in *Chullin 75b*, where we learn about a *ben pekua* (an animal found in the uterus of its slaughtered mother and is considered one of her limbs and therefore does not need to be separately slaughtered). The *ben pekua* has two clear signs that ensure that everyone remembers where it comes from and why it does not need *shechita*, so that no one will suspect those who eat it of transgressing the prohibition of consuming non-kosher meat that was not properly *schechted*.

Similarly, here in *Mitzrayim*, the *Ohr HaChaim* posits that we required two wondrous events in order to instill *emuna* in Klal Yisrael so that they would never forget their faith and belief in *Hashem*. The first one is that the *makkos* occurred in such a way that all forms of creation: earth, air, fire, water and all the animals would be affected. However, this alone would not suffice. In addition, *Hashem* ensured that the *makkos* would strike Paro, his regime and his nation in such a way that no nation had ever suffered such a miraculous, disastrous series of events. These two wondrous ingredients were essential to instill an enduring *emuna*, as the *pasuk* says, *lemaan tesaper be'oznei bincha* – “in order that you retell (these events) to your son” to instill in the next generation the same rock-hard, never-ending faith and belief. Without these two wondrous points, the matter would never be permanently locked into our national memory. The *pasuk* continues, counting the two points, “The fact that I [*Hashem*] punished *Mitzrayim*” – *Hashem* severely punished them in a supernatural manner through ten plagues, each of which was comprised of four or five elements, something unheard of in terms of suffering. But this wonder alone would not be enough to remember, and so the *pasuk* continues, “and My signs”, referring to the signs *Hashem* performed. This was the second wonder needed; together these two wonders would ensure our *emuna* that *viydatem ki ani Hashem* – “you will know that I am *Hashem*!”

In the *sefer Me'or Chaim*, Rav Moshe Franco quotes the *Ohr HaChaim's deroshos* in Livorno and adds details to how Rav Chaim ben Attar explained how each of the *makkos* demonstrated *Hashem's* mastery over a different element of nature: water was struck when the Nile was transformed into blood, the earth with a plague of lice, everyone saw the strength of *Hashem* in the hail (which was fiery ice) and when *Hashem* commanded the plague of locusts, He demonstrated His mastery over the wind and the air. The sun and moon were proven to be non-divine and powerless through the plague of darkness, in order that no one should worship the celestial bodies. [Above we mentioned mastery over the animals, demonstrated in the plagues of frogs, wild animals and cattle plague.] Finally, the death of the firstborn proves how only *Hashem* is master over people, knowing their most intimate secrets – who is truly the firstborn.



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

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

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

2) Light a twenty-five-hour candle in his or her honor. There is no specific *berochah*. 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

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

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלוֹי נִשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק _____
 בְּ/בֵת _____, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים
 וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטוֹב שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל
 לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלוֹי לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפֶרֶט לְנַפְשׁ רוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /
 צַדִּיק _____ יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁתִּהְיֶנָּה 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 Bo

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

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

* 6th of Shevat ~ Begins Friday Night (Jan 11th)

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

* 7th of Shevat ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Jan 12th)

- * **Rav Dovid Biderman**, the first *Lelover Rebbe* (1746–1814), son of Rav Shlomo Biderman. A close follower of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, he was known for his extraordinary compassion for, and inability to see faults in, his fellow Jews. His main *talmid* was Rav Yitzchok of Vorki, whose son, Yaakov Dovid, was the first *Amshinov Rebbe*. Two printed collections of stories about Rav Dovid are *Migdal Dovid* and *Kodesh Halulim*, (5574/1814);
- * **Rav Mordechai Dovid Ungar** (Unger), *Dombrover Rebbe*. The son of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Unger, Rav Mordechai Dovid was a *talmid* of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apt, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, and the *Kozhnitzer Maggid*. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Yosef of Dombrov, (5707/1947);
- * **Rav Reuven Biala** of Chicago and Mountaindale, New York (1943–2006). Born in Cleveland to irreligious parents, he developed an interest in *Yiddishkeit* as a teenager, triggered by a *Bnei Akiva Shabbos* get-together. His father passed away when he was in his early teens, and his mother vehemently opposed his desire to learn in *Yeshiva*, but he ran away from home, and entered the *Telz Yeshiva* at sixteen. Rav Reuven married Chaya Singer from Pittsburgh. Following his marriage, he learned for a short time in New York, followed by Chicago, where he learned in *Telz Yeshiva*. His wife passed away at the young age of thirty-five. It was around this time that he began publishing and distributing *Torah Action Publications*, pamphlets on different topics of *halocha*. Rav Reuven remarried and moved to Mountaindale, New York. They raised another four children *b'derech haTorah*, (5766/2006);
- * **Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Neiman**, the *Pupa Rav* and *Belzer Dayan* in Montreal, (5679–5767/1919–2007).
- * **Rav Nosson Dovid Rabinowitz** of Partzov *ben* Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, *mechaber* of *V'Eileh*

HaDvarim Shene'emru L'Dovid, (5580/1820);

- * **Rav Yitzchok Aharon Segal Itinga** *ben* Rav Mordechai Zev *HaLevi*, *mechaber* of *Shailos U'teshuvos Mahari HaLevi*, (5651/1891);
- * **Rav Mordechai Dovid Levin** *ben* Rav Boruch, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Eitz Chaim* and *mechaber* of *Darchei Dovid*, (5727/1967);
- * **Rav Tzvi Hirsch**, son of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5539/1779);
- * **Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado**, (1740–1793). Originating from Spain through their progenitor, Rav Shmuel, the Laniado family was among the most famous and well-established in the Syrian city of Chaleb. Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado was a prolific writer, and he well known for several halachic works: *HaMa'alos LiShlomo*, *Bais Dino Shel Shlomo*, *Lechem Shlomo*, and *Kisei Shlomo*, (5553/1793);
- * **Rav Mordecai Yosef Leiner** of Ishbitz (1800–1854 [some say 1878]), founder of the *Chassidic* Court at Ishbitz after leading a group of *talmidim* from the court of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. Born in Tomashov, Poland in 1800, he was a childhood friend of Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, later to become the *Kotzker Rebbe*, and they studied together in the school of the *Chassidic* Master, Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha. His *sefer*, *Mei HaShilo'ach*, is considered a fundamental work of Izhbitz and Radziner *Chassidus*. Among his *talmidim* were Rav Tzodok *HaKohen* of Lublin and Rav Leibel Eiger, (5614/1854);
- * **Rav Sholom Yosef Friedman** of Husyatin, brother of one of the first *Rebbes* of Husyatin, Rav Mordechai Shraga (the youngest son of the *Rizhiner Rebbe*, who had moved to Husyatin in 1865 and was *niftar* in 1894). Rav Sholom Yosef was the father of Rav Moshe of Boyan-Cracow (“Rav Moshenyu”), (5639/1879 [1851, according to some]);
- * **Rav Yosef Elyashiyov**. Born in the former Soviet Union to Rav Tzion, who was killed by the authorities for his efforts to promote *Yiddishkeit*, he moved from Samarkand to Tashkent after marrying; there, he and his wife raised their seven children. While living in Tashkent he had to spend seven years away from home — four years in custody on suspicion of underground religious activity and three years hiding from the KGB, who had him under surveillance for his activities to promote *Yiddishkeit*. In 1971, he managed to secure an exit visa and left his home and his family, traveling to *Eretz Yisrael*. He opened the first *Shaarei Tzion* institutions in 1980, naming them after his father. He then started a *kollel* with the goal of drawing *avreichim* from Bukharan families as well as a school in Kiryat Ono for Bukharan immigrants. Today, a total of 4,500 students, from kindergartners to *avreichim*, study at *Shaarei Tzion* institutions, (5767/2007).

* **8th of Shevat ~ Begins Sunday Night (Jan 13th)**

- * **Rav Boruch** *ben* Rav Shmuel of Pinsk. In 1830, Rav Yisrael of Shklov, one of the closest *talmidim* of the *Vilna Gaon*, began an effort to locate the “Ten Lost Tribes”. Rav Boruch *ben* Rav Shmuel of Pinsk served as the messenger and departed from Tzefas with a letter of introduction to the king of the Lost Tribes. (The Ten Tribes were believed to have an independent kingdom where they practiced true *semicha* (rabbinical ordination) as handed down from Moshe *Rabbeinu* until the Fourth Century CE). Rav Boruch traveled through the Middle East for almost three years before he was murdered in Yemen, (5594/1834);
- * **Rav Yosef Meir Kahana**, the *Spinka Rebbe* of Yerushalayim, son of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kahana. Rav Yosef Meir was succeeded by his son, Rav Mordechai Dovid Kahana, (5738/1978);
- * **Rav Menachem Breier**, father of the *Boyaner Rebbe*, (5767/2007);

- * **Rav Nosson Aminodov Yona** (*ben* Moshe Dovid) Cassuto of Florence (1909–1945). The son of the Florence *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Nosson became an ophthalmologist after receiving *semicha*. When the Mussolini government forbade Jews to serve as doctors, Rav Nosson became the chief *Rav* of Milan. He returned to Florence as their *Rav* in 1943. When the Nazis overran northern Italy in September of 1943, he hid his three children in a monastery, but he and his wife were arrested. He was transferred to Auschwitz in February 1944 and shot to death on a death march one year later. His wife, Chana, survived the war but was murdered by Arabs on the 4th of *Nissan* 1948, (5705/1945).

* **9th of Shevat ~ Begins Monday Night (Jan 14th)**

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



invitation to become *Rav* in Cincinnati, where he remained until his passing. He founded the American branch of *Agudas HaRabbanim* and established the *Va'ad Hatzola* to aid Jews in Europe during World War II, (5728/1968);

- * **Rav Nachum Abba Grossbard**, *Mashgiach* of Ponovezh. His son is Rav Shmuel Grossbard, *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Telzstone *Yeshiva Gedola* in Eretz Yisrael, (5753/1993);
- * **Rav Dovid** of Skver-Boro Park. Succeeded his father, Rav Yitzchok Twersky, known as Rav Itzikel Skverer (Skvirer), when the latter was *niftar* prematurely. Rav Dovid was succeeded by his son, Yechiel Michel Twersky, the Skverer *Rebbe* of Boro Park, (5761/2001).
- * **Rav Ezra** of Gerona, a *talmid* of Rav Yitzchok Sagi Nohor (Isaac the Blind), the blind son of the *Ra'avad*. In around 1200, *Kabbola* had reached Gerona in Spain. Thereafter the city began to be regarded as one of the most prominent centers within the framework of esoteric thought. Among *Mekubolim* of the time, Gerona was already known as a “Mother of Yisrael” city. Rav Ezra was extremely well versed in *Kabbola* that he had learned from his father, who was the *Ramban's* teacher, (4987/1227);
- * **Rav Yaakov Reischer**, *mechaber* of *Minchas Yaakov*, *Chok Yaakov*, *Iyun Yaakov*, and *Shvus Yaakov*, (5493/1733);
- * **Ezra HaSofer**, (313 BCE or 320 BCE);
- * **Nechemya HaNovi**;
- * **Rabbeinu Yosef**, son of Shmuel *HaNoggid*, and son-in-law of Rav Nissim *Gaon* of Kirouan, murdered in an Arab pogrom with another 1500 Jews in Spain, (4827/1067);
- * **Rav Yehuda (“Reb Yiddel”) Weber** (1920–2006), born in Vodkert, Hungary, to Rav Yissochor Weber, a descendent of the *Bach*, and Rebbetzin Chana, a niece of the *Arugas HaBosem*. After his *bar mitzva*, Yehuda was sent to learn in Pupa under Rav Yaakov Yechezkel Grunwald, the *Vayaged Yaakov*, the Pupa *Rebbe*, who was his *Rebbe Muvhok* for seven years. When Rav Yaakov Yechezkel was *niftar* at the age of fifty-nine, he was succeeded by his son, Rav Yosef Grunwald, the *Vayechi Yosef*. Rav Yehuda then served as *Mashgiach* of Pupa. When the *Yeshiva* was closed in 1944, Rav Yehuda spent six months in the local work camps before being deported to Bergen-Belsen. In 1946, his sister introduced him to his *Rebbetzin*, Batsheva. A year later, his sister, Miriam, married the Pupa *Rebbe*. Both families settled in Antwerp, then moved to Williamsburg, New York, in 1950. In 1952, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of the newly established Pupa *Yeshiva*, first located in Queens, then in Ossening, in Westchester County. Although his family stayed in Williamsburg, Reb Yiddel made the regular forty-mile drive for four decades, (5766/2006).

* **10th of Shevat ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Jan 15th)**

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

His epitaph reads:

The heavens are clothed in darkness

And we don sackcloth

Because of the departure of a saint

The foundation of the world, a prince pure

*Who submitted with complete faith
To G-d and his religion
Better was his name than the choicest oil
Head of the Diaspora, Meir, a righteous man
Who departed on the 10th of Shevat
In the year 1565 this saint departed.*

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

- * **Rav Sholom Mizrachi Didia** *ben* Yitzchok Sharabi (Hebrew: שר שלום מזרחי דידיע שרעבי), born in 5480 (1720) in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen), was known as the *Rashash* (initials for "Rav Sholom Sharabi"). His father was *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais E-l*. Along with a number of other writings, Rav Sholom wrote a *siddur*, known as the *Siddur HaKavonos*, which is still used by *Mekubolim* today for *tefilla*. The great *Mekubol*, Rav Chaim Pelaji, testified that Rav Sholom Sharabi's soul was that of the holy *Ari* of Tzefas, and Rav Yitzchok Kaduri used to say, "One can have memorized all the written teachings of the *Ari*, and have studied them and the commentaries upon them in great depth, but if you have not learned the works of the *Rashash*, you have not yet entered into the study of *Kabbola*." The *Rashash* is considered the father of all contemporary *Sefardi Mekubolim*. On the 10th of *Shevat*, in the year 5542, he was *niftar* at the age of sixty-two, in Yerushalayim. He is buried on the Mount of Olives, where his grave is a pilgrimage site until this day, (5542/1782);
- * **Rebbetzin Rivka Schneersohn** (1833–1914), a granddaughter of Rav Dov Ber, the second *Rebbe* of Lubavitch. At age sixteen she married her first cousin, Rav Shmuel, who later became the fourth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*. The *Bais Rivka* network of girls' schools is named after her. Surviving her husband by thirty-three years, for many years she was the esteemed matriarch of Lubavitch. She is the source of many of the stories recorded in the talks, letters and memoirs of her grandson, Rav Yosef Yitzchok (the sixth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*), (5674/1914);
- * **Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn**, the sixth Lubavitcher *Rebbe* (1880–1950). The son of Rav Sholom DovBer, he dedicated his efforts to the *Yeshiva* founded by his father, *Tomchei Temimim*. He was jailed by the Russian government for teaching *Torah*, and on his release, he settled in Riga, Latvia. He escaped to America in 1940. His son-in-law, the last Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, is buried next to him in Queens, New York. He is referred to as "the father-in-law" by the last Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, (5710/1950);
- * **Rav Yitzchok Eizek Sher** of Slabodka (1875–1952). Born in Halusk, he studied in Volozhin under the *Netziv*'s son-in-law, Rav Refoel Shapira, before moving to Slabodka. There he studied *b'chavrusa* with Rav Avrohom Grodzinski. In 1903, Rav Yitzchok Eizek married the *Alter*'s youngest daughter, Mariasha Guttel, and moved to Kelm where he continued to learn diligently. He also studied for a brief period in the Mir, where his brother-in-law, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, served as *Rosh Yeshiva*. In 1911, the *Alter* appointed Rav Yitzchok Eizek to the position of *Rebbe* in the *Yeshiva*. In 1928, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel went to *Eretz Yisrael*, along with the majority of Slabodka's students, and settled in Chevron. At that point, Rav Yitzchok Eizek was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of Slabodka's European division, with its *Mashgiach*, Rav Avrohom Grodzinski. On *Shabbos* morning, the sixteenth of *Av*, 1929, the Arabs massacred Chevron's Jews. After the massacre, the survivors reestablished the Chevron *Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim. Rav Yitzchok Eizek, at the advice of the *Chazon Ish*, reestablished the European branch of the Slabodka *Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak, (5712/1952);
- * **Rav Rachamim Chai** *ben* Rav Chanina *HaKohen* Chavita, *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Djerba,

Tunisia, *mechaber* of *Minchas Kohen* and *Simchas Kohen*, (5719/1959).

* **11th of Shevat ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Jan 16th)**

- * **Rav Dovid Nossou Deutsch**, son of Rav Yosef Yoel Deutsch, and the second *Rav* of Kretchenif. He authored *Nefesh Dovid* on *Chumash*, (5639/1879).
- * **Rav Yehuda Leib ben Dovid**, *Rav* in Berlin and Dassau and *mechaber* of the *sefer Korban Eida*, (5566/1806);
- * **Rav Chaim Yehoshua ben Reuven HaKohen** Blumenthal, *Rav* of Kaminetz, (5648/1888).

* **12th of Shevat ~ Begins Thursday Night (Jan 17th)**

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



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

The *Maharil*, in *Hilchos Taanis*, teaches us that the reason why there is a custom to visit the *Bais hachaim* on a fast is because "this place is the resting place of the *Tzaddikim* and is

therefore sanctified, pure and holy and our tefillos are more readily heard, accepted and answered when *davened* on holy ground. When you *daven* there, do not make requests of the dead who are buried there; rather ask *Hashem* to answer you mercifully in their merit. Then circle around the graves and donate charity before reciting tefillos."

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

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have the custom to go and daven at the kevorim of *Tzaddikim*. The reason for this is that we approach them with fasting, remorse and repentance, and we have in mind that the departed souls ask and *daven* for us before *Hashem* on High, as opposed to the prohibition against speaking to the dead which is an idolatrous practice where the idol worshippers sought out the impure dead souls and bodies using sorcery and witchcraft. Instead, beseech our *Tzaddikim* who, in *gan eden*, are truly alive, and ask through *tefilla* and fasting and *teshuva* alone.



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yosef Meir Kahana of Spinka, 8th of Shevat

A Kohen Meyuchos

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

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

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

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



Rav Sholom Ben Yitzchok Mizrachi Sharabi, 10th of Shevat

The *Rashash*

One of the great Yemenite *Torah* leaders and one of the foremost *Mekubolim* of his day and the leading *Mekubol* in Yerushalayim, Rav Sholom Sharabi, otherwise known as the *Rashash*, was born in Sharab, Yemen, in 5480/1720. After

being miraculously saved from a difficult situation, Rav Sholom made a vow to go to the Holy Land in order to live in Yerushalayim, where he arrived after a journey that led him through India, Baghdad and Damascus. Although he had

already established himself in his previous countries of residence as a significant *Torah* scholar and *mekubol*, he was determined to keep his abilities hidden in *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Rashash* approached the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Gedalia Chayon, and applied for the job of *Shamash*. This way he was able to stay anonymous, yet quench his thirst for *Torah* in this great *Yeshiva*.



He would stand innocently in the corner during *shiurim* as if he were not part of the *shiur*, yet he was listening intently. His official job was to wake up the *talmidim* for *tikkun chatzos* (midnight prayers), arrange the *seforim*, and bring water. No one dreamed that this “*Shamash*” was actually a great *Talmid Chochom*. When difficult questions arose that could not be answered by anyone in the *Yeshiva* the *Rashash* would leave an anonymous note with the correct answer between the *Rosh Yeshiva*’s *seforim*. This happened on a number of occasions and left the *Rosh Yeshiva* and all the *talmidim* bewildered as to who the author could have been, since the *Rosh Yeshiva* had decreed on all the *talmidim* that they must reveal the author.

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

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

Among his *talmidim* were the *Chida* and the *Maharit Algazi*, who became the *Rosh Yeshiva* after the *petira* of the *Rashash*. His great son, Rav Yitzchok Sharabi, left in his *tzavo’a* (will) a request to bury him in disgrace and throw him into his *kever* as a *kapora* for once acting against the wishes of his father, the *Rashash*. Naturally, upon his *petira*, the *Chevra Kadisha* refused to carry this out. During the *levaya* they were attacked by the local Arabs and everyone was forced to leave the *niftar* and flee for their lives. The attackers then flung the body which rolled down the hill in disgrace to its final resting place.

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

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



The Sar Sholom and the Siddur Rashash

The first Belzer *Rav*, the *Sar Sholom*, had a *Chassid* who always traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* to procure an *esrog* for the *Rebbe* for *Sukkos*. One summer, when this

Chassid was preparing for the journey, the *Rebbe* gave him an additional mission: to procure the *sefer Nahar Sholom* and the various volumes of the *siddur* of the holy *Rashash*, which was rare back then, and only available as a hand-written manuscript – and only in *Yeshiva Beis E”l* in the old city of Yerushalayim.

The *Chassid* accepted the mission and when he traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* he succeeded in procuring the manuscripts of the *Rashash’s* writings, as well as the *siddur* for the *Sar Sholom*.

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

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

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

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



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

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

There in the *Yeshiva* is a side room where a hole leads down a stairway to a wide courtyard



courtyard where a cavern is found. In this cavern, the *Tzaddikim* meditated in *hisbodedus*

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

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

The Panicked Nurse

In 1947, only a few years before Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn (the *Rayatz*), sixth *Rebbe* in the *Chabad-Lubavitch* dynasty, passed away, his son-in-law and eventual successor, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, traveled to Paris. His mother had made it out of Communist Russia. The *Rebbe*, who had escaped from Europe to the United States in 1941, arrived in Paris to greet his mother, whom he had not seen for more than fifteen years, in order to escort her back to the United States.

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

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

he had even lost consciousness.

She ran out looking for someone from the family or the staff. She encountered the *Ramash* (as the *Rebbe-to-be* was known in those days), who quickly came into the room and approached his father-in-law to hear what he was mumbling. He heard the *Rebbe Rayatz* reciting by heart and with the *Torah* melody the words of the Song of the Sea, *Oz Yoshir*. It was as if the *Rayatz* was praying. So, immediately he realized that the *Rayatz* was in a state of communion (with *Hashem*) and that he was not sick. This state is known as disembodiment and the person seems to have lost touch with reality (the truth is very much the opposite, as we will see in a moment). Indeed, after a few minutes, the *Rayatz* seemed to snap out of it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



One Angel of Mercy Versus One Thousand

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

“One of my *ba'alei batim*, a member of our congregation, was sick, and lay in the hospital as his sickness spread and attacked his body, causing him to be bedridden and unable to walk. When I found out, I personally went to visit him.

His family told me that his condition was very serious and that I could not even go in to see him, but he heard my voice and called them to tell me to come in.

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

“I quickly sent a telegram to the *Rebbe Rayatz*, explaining the situation, and his answer arrived back quickly as well: ‘Tell the sick man that they are in the midst of constructing a Lubavitcher *Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim* in Montreal and that he should donate one thousand dollars, because an angel of one thousand is worth more than of one hundred, as we say: *im yesh olov maloch meilitz achad minI olef.*’

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

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

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

“This is indeed what happened. Afterward, the son asked me if he had to delay his wedding. ‘I was engaged and we pushed off the wedding date because of my father's sickness. Now that he is well again,

we wished to proceed, but my uncle whom you met at the hospital suddenly died.'

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



What is Chassidus and What is Tanya?

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

An American Jew approached me and asked, "What is *Chassidus* and what is *Tanya*?"

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



Holy Matbei'os With Holy Instructions

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Zera Shimshon



Bo

The Zera Shimshon, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachmon Michael Nachmani, was born in 5467 (1706/1707) into an illustrious family with great Rabbinical lineage. He studied the revealed and concealed parts of the Torah by the Torah greats of his day.

He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sayna and Reggio, Italy, and was recognized as a holy and pious individual, as well as a tremendous Torah scholar in all areas of Torah. He passed away on the 6th of Elul 5539 (1779).

His Seforim were named, Toldos Shimshon (The 'Offspring' of Shimshon) on Pirkei Avos and Zera Shimshon (The 'Seed' of Shimshon) on the Parshi'os of the Torah. In his introduction, he explains that since his only son had died during his lifetime, he wrote his Seforim to perpetuate his own memory after his passing.

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

"I implore of you with ten terms of supplication to choose from my Chiddushim (novella) the piece that finds favor in your eyes, for your learning will sooth my soul etc..."

"This righteousness will stand by you forever – to 'eat' in this world, and be satiated in the next. In this merit, Hashem will repay you with children, health and sustenance.

"...and now my brothers and friends etc. do a true kindness, and with your eyes you will see children and grandchildren surrounding your table, houses filled with all that is good, wealth and honor will not cease from your children..."

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות זיווג הגון בקרוב
לאילושבע נעמי בת רחל

לזכות הג"ר נחום צבי בן רחל
לכל הענינים

ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב לשונו למאיש ועד בהמה (יא' ז')

Against any of the Bnay Yisrael, no dog will bark (sharpen) its tongue, from man to beast (11:7).

The Zera Shimshon asks - why did Moshe Rabbeinu find it important to inform Pharaoh that during the plague of the dying of the firstborns, the dogs would not bark at the Jewish people when in reality, the main miracle was the fact that only the Egyptian firstborns would die. As well, why was it worth mentioning that not only will the dogs not bark at the Jewish people but they will even refrain from barking at their animals?

The Zera Shimshon explains (4) that as long as the Jewish people were associated with impurity, they were not able to free themselves from Egypt. The passuk says (Yirmia 2:3), "*Holy is Yisrael to Hashem, His first produce (firstborn) all those that eat it (His produce, the Jewish people) are held accountable.*" The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 2:13) says that this passuk refers to those that steal from the Jewish people. This teaches that the Jewish peoples status of Hashem's firstborn sanctifies not only them but their possessions as well.

The status of the firstborn's holiness was one that began with the creation of the world. However, after the sin of eating for the Etz Hada'as, during which Chava was defiled by the snake, the firstborn retained some of this impurity that the snake contaminated Chava, the mother of all mothers, with. It was only through the purifying slavery in Egypt that this impurity left us. Now, we as a nation, were ready to leave Egypt as Hashem's holy firstborn after severing all connection to impurity.

The fact that the dogs did not bark at the Jewish people and at their animals proved that the Jewish people were now totally unassociated with impurity and entirely Hashem's firstborn. Therefore, the dogs, which symbolize the impure, did not even bark at the Jewish people's possessions, namely their animals, since even their possessions were now holy. Moshe Rabbeinu told this to Pharaoh to show him that the Jews were ready to leave Egypt and he was not going to be able to stop them.

The Zera Shimshon offers another explanation as to why it was important to mention that the dogs would not bark at the Jews.

The Midrash Rabba (Shemos 1:35) says that Moshe Rabbeinu was wondering why it was that of all the nations, only the Jews had to suffer so much under Egyptian bondage, until he saw that there was lashon hara between them. It was then that he exclaimed (Shemos 2:14), now the matter is known.

The Gemara says (Makos 23a) that one who speaks lashon hara is deserving of being thrown to the dogs. The dogs' refraining from barking at the Jews is a proof that they had repented from the sin of lashon hara and were now worthy of leaving Egypt, and there was nothing Pharaoh could do to stop them.

לזכות חיים דוד בן טובא חוה להצלחה וסייעתא דשמיא בכל מעשה ידיו ובכל הענינים
זכות רבינו זיע"א יעמוד לזיווג הגון בקרוב עבור שושנה נחמה בת חנה פעסא ולרפואה שלימה ליוכבד
בת דבורה ולכל משפחתה שימלא הקב"ה משאלות לבם לטובה במהרה
ולזכות רבקה רויזא בת פייגא לזיווג הגון בקרוב בתוך שאר ישראל
לזכות החפץ בעילום שמו לזיווג בניו ובנותיו בקרוב בזכות רבינו זיע"א

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