

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



בָּעֵדֶת חָ' יְהִרְאָךְ

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זכות רפואת שלמה
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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)

YISRO

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

Sowing the Seeds of the *Zera Kodesh*

Dvar Torah

The Divine Revelation on Har Sinai - Seeing Hashem Face-To-Face

"Hashem spoke once (and) I heard this twice" (Tehillim 62:12).

The heilige Ropshitzer cites the Medrash that quotes our pasuk, saying, "Anochi Hashem Elokecha – I am Hashem, your G-d". The Medrash adds, "As it says: "Face-to-face Hashem spoke with you" (Devorim 5:4).

The Ropshitzer reminds us here in Parshas Yisro of what he says in his *derushim* to *Shavuos*: "I heard from my teacher and master, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, regarding the pasuk in *Tehillim* (62:12), 'Hashem spoke once and I heard twice' the following: Perhaps, said the Rymanower, we heard from the Holy One's mouth nothing but a single letter, just the alef of the word *anochi...*" From this, says the Ropshitzer, we understood the rest of the *Aseres HaDibros* (Ten Commandments). Perhaps, adds the Ropshitzer, we heard just *komatz alef* [the first *nikud* taught to a *cheder yingel*], the alef vowelized with the *nikud* of *komatz*, as explained elsewhere at length.

He continues in his *derushim* to *Shavuos* to explain this in greater detail, saying that we can try to understand this idea based on the sweet words of our forefathers, who said that

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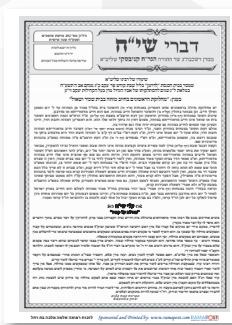
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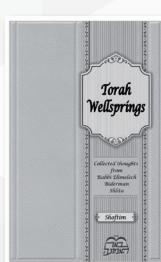
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לזכות רפואה שלמה
מלכה בת רחל ומיבאל בן של

Shivisi Hashem lenegdi somid is a *klal godol baTorah* – “Placing Hashem before me at all times is a great general principle in the Torah”. Notice that they did not say it is a great rule in *Avodas Hashem* (serving Hashem) – no, they said “in Torah”!

The *sifrei mussar* (works on character development and refinement) teach us that the letter *alef* can be written with a *yud* above and below, with a *vov* in the middle. This image of two *yuds* and a *vov* is the numerical value of twenty-six, based on *gematria*, which is equal to the divine Name *Havaya*”*h* – *YHV*”*H*.

This is also hinted to in the face of a person: the two eyes are each a letter *yud* and his nose is the letter *vov*, similar to the *alef* we just mentioned. This is behind the idea that we were created, so to speak, in *Hashem’s* image – *Betzelem Elokim*. In man’s face are inscribed the letters that form the letter *alef*. The image known as *Tzelem Elokim* is the source of the divine light, known as the *ohr makif*, that surrounds us, and thus as a holy nation we are bidden always to have in mind that we carry this *Tzelem* and that we are made in *Hashem’s* divine image, that His seal is before us at all times and that we should act accordingly, thereby having us – the physical matter – take on the form, from which we were created [as clay is formed through a stamp]. This is why they called it a great general principle to place *Hashem* before us at all times. When we merited to stand at the foot of Har Sinai and receive the holy *Torah*, and we heard the divine voice call out that single letter *alef*, which alludes to the divine Name *YHV*”*H*, then all the secrets in that *alef* were revealed to us, and we experienced and saw the divine image and form, as it says “*ro’im es hakolos* – *ro’im es hanishma*” –we saw the sounds and voices; we saw that which is normally heard. We had a visual experience from an auditory source.

We heard and saw the letter *alef*, which represents the divine Name, and we understood that our face corresponds to that *alef*, and that we were formed *Betzelem Elokim*. Then His awe and fear was literally on our faces, to prevent us from sin. For when a person walks with this idea in mind – no matter where he goes – that he is formed *Betzelem Elokim*, it saves him from wrongdoing.

The *zokon* (beard) that grows from the face downward is similar to the vowel point below the letter *alef*, as in the image of a man’s face with his beard grown. Since this *alef* is the first letter of the word *anochi* (from the first of the *Aseres HaDibros* that *Hashem* spoke on Har Sinai), the vocalization and vowel used is the *komatz*. This is why our Sages say that *Hashem* was revealed on Har Sinai like an old man – *zoken* – full of mercy. The letters *alef* and *bais* are at the head of the alphabet, which is why our Sages said that He is an *av zoken* – *av*, spelled *alef-bais*, and *zoken* (old), symbolizing the *zokon* (beard). Even though we saw no image, we can now understand how this revelation is called “face-to-face”, in that the face stamped with the beard is the image of the *alef* with a *komatz* – [2 *yuds*=2 eyes, the *vov*=nose, *komatz*=beard] and from my flesh I shall see my G-d.



Shabbos Noam Haneshomos – Noam Elimelech

Collecting Geirim in Golus

"And Yisro heard" (*Shemos* 18:1).

The Rebbe Reb Melech cites the *Gemora* (*Pesochim* 87b): "The reason why Bnei Yisrael went into exile was so that converts could join them." Asks the *Noam Elimelech*: Is this really a justified reason for *Golus*? Could it be that Bnei Yisrael should suffer *Golus* just so that converts from among the nations could join us? Wouldn't it be more proper for the converts to travel to us instead of us to them? They could come to *Eretz Yisrael* on their own and convert once they are there!

Explains the *Noam Elimelech* that there is a hidden spark of holiness concealed within all righteous converts – which is what pushes them to convert. However, this spark is too small and weak on its own to inspire them to make the trip to *Eretz Yisrael* and convert. When they see Bnei Yisrael and observe them and their sanctity, this *kedusha* ignites their own spark and awakens it, pushing and inspiring them to convert. This is why Bnei Yisrael needed to go into exile, because their contact with the *geirim* is needed to ignite the spark.

This is how we can interpret our *pasuk*: "And Yisro heard...the father-in-law of Moshe": through Moshe's *kedusha*, Yisro's heart was awakened, giving Yisro's spark the energy it needed to listen to all *Hashem* had done for Moshe and Bnei Yisrael and ultimately to convert.



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

The Soul of the Ohr HaChaim

The *Yismach Yisrael* of Alexander used to travel to Rav Yaakov of Radzimin and ask that he should be blessed with *bonim*. Once, when the *Yismach Yisrael* left, the Radzimer told the *Chassidim*, "What does the son of the Gritz Rav want from me? What should I do if he has the *neshoma* of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* and cannot have *bonim*!" (*Eser Zechuyos*, #13)



Drawing Close All Yidden

The *Yismach Yisrael* of Alexander used to follow the same path as the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* by drawing every type of Jew close, even simple and strange types. This was the

way of the *Ohr HaChaim*. The holy Neshchizer told that when the *Ba'al Shem Tov*'s brother-in-law, Rav Gershon of Kitov, asked the *Ohr HaChaim* why he allowed a certain *talmid* into his *Yeshiva*, for Rav Gershon could tell that he was improper, the *Ohr HaChaim* answered him, "This is our way – we draw close even those who are distant." (*Tiferes Yisrael*, p. 51 #166)



The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim

A Supernatural People

"And you shall be for Me a *segula* from all the peoples" (19:5).

One way that the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* defines a *segula* is something with supernatural powers that defy nature. As an example, some medicinal herbs have properties that seem to be against nature, for in medicine an herb that has a cold nature should work against sicknesses that have a hot nature, but herbal lore finds that such cold herbs heal cold sicknesses and this is not a natural phenomenon. Similarly, Bnei Yisrael are said by *Hashem* to be an *Am Segula* – a supernatural people, whose properties defy the natural order, a people who operate by a different set of rules and standards and who do not conform to what is observed as nature and its set of laws.

The *Ohr HaChaim* gives an example: *Chazal* teach in *Shabbos* 63 that if a Jew was prepared and ready to perform a *mitzva* and through no fault of his or her own was prevented from fulfilling that *mitzva*, he still gets reward, for it is counted as if he has done that *mitzva*, whereas this is not true regarding a transgression. This rule, however, does not hold for the other nations of the world; in fact, the opposite is the case. Logically speaking, if this rule were natural, it should play out that if thoughts can cause a reaction, it should apply to the desire or will to transgress as well, not just to do good and perform *mitzvos*. And why, for the other nations, should this work in an opposite manner [that if they wished to do good it does not count and if they wish to sin, it counts as a transgression, even if they did not act on it]?

Another example the *Ohr HaChaim* gives of Bnei Yisrael's supernatural power is the law (*Sanhedrin* 59a) that a non-Jew who engages in *Torah* study or who keeps *Shabbos* is liable for capital punishment. If the act itself were a positive one, shouldn't anyone who engages in *Torah* study and *Shabbos* observance be rewarded? If it is a negative act by its very nature, how can it be a *mitzva* for us? This is why the *pasuk* says, "You shall be an *Am Segula* from all the peoples": the power and *segula* of the *Torah* and its *mitzvos* depend on you; your observance is what defines them as positive, not any natural, inherent set of rules or conditions.



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 *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 *tefillah* 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 *tefillah*. Rav Papo was the *Rav* of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The *tefillah* of the *Pele Yo'etz* is reproduced and translated below, as a public service.

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֶפֶר אֵלֹן הַמְגֻנוֹ מִבְּעֵל הַפְּלָא יוֹצֵא עַל פָּרֶשֶׁת וַיַּצֵּא עַמוֹּד כ"ד]

הַרְינִי מַדְלִיק נֵר זוֹה לְמִנּוֹחַת וּלְעִילָוִי נְשָׂמַת אָבִי / אֲמִי מַרְתִּי / הַצָּדִיק
בָּן/בָת _____, יְהִי רָצֵן מֶלֶפְנֵיךְ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ וְאֱלֹקֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתְּקַבֵּל בְּרוּחִים
וּבְרָצֹן כָּל מְعָשָׂה הַטוֹב שֶׁאָנָי עָשָׂה, בֵּין בְּמִחְשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִיבּוֹר, בֵּין בְּמִעֵשׁ וַיְהִי הַפְלָל
לְזִכּוֹת וּלְמִנּוֹחַת וּלְעִילָוִי לְנִשְׁמֹות עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפָרֶט לְנֶפֶשׁ רֹוח וּנְשָׂמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אֲמִי /
צָדִיק _____. יְהִי רָצֵן שְׁתַהְיוֹנָה נְפָשֹׁתֵיכֶם צְרוּרָת בְּצָרוּר הַחַיִם.

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.yeshhem.com/hilulah.htm



GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



YAHRZEITS BEGINNING SHABBOS YISRO

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

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

* **20th of Shevat ~ Begins Friday Night (Jan 25th)**

- * Birth and *petira* of **Osher ben Yaakov Avinu**, (1565 BCE);
- * **Rav Avrohom Abba Freedman** (1920–2002). He was sent from Brooklyn to Detroit in 1944 by his *Rebbe*, Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, to help launch the day school that had been established there by Rav Simcha Wasserman. On his first *Shavuos* there, the only two

people to stay up learning *Torah* were Rav Freedman and Rav Wasserman. Rav Freedman is credited with the growth of Detroit into a *Torah* metropolis, including a *Yeshiva Ketana*, a *Mesivta*, a *Bais Yaakov*, a *Bais Medrash*, and a *Kollel*. His biography, written by Gary Torgow, is named *Holy Warrior: A Portrait of Strength and Determination*. The “warrior” reference in the book’s title describes Rav Freedman’s legacy: fifty-eight years of relentless striving in Detroit to instill in children and share with adults – especially the waves of Russian immigrants – his love for *Torah* and dedication to the religious way of life. Rav Freedman wrote an essay entitled *We Are A Historical Society*, which abounds with joy in the here and now and optimism for the future. “Everything,” he assures us, “is in God’s hands. While the once-mighty ancient empires that oppressed us are but forgotten dust, under God’s shepherding, the Jewish people and our *Torah* have survived for thousands of years and will survive forever. Our future is “as clear and vivid to us as our past”, (5762/2002);

- * **Rav Yosef of Yampoli** *ben* Rav Yechiel Michael *HaMaggid* of Zlotkov, (5572/1812);
- * **Rav Chaim Dovid** “Doctor” Bernhard of Pietrokov *ben* Yissochor Ber, a secular doctor, whom Rav Dovid of Lelov made into a *Ba’al Teshuva* and brought to the *Chozeh*. After the *Chozeh’s petira*, he became a *talmid* of the Radoshitzer. He became a great *Chassidic Rebbe*, (5610/1850);
- * **Rav Ovadya Hadya** *ben* Rav Sholom, a *mekubol* of *Yeshiva Bais El*, *Rav* in Yerushalayim and *mechaber* of *Responsa Yaskil Avdi*, a greatly respected *halachic* work, (5729/1969).

* **21st of Shevat ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Jan 26th)**

- * **Rav Yehudah Leib Chanales** of Lublin *ben* Rav Meir of Lublin, the *Maharlach*, *mechaber* of *Vayigash Yehuda*, (5356/1596);
- * **Rav Moshe Galante** (Galanti) II of Yerushalayim (1620–1689), son of Rav Yehonoson, who was the son of Rav Moshe Galante the elder (1540–1614), who studied with Rav Yosef Karo. He wrote two *halachic* works, *Elef HaMogen*, which includes a thousand responsa on various topics, *Zevach Shelomim* on the *Talmud* and *Korban Chagiga* on *Maseches Chagiga*. He argued strongly against the popularity of *Shabsai Tzvi*. His grandson was Rav Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter of Ger, the *Sfas Emes*. Among his students were Rav Chizkiya De Silva, *mechaber* of *Pri Chodosh* (printed in the standard edition of the *Shulchon Aruch*), and Rav Yaakov Chagiz and his son Rav Moshe Chagiz. Refusing to accept the title of “chief *Rav*” that was offered to him, he coined a new title: *Rishon Le’Tzion*, (5449/1689);
- * **Rav Yitzchok** *ben* Rav Mordechai of Neshchitz, *mechaber* of *Toldos Yitzchok*, (5628/1868);
- * **Rav Yechiel Meir Lipschitz** (Lipschutz) of Gustinin [Gostynin; Gastinin] in Poland (1816–1888). He was a *talmid* of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotsk and of Rav Yaakov Arye of Radzymin, after whose *petira* he became *Chassidic* leader in Gustinin. His teachings appear in *Merom HaRim* and *Mei HaYom*. He was known as the *Ba’al HaTehillim*. The Kotzker said that he was one of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim* of his generation, (5648/1888);
- * **Rav Yaakov Weidenfeld** of Tchebin, the *Kochav MiYaakov*. His one volume of responsa, entitled *Kochav MiYaakov*, was a mere fraction of the thousands of responsa that he wrote, but which were lost in the two world wars. Rav Yaakov’s glosses to *Seder Taharos* and *Talmud Yerushalmi* were written in one day, as is indicated by their original title, *Hagahos Chad Yoma*, (5654/1894);
- * **Rav Yechiel Yehoshua Rabinowitz**, the Bialer *Rebbe* (1901–1982). Born in Biala, Poland, to Rav Yerachmiel Tzvi, the son of the *Divrei Bina* of Biala and a direct descendant of the *Yid HaKodosh*. The *Divrei Bina* passed away when Yechiel Yehoshua was only four, and

tragically, Rav Yerachmiel Tzvi passed away shortly thereafter at the age of twenty-six. In 1919, Rav Yechiel married Beila Chana Pesha, and in 1924, he was formally installed as Rebbe of *Biala*, and set up court in Shidlitz, with a population of 200,000 Jews. He was exiled to Siberia with his family in 1940. In 1947, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, living in Tel Aviv for eight years before setting up his *Bais Medrash* and *Kollel* in Zichron Moshe in Yerushalayim, where he remained for the next twenty-seven years. He authored the *sefer Chelkas Yehoshua*, (5742/1982);

- * **Rav Yehoshua Heshel Brim**, *Rosh Yeshiva Tiferes Yisrael* of Ruzhin-Yerushalayim, (5746/1986).

* **22nd of Shevat ~ Begins Sunday Night (Jan 27th)**

- * **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Kotzk (1787–1859). Born in Goray, near Lublin, Poland, Rav Menachem Mendel received a thorough *Torah* education from his father, Leibush Morgenstern, a zealous opponent of *Chassidus*. After his marriage at fourteen, his father introduced him to the world of *Chassidus*. Thereafter, he became an ardent follower of the *Chozeh* of Lublin and Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, whom he eventually succeeded. Rav Menachem Mendel was a new type of *Chassid*. If the *Ba'al Shem Tov* embodied *chessed* (loving-kindness), Rav Mendel represented *din* (strict justice). While the *Ba'al Shem* sought to reach all the people, Rav Mendel knew that what he sought could only be attained by the elite. The *Ba'al Shem* lifted the people up; Rav Mendel rebuked them for their inadequacies and always demanded more. Rav Leibel Eiger was entranced by Kotzk, to the despair of his father, Rav Shlomo. Rav Mendel and Rav Mordechai Yosef of Izhbitz had been close friends and talmidim of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha. After Rav Bunim's passing, Rav Mendel became *Rebbe*. However, because of Rav Mendel's extreme aloofness the two friends were traveling on a collision course. Finally, on *Simchas Torah* of 1840 there was an irrevocable split between the two and Rav Mordechai Yosef left with his *Chassidim* to form a new *Chassidus*. Most prominent among his *talmidim* were the *Chiddushei HaRim* of Ger and Rav Chanoch of Alexander, (5619/1859);
- * **Rav Yehuda Arye Leib Eiger** (1816–1888). Known as Rav Leibele Eiger, a grandson of the renowned Rav Akiva Eiger, Rav Leibel was born in Warsaw. He learned under Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter, later known as the *Chiddushei HaRim*, in Warsaw. The *Chiddushei HaRim* used to say, “True *Misnagdim* don’t really deserve to be punished, because they fight *Chassidus* for the sake of Heaven. Therefore, they are punished with a punishment that is not really a punishment – their sons become *Chassidim*.” At twenty, he married and moved to Lublin where he *davened* at the *shul* of the *Chozeh*. There, he befriended Rav Yisrael, the *Chozeh*'s son. He then moved to Kotzk. He became a *Rebbe* after the *Rebbe* of Izhbitz passed away in 1854. After his *petira*, his son, Rav Avrohom, printed his *seforim Toras Emes* and *Imrei Emes*, (5648/1888);
- * **Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson**, (5661–5751/1901–1991);
- * **Rav Yehuda Zev Segal**, the Manchester *Rosh Yeshiva* (1910–1993), born in Manchester to Rav Moshe Yitzchok Segal, the *Rosh Yeshiva* and a former *talmid* of the *Alter* of Novardok, who received *semicha* from Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein, the *Aruch HaShulchon*. Rav Yehuda's father, at the age of nineteen, had been drafted into the Czar's army, where he insisted on observing *mitzvos* as well as he could. One day, as Rav Moshe was searching for water, he fled to the border and crossed over to Germany. From there, he headed to Manchester, England, where he settled and Rav Yehuda was born. At the age of twenty, Rav Yehuda Zev attended the Mir, where he learned with Rav Chaim Shmulevitz. He formed a

close bond with Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, whom he referred to as *mori verabi* (my master and teacher). After he married in 1934, he learned in Gateshead, but moved to Manchester after the Germans bombed Gateshead in 1940. On April 16, 1950, he was officially inducted as *Rosh Yeshiva* by Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, supported by Dayan Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss (the *Minchas Yitzchok*), then the Manchester *Av Beis Din*, (5753/1993);

- * **Rav Sholom Flam**, Strettiner *Rebbe* (1929–2003). Born in Montreal, he was the fifth of eight children born to Rav Dovid Flam, the Olesker *Rebbe*, and his Rebbetzin Sara, the daughter of Rav Moshe Langner, the Strettiner *Rebbe* of Toronto, (5763/2003).

* **23rd of Shevat ~ Begins Monday Night (Jan 28th)**

- * **Rav Aharon ben Chaim Avrohom HaKohen Perachia** (1627–1697), a wealthy man appointed chief *Rav* of Salonika in 1688. He authored a responsa called *Parach Mateh Aharon*, (5457/1697);
- * **Rav Yehoshua (Shaya'le) Roke'ach** of Belz, fifth son and the successor of Rav Sholom, the *Sar Sholom*, founder of the Belz dynasty (1825–1894). He married a granddaughter of the *Ohev Yisrael*, the Apter *Rav*. After Rav Sholom was *niftar* in 1855, the Belz *Chassidim* had no leader for two years, after which Rav Yehoshua replaced his father, in compliance with his father's wishes, despite the fact that Rav Yehoshua had four older brothers. He led the Belz *Chassidim* for thirty-nine years. He was also the founder of *Machzikei HaDas*, perhaps the first Orthodox Jewish organization to be involved in government politics. Some of his discourses are published in *Ohel Yehoshua*, a supplement to the book of his father's teachings, *Dover Sholom*. He was succeeded by his second son, Rav Yissochor Dov, (5654/1894);
- * **Rav Moshe Kliers** (1874–1934). Born in Tzefas, he married the daughter of a prominent *Talmid Chochom* of the Slonim community in Teveria, and went to live there. At the age of twenty-six, in response to a request by Rav Shmuel, the Slonimer *Rebbe*, Rav Moshe founded a *Yeshiva* (*Ohr Torah*) by the kever of Rav Meir *Ba'al Haness* on the shores of the Kinneret. He was involved in the *Teshuva* Campaign of 1914. Rav Moshe authored the *sefer Toras HaAretz*, (5694/1934);
- * **Rav Osher Eliach** (1952–2004). Born in Yerushalayim's Shaarei Chessed neighborhood, he learned at *Yeshiva Kol Torah*, where he cleaved to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Later, he studied at *Yeshivas Ponovezh* under Rav Shach, Rav Povarsky and Rav Rozovsky. He learned *Maseches Eruvin* with all the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* over twenty times, becoming an expert on the subject, and numerous *chareidi* communities consulted with him. He was involved in setting up *eruvim* in every part of *Eretz Yisrael*. For the last five years of his life, he served as *mashgiach* at *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chaim Ozer*. Tragically, he died suddenly of a heart attack during a *Melave Malka*, (5764/2004);
- * **Rav Avrohom Lopes Cardozo** (1914–2006), appointed *Chazzan* of Congregation *She'eris Yisrael*, the historic Spanish and Portuguese shul in New York City, in 1946. The congregation had been founded in 1654 in Lower Manhattan by the first Jewish settlers in North America. Rav Cardozo was born in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1914, the great-grandson of the Chief *Rav* of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam, and attended *Yeshiva Etz Chaim* in that Dutch city. His was a rabbinical family that traced its origins to the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century, when the Jews were expelled. In 1939, he was appointed by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands to be the *Rav* of the *Sephardi* community in Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana, now Surinam, and in 1951 he married Irma Robles of Surinam. Soon after he left Amsterdam, the Nazis invaded the Netherlands,

killing tens of thousands of Jews, including Rav Cardozo's parents and siblings. Rav Cardozo published several books of liturgical music, including *Music for the Sephardim* and *Sephardic Songs of Praise* and maintained the position of *Chazzan* at Congregation *She'eris Yisrael* for forty years, continuing there until 1986. On June 7, 2000, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands presented him with the decoration of Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau, for his work in preserving Dutch Jewish culture. At the age of ninety-one, on February 21, 2006, Rav Cardozo passed away in Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan, New York, after a sudden heart attack, (5766/2006).

* **24th of Shevat ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Jan 29th)**

- * **Rav Shaul HaLevi Mortora** (Morteira), *Av Bais Din* of Amsterdam, *mechaber* of *Givas Shaul*, a collection of fifty sermons on the *Chumash*, selected from five hundred *derashos* written by him. The *Givas Shaul* explains how each law in the *parsha* corresponds to an event in Moshe *Rabbeinu*'s life: the laws of a slave, because his brothers were slaves; the laws of maidservants, because of what he saw happening to Yisro's daughters. Moshe wanted the people to see that the laws of the *Torah* address and direct every detail of life, and protect us from the type of suffering the people had experienced. This was his life. This was how he placed the laws "before them", in an accessible manner that would speak to each person on his own level. He was a Dutch *Rav* of Portuguese descent, born in approximately 1596 in Venice, Italy; he was *niftar* on February 10, 1660, in Amsterdam, Netherlands. When in 1616, Rav Shaul escorted the body of the physician Elijah Montalto from France to Amsterdam, the *Sephardi kehilla* of *Beth Jacob* in Amsterdam (House of Jacob) elected him *Chacham* in succession to Moshe *ben Aroyo*. Rav Shaul and Yitzchok da Fonseca Aboab (Menashe *ben Yisrael* was in England at the time) were the members of the *mahamad*, the political arm of the community, which pronounced on July 27, 1656, the decree of excommunication (*cherem*) against Boruch Spinoza, previously one of Rav Shaul's star pupils. Rav Shaul was the founder of the congregational school *Keser Torah*, in the highest class of which he taught *Talmud* and Jewish philosophy. He also preached three times a month, and received an annual remuneration of six hundred guilders and a hundred baskets of turf. Rav Shaul's polemical sermons in Hebrew against the Catholic Church were published, but his Portuguese writings against Calvinism remained unpublished, (5420/1660);
- * **Rav Avrohom Yechiel ben Rav Uziel** of Halberstadt, *mechaber* of *Nezer HaKodesh*, (5490/1730);
- * **Rav Shlomo Margulies**, *Rav* of Zelitschek and a close *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. He wrote: "How well do I know with what great holiness he, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, conducted himself, with such piety and separation from worldliness. But he especially put his efforts and energy into the service of the heart – *tefilla*. He *davened* with complete divorce from the body and from everything material – *hispashtus hagashmiyus* – and with tremendous *dveikus* with the living God", (5565/1805);
- * **Rav Shabsai Shaltiel**, *Rav* in Yerushalayim, (5606/1846);
- * **Rav Sholom Zelig Steinmetz**, elder Vizhnitz *Chassid*, (5755/1995).

* **25th of Shevat ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Jan 30th)**

- * **Rav Yisrael ben Rav Ze'ev** Wolf Lipkin Salanter (1810–1883), founder and spiritual father of the *Mussar* movement. Born in Zager (near Kovno), Lithuania, to Rav Ze'ev Wolf Lipkin, a descendant of the Vilna *Gaon*, Rav Yisrael became a close *talmid* of Rav Zundel of Salant, who introduced him to the classic works of *mussar*. In 1840, he became *Rosh*

Yeshiva of the Rameilles *Yeshiva* in Vilna, and later opened a *Yeshiva* in Kovno. A compilation of his thoughts was recorded in a *sefer*, *Or Yisrael*, written by one of his closest *talmidim*, Rav Yitzchok Blazer of Petersburg. Among his other close *talmidim* were Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv of Kelm and Rav Yosef Yoizel Hurwitz of Novardok, (5643/1883);

- * **Rav Mordechai Pogramansky**, the *Iluy* from Telz, (5710/1950);
- * **Rav Shabsai**, father of Rav Yisrael – the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz, (5521/1761);
- * **Rav Ephraim ben Rav Shlomo Zalman Zelaznik**. In 1956, he became one of the first *talmidim* in Brisk, under Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik. He taught at *Yeshiva Eretz Tzvi* for most of his life, (5691–5765/1931–2005);
- * **Rav Zalman Ury** (1924–2006). A great-great-grandson of Rav Dovid Teveli, *mechaber* of *Nachalas Dovid*, Rav Ury was born in Stolpce, Poland, and studied at *Yeshiva Etz Chayim* in Kletzk under Rav Aharon Kotler from 1934–1941. At the start of World War II, he was interned in a Siberian Concentration Camp, while his parents and siblings died at the hands of the Nazis. He spent the remainder of the war in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, where he met his wife, Eva. They married soon after the war ended and immigrated to the United States in 1947, where he received his *semicha* at Lakewood. Rav Zalman received his B.S. from Washington University, St. Louis, then moved to Los Angeles in 1957. He earned his M.A. in Education from Loyola University and his Doctor of Education at UCLA. For forty-seven years, Rav Ury worked with the Bureau of Jewish Education, building and nurturing the *Yeshiva* day-school system. Under his direction, *Yeshiva* enrollment in Los Angeles increased from less than a thousand *talmidim* to more than 5,500, and the number of Jewish schools increased from five in 1960 to twenty-one by the time of his passing. He wrote over a hundred articles and educational materials for journals and books, and authored the books *The Musar Movement* and *The Story of Rav Yisrael Salanter*. In 2001, he published *Kedushas Avrohom*, a two-volume work containing *chiddushei Torah*, *mussar* teachings and correspondences with *Gedolei Yisrael*, including Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Henkin and Rav Simcha Wasserman, as well as an essay on his *Rebbe*, Rav Yosef Aryeh Leib Nanedik, the *mashgiach* at *Yeshiva Etz Chaim*. For many years he served as *Rav* of Young Israel Congregation of Beverly Hills, (5766/2006).

* **26th of Shevat ~ Begins Thursday Night (Jan 31st)**

- * **Rav Dovid HaLevi Segal**, *mechaber* of *Turei Zohov* (the *Taz*) (1586–1667), son-in-law of the *Bach*, born in Ludmir and unofficial *Rav* of Posen, 1619~1640. Rav Dovid headed the famous *Yeshiva* at Ostro from 1643, escaped the Cossacks' rampage of 1648–49 to Lublin, then went to Moravia. He settled in Lemberg (Lvov) but lost two sons to violent deaths in the spring pogroms of 1664. He sent his son Yeshaya and son-in-law Aryeh Leib (later to be the *Sha'agas Aryeh*) to investigate Shabsai Tzvi. He also wrote *Divrei Dovid* on *Rashi al HaTorah*, (5427/1667);
- * **Rav Mordechai Yosef Elozor ben Rav Gershon Henoch Leiner (Lainer)**, *Rebbe* of Radzin, son of the *Ba'al HaTecheiles* and great-grandson of Mordechai Yosef of Izhbitz. He was the *mechaber* of *Tiferes Yosef*. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Shmuel Shlomo, and then by his son-in-law, Rav Avrohom Yissochor England, (5689/1929);
- * **Rav Shaul ben Rav Elozor Brach of Kashau**, *mechaber* of *Shaul Sha'al*, (5700/1940);
- * **Rav Yaakov ben Moshe Yehuda Leib Landau**, *Rav* of Bnei Brak (1893–1986). At the age of thirteen, he went to learn in Lubavitch under the fifth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Ber, the *Rashab*. At the age of nineteen, he replaced his father as *Rav* of Kornitz, and later became the emissary of the *Rashab* in Lubavitch. When the Bolsheviks began persecuting

Rabbonim, Rav Yaakov moved to Latvia, where he became close to the Rogatchover *Gaon*. It was there that he married. In 1934, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, soon becoming *Rav* of Bnei Brak, a position he kept for the following fifty years;

- * **Rav Ephraim ben Rav Benzion Borodiansky** of *Yeshiva Kol Torah*, *mechaber* of *Binyan Ephraim*, (5750/1990).



❖ 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*.”

**בֵּית הַקְבָּרוֹת הוּא מָקוֹם מִנוּחַת הַצָּדִיקִים וּמָתוֹךְ כֵּן הוּא מָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ וּטָהוֹר הַתְּפִילָה נִתְקַבֵּלה
שֶׁמְ יוֹתֶר, אֲךָ אֲלֹ יִשְׂמַח מְגַמְתּוֹ נֶגֶד הַמְתִים, אֲךָ יִבְקַשׁ מִהְשִׁיָּת שִׁיחַת עַלְיוֹ רְחָמִים בְּזָכוֹת
הַצָּדִיקִים שְׁוֹנֵנִי עַפְרָה, וַיַּקְרַב הַקְבָּרוֹת, וַיַּתֵּן צְדָקָה קָדוֹם שִׁיאָמֵר הַתְּחִינּוֹת.**

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 *tefila* and fasting and *teshuva* alone.



❖ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❖

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yitzchok Ben Mordechai of Neshchiz, 21st of Shevat

Mechaber of Zichron Tov

Only the Good

Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz was once in Alik and, while wrapped in his *tallis* and crowned with his *tefillin*, one of his attendants entered and began to complain and tell the *Rebbe* about someone else's misconduct and misdeeds. The *Tzaddik* grew very upset and he grasped the door handle, saying to his *gabbai*, “You have

been my attendant in this house for several years already. Don't you know by now that before a person even grasps hold of the *kolimka* – the handle of my door – that right away I can already sense everything that person has done since the day he was born? What can I do? It says, regarding *Hashem* in *Bamidbar* (23:21) that He sees no iniquity or wrongdoing in Yaakov.

Hashem does not look at the evil that *Bnei Yisrael* do, and if *Hashem* does not, how can I? My way and custom is that I do not look at the negative side of people – only at their positive side, because if I did see their negative sides, I would never let anyone cross my threshold and enter through this door to see me!"

When the *Rebbe* Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz left Berditchev to take over the leadership as Neshchizer *Rebbe*, he *davened* to *Hashem* and succeeded in achieving that he should never see the negative side of a person – only the positive side. (*Zichron Tov* – *Mei'avodas HaTzaddikim* # 33)



Rav Yechiel Yehoshua Ben Yerachmiel Tzvi Rabinowitz of Biala, 21st of Shevat

Mechaber of Chelkas Yehoshua

Being a Well-Known Rebbe is a Punishment

The Biala *Rebbe* of Lugano explained that *Tzaddikim* held that to become well known as a *Rebbe* was a form of punishment or torture, and said that his father, the *Chelkas Yehoshua*, used to say, "Better to be a shoemaker than a *Rebbe*!" (*Mevaser Tov Yeshuas Avrohom* p. 10)



Just Two Demands

The Biala *Rebbe* of Lugano said that his father, the *Chelkas Yehoshua*, used to awaken the hearts of *Bnei Yisrael* to serve *Hashem* and would ask of them two things: "The main things I ask of you are *Kedusha* (holiness) and *Tikkun HaMiddos*



(correcting character traits)." (*Mevaser Tov Yeshuas Avrohom*, p. 233)



Belief in Am Segula

The *Chelkas Yehoshua* established that as one of the main principles of faith, we should daily declare that "I believe with full faith – *Ani maamin beemunah sheleima* – that *Bnei Yisrael* are *Hashem*'s *segula* [supernatural and above the laws of the natural order], they are His portion and they are the inheritance of *Hashem*, the Creator. He even incorporated this into his *siddur* after reciting the *Rambam*'s thirteen *Ikrei Emuna*. (*Mevaser Tov Yeshuas Avrohom*, p. 363)



Rav Moshe Galante, 21st of Shevat

There is a story that Rav Galante left his beloved city of Yerushalayim for Damascus on a mission for the community. While in Damascus, Rav Galante heard of an Arab sheikh who was said to possess miraculous healing powers. The sheikh would say, "This one will live, this one will die," and his words came true. More than this, the sheikh was said to be proficient in the so-called seven branches of worldly wisdom. The *Rav*, who was also well versed in the known branches of wisdom, was intrigued by the sheikh's seeming ability to decree with such certainty something that was not in the realm of human hands. Our

Sages tell us that the key of life and death is not handed over to anyone – not even to a *malach*; *Hashem* retains that key for Himself alone.

Rav Galante's curiosity was so intense that he sent the most influential Jew in Damascus, called the *parnas*, to tell the sheikh that a very wise Jew from Yerushalayim would like to meet with him. The sheikh, having previously heard of the *Rav*'s wisdom, was delighted to meet with him in his villa, and quickly turned the conversation to the central issue. "I have heard that you are a wise man," said the

sheikh. "Is it true that you are knowledgeable in such-and-such a wisdom?"

"Yes, the Lord has granted me a little knowledge of this wisdom," answered Rav Galante. In order to test him, the sheikh began to ask Rav Galante a series of difficult questions. Rav Moshe answered each query in depth and to the point. "My beloved friend," smiled the sheikh. "I have enjoyed your company immensely. I would be very pleased if you would come to my palace again, say once a week. I see that we have much to discuss."

Two days later, the sheikh sent two of his servants to the *Rav's* residence, with an invitation for another audience with him. "Peace be with you!" said the sheikh, embracing his dear friend. "Since you left here, I have been thinking a lot about our conversation. I could not wait any longer to see you again and therefore I sent for you now." Both seated on cushioned pillows in one of the sheikh's opulent lounge rooms, again the sheikh asked Rav Galante if he was versed in another one of the seven branches of worldly wisdom. And again he began to ask Rav Galante questions. Once again, he was astonished by the *Rav's* breadth of knowledge. As the conversation drew to a close, the sheikh asked his friend, "If I have found favor in your eyes, would you please come every other day to me?" Rav Galante agreed to his request.

At each new meeting, they discussed another one of the seven branches of wisdom. Each time, the sheikh felt a greater bond with the *Rav*. At last, the sheikh confided in his companion, "To be truthful, my friend, I am lacking certain preparatory details concerning the last branch of wisdom. Without these, I am unable to fully grasp and use this branch. Do you have a comprehensive understanding of it?"

The *Rav* replied, "Yes."

Falling at his feet, the sheikh pleaded with Rav Galante to teach him

everything he knew. The *Rav* responded that he was willing to teach him, on condition that he taught him concerning another body of wisdom. The sheikh was dumbfounded. "What do you mean? You are wiser than me. How can there be a branch of wisdom that you are not proficient in?"

The *Rav* replied, "There is a wondrous body of wisdom that you know, of which I am wholly ignorant – you can daven for a sick person and see into the Book of Life and Death. I lack this wisdom. Therefore," concluded Rav Galante, "if you will reveal to me this wisdom, I shall teach you what you want to know."

The sheikh returned slowly to his seat. "Your request is impossible to fulfill. I have sworn to my forefathers not to divulge the secret to anyone."

"Likewise," responded Rav Galante, "I am also sworn not to teach this wisdom I possess to anyone else. Yet, since it is of great benefit for me to acquire this new knowledge, it is permissible to do so and does not abrogate my oath. You should feel the same; remember, you are not selling it for money; you are exchanging and sharing wisdom. With this new knowledge you will be enlightened and have total command of all the seven branches of worldly wisdom."

"In that case," said the sheikh, "listen carefully to me. Return to your abode. When the sun is about to set, take a vow to fast for two consecutive days. At your last meal, be sure not to eat meat or drink wine. After eating, immerse in a pool of water and dress in fine garments. Throughout the two days, meditate on repentance and immerse often. Then, on the third day, return to me."

"I agree to everything you say," answered Rav Galante, and returned home and followed all of the conditions laid out by the sheikh to the letter. At the beginning of the third night, Rav Galante decided to refrain from breaking his fast. He wanted to experience this secret wisdom in a true

state of humility. When Rav Galante appeared before the sheikh the next morning, his host immediately noticed how weak and feeble he looked. "I see you have fulfilled everything I requested."

"Yes," answered Rav Galante. "I am still fasting now."

The sheikh then led his guest to a locked room to which no one but he had the key. After they entered, the sheikh locked the door behind them. From there they came to a second locked door. This one opened into a magnificent garden. In the middle of the garden was a spring of fresh water. Butterflies danced in the air. The spring flowed into a pool before continuing along a narrow channel. Next to the spring was a bench with two white cloaks on it. "We must first immerse here before dressing in these white garments," whispered the sheikh. Silently they immersed and donned the new garments. The sheikh then led the *Rav* through the garden. Finally, hidden behind a grove, they came to an edifice of exquisite beauty. The double doors of the structure were made of pure silver, with marvelous engravings on them.

"Beware," the sheikh said in a hushed voice. "Follow after me with utter fear and trepidation."

The sheikh opened the doors. Upon beholding the extraordinary beauty inside, Rav Galante was spellbound. The fragrance was otherworldly. Before them was a chamber. In the entrance to the chamber hung a curtain with precious stones sewn in it. The sheikh bowed on the floor seven times before the curtain. Rav Galante froze in his place. Was there an idol inside? The sheikh motioned for him to bow. His head began to swim. He closed his eyes, and as if in a stupor fell on the floor and whispered, "I shall place *Hashem* before me always." He had never felt such a state of awe in his life.

"Now," whispered the sheikh, "you

may enter, and there you will find the secret you seek."

Rav Galante stood up and pushed aside the curtain and entered the chamber. On the walls hung tapestries of gold and silver. On the wall facing the curtain hung an exquisite tablet with an engraving of a *menora* and four Hebrew words: *Shivisi Adonai Le'Negdi Tamid* ("I shall place *Hashem* before me always"). The Ineffable Name of *Hashem* was spelled out in large, bold letters. Rav Galante was overjoyed to see this. He had not bowed in vain! He bowed again and retraced his footsteps into the antechamber.

Outside in the garden, Rav Galante inquired of the sheikh, "You told me that inside the chamber I would find the answer. But more than what my eyes saw was not revealed to me."

"My dear friend, let me explain," said the sheikh. "The four large letters you saw in the tablet are the name of the Creator of the world. When I am asked to pray for a sick person, I immerse in the pool and enter the chamber. Before opening the curtain, I pray wholeheartedly. When I open it and gaze at the tablet, I see one of two things. Either the four-letter Name is glittering and sparks of light seem to emanate from it, or it is dark and unclear. If it is shining, I know the sick person will live, and if it is cloudy I know he will die. With this, I have now revealed to you a secret that no other human being knows."

When Rav Galante returned to his residence, he wept. "Woe unto us on the Day of Judgment," he lamented. "Look at this gentile – because he honors the name of the Creator to such an extent, he is privileged to have such Heavenly secrets revealed to him. But we, the Jewish people, what can we answer? We are even more qualified to have *Hashem* reveal this to us. Yet, look at us and how we approach the name of *Hashem*!"



Rav Menachem Mendel Ben Yehuda Leibish Morgenstern of Kotzk, 22nd of Shevat

I Am I and You Are You

The *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz was fond of citing the Kotzker's well-known *vort* about being true to yourself:

The Kotzker used to say: "If I am I because I am I and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you. But – if I am I because you are you and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you!" (*Sarfei Kodesh Vizhnitz*)



A Tanna

Whenever Rav Zev Wolf of Strikov came before his *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, the Kotzker asked him to review some *chiddush* that his father had taught. The Kotzker was very strict about this procedure – so strict that if the Strikover could produce no *chiddush*, the Kotzker would not greet him with *sholom* and refused to see him!

On one occasion, the Strikover was in Warsaw on some business and happened to visit his *Rebbe* afterward in Kotzk without advance preparation and thus he had not prepared any *chiddush* beforehand. As expected, the Kotzker greeted him with a request for one of his father's *chiddushim*; when none was forthcoming he refused to see the Strikover or extend his hand in *sholom*, instead sending him packing and telling him to come back with a *chiddush*!

On the way back to Tchechonow the Strikover stopped off in Warsaw and went to see the *Chiddushei HaRim*, telling him what had happened in Kotzk. The *Chiddushei HaRim* asked him to stop off and relate his father's *chiddush* to him as well the next time he came back that way. And so the Strikover went to his father and heard a *chiddush* from him. On the way to Kotzk, he stopped off in Warsaw and related the *chiddush* to the *Chiddushei HaRim* who was greatly impressed with it

and praised it highly.

"Please stop off here after relating this to the Koztker and tell me what his reaction to this *chiddush* was," he requested.

When the Strikover returned, he stopped off again at the *Chiddushei HaRim* and told him that he had been in Kotzk and related the *chiddush* to the *Rebbe* and the Kotzker had retorted back, "That can't be right – it's against an explicit *Gemora*!"

"Aha!" exclaimed the *Chiddushei HaRim*. "It is no wonder that the Kotzker responded thus, for he himself is like a *Tanna* from the *Gemora*!" (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh*, #87)



The Fear of a Rebbe

Rav Michel of Sheps was once in Kotzk and related what he saw:

It was *Shabbos* and the two *Tzaddikim* and *Geonim*, the Gerrer *Rebbe* and the Alexander *Rebbe*, both *talmidim* of the Kotzker, sat facing one another in the *Bais Medrash*, discussing *Divrei Torah*, when all of a sudden the Kotzker *Rebbe*'s footsteps were heard coming toward the closed door that led from the *Rebbe*'s room to the *Bais Medrash*. Immediately, such a terror seized all those present, that before the *Tzaddik* could open the door, the Gerrer *Rebbe* took flight and hid behind the stove and the Alexander *Rebbe* ran away and jumped out of the window! Rav Hirsch Tomashover, the *Rebbe*'s *gabbai*, was so seized with panic that he hid under the table. Then the door opened and the *Rebbe* declared in a voice that burst forth like fiery flames words of *mussar* and *hisorerus* that reached the highest heights and moved the soul to its depths! He finished and then closed the door to his room.

That is what it means to fear your *Rebbe*! concluded the *Rav* of Sheps. (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh*, #89)

Another time, the Koztker burst into the *Bais Medrash* and yelled, “Ha! That’s what I thought, eh? I thought I would have ten white-robed *talmidim* and no more!”

Almost everyone present fled in terror that the *Rebbe* should not be angry

at them; only Rav Yechiel Meir of Gustanin stood rooted to the spot in abject terror, petrified and unable to flee, when the Kotzker turned to him and said, “I didn’t mean to include you in that.” (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh*, #90)



Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, 22nd of Shevat

The Manchester *Rosh Yeshiva*

During World War II, Rav Yehuda Zev secured sanctuary visas in England for as many war refugees as possible, and the Manchester *Yeshiva* opened its doors to young refugees fleeing the Nazi inferno. As the war intensified, the *Yeshiva* expanded its rescue and relief efforts, organizing daily *shiurim* for young men who, due to the war, were unable to attend *Yeshiva* full time. Rav Yehuda Zev opened his own home to many of the young refugees. During this period, Rebbetzin Segal assisted her husband in all of his rescue efforts, and was one of the organizers of the community’s efforts to prepare food packages for new arrivals from the displaced persons camps. She also helped her husband raise funds for the *Yeshiva*, and was like a mother to its students. On April 16, 1950/5710, he was officially inducted as *Rosh Yeshiva*. Rav Yehuda Zev is probably best known for his dissemination of the awareness of the importance of not speaking *loshon hora*. “I have set *Hashem* before me always,” was Rav Yehuda Zev’s guiding principle.

It is said that Rav Yehuda Zev Segal underwent a marked transformation in his outlook and behavior at the age of eight. This sounds rather far-fetched; how many eight-year-olds have real outlooks, and how

many are capable of changing their behavior and attitudes at such a young age? Rav Yehuda Zev, however, was no ordinary youngster.

At the age of eight, an incident occurred that changed his life forever, as he told a close *talmid* more than fifty years later. “As I was crossing the street in London,” he told his *talmid*, “a city bus suddenly veered toward me. The driver turned on the brakes, and the bus halted only inches away from me. I was only eight at the time. Nonetheless, after this incident I realized that if life in this world can end within a second, then we certainly weren’t created in order to enjoy the here and now. I also felt that so great a miracle obligated me to dedicate myself to service of *Hashem*.”



Roots

Rav Yehuda Zev Segal was born in London on the 17th of *Sivan* 5670/1910 to Rav Moshe Yitzchok and Roize Segal. Rav Moshe Yitzchok, a *talmid* of the *Alter* of Novardok, was an outstanding *Talmid Chochom*, who received *semicha* from Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein, the *Aruch HaShulchon*. At the age of nineteen, Rav Moshe Yitzchok was drafted into the Czar’s army, where he insisted on observing *mitzvos* as well as he could, and on fulfilling the *mitzva* of *netilas yodayim* when required by *halacha*, in particular.

Each time Rav Moshe Yitzchok searched for water for *netilas yodayim*, a



soldier would follow him. After a while, the soldier grew tired of running after him and permitted him to search for water alone. One day, as Rav Moshe Yitzchok was searching for water, he fled to the border and crossed over to Germany. From there, he headed to England, where he began to study in the *Machzikei HaDas Shul*.

In time, he was appointed *shochet* of the community. This position paid well and enabled him to save up a sizable sum, which he used to found the *Eitz Chaim Yeshiva* of London, the only *Yeshiva* at that time in England.

A number of years later, Rav Yehoshua Dov Silverstone and Rav Tzvi Hirsch Ferber founded a *Yeshiva* in Manchester, and invited Rav Moshe Yitzchok to head it. He accepted the position. Rav Yehuda Zev was only three years old when his family moved to Manchester. At that time, there was no Jewish primary (elementary) school in the city. Since British law obligated all children under the age of fourteen to attend school, Rav Moshe Yitzchok was forced to enroll Yehuda Zev in the local “Jewish school” whose curriculum was entirely secular. However, when Yehuda Zev returned home each afternoon, Rav Moshe Yitzchok studied *Torah* with him, providing him with a full *Torah chinuch*.

Rav Yehuda Zev’s unique home environment, together with his deep piety and his resolve to dedicate himself to *Hashem*, were the factors that fashioned his personality at that time. Rav Mordechai Smith was twenty-two when he studied with the thirteen-year-old Yehuda Zev. He recalls, “Already then, Rav Yehuda Zev was very sensitive to the needs of others. Our study session began very early in the morning. In order to avoid making noise as he walked downstairs, he would climb out of a window on the second story of his house and slide down a drainpipe, reaching the backyard without having woken anyone.”

In The Mir

When Rav Yehuda Zev graduated from secular school, he began to study full time in his father’s *Yeshiva*. At the age of twenty, he transferred to the Mir *Yeshiva*, where he learned for three years and developed outstanding character traits. One day, a young man asked if he could study with him on a steady basis. Although Rav Yehuda Zev’s schedule was full, he arranged to study *Berochos* with him every morning before *Shacharis*. That young man was Rav Chaim Shmulevitz.

Rav Mordechai Schwab, the late *mashgiach* of *Mesivta Bais Shraga* of Monsey, who studied in Mir at that time, relates, “I began each day with a *mussar* study session. During the first minutes of this session, I would watch Yehuda as he plumbed the depths of the *Gemora*. That sight could inspire anyone to increase his *hasmoda* (diligence in learning).”



Rav Yechezkel Levenstein

They were so devoted to each other that Rav Yehuda Zev would refer to Rav Yechezkel as “*Mori ve’Rabi*”, while Rav Yechezkel would say, “Yehuda Zev is my son.” In Mir, he soon gained acclaim for his outstanding *hasmoda*. Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, the late *mashgiach* of *Bais Medrash Govoha* of Lakewood, another *talmid* of Mir during that period, once said, “From watching Rav Yehuda Zev between learning sessions, it was obvious that he was striving to develop his inner self.”

In Mir, Rav Yehuda Zev formed a close bond with another *gadol ba’Torah* – Rav Shimon Shkop, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Sha’ar HaTorah* in Grodno. Rav Shimon would sometimes come to England to raise funds for his *Yeshiva*, and Rav Yehuda Zev took advantage of those opportunities to be *meshamesh* him. He also spent one vacation at Rav Shimon’s summer resort, studying with him and

accompanying him on his walks.



Marriage

In the winter of 5693/1933, Rav Yehuda Zev's parents asked him to return home because they had found a suitable *shidduch* for him. Rav Yehuda Zev left Mir on an icy winter day. Rav Yechezkel Levenstein accompanied him to the wagon that was to take him to the train. When they reached the wagon, Rav Yechezkel handed him his scarf, but Rav Yehuda Zev hesitated to take such a gift from his mentor. At last, the two decided that Rav Yehuda Zev would wear the scarf on the trip, and then mail it back to Rav Yechezkel.

On the 15th of *Shevat*, 5694/1934, Rav Yehuda Zev married Yocheved, the youngest daughter of Rav Shlomo Zalman Cohen, a Gerrer *Chassid* from Gateshead. Although Rav Shlomo Zalman Cohen was involved in business, he made *Torah* his primary pursuit and earning a living a secondary one. Rav Yehuda Zev planned to return to Mir after his wedding. However, when his mother-in-law fell seriously ill, he canceled these plans and remained in Gateshead. After his marriage, he devoted himself to full-time *Torah* study.



World War II

During World War II, England, like all other countries in the free world, refused to accept refugees who might become dependent on the state. Thus, any refugee who applied for admission to the country had to present a statement signed by a British citizen who promised to assume responsibility for the refugee's material needs.

In order to rescue as many refugees as possible, Rav Solomon Schonfeld of London launched a project to secure affidavits from British Jews. Rav Yehuda

Zev greatly assisted him in these efforts, working primarily among Gateshead's Jews.

In 5700/1940, German bombers attacked Gateshead, and many people left the city for safer areas. Rav Yehuda Zev and his family moved to Manchester, where he remained for the rest of his life.

In Manchester, he assumed the position of *Maggid Shiur* in the Manchester *Yeshiva*, where his father served as *Rosh Yeshiva*. From there, he continued to secure visas for war refugees. During the war, the Manchester *Yeshiva* opened its doors to young refugees fleeing the Nazi inferno.



Like A Father

After the war, Dayan Arye Leib Grossnass brought a group of teenage survivors to England. These orphaned and destitute youngsters, who ranged in age from fourteen to sixteen, were welcomed into the Manchester *Yeshiva*, where Rav Yehuda Zev encouraged and assisted them. On their first *Sukkos* in England, Rav Yehuda Zev decided that it would be best for the group to spend the *Yom Tov* together in the *Yeshiva*, instead of at different homes. However, a misunderstanding occurred, and no food was prepared for them. Rav Yehuda Zev learned of this only a short while before *Yom Tov*. Despite the late hour, Rebbetzin Segal went to the *Yeshiva* and prepared a full meal for all twenty boys. Then, she and Rav Yehuda Zev spent the entire meal with them.

As the youngsters acclimated to their new life, their bond with Rav Yehuda Zev strengthened, and they truly felt that he was their father. On *Erev Pesach*, the entire group helped him with the *Yom Tov* preparations, and then joined him for an inspiring and rousing *Seder*.

During this period, Rebbetzin Segal

assisted her husband in all his rescue efforts, and was one of the organizers of the community's endeavors to prepare food packages for new arrivals from the displaced persons camps. She also helped her husband raise funds for the *Yeshiva*, and was like a mother to its students.



The Search for a New *Rosh Yeshiva*

Rav Yehuda Zev's father, Rav Moshe Yitzchok, was *niftar* on the 12th of *Cheshvan* 5707/1947 after a serious illness, leaving the *Yeshiva* bereft.

Soon after his *petira*, the *Yeshiva*'s board of directors began to search for a new *Rosh Yeshiva*. Although Rav Yehuda Zev was already serving unofficially as *Rosh Yeshiva*, some of the modern members of the board felt that due to his high standards of *kedusha* and meticulous *mitzva* observance, he might be unable to relate to the average layman. As a result, they strongly opposed his appointment.

Rav Yehuda Zev, who was aware of this opposition, showed no interest in the position, in order not to foster ill will among the board members. As a result, the position remained vacant for a number of months.

In February 5708/1948, Rav Yechezkel Abramsky arrived in Manchester to participate in a ceremony at which outstanding students received awards.

At a meeting with the board, Rav Yechezkel declared that Rav Yehuda Zev was best suited for the position of *Rosh Yeshiva* and that the *Yeshiva* would greatly benefit from him.

Seeing the opposition to the appointment, he then suggested that Rav Yehuda Zev be appointed "acting *Rosh Yeshiva*", adding that he was certain that if someone more qualified were found, Rav Yehuda Zev would not only step down, but would also warmly welcome the new *Rosh Yeshiva*.

During the next year and a half, many *Talmidei Chachomim* came to Manchester to apply for the position of *Rosh Yeshiva*. Throughout this period, Rav Yehuda Zev never displayed resentment or ill will.

In 5709/1949, the Ponovezher *Rav*, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, invited Rav Yehuda Zev to join the leadership of the Ponovezh *Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak. Rav Yehuda Zev accepted the offer and prepared to leave England. But then the president of the *Yeshiva*'s board, the eminent and pious Rav Shaul Rosenberg, fell seriously ill. As he lay in the hospital, he told a close acquaintance about a frightening dream he had just had. In the dream, he had been told that he had fallen ill because Rav Moshe Yitzchok was upset by the board's failure to appoint Rav Yehuda Zev to the position he rightfully deserved.

Although Rav Shaul had not opposed Rav Yehuda Zev's appointment, he feared that he had also not done enough to secure it for him. As a result, he sent a family member to Rav Moshe Yitzchok's grave and begged his forgiveness, promising to rectify the matter immediately.

Amazingly, Rav Shaul, who had seemed on the brink of death, soon recovered in full. When he was released from the hospital, he called an emergency meeting of the board and convinced its members that Rav Yehuda Zev was the best possible candidate for the position.

The board unanimously appointed Rav Yehuda Zev as *Rosh Yeshiva*. However, Rav Yehuda had already made plans to leave for Bnei Brak. At a farewell gathering in his honor, Dayan Yitzchok Golditch publicly asked him not to leave Manchester. That evening, Rav Yehuda Zev wrote to Rav Eliyahu Dessler, the *mashgiach* of Ponovezh, asking him to discuss the issue with the *Chazon Ish*. Rav Dessler took the matter to the *Chazon Ish*,

who replied that Rav Yehuda Zev should remain in Manchester.

On April 16, 5710/1950, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal was officially inducted as *Rosh Yeshiva* by Rav Yechezkel Abramsky.

His appointment was supported by Dayan Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, the *Minchas Yitzchok*, head of the Manchester *Bais Din* at that time.

During subsequent years, Rav Yehuda Zev was greatly assisted by Rav Shaul Rosenberg, who assumed responsibility for all of the *Yeshiva*'s fundraising activities. He would often say, "The *Rosh Yeshiva* and I have an understanding between ourselves. He doesn't get involved with the budget, and I don't mix in with the *chinuch*." Rav Shaul was also a model of *kibbud Talmidei Chachomim*, a *ba'al chessed* and supporter of *Torah*.



As Rosh Yeshiva

As *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Yehuda Zev's sole concern was developing his students' full potential. When a student enrolled in the *Yeshiva*, Rav Yehuda Zev would ask him for his complete Hebrew name as well as his mother's, so that he could *daven* that he grow spiritually. Every morning, before *Shacharis*, he would give *tzedoka* and then *daven* that he merit to see all his *talmidim* following the path of *Torah*.

As *Rosh Yeshiva*, he was very warm and loving toward his students. If a student was ill, he would summon a doctor for him, visit him in the dormitory and even bring him tea. As a result, students would jokingly say, "If you want the *Rosh Yeshiva*'s special attention, become sick!"

When the *Rosh Yeshiva* felt that a student would develop best somewhere else, he would help him to transfer to a different *Yeshiva*. But if he thought that a student who was having difficulties should nonetheless remain in the *Yeshiva*, he

would make an all-out effort to achieve that goal.

Thus, when parents of a French student told their son to return home to pursue a career, Rav Yehuda Zev and his wife traveled all the way to Paris to convince them to let him remain in *Yeshiva*.

Despite his warm and caring nature, Rav Yehuda Zev maintained strict discipline in the *Yeshiva*, inspiring his students to awe and revere him. He did this because he believed that holding one's *Torah* mentors in awe is crucial for a *ben Torah*'s development, as it is written, "The awe of your *Torah* teacher should be like the awe of *Shomayim*" (*Pirkei Avos*, 4:12).

Once, a mother called him on the phone and when he picked up the phone to speak to her, he automatically took off his glasses because that is what he did when he spoke to women in person.

Many former students called Rav Yehuda Zev every Friday to wish him a good *Shabbos*. Others would call to report on the progress of their children or about *simchas* in their families. One time, the *Yeshiva* students hosted a *sheva berochos* for one of Rav Yehuda Zev's grandchildren. When he rose to speak, he said, "It is written that one should not mix one festive occasion with another. This gathering is a double *simcha* for me, since it affords me the opportunity to be with my *talmidim*, too. However, a *sheva berochos* is a family affair – and my *talmidim* are my children, too."

As *Rosh Yeshiva*, he would stress that *talmidim* should use their *Yeshiva* years for optimal growth, especially with respect to amassing *Torah* knowledge. With an eye toward their future, he told them that the more knowledge they acquired during those years, the greater would be their influence later on.

With his unique *hasmoda*, he was a role model for such spiritual growth and

love of Torah.



An ‘Ordinary’ Man’s Tefillos And Blessings

Before beginning his morning *tefillos*, Rav Yehuda Zev would *daven* that *Hashem* help him *daven* with *kavona*. To achieve this goal, he recited every single *tefilla* from a text, even *Asher Yotzar*, which one says a number of times a day. He would recite this prayer with the same *kavona* and emotion that one recites *Ne’ila* on *Yom Kippur*.

When eating, Rav Yehuda Zev would also recite *berochos* from a text. Since he could not always carry a *siddur* with him, he kept a card in his pocket that had the various *berochos* printed on it. Before making a *beracha*, he would recite a preparatory *tefilla*, such as, “I am about to utter the blessing of *shehakol...*” On *Shabbos*, when the *Shemoneh Esrei* is shorter than during the week, it is more difficult to accrue the hundred *berochos* one is required to recite daily. To solve the problem, on *Shabbos* Rav Yehuda Zev calculated how many blessing he had already made, and during the day he ate small pieces of food in order to arrive at the requisite number of *berochos*.

Quite soon, he became renowned for his manner of *tefillos*, and people from all over the world would seek his *berochos*. Great *Torah* sages such as Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky would advise people in distress to seek the Manchester *Rosh Yeshiva*’s *berochos*. When Rav Yaakov himself was ill, he asked someone who was going to Manchester to ask that Rav Yehuda Zev *daven* for him.

Similarly, the late Satmar *Rav* told someone who had approached him for a *beracha*, “Why seek a *beracha* from me when you can go to the Manchester *Rosh Yeshiva*?”

During the last decades of his life,

Rav Yehuda Zev was flooded by requests for *berochos*, and he related to every single request with deep emotion. Yet in his humility, he often said of his *berochos*, “A *berocha* given by an ordinary person should never be insignificant in one’s eyes.”

One of his students was diagnosed with a malignant disease. When the boy’s father, who had hoped that his son would study a profession, asked Rav Yehuda Zev for a *berocha* for the boy’s recovery, Rav Yehuda Zev replied, “If your son dedicates his life to *Torah* study, he will recover fully.”

That night, as Rav Yehuda Zev *davened Shemoneh Esrei*, he was heard saying, “*Tatte*, I promised him.” Not long afterward, the young man recovered.

On another occasion, Rav Yehuda Zev joined a group traveling to Eastern Europe to *daven* at the graves of *Tzaddikim*. At the *Chasam Sofer*’s grave, he took out a sheet with a long list of names of people who needed a *yeshua*, and began to *daven* for each one. A short while later, the group was ready to leave, but Rav Yehuda Zev still hadn’t finished *davening* for everyone on his list. Having no other choice, he clutched the sheet to his chest and cried out with intense emotion, “*Ribboho Shel Olam*, may the requests of all who those whose names are on this list be fulfilled for the good.”



A Paragon Of Chessed

Rav Yehuda Zev tried to perform at least one *chessed* each morning before *Shacharis* in order to enhance the efficacy of his *tefillos*. When he lived in his daughter’s home, he would prepare a thermos of hot water before going to *shul*, so that his son-in-law could have a hot drink before leaving the house. While at his summer resort, he would prepare *negel vasser* for those of his companions who awoke after him.

In his *mussar* talks, he would stress that no opportunity to perform *chessed* – big or small – should be overlooked. This was a lesson he taught by personal example. Whenever he washed his hands, for instance, he filled the cup for the next person. And when he returned home from *Yeshiva* at night, he deposited his students' letters in a mailbox on his way. Before dropping these letters into the box he would say, "*Hareini mechaven lekayem mitzvas asei shel chessed* – I intend to full the positive command to do *chessed*."

Visiting the sick was another *chessed* to which Rav Yehuda Zev dedicated his time. Every Friday, he would visit the aged and the bedridden members of the community, comforting and encouraging them.

Rav Yehuda Zev saw a *siddur* that contained an inscription praising the ill man's son for excellence in *tefila*. With a glowing smile, Rav Yehuda said, "You must be so proud of your son." Then he noticed a picture of the boy on the wall and exclaimed, "That boy looks like a *Tzaddik*. May you have much *nachas* from him."

Once, he was asked to *daven* for a number of older *bochurim* who still hadn't found *shiduchim*. Looking over the long list of names, he said, "I feel terrible for them. May *Hashem* help them."

At *simchas*, he was equally caring and emotional, and as he danced before a *chosson*, his face would literally glow. Once, before he was about to undergo minor surgery, he stopped by the sickroom of a man with a fatal disease; a smile spread across the ill man's face and his pain seemed to ease.



In Sorrow and in Joy

Rav Yehuda Zev shared both the pain and the joy of others. He once told his doctor before an operation that he was worried that the operation would interfere

with his ability to dance at weddings. The doctor jokingly replied, "I didn't know that people your age still dance." Of course, the doctor did not realize that dancing at weddings was a form of *chessed* for the *Rosh Yeshiva*, not a form of recreation. During the Gulf War, Rav Yehuda Zev constantly davened for *Eretz Yisrael*'s Jews. When people asked if he was worried about a particular relative in *Eretz Yisrael*, he would reply, "*Klal Yisrael* is in *Eretz Yisrael*. I am worried about them all."

In 5752/1992, Rav Yehuda Zev asked Rav Yosef Eckstein, founder and director of the *Dor Yeshorim* organization in Yerushalayim, to include testing for Cystic Fibrosis in his program. Rav Yosef was agreeable to the idea, but he explained that financial difficulties prevented him from realizing such a plan. Then and there, Rav Yehuda Zev launched a drive to solicit funds for the cause.

A week before Rav Yehuda Zev's *petira*, Rav Eckstein told him that the sum of \$250,000 was still needed to implement the program. Immediately, Rav Yehuda Zev began to write letters to collect the remaining funds.

In addition to the numerous calls Rav Yehuda Zev received from callers in need of *berochos*, there were many others from people who merely wished to share their troubles with him. Once, when he was in a summer resort, he spent the day in Vienna. A student who had accompanied him there said, "*Boruch Hashem*, you had no phone calls today. At least you were able to get a bit of rest."

To this Rav Yehuda Zev replied, "I may have rested a bit, but I doubt if those who tried to reach me had any rest."



Shemiras HaLoshon

Rav Yehuda Zev is probably best known for his dissemination of the awareness of the importance of not

speaking *loshon hora*.

It all began at the end of Rav Yehuda Zev's first *zman* in the Mir *Yeshiva*, when he went to Radin to visit the *Chofetz Chaim*. After that meeting, Rav Yehuda Zev became deeply attached to the *Chofetz Chaim* and his works.

When Rav Yehuda Zev joined a *shiur* in the Manchester *Yeshiva* in 5700/1940, he inspired his students to study *Sefer Chofetz Chaim*.

In 5727/1967, he suggested that a group of students study *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* every day, according to a fixed schedule. Later, these students prepared a written schedule of the *halochos* to be studied each day of the year, and hung it in the *Bais Medrash*.

In this manner, the first yearly cycle of *shemiras haloshon* study was launched. Every year, from then on, Rav Yehuda Zev published a *shemiras haloshon* calendar, which contained a schedule for the daily study of two *halochos* from *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* and one page from *Sefer Shemiras HaLoshon*, which explains the concepts behind the *halochos*.

In time, students of the Manchester *Yeshiva* spread the idea of studying two *halochos* a day from the *Chofetz Chaim's seforim* to other *Yeshivos* and *Kollelim*.

Rav Yehuda Zev himself was very active in organizing *shemiras haloshon* study groups and classes not just in England, but also throughout the world. He often said that a home in which *shemiras haloshon* is observed and studied is saturated with *kedusha*.

For the remainder of his life, Rav Yehuda Zev devoted great amounts of time to disseminating this calendar, which he called his "passport to *Olam HaBa*".

He was also the founding rabbinic advisor of the *Chofetz Chaim* Heritage Foundation, which has played a leading role in heightening awareness of the importance of *shemiras haloshon*. Inspired

by his counsel and direction, this organization promotes dozens of programs throughout the world.

Whenever people sought Rav Yehuda Zev's *berochos*, he would encourage them to undertake the study of these *halochos* on a daily basis. He would explain that the *Chofetz Chaim* felt that the majority of *Klal Yisrael's tzoros* are caused by their failure to guard their tongues, and that *shemiras haloshon* invokes divine compassion, which benefits both the individual and *Klal Yisrael*. Two weeks before his *petira*, Rav Yehuda Zev asked the *Chofetz Chaim* Heritage Foundation to produce a *sefer* containing *halochos* of *shemiras haloshon* and the concepts behind them, arranged for daily study. The English version of this book, *A Lesson a Day*, is now studied by thousands of Jews worldwide.

It is said that every family that studies these *halochos* according to the daily schedule will surely merit *yeshuos*.



Striving For Perfection

Rav Yehuda Zev strove for perfection in all his deeds and thoughts. The *kabbolos* he made one *Tishrei* clearly illustrate his life's aspirations. They included the following: To seek to do acts of kindness even for someone who has hurt me; to control my thoughts; to go to sleep while thinking in *Torah*; to always meditate on *Torah* or *mussar*; and contemplate the effect of my words before they are uttered.

He also adopted the practice of the great *mussar* sages known as *Asiri Kodesh* – "The tenth day is holy". Starting from *Rosh HaShana*, he would devote every subsequent tenth day to introspection and self-examination, conducting himself with added *kedusha* on those days.

Still, on every day of the year, *Shivisi Hashem Lenegdi Tamid* – "I have set *Hashem* before me always" was Rav

Yehuda Zev's guiding principle.

Until the last days of his life, Rav Yehuda Zev was in full possession of all his faculties, maintaining his regular learning schedules and accepting visitors as usual.

Shortly before *Shabbos Kodesh*, the 21st of *Shevat*, 5753/1993, he suffered a stroke and was rushed to the hospital. On Friday night, the 22nd of *Shevat*, he returned his pure soul to its Maker.

Thousands of people attended his *levaya*. In accordance with a request he had made while alive, he was buried in Manchester – and not in *Eretz Yisrael* – so that England's Jews would have a place to visit and pour out their hearts. He had also asked to be buried among children, and in



Rav Yehoshua ben Rav Sholom Roke'ach of Belz, 23th of Shevat

Be Mekarev All Bnei Torah

Rav Bromer of Sanik said in the name of the *Mahari* of Belz that while in previous generations there was a custom among *Chassidim* to disparage and distance themselves from anyone whose *Torah* study was not *leshem Shomayim*, that was the case only when in the past the study of secular subjects was generally foreign, ignored and not widespread. Today, however, when secular subjects are



Rav Yisrael Lipkin Salanter, 25th of Shevat

Founder of the *Mussar* Movement

One organization that follows the teachings of Rav Salanter in the order of *mussar* is the “Salant Center”. They ask for email addresses to be sent to them in honor of the *Hilula* of Rav Salanter. The email address to send suggested names of people who might be interested in learning *mussar* is: salantorg@gmail.com.

Here is an excerpt from the English translation of *Ohr Yisrael* published by the Salant Foundation and Targum Press:

a place where *kohanim* are able to daven.

All of Torah Jewry owes Rav Yehuda Zev a tremendous debt of gratitude, especially for his efforts to inculcate *Klal Yisrael* with the importance of *shemiras haloshon*. As a result of these efforts, thousands of Jews worldwide regularly study the *halochos*, and many have experienced long-awaited *yeshuos*. In his merit, may *Klal Yisrael* soon be delivered from all its *tzoros*.

Article by D. Sofer. This article originally appeared in *Yated Neeman*.

www.matzav.com/the-manchester-rosh-yeshiva-rav-yehuda-zev-segal-ztl-on-his-yahrtzeit-today-2/

widely studied and *Torah* study has diminished, we should draw close any *ben Torah* from any background, even those who do not yet study *leshem Shomayim*, in order to distance the masses from secular studies and discourage their dissemination. (*Etz Chaim, Gilyon* 11, p. 219)

(See also below a story Rav Yehoshua used to say about the *Taz*, and the story of Rav Yehoshua of Belz and Rav Shaul Brach of Kashau – 26th of *Shevat*.)

On one occasion, Rav Yisrael was carrying a gift. A colleague asked, “Where are you taking the gift?”

Rav Yisrael responded, “I am delivering it to a certain individual.”

His friend asked, “Why don’t you send the gift with a messenger?”

Rav Yisrael responded, “The *Torah* obligates me to personally deliver the gift.” His friend was puzzled. “I am not familiar

with any such law.”

Rav Yisrael explained, “The *Talmud* (*Yevomos* 78b) tells us that when *Hashem* judges a person for a misdeed, at that very moment He recalls the good deeds of the person. We understand from here that if we feel someone has done something wrong, it is important to reflect on his good deeds. In this way, we will not lose our perspective. Instead of magnifying his improper conduct, we will see him as a good person who made a mistake.

“This is the reason I am delivering the gift. A certain *Rav* acted improperly and it is my duty to speak to him about his behavior. It is a *mitzva* to emulate the attribute of *Hashem*. Since I must tell him that he acted improperly, I must remember and mention that he is a *Torah* scholar. Therefore, I am honoring him with a gift, even though at other times I would not necessarily do so. Yet under the circumstances I am obligated because ‘at the time of judgment is the time to mention his good deeds.’”

How elevated were his paths! How deep were his thoughts – to inspire him to find this precious attribute of *Hashem* and conduct himself accordingly. Human nature is just the opposite. When someone harbors resentment against another, he will forget all of the person’s good points, *chas v’sholom*!

May we realize the vital importance of keeping our perspective in our relationships by always mentioning and remembering the good qualities of others.



Hakoras HaTov

Rav Yisrael Salanter once noticed that a fancy restaurant was charging a high price for a cup of coffee. He approached the owner and asked why the coffee was so expensive. After all, some hot water, a few coffee beans and a spoonful of sugar could not amount to more than a few cents.

The owner replied, “It is correct that for a few cents you could have coffee in your own home. But here in the restaurant, we provide exquisite decor, soft background music, professional waiters, and the finest china to serve your cup of coffee.”

Rav Salanter’s face lit up. “Oh, thank you very much! I now understand the blessing of *Shehakol* – ‘All was created by His word’ – which we recite before drinking water. You see, until now, when I recited this blessing, I had in mind only that I am thanking the Creator for the water that He created. Now I understand the blessing much better. ‘All’ includes not merely the water, but also the fresh air that we breathe while drinking the water, the beautiful world around us, the music of the birds that entertain us and exalt our spirits, each with its different voice, the charming flowers with their splendid colors and marvelous hues, the fresh breeze – for all this we have to thank *Hashem* when drinking our water!”



Late one night, Rav Yisrael Salanter walked past the home of an old shoemaker, and noticed that despite the late hour, the man was still working by the light of a dying candle. “Why are you still working?” he asked. “It is very late and soon that candle will go out.” The shoemaker replied, “As long as the candle is still burning, there is time to make repairs.”

Rav Salanter spent that entire night excitedly pacing his room and repeating to himself, “As long as the candle is still burning, there is time to make repairs.” The human soul is compared to a candle: *ner Hashem nishmas odom* – “A man’s soul is the lamp [candle] of *Hashem*....” (*Mishlei* 20:27). From the simple shoemaker, Rav Salanter took the message never to give up. As long as the candle is burning you can still make repairs. As long as there is life, there’s still time to make spiritual repairs.

as well. We can still do *teshuva* – make positive changes in our lives – and set right all the things that are wrong.



The Face of a Dog

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer of Slutzk said in the name of Rav Yisrael Salanter that the meaning of *Chazal's* statement in *Sanhedrin* 97a that “the generation before *Moshiach* has the face of a dog” is that usually when a dog runs before a wagon, it looks like the dog is leading the way. The way that one can tell that the wagon driver is leading is when they reach the



Rav Shabsai, 25th of Shevat

Father of Rav Yisrael – The *Maggid* of Kozhnitz

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* was sitting at the table with his *talmidim* one Friday night, when all of a sudden – three times – he let out a loud laugh.

After *Shabbos*, he was asked why he had laughed, to which he replied, “I really would like to tell you, but first you have to come with me. That is when you'll find out what you want to know.”

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* called his servant and told him to hitch up the wagon, into which his *talmidim* climbed. They traveled the whole night, and in the morning they arrived at a tiny village. The *Tzaddik* commanded that Shabsai the bookbinder and his wife be brought to him.

Rav Shabsai (who was advanced in years) and his wife immediately came to see the *Tzaddik*. He turned to the bookbinder and said to him, “Tell me what you did last Friday night.”

The bookbinder began his story:

“I am a craftsman, and I used to earn a living working with my hands. Every Thursday, my wife and I would go to the market to buy what we needed for *Shabbos*. On Fridays, I would leave my work at ten in

crossroads. There, the dog waits to see which way his master drives the wagon and follows, except that he then again runs up ahead, as if he is in the lead. This *moshol* illustrates our lowly generation before *Moshiach*. Those brazen-faced individuals who attempt to be the leaders will walk in front as if they know how to lead the way, and whichever way the generation actually leads them, they will again run up ahead in front as if they chose the course and are leading, when, in reality, they are nothing but followers of the masses. (*Shema Eliyahu Over Orach* by the *Aderes* #7)

the morning and prepare for *Shabbos*, going to *shul* early. This is what I did my entire life. However, I'm old now and I no longer have the strength to work. Yet despite having great difficulty in making a living, I have never needed gifts from anyone. *Hashem* has always helped me to honor *Shabbos* as I normally would.

“Last Friday, however, I didn't even have a cent. Yet, I decided that it was better to fast than to ask anyone for help. My wife, who is an upright woman, promised to abide by my decision and not to ask people for help either. I went to *shul* early enough, as is my usual practice, and I stayed there until the last person departed. When I went home, from afar I could see the lit *Shabbos* candles in my home. When I arrived, I saw that the table was set and covered with a great many good things. Since I was certain that my wife did not fail to keep her promise of not asking for help from anyone, I immediately came to the table and recited *Kiddush* on the wine and commenced the meal.

“As we were eating, my wife told me the following: ‘You remember your old coat

with the silver buttons that we lost a while ago? Today, I found it after you left for *shul*. I then sold the buttons, and with the money I purchased everything we needed for *Shabbos*.

“When I heard that, my eyes let out tears of joy. I took my wife and together we danced in gratitude to *Hashem*.”

When he finished his story, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* said to his *talmidim*, “Know that the angels of Heaven also rejoiced and danced with them. And now, Shabsai, what is your desire?”

Shabsai asked the *Ba'al Shem Tov* to give him a blessing for a son. He agreed, on the condition that he name the son after him. One year later, in 5500 (1739), a son was born to him whom he named Yisrael.

Since he was born in his father’s old age, Yisrael was by nature a weak child. Nevertheless, he possessed a strong mind and soul. By the age of seven, he already knew several *masechot* of the *Talmud* by heart, and he became one of the youngest students of the *Maggid* of Mezritch and his *talmidim*: Rav Shmelke of Nickolsburg, Rav Elimelech of Lzhensk and Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. Rav Chaim of Volozhin recounted that when he had been in Kozhnitz, he studied with Rav Yisrael for an entire day and found him to be an expert in all fields of *Torah*.

When the inhabitants of Kozhnitz heard of his fame, the prominent members of the community came to him with an offer to be their *Maggid*.

The people of Kozhnitz greatly loved their *Rav*, whose fame quickly spread around the Jewish world. From the four corners of the globe, people began to seek out the *Maggid* in order to receive his blessing.

Despite his frailty (and even though he spent most of his time lying down wrapped in covers to warm his body) when the time for prayer arrived, he experienced no weakness. When he went to *daven* in

the morning, he entered the *Bais Medrash* holding a *Torah* scroll in his arms, and he danced before the *Aron Kodesh* as two rows of people stood on either side of him. He would *daven* with a powerful voice, one whose echo was heard throughout the building.

He taught his *talmidim* to have confidence in *Hashem*. And how powerful confidence is – the confidence that comes from the depths of the heart!

There was a certain peasant who lived with his wife for more than ten years, yet they remained childless. A *Chassid*, who was among one of the *Maggid*’s closest *talmidim*, said to the peasant, “Follow my advice. Go see the great *Maggid* of Kozhnitz and ask him for a *beracha*. He has already saved many childless couples.”

The peasant and his wife hurried to the *Maggid*. They implored him to give them a *beracha* so that they could have offspring. He looked at them and finished by saying, “If you want a son, you must put fifty-two gold pieces on the table, the numerical value of *ben* [son].” The astonished peasant exclaimed, “Fifty-two gold pieces? Only the rich have that kind of money! I only have ten gold pieces.” However, the *Maggid* maintained his demand for all fifty-two of them.

The peasant raised his hands to heaven and said to his wife, “Let’s go. *Hashem* will help us even without the *Maggid*!”

At that point, the face of Rav Yisrael began to shine. He said to them in a confident tone, “Go home in peace, because from Heaven your salvation is near!”

The words of the *Tzaddik* were quickly fulfilled; how great is the power of faith in *Hashem* when it comes from the depths of the heart.

Rav Yisrael supported people who moved to *Eretz Israel*, and he was among the *Tzaddikim* of the generation who

established the *Rav Meir Ba'al HaNess* fund to aid the poor of *Eretz Yisrael*.

On the 14th of *Tishrei*, 5575 (1814), on the eve of *Sukkos*, the holy *Maggid* of Kozhnitz left this world. His son, Rav Moshe Eliakim Bria, replaced him as *Rav* of Kozhnitz.



Rav Dovid HaLevi Segal, 26th of Shevat

Mechaber of Turei Zohov, Taz on Shulchon Aruch

To Deliver a Baby

Rav Dovid's family was famed for scholarship. His father, Rav Shmuel, was the son of the famous scholar, Rav Yitzchok Betzalels. He had an older half-brother called Rav Yitzchok *HaLevi*, a great *Talmud* scholar, who founded a *Yeshiva* in Vladomir, Chelm and Lvow, Poland, and was the *mechaber* of two books on Hebrew grammar, called *Siach Yitzchok* and *Bris HaLevi*. This great man dearly loved his younger brother, and became his first teacher and counselor for many years. The affection between the two brothers never diminished in later years, and they continued to correspond with each other in writing after they had been separated. A part of this correspondence has been preserved. These letters are of great interest not only because they testify to the deep friendship and love that existed between the two brothers, but also because they contain an exchange of scholarly opinions on many problems of Jewish law.

In addition to his scholarship, Rav Dovid's father was well-to-do, so that the young prodigy Dovid, who had shown unusual talent for study, was fortunate enough to grow up in an atmosphere of both wealth and learning. His early, happy youth was in marked contrast to his later years, when he suffered great hardships and poverty, as we shall see later. He became a reputed *Talmudic* scholar, and married Rivka, the second daughter of Rav Yoel Sirkes of Brest, *mechaber* of the

The published works of the *Maggid* include *Avodas Yisrael* (a commentary on the *Torah* and *Pirkei Avos*), *Ohr Yisrael*, and many others.

[www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/129_rabbi_israel_t
he_maggid_of_kozhnitz.html](http://www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/129_rabbi_israel_t_he_maggid_of_kozhnitz.html)

famous commentary on the *Tur*, *Bayis Chodosh* (whom the *Taz* frequently quotes in his works).

He was also a *mohel*. As was customary in those days, Rav Dovid stayed in his father-in-law's house for several years, during which he applied himself fully to the study of the *Talmud* and

Poskim (codifiers). This period served as a good preparation for the great contribution which he himself was to make to this immense literature.

After continuing his *Torah* studies for several years, he left his father-in-law's house to make a home of his own, moving to Cracow. He was then appointed chief *Rav* of Potelych (Polish: Potylicz), near Rava, where he lived in great poverty. Later, he went to Poznań, where he remained for several years. Around 1641, he became *Rav* of the old community in the famed city of scholars, Ostrog, (or Ostroh), in Volhynia. There, the *Taz* established a famous *Yeshiva*, and was soon recognized as one of the great *halachic* authorities of his time. In Ostrog, the *Taz* wrote a commentary on Rav Yosef Caro's *Shulchon Aruch* (*Yoreh De'ah*), which he published



in Lublin in 1646. This commentary, known as the *Turei Zohov* ("Rows of Gold"), was accepted as one of the highest authorities on Jewish law. Thereafter, Rav Segal became known by the acronym of his work, the *Taz*. He accepted the position of *Rav* in a small town, a position he changed several times for other small towns. During this time he suffered poverty and want, and was stricken by other misfortunes also. Several of his children passed away in infancy, but overall Rav Dovid *HaLevi* enjoyed a peaceful period of teaching and writing.

However, the *Taz* and his family had to flee the massacres of the Cossack insurrection under Bogdan Chmielnicki in 1648–1649. They were fortunate enough to leave Ostrog before it was captured by the Cossacks. He also succeeded in saving his priceless manuscripts. Rav Segal went to Steinitz near Ostrau, Moravia, where he remained for some time. Not happy in Moravia, he returned to Poland as soon as order was restored, where he was invited to become *Rav* of Lvov (Lemberg), and remained there for the rest of his life. In Lemberg, Rav Segal was appointed *Av Bais Din* (head of the rabbinical court). When Rav Meir Sack, chief *Rav* of Lemberg, was *niftar* in 1653, he succeeded him in this position as well. However, a cruel blow was struck at the aging *Rav* when, three years before his death, in the spring of 1664, he lost his two older sons, Rav Mordechai and Rav Shlomo *HaLevi*, who were murdered in a pogrom in Lemberg. His wife had passed away long before; now Rav Segal married the widow of her brother, Rav Shmuel Hirz, *Rav* of Pińczów. His third son from his first marriage, Rav Yeshaya, and his stepson, Rav Aryeh Leib, were the two Polish scholars who were sent — probably by Rav Segal, or at least with his consent — to Turkey in 1666 to investigate the claims of the pseudo-Messiah, Shabsai Tzvi.

Most of Rav Segal's works were published long after his *petira*. The *Turei*

Zohov was published by Shabsai Bass in Dyhernfurth in 1692. The work is subtitled *Mogen Dovid* ("Shield of Dovid", after Rav Segal's first name) in many editions. Both commentaries (*Taz* and *Mogen Avrohom*), together with the main text, the *Shulchon Aruch*, were republished frequently with several other commentaries, and still hold first rank among *halachic* authorities. Two years before the publication of this work, Rav Yudel of Kovli, in Volhynia, a *mekubol* and *Talmudic* scholar who wrote a commentary on *Orach Chaim*, gave money to have it published together with the *Taz*. His wishes were never carried out, but his money was used to publish another of Rav Segal's works, *Divrei Dovid* ("The Words of Dovid"), a super-commentary on *Rashi* (Dyhernfurth, 1690). Rav Segal also authored responsa which, though sometimes quoted from the manuscripts, were never published. He and Shabsai Kohen (the *Shach*) are among the greatest *halachic* authorities among the *Acharonim*. In 1683, the Council of Four Lands declared that the authority of the *Taz* should be considered greater than that of the *Shach*, but later the *Shach* gained more and more in authority.



The *Taz* wrote about his personal tragedies in his commentary, the *Turei Zohov* (see comments to *Orach Chaim*, end of *Siman 151*, the laws of the *shul*). "In my youth, when I lived in the holy community of Cracow, my home and personal house of study were located above the *shul* (this is a frowned-upon location as indicated by the *Shulchon Aruch*, ibid) and I was greatly punished when my children died and I pointed to this as the cause of their untimely death." Later, he was appointed as *Rav* of several cities, including Lwów.

His commentary on the *Shulchon Aruch* was so well-respected and esteemed that many of the leading *Rabbonim* began to use his opinions, decisions and rulings

as the basis for their own. This roused the ire of other *Rabbonim* such as Rav Shmuel Koidinover, *mechaber* of *Birchas HaZevach*, and Rav Gershon Ashkenazi, *mechaber* of *Avodas HeGershuni*, who felt that it was improper to rely on the decisions of such later authorities over deciding the case through the earlier works. They felt that the commentaries of the *Taz* and his contemporary Rav Shabsai Kohen, *mechaber* of the *Shach*, were full of errors and mistakes.

Just as earlier in history, the *Maharam Lublin* had attacked the *Shulchon Aruch* and the *Rema* for what he saw as shortcomings, and was ignored, so were the attackers of the commentaries on *Shulchon Aruch* ignored. Their opinion was in the minority and the majority of the *Rabbonim* greatly respected and followed the rulings of the *Shach* and *Taz* to the point where today, no *Rav* can earn *semicha* without having studied and mastered their commentaries in addition to having studied and mastered the *Shulchon Aruch* and the *Rema*.

As is well known, the *Taz* wrote a commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch*. He was a *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* in the big city of Posen in Western Poland, but after a few years decided that he was not cut out for the Rabbinate. He decided to become anonymous by going to the town of Lvov in Eastern Poland, where nobody would recognize him and he would be able to learn in peace and quiet. After a few weeks in this town, someone came over to him in the shul and said, "Rabbeinu." It turns out it was one of his former *talmidim* who happened to live in the town. He swore him to secrecy that he would not reveal who he was.

After a few months, the *Taz* was resigned to find work to support his family. He found work in the slaughterhouse, skinning and cutting meat. A number of *shailos* came up in the plant. They happened to ask him if he knew what the

din was and he *paskened* a few questions. Word got to the *Rav* of the town and he was very upset. He called in the *Taz* and decided to put him in *cherem* for *paskening shailos* instead of referring them to the *Rav* of Lvov. He could no longer learn in the *shul* but would have to stay in the booth where the guard sat.

One time a young girl came with a question about a chicken to the *Rav* and the *Rav paskened* that it was not kosher. The girl ran out crying. The *Taz*, who was in the booth outside the *shul* saw her and asked her why she was crying. She said, "My mother is a widow and this means we will not have chicken for *Shabbos*."

The *Taz* looked at the chicken and said, "The chicken is kosher. Go and tell the *Rav* to look in *Yoreh De'ah Siman 18* in the *Taz*, in footnote 8, and he will see that the chicken is in fact kosher."

The young girl went back into the *shul* and told the *Rav*. The *Rav* looked up the *halacha* and then realized that he had made a mistake; the chicken was in fact kosher. He asked the girl, "Who told you this information?"

She replied, "The man sitting outside in the booth."

The *Rav* went outside and asked him, "How did you know that *Taz*?"

"Because I am the *Taz*!"

The *Rav* immediately called the entire town together and announced in the *shul* that he was stepping down as *Rav* and handing the reigns over to the *Taz*. The *Taz* accepted. The student, who had known the whole time of the *Taz*'s identity, asked his *Rebbe*, "Why did you reveal your identity and why are you accepting the position?"

The *Taz* explained, "I really wanted to remain in hiding, but when I saw the tears and felt the pain of this *yesoma* (orphan), all my personal plans were no longer significant. I had to do something to prevent the pain and anguish to this poor family and any other poor family in the

future."

Rav Yehoshua of Belz (whose *Yahrzeit* is 23rd of *Shevat*) used to relate the following story he had heard from his father [the *Sar Sholom*] about the *Taz*:

Once, a woman who was having a very difficult time giving birth cried before the *Taz* to save her life and the baby.

"What can I do to save you? Only this can I offer," replied the *Taz*. "Because of the fact that today I answered a difficulty in the commentary of the *Tosafos*, I hereby give this merit to you!"

As soon as he had spoken, she delivered the baby easily, without any further distress or difficulty.

The *Sar Sholom* concluded that this is no wonder at all: because the *Taz* answered a difficulty, easing the understanding of the *Tosafos*, when he passed on that merit on to her, they eased her difficulty and just as easily did she give

birth. (Cited in the name of the Rav of Vilkomin – *Chemda Genuza* II, p. 30)



Not to Embarrass Another Jew

The *minhag* of the *Taz* was always to recite *Kiddush* on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* from the *siddur*. He explained that besides the *kedusha* found in the *osiyos* (letters) themselves, it prevented the embarrassment of others. Many times the *Taz* found himself a guest among people who were ignorant and did not know to recite *Kiddush* by heart. The *Taz* sought ways to avoid embarrassing other Jews, and was sure that if he said *Kiddush* by heart, they would be embarrassed to recite *Kiddush* from a *siddur*. Therefore, he always said it from a *siddur* and encouraged others to follow his example. (*Beis Rochel, Shaar Hachona*, by Rav Naftoli Katz #34)



Rav Shaul ben Elozor Brach of Kashau, 26th of Shevat

The Berocha for the Yeshiva

Rav Yisrael Ehrlich writes in his *sefer Shaul Bechir Hashem* the following, as he heard it from Rav Shaul Brach himself:

Rav Shaul related how he traveled to the Mittler Rebbe of Belz, Rav Yehoshua, in the winter.

To this day, I myself do not comprehend all I experienced there," he admitted and continued, "I entered the *Rav's* room with my *kvittel*, and it was as if I was enshrouded in darkness. I felt, *chas vesholom*, as if I were blind; I could not see and I was struck by a great fear. The *Rav* came and held my hand and guided me to his table, and he took my *kvittel* and read it. He then began to describe my apartment in Mogendorf, where I served as *Rav*,

and depicted each room with its dimensions, and where it was located, whether north or east and so on. He then calculated and related the dimensions of the adjoining *Bais Medrash*, how many trees were planted there and where they were situated. Afterward, the Belzer Rebbe blessed me that I should merit to have a *Yeshiva* with good *talmidim*.

This, in fact, was what Rav Shaul left behind. He writes in his *tzavo'a*, printed in the *sefer Tov Devorecha*,

And if someone will be present at the *levaya* who wishes to say a *hesped*, they should refrain from false grandiose titles like *Tzaddik* or *Gaon*. Rather, they may deliver the *hesped* and eulogize me that I merited to uphold and run a *Yeshiva* with upright students and *talmidim*

hogunim, full of *Yiras Shomayim* and love of *Torah* who toil in it. I merited all this through the *berocha* of *Geonim Moron Admor* the holy Rav Yehoshua of Belz and the holy *Gaon* Rav Yechezkel Shraga of Shinova.

(*Admorei Belz*, Volume II, p. 66–67)



The Passing of the Belzer Rav and the final Berocha for Rav Shaul of Kashau

On the 23rd of *Shevat*, in the year *tov-reish-nun-dalet*, Rav Yehoshua, the Mittler Belzer *Rebbe*, passed away. He had traveled to Vienna to seek the advice and care of the doctors and professors and was admitted there to the hospital. It was there that he was *niftar* and was brought back to Belz for burial.

For *Parshas Bo*, Rav Shaul left Mogendorf, where he served as *Rav*, and traveled to Vienna to visit the *Tzaddik*, Rav Yehoshua, the Belzer *Rav*. This is one of the stories Rav Shaul related from that visit:

“On Sunday, I heard that the Pressburger *Rav*, the *Shevet HaSofer*, was also in Vienna seeking medical advice and care, and so I went to visit him. During my visit, he expressed surprise that I had left my post as *Rav* and teacher to see the *Rebbe*.

“How can you leave a public matter to see a *Rebbe*?” he asked in astonishment.

“At first, I replied that it says in *Eruvin* 13 that *Rebbe* said he was sharper than his fellow *Rabbonim* and he attributed this to having once seen Rav Meir from behind. I merited seeing the Belzer *Rav* face-to-face!

“This did not appease him, and so I related a *chiddush* on *Parshas Bo* that I had heard from the Belzer *Rebbe*, Rav Yehoshua. The *pasuk* says, ‘In order that you relate to your son and grandson’ and

concludes, ‘In order that you all know that I am *Hashem*’. Rav Yehoshua of Belz pointed out that the *pasuk* begins in singular and concludes in plural. He explained that the *mitzva* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the *mitzva* to retell the story of the Exodus, which we fulfill through reading the *Haggoda* at the *Pesach Seder*, was already incumbent upon Bnei Yisrael to fulfill even in the very first year that it was commanded. However, only Moshe could fulfill it because only his wife and sons were not exiled in Egypt. Because Moshe’s *neshoma* included all the souls of all of Klal Yisrael, he was able to fulfill the *mitzva* on behalf of them all. This is why the *pasuk* begins in singular, referring to Moshe, and concludes in plural; he fulfilled the *mitzva* for all of Klal Yisrael.

“When I concluded, the Pressburger *Rav* turned to his attendant and told him that they must get ready to go and see the Belzer *Rav*!

“When I entered the hospital room of Rav Yehoshua of Belz, he took my *kvittel*, gave me a *berocha*, sank into thought for a moment and then told me, ‘Mogendorf *Rav*, hear now what I say to you: a person must be strong in his resolve to have *bitochon* in *Hashem* and never to give up hope, even when things are bad and the situation is a dire and difficult one. Even if a person is very sick with a serious disease, and even if they take him to Vienna, and admit him to this hospital, and in this room and in this very bed – still, do not give up hope and do not despair, because you can recover fully with *Hashem*’s help, and become the *Rav* of a large town, and after that, become the *Rav* of a great city!’

“The *Rebbe*’s words were a riddle to me, and a few days later he passed away. Several years passed and I became very sick. I was still the *Rav* in Mogendorf and the doctors urged me to seek medical attention in Vienna, whose expert doctors could help, because they could not

diagnose my disease nor properly treat me. During the journey by train my situation worsened and I fainted. They took me and lay me down across the benches in one of the cars. As I lay unconscious, I heard a commotion and awoke. I saw sitting beside me a stranger in *Chassidic* attire who asked me, 'Do you remember what the Belzer *Rav* told you in Vienna?'

"When I arrived in Vienna, I was admitted to the same hospital as Rav Yehoshua had been. I was placed in the same room and even in the same exact bed he had previously occupied! It was then that I realized what the *Tzaddik* had meant, and I did not give up hope. Obviously, his *berochah* was effective and I left the hospital fully healed. The doctors, however, warned me not to strain myself; instead I should

plant a garden, tend its flowers and play *Shach* [chess]. I listened to them and I played *Shach* and *Taz* and studied the *Shulchon Aruch* and all its commentaries!!!

"Afterward, the rest of the Belzer *Rav*'s riddle unraveled, when I was appointed *Rav* of the great town of Kruly, and afterward as the *Rav* of Kashau, a great city in Hungary. At first, I was hesitant to take the post but when I sent a letter asking the new Belzer *Rav* if this was the fulfillment of his father's *berochah*, he applied in the affirmative and said that I must accept.

"I left Rumania and took up the position of *Rav* of the great city of Kashau, as the *Tzaddik* had blessed me in Vienna." (*Admorei Belz*, Volume II, p. 67-69)



לזכר נשמת אמן החשובה, נפש יקירה ועדינה
 אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות מרת זיסל ז"ל
 בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה ה"ד מעיר נירעד האז יע"א
 וננדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטובי ז"ע מבריד
 אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברם 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*, amen.

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והנהנה כאשה כשרה)
 לכל משפחתה, היא הודה היא הדרכה - נקייה וטהורה
 היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגויה) נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה
 ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק
 תמליז טוב بعد משפחתה היקרה
 ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין מהרה
 ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

ויספר משה לחותנו את כל אשר עשה ה' (יח' ח')

And Moshe told over to his father-in-law everything that Hashem did etc. (18:8).

The Zera Shimshon brings the following question from the Zera Berach: If Yisro joined the Jewish people because of all the miracles he heard that happened to them, as the passuk clearly says (18:1), "and Yisro heard everything that Hashem did etc." why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to retell him all the miracles? He already knew them?

The Zera Shimshon himself asks a couple of questions.

1) Although the Torah writes that Yisro had heard all the miracles that happened to the Jews, the Torah specifies that he heard about the miracle of the Jewish leaving Egypt. Rashi explains that since this was the greatest of all the miracles that had transpired, the Torah made special mention of it. The Zera Shimshon asks - wasn't the splitting of the sea the biggest of all miracles? The reversal of nature that happened at the splitting of the sea had no parallel in any of the stages of the ten plagues and the exodus from Egypt?

2) After Moshe Rabbeinu finishes telling Yisro everything he seemingly already knew, Yisro exclaims (18:10) "Baruch Hashem etc." What was it that he heard in Moshe Rabbeinu's version of the miracles that he did not yet know and now felt the necessity the bless Hashem's name anew?

The Zera Shimshon explains that Yisro was originally a high ranking priest of Avoda Zara in Egypt. This inherently meant one thing - he was a master at sorcery. He believed that if sorcery had the ability to accomplish things in the world, it proved that Hashem's power was either limited or was non-existent.

Therefore, when he heard that the Jewish people had managed to leave Egypt, this for him was the greatest of all miracles. This is because no slave had every managed to escape Egyptian bondage due to the sorcery and witchcraft that the Egyptians did specifically to make sure that the slaves could not free themselves.

Thus, when the Jews succeeded in leaving Egypt, this proved to Yisro that there was a higher power that was stronger than the power of sorcery which he had thought was the highest power around. This, to him, was even greater than the splitting of the sea since to split the sea one did not have to contest the powers of sorcery, just the course of nature. Only to leave Egypt did one have to battle the forces of witchcraft. This, in the eyes of Yisro who had been in that field, was the greatest miracle. This is why the Torah singles out that Yisro heard about the Jews leaving Egypt over the other miracles and Rashi comments that this is because it was the greatest of all miracles - in Yisro's understanding

What Yisro did not realize is that in all the other miracles, the forces of sorcery and impurity that fuel them were also contested. And this is why Moshe Rabbeinu repeated to Yisro all the miracles that he had already heard about - to show him how in them too, the powers of impurity were overcome.

With regards to the splitting of the sea the Zohar (54-56) writes that the powers of impurity were greatly weakened when the Egyptians were tossed around in the sea. And Rabbeinu Bachya (Beshalach) writes that Amalek used sorcery to try and overpower the Jewish people, but they lost.

This is why Yisro now said Baruch Hashem, because he now understood that not only was the exodus from Egypt a show that Hashem had more power than the powers of sorcery, which he viewed as the all powerful, but so were all the miracles.

לזכות זיווג הגון בקרוב לאה בת שרה חנה, רינה ברכה בת שרה חנה

Zera Shimshon



Yisro

The Zera Shimshon, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachmon Michoel 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 Parshiyos 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..."

לכך נשמט

רבי שמשון חיים בן רבנן מיכאל זצ"ל
בעל הורע שמשון זע"א
ויה"ר שיתקיים לנו ברוכתו של אוטו צדיק

לזכות חיים דוד בן טוביאה חונה להצלחה
וסיעתא דשמייא בכל מעשה ידי ובכל

העינויים

זכות רבינו זי"א יי"מ זל לויין הגון
בקrhoב עברו שושנה נהמה בת חנה
פעסא ולרפהה שלימה לויובכ בת
דבורה וכל מושפחתה שיימלא הקב"ה

משאלות לבם לטובבה במדהה
ולזכות רבקה רוייא בת פגיא לויון הגון

בקrhoב תחן שאר ישראל
לזכות החפץ בעליום שמלו זוזו בני
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