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PARSHAS KI SAVO

Seventy Translations

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)

In a village not far from Berditchev, there lived a *Chassid* of Rav Levi Yitzchok. The *Chassid* was exceedingly rich in wisdom and exceedingly poor in worldly possessions. But he was happy as long as he could spend time with his *Rebbe*, and he often spent several weeks at a time in Berditchev.

On one of his long absences from home, his wife came to Berditchev and confronted him in front of the other *Chassidim*.

“How can you spend all your time here,” she admonished, “when you have a house full of hungry children at home? And what do you intend to do about your daughters who are old enough to get married? How will we marry them off if we are penniless?”

The *Chassid* just stood there silently. There was nothing he could say.

Word of the confrontation reached Rav Levi Yitzchok, and he sent his attendant to deliver a message to the *Chassid's* wife. “Return home,” he said. “Your husband will follow presently with enough money to feed your youngsters and marry off your daughters.”

At that time, the French army had crossed the border and was marching toward Moscow, and the Russian army was in retreat. The entire country was in a state of emergency. The countryside was in turmoil, and travel was restricted. Nevertheless, Rav Levi Yitzchok ordered his attendant to hire a coach and travel to the villages and towns together with the *Chassid* to raise money for his family.

“But it is impossible to travel without a permit,” said the attendant.

“Then get a permit.”

“But it is impossible to get a permit on such short notice.”

“Very well,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok. “Hand me a piece of paper.”

The attendant brought him a piece of paper. He wrote a few letters and handed it back.

“This is your travel permit,” he said. “If you are challenged, show this paper, but you must insist that you can only show it to a general or other high-ranking officer.”

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The *Chassid* and the attendant set out on their fund-raising journey. The first village they visited was garrisoned by a squadron of Cossacks. They ordered the coach to pull over. A burly Cossack approached them.

“Show me your travel documents,” he said.

The attendant got out of the coach. “I have papers,” he said, “but they are of a highly sensitive nature. They may only be shown to your commanding officer.”

“Show them to me,” blustered the Cossack. “I will decide if I should show them to my general.”

“If you insist on seeing them,” said the attendant, “you are risking your life. If the general discovers that you have seen these papers, he will have you executed.”

The Cossack hesitated, and then prudence won out over his bravado.

“Very well,” he said. “I will call the general.”

Minutes later, the general arrived. He took the paper from Rav Levi Yitzchok’s attendant, unfolded it and scrutinized it for a long time.

“Who wrote this?” he finally demanded.

“Why?” asked the attendant. “Is something wrong?”

“There is nothing wrong,” said the general. “It is just that this is an amazing document. I speak eight languages, and I am able to read this paper in each of these languages, and it makes perfect sense in each of them. I want to know who wrote it. It must have been a holy man.”

The attendant breathed a sigh of relief. “It was written by Rav Levi Yitzchok, the *Rav* of Berditchev. It was intended to help me and my friend travel to different communities to raise money for his family, which is in dire need.”

The general stepped over to the coach and opened the door.

“How are you, sir?” he said to the *Chassid* sitting inside.

“I-I am fine, Your Excellency,” said the *Chassid*.

“Listen to me,” said the general. “I will not return this holy paper to you. You see, I need it as a protection when I go into battle against the French any day now. But I will not steal it from you. I will pay you for it. Wait here, and I will bring you some money.”

The general left and presently returned with a bag of gold coins. “This money should amply cover all your needs,” he said. “But it is not adequate payment for the paper. Indeed, there can be no adequate payment for the paper. It is priceless.”

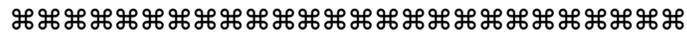
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Moshe instructed the Jewish people to erect large monoliths after they crossed the Jordan River into *Eretz* Yisrael and to inscribe upon them (27:8) “all the words of the *Torah*, well explained.” What is the meaning of “well explained”? *Rashi* writes that it means they were to translate the *Torah* into seventy languages. Why was this necessary?

It can be explained very simply, says Rav Levi Yitzchok, according to what *Rashi* writes on the

first *pasuk* in the *Torah*. *Rashi* asks why the *Torah* starts with the story of creation rather than the first *mitzva*. And he answers that it is to refute the accusations of the nations who say that the Jewish people are robbing the land from them. *Hashem* created the world, He is its Master, and He can take from whomever He chooses and give it to whomever He chooses.

The inscriptions on the monoliths were intended to show the nations that the Jewish people earned the right to the Land, because they accepted the *Torah* while the other nations rejected it, and they had to be translated in seventy languages so that all the nations would understand the message.



Translated Kedushas Levi On The Parsha

“You have specified Hashem today to be a G-d for you, and to walk in His ways, and to observe His decrees, His commandments and His statutes, and to hearken to His voice” (Devorim 26:17).

The idea, based on the suggestive word *be'emarta*, is that it is the speech of *Hashem* that needs to be activated in our favor. Otherwise, we will cause *Hashem* to lapse into silence (as indicated by the reference to the word *Bo'ilmim* – “among the speechless”) regarding us.

The idea is that the sustenance from the Creator is called His speech, (as indicated by use of the term *be'emarta* – based on the root *amor*, meaning “to say” or “to speak”) as is said in *Tebillim* (33:6): “By the speech of *Hashem* were the heavens created...” and when the people of Yisrael are on a high level, then, so to speak, they cause that the effect of the speech of the Holy One, blessed is He, is to provide them with sustenance, and if, G-d forbid, that is not the case, the reverse is true. For it says in an expression of praise: “Who is like unto You among the powerful?” (*Shemos* 15:11), and the *Gemora* (*Gittin* 56b) plays on the word in the previously cited Scriptural expression *Bo'eilim* – translated as “among the powerful” as if it were written *Bo'ilmim*, which means “among the **speechless**”. And that is

the hint in the expression “You have specified *Hashem* **today**” – you are able to cause **today** that the speech of the Holy One, blessed is He, will be such as to cause good sustenance for the people of Yisrael, and that is if Yisrael is on a high level as indicated by the word “**today**”, that each day the **words of Hashem should appear to you as brand new**. (See *Rashi* on *Devorim* 26:16)

“And Hashem has specified you today to be for Him a treasured people...and to make you supreme over all the nations that He made for praise, for renown and for splendor...” (Devorim 26:18–19)

Kedushas Levi points to a problem in the logic of the *pasuk*, in that it seems to associate complimentary terms with the nations of the world, rather than with Yisrael. He promises to resolve the problem in the forthcoming paragraphs using statements of *Chazal*.

One type of servant of a king is not required to be in his presence all the time. The other servant wishes to be in his presence and serve him as much as possible.

The same attitude can be found in human beings and in their attitude toward service of *Hashem*. This can be seen in the case of a person who has nothing to his name, yet desires nothing other than to “dwell in the house of *Hashem*”.

being who has nothing, yet fills his heart with a great desire to serve Me, and He rejoices in His service so much.

“In a place where masters of repentance stand, the thoroughly righteous cannot stand”, because *Hashem* appreciates how the repentant sinner has turned from the path of sin and now his heart burns for the service of *Hashem*. This applies as well to the spiritual lives of nations, where the seventy nations do not serve *Hashem*, but Yisrael has no greater desire than to serve Him.

selected the Divine Name.

The logic of the *pasuk* seems somewhat lacking, in that a connection is made between the creation of the nations and the complimentary terms “for praise...” It would have been more logical to write the complimentary terms first, so that they would apply to the people of Yisrael. This problem will be resolved based on the statement of *Chazal* (*Sanhedrin* 99a): “Where masters of repentance stand, the thoroughly righteous cannot stand...” And another statement of *Chazal* (*Yoma* 86b) will also be explained; namely: “Repentance is great, for it has the power to convert sinful acts done on purpose to meritorious acts”.

There are two types of servant; the position of one requires that he always be in the presence of the king and constantly in his service. The position of the other does not require that. Rather, he arouses himself to serve the king, and when he comes into his presence, he does not ask for his own needs, but rather expresses the desire to serve him.

The same difference in attitude applies in the service of *Hashem*. The one who desires to serve Him continuously, and turns away from all his other activities, and subordinates his entire self to *Hashem*, is the one described in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 102:1): “A prayer of the impoverished one, who puts it aside...” – The intention is this: The prayer of one who is desperate for relief, for a modicum of sustenance, yet he puts that *tefilla* aside (see *Rashi* on *Bereishis* 30:42); rather, he pours his spirit out before *Hashem*, desiring only to be in *Hashem*’s Presence and to serve Him – then *Hashem* has tremendous pleasure, and He says, “Come and see a human

And that which they said, “In a place where masters of repentance stand, the thoroughly righteous cannot stand”, the reason is that the Holy One, blessed is He, derives great pleasure from the master of repentance, who was nothing but an empty person, and till now he had followed a path of foolishness, and now how his heart burns for the service of *Hashem*! And for that reason, it is also true that “repentance is great, for it has the power to convert sinful acts done on purpose into meritorious acts” for because so great is the pleasure derived by the Creator, blessed is He, that He turns those sinful acts into acts of righteousness. And behold, when the Holy One, blessed is He, contemplates Yisrael and the other nations, and observes that the other nations do not serve Him, the Holy One, blessed is He, derives tremendous pride from Yisrael, and He says, “All of these seventy nations are nothing but fools and madmen, while Yisrael has

Kedushas Levi asks: “If Yisrael is *Hashem’s* treasured nation, why were the other nations created?” They rejected *Hashem* and Yisrael embraced Him out of their own free will, and *Hashem* takes pride in the holy choice of Yisrael.

And the *pasuk* that says: “And *Hashem* has selected you today to be His treasured nation...over all the nations which He created” – if you ask, “If so, why did He create them?” To this, He responds, “for praise, for renown and for splendor” – which means so that He would be able to derive pride **from Yisrael**. Now taking pride is called “wearing a garment”, for *Hashem*, may He be blessed, blessed is He, as it were, dresses Himself with the “garment” of *Tiferes*, and the source that *Tiferes* is called a “garment” is *Shemos* (28:2): “And you shall make holy garments...” *lechvod ulesifores*, – “...for glory and for **splendor**”.

In *Tashlich*, we ask that *Hashem* “cover over” our sins. When he does this, he takes them one by one to appreciate what it is that we have turned away from, and adorns Himself with them, as with a beautiful garment.

And that is the meaning of “He will **cover over** our sins” (*Micha* 7:19) – in the sense of “let the **lambs** be your clothing” (*Mishlei* 27:26) [the word *yichbosh* in the expression *yichbosh avonoseinu* means “cover over”. The word *kevosim* in the expression *Kevosim libvushbecha* – “let the lambs be your clothing” demonstrates that *Micha* meant and we mean to ask in the *Tashlich tefilla* that *Hashem* cover over our sins as the wool of lambs covers the body when used in clothing. In any case, the letters *shin* in *yichbosh* and *sin* in *kevosim* are interchangeable], which is *Tiferes* in the sense of “pride” as we

see from the expression in *Hashem’s* exultation, “that a man naked of the garments of *mitzvos* **should wish to serve Me!**” Thus, we see that *Hashem* is taking a paradoxical “**pride**” in sins. And that is the meaning of “He will cover over our sins”, as if to say, “let Him (the Holy One, blessed is He) **cover Himself** with the *Tiferes* of our sins”. And the expression **in the context of divine forgiveness**, that “He reviews them one by one” – that is, the sins of this sinful individual (who has now fully repented) – the Holy One, blessed is He, is now reviewing his past sins, one by one, and the reason is that that is the nature of the attribute of forgiveness (*Rosh HaShana* 17a), which alludes to the wearing of a garment and taking pride in it, for the Holy One, blessed is He, as it were takes pride in our sins, (if, and only if, we repent) – and therefore examines them one by one, *Amen*.

An alternative explanation of “**And Hashem has specified you today to be for Him a treasured people ...as He spoke**” (*Devorim* 26:18-19):

When speech leaves the “mouth” of *Hashem*, it is pure, undiluted kindness, in too strong a dose for almost every world and every individual. However, for someone who has attached himself, so to speak, to *Hashem*, the purest kindness is not too overwhelming.

The message here is that when speech leaves the “mouth of the Holy One, blessed is He”, it is only kindness for all the worlds. And in truth, the speech, while it is still “attached” to the Holy One, blessed is He, is great kindness, but when the speech spreads out from the “mouth” of the Holy One, blessed is He, the kindness thins out so that each world will be able to receive it, each according to its aspect. But in truth, a person who is always attached to the Holy One, blessed is He, can receive the kindness in its undiluted form, as when it is still attached to the Holy One, blessed is He. And that is the meaning of the “Holy People... as He had spoken” – as when the speech was still attached to the Holy One, blessed is He.

“You shall inscribe on the stones all the words of this Torah, well clarified” (Devorim 27:8).

Rashi, רש"י, explains the words “well-clarified” as meaning translated into all the languages. The reason for this was to explain their legitimate entitlement to the Land. Hashem created every part of the planet and endowed the Land of Yisrael with a unique holiness that would not tolerate immorality. The people of Yisrael was the only nation that had accepted His holy Torah, which defined His rules of morality for human beings.

See the explanation of Rashi, רש"י, on the expression *ba'er heiteiv* – “well clarified” – where he explains that the expression “well clarified” means that it was translated into the seventy languages. It is necessary to understand why the Torah was translated into the seventy languages at this point. And this can be understood on the basis of Rashi רש"י's explanation of Bereishis (1:1): “If the nations come to protest that Yisrael stole the land of the Seven Nations, Yisrael will respond, ‘Hashem created the entire earth; initially He gave the land of Canaan to them and afterward He gave the Land of Yisrael to us.’” The simple explanation of this is that the people of Yisrael accepted the Torah, and therefore Hashem gave them the Land. And that is why the Holy One, blessed is He, commanded that they set up stones, and to write the Torah on them in seventy languages upon their entry into the Land. It was to demonstrate clearly to the nations that the reason for their entitlement to the Land was their acceptance of the holy Torah, whereas all the other nations of the world had rejected it. **That was their**

claim to the Holy Land.

“Moshe and the Kohanim and the Levi'im spoke to the entire (people of) Yisrael, saying, ‘Be attentive and hear, O Yisrael, This day you have become a people to Hashem, your G-d.’” (Devorim 27:9)

The *pasuk* says: “Today you have become a people”, and Rashi explains that every day you should experience the Stand at Sinai anew. And by virtue of your presence at Sinai, you will have heard the actual voice of Hashem.

Rashi explains: “Each day they should appear to you as new.” How is this possible? It is possible by your belief that with each breath that you take, you are receiving a new life force (study *Bereishis Rabba* 14:9); and therefore **you are a new creation**. If so, you will merit by means of this belief to be present each day and **hear again** your people’s Stand at Sinai. And thus, since you hear the Stand at Sinai, it is true that **“You heard the voice of Hashem, your G-d...”** (as Moshe, together with the *Kohanim* and the *Levi'im* continue their address to the people of Yisrael in the next *pasuk*), for if this were not the case, you would not hear the voice of Hashem, only

the words of the Torah, but since you merit to hear all the time the actual Stand at Sinai, you merit to hear the actual voice of Hashem, your G-d.

“It shall be that if you hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, to observe, to perform all of His commandments that I command you this day, then Hashem, your G-d, will make you supreme over all the nations of the earth” (Devorim 28:1).

The “voice” referred to in the *pasuk* is identical with the “Heavenly voice” that announces an invitation to all members of the Jewish people to return in repentance before *Hashem*. This invitation and arousal is open to all but *Acher*, the “Other”, the teacher of Rav Meir, who became an extremely great *Torah* scholar, and then lost his faith.

will be accepted. (*Acher*, the “Other”, was the pejorative name given to Rav Elisha *ben Avuya*, the teacher of Rav Meir. According to the *Talmud*, he had once witnessed a son obeying the command of his father to climb a tree, to perform the *mitzva* of *Shiluach HaKen*, sending away the mother bird before taking her eggs or chicks, both of which are *mitzvos* for which the *Torah* promises long life – and the boy fell to his death. At that point, Rav Elisha lost his faith and despite the great efforts of Rav Meir, he never recovered it.) But this Heavenly voice is not used to arouse him, because **he was in Heaven**, and still did not return! Therefore, he must arouse himself to repent, but he is the only exception. And the *Torah* chose with precision the word *Vehaya* – “it shall be”, because that word expresses happiness (*Bereishis Rabba*, 42:4): “...if you hearken to the voice of *Hashem*, your G-d” – that is, the voice from Above which makes an announcement every day, which is one and the same with the Heavenly voice mentioned above that announces every day that people should repent.

“...on one road will they go out toward you, and on seven roads will they flee before you.”
(Devorim 28:7)

The people of Yisrael, the holy nation, possesses all ten attributes of the Creator, which can operate together in simple unity. They also have love and fear of the external entities, but these cannot operate together.

The idea here is that the people of Yisrael, the holy nation, has fear of *Hashem*, and love of *Hashem*, and the pride which the Creator, blessed is He, takes in them, and they also have all the seven attributes possessed by the Creator, blessed is He, which provide beneficial sustenance to Yisrael, who then have all the ten attributes of the Creator, blessed is He. And in opposition to these, they have fear of external entities, and love of external entities, and likewise for all the other attributes. And the crucial difference is that in the realm of holiness, all of the attributes can exist together in simple unity, whereas, with *Hashem*'s protection, in the realm of the external entities, the seven attributes cannot exist together. If one has fear of some entity, he cannot have love for the same entity, and likewise with the other attributes, but again, in the realm of holiness, one can serve *Hashem* with all the attributes with simple unity.

The idea taught by the *Kedushas Levi* above is also alluded to in the *pasuk* before us. “On one road will they go out towards you”, for they can operate in only one attribute at a time. “...and on seven roads will they flee before you” – you have the option of all seven attributes at the same time.

And this is the hint provided by the *pasuk*: “On one road will they go out toward you...” for the external entities can only operate with one attribute, either love or fear or one of the other seven attributes, but they cannot operate with seven attributes simultaneously. But you – who operate in the realm of holiness, have the ability to serve the Creator with all seven attributes at the same time! And this is the hint in the Torah: “On **one road...**” – for the enemy cannot come against you with more than one attribute, but you have the option of all seven attributes; therefore they **flee before you**, as indicated by “...and on **seven roads** will they flee before you”.

“Hashem will command the blessing for you in your storehouses...” (Devorim 28:8)

Sometimes the Creator provides sustenance out of His kindness. That is an arousal from above; open and revealed. Other times, the arousal comes “**for you/from you**” – an arousal from below. It is hidden and stored away “in your storehouses” – in secret and hidden.

Sometimes, the Creator, blessed is He, sustains His people, Yisrael, with benefits out of His compassion. That type of sustenance is revealed and is good on its surface. And at other times, the Creator, blessed is He, provides sustenance for the holy nation due to an arousal from below. That type of sustenance is clothed in a garment, and at first appears not to be beneficial, but afterward its good quality appears; thus, that good was hidden. And that is the type of benefit referred to by this *pasuk*: “*Hashem* will command the blessing **from you...**” – where the sustenance arises from your strength, **from your arousal**, and that is the meaning of “the blessing **from you**” – the blessing caused by your arousal, this type of

blessing is to be found “**in your storehouses**” – a place hidden from the eye; that is, its goodness is hidden and stored away for much later, as was *Akeidas Yitzchok*.

“Hashem will open for you His storehouse of goodness, the heavens...” (Devorim 28:12)

In the Time-to-Come, the Ministering Angels will praise the righteous with “Holy!” And *Hashem* will open for them His storehouse of goodness, the heavens.

The idea here will be explained by a statement of *Chazal* (see *Bava Basra* 75b): “In the future, the Ministering Angels will praise the righteous with ‘Holy’ and thus, the righteous will merit more than Heaven.” And that is the meaning of “*Hashem* will open for you His storehouse of goodness, the heavens”; that is to say, the goodness that is in the heavens is in a storehouse, closed and sealed, and *Hashem* will open it for you, for you will

be on a higher level than the heavens.

Alternatively, the *pasuk* beginning with “***Hashem will open for you His Storehouse of Goodness***” can be explained as follows:

Fear of *Hashem* must precede the pleasure derived from His service. For if the reverse were true, the service of *Hashem* would be insignificant, because one would enter into that activity for the love of pleasure rather than for the love of *Hashem*.

for a treasure is something that is deeply hidden, and within the fear is the pleasure.

We now understand the pasuk “*Hashem* will open for you His storehouse of goodness” as meaning that the “storehouse” is fear of *Hashem* and the “goodness” is the pleasure associated with service of *Hashem*. An example of benefits derived from fear is the blessing of Avrohom and his generations received after *Akeidas Yitzchok*. In the expression *Zochor VeShomor*, *Zochor* (remembering) alludes to service out of fear, *Shomor* (guarding) alludes to pleasure derived from service of *Hashem*.

Based on what is said in the *Gemora (Berachos 33b)*: “The Holy One, blessed is He, has nothing in His worlds besides fear of Heaven”, the idea is that first fear comes to a person and after the fear, comes pleasure, and the pleasure is, as it were, hidden within the fear, for if pleasure came first, then service of *Hashem* would be insignificant, for it was not entered into by choice but rather from love of pleasure. Therefore, the aspect of pleasure must be deeply hidden; a person must exert much effort in fear of *Hashem* for a long time, and afterward, he will attain the pleasure. And this is alluded to by the *pasuk* in *Yeshayahu (33:6)*: “The fear of *Hashem* is His treasure” –

And this is the meaning of “*Hashem* will open for you His storehouse of goodness...” – that is to say, *Hashem* will open for you the goodness that is hidden in the storehouse, which is fear of *Hashem*, after you have served the Creator with fear. And that explains the ending of the verse: “...to provide the rain for your land in its proper time...” for there are times that the Creator, blessed is He, provides benefits that are revealed, and other times when the Creator, blessed is He, provides benefits and they are hidden and dressed in an attribute that is not appropriate, as was the case at the Binding of Yitzchok. But when the Holy One, blessed is He, provides revealed benefits to Yisrael, then the sustenance comes with the appropriate attribute. And that is the meaning of “the rain for your land, at its proper time” – and thus, service out of fear must precede the pleasure derived from that service, and that is the meaning of *Zochor VeShomor* – “Remember it and guard it” (*Shavuos 20b*): “To remember it” is alluded to in service out of fear, and pleasure derived from service is alluded to in “guarding it”.

“Hashem shall place you as a head and not as a tail; You shall be only above and you shall not be below...” (Devorim 28:13)

At first glance, it seems that the expressions “and not as a tail” as well as “you shall not be below” are extraneous. However, if we consider the three worlds; from top to bottom, the world of thought, the world of speech and the world of action, we notice that the top of the world of action is the same as the bottom of the world of speech (and the same is true for speech and thought). The blessing in the *pasuk* is that Yisrael would always be at the top of the world of thought.

At first glance, the words “and not as a tail” and “you shall not be below” are extraneous. If we look carefully, we see that there are three worlds: the world of thought, the world of speech and the world of action – and the Holy One, blessed is He, animates each of them. Now (if we stack them one on top of the other, with thought on top, speech next and action on the bottom) the top of the world of action is one and the same with the bottom of the world of speech, and likewise, the top of the world of speech is equivalent to the bottom of the world of thought, and the top of the world of thought is highest of all. And this is the hint: “You shall be the top...”, “You shall be above” – that is to say, that you should be attached to the “head” – of the world of thought, above which there is nothing. And this is the hint in the *pasuk* above: “and not a tail” – for when a person is attached to the top of the world of speech, then he is also attached to the bottom of the world of thought, and likewise when he is attached to the top of the world of action, then he is at the bottom of the world of speech. But when one is attached to the top of the world of thought, then there is no end at all.

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Torah Perspectives on the Parsha by Rav Yaacov Haber Shlita – www.torahlab.org

If Hashem Can Do It, You Can Do It!

“You set *Hashem* aside to be your G-d, so that you can walk in His ways...” (*Devorim* 26:17)

In simpler terms we can act like *Hashem* acts; we can be kind like *Hashem* is kind; we can forgive like *Hashem* forgives; we can have the same type of mercy that *Hashem* has.

One of the most basic differences between the Jewish belief and the Christian belief is that according to the Christians, *Hashem* can manifest Himself as a human. According to Judaism man can act like *Hashem*.

We have the potential to act like *Hashem*! Man can be G-dly and indeed has an obligation to be so. The *Torah* revealed that man was created in the image of *Hashem*. That means that the human being has within himself or herself the ability to act just like *Hashem*, to “walk in His ways”.

Chazal observed that acting kindly is so central to Judaism that the *Torah* itself begins with an act of *Hashem*’s kindness and ends with an act of *Hashem*’s kindness. It’s all about *Hashem*’s kindness and how we can “walk in His ways”.

The *Torah* starts with kindness by telling us how *Hashem* made clothing for Odom and Chava. The *Torah* ends with kindness by telling us that *Hashem* Himself buried Moshe.

Why did the *Talmud* choose the example of *Hashem* making Odom and Chava clothing? Certainly there were earlier acts of kindness. He created the world, He created man; He gave man

a wife; He put them in Gan Eden and on and on. That He made them clothing sounds almost small compared to the earlier generosity of *Hashem*!

The answer: to create the world, man and his environment are acts of kindness but not yet acts of G-dly kindness. After all, *Hashem* wanted a world and man. He was more than happy to provide everything they needed. But then man sinned. He and his wife ate of the forbidden fruit and *Hashem* evicted them from the Garden. When He removed them from Gan Eden He brought pain and death to the world. In the midst of this rejection, *Hashem* saw that Odom and Chava felt awkward in their nakedness and “He made them clothing”. This is an act of G-dly kindness. *Hashem* was betrayed and violated, yet He responded with kindness.

We can “walk in His ways” and indeed we are commanded to do so. We can be G-dly.

This is how it’s done: find someone you really don’t like, perhaps someone who has hurt you or betrayed your friendship. Now think of something you can do to make that person’s life easier or a bit more pleasant. At this point you will find yourself saying, “But I am only human!” So remember, to be only human is to be created in the image of *Hashem*. We are designed to be superhuman.

As we do kindness with those who are perhaps undeserving, we can turn to *Hashem* and ask Him to do kindness for us and bless us with a new year full of His kindness and blessing.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Fighting in Shul

Rav Moshe Feinstein once commented that early on we used to see fierce arguments in *shul* over who should get an *aliya* and who should not. He observed that as years went on, things seemed to have become much more civilized and gentlemanly. “Please, you take the *aliya*, I’m fine.”

Said Rav Moshe, “I’m really not sure which is worse!”

“Today,” said Moshe, “you have become a people (*Devorim* 27:10).”

Why today?

Moshe spoke these words to the Jewish people after forty years of remarkable Jewish history that took place in the desert. “*Hayom!* Today, for the first time, I call you a people!”

In Egypt we were persecuted for over two centuries only because we were a people.

Forty years before the passing of Moshe we received the *Torah* on Har Sinai because we were a people.

Amolek attacked us from behind in the desert because we were a people.

We built a *Mishkon* in the desert, walked through the sea and ate *man* – only because we were a people.

So what happened today? Why at the end of Moshe’s life did he finally tell us, “Today – you have become a people”?

That day, Moshe introduced a new artifact to the Jewish people – a *Sefer Torah*. Finally, a holy scroll that would represent *Hashem's* word to the people. When the *Torah* came into a room everyone would stand up. They would follow it and kiss it. They would build a beautiful ark for it. On that day Moshe presented a *Torah* to the Jewish people. He handed it to the heads of the tribe of Levi.

Eventually there would be thirteen *Sifrei Torah* and Moshe would give a *Sefer Torah* to the leader of every tribe in Yisrael. But so far, on this day, there was only one *Torah*, and Moshe presented this first *Sefer Torah* to the people of Levi.

Alarms went off throughout the Jewish camp. Hundreds of thousands of Jews began a whispering rebellion. Why did he give the *Torah* to Levi? Why does Moshe favor his own tribe over the others? Why aren't we getting one? We were all present at Har Sinai; the *Torah* belongs to all of us!

I close my eyes and I imagine the scene...

The tribe of Yissochor stands up and says, "We should hold that Torah – we are the scholars who study it all day!"

Zevulun argues, "Why you? If we didn't support you, you wouldn't be able to study at all!"

Don says, "What good is studying if you don't know the din?! We are the judges of Yisrael – we get the Torah!"

Binyamin says, "But the Bais HaMikdosh is in our land – we need the Torah!"

As the argument continues, Moshe smiles. "Today", he says, "I see you really are a people!"

(Rashi and Mosif Rashi)

Why did Moshe smile? Because on that day they finally owned the *Torah* – they felt it was theirs. Each group felt that they deserved the *Torah* and could not live without it. They loved the *Torah* and argued over it.

"Today," said Moshe, "you have finally become a real people!"



We Have Arrived in the Land

Hashem created the world just so that we could come to *Eretz Yisrael*.

We have just arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* looking forward to some fresh spiritual inspiration.

But it is very difficult to do so. How can we think about our soul when our body is in pain? The constant stabbings in Yerushalayim hit very close to home. It is painful enough sitting in Monsey reading the newspapers, but to live here, and hear the sirens, and see the tears, is too much to bear.

So even though it's before *Rosh HaShana*, even though I walk the streets of Yerushalayim, it is difficult, almost selfish, to think about how to grow spiritually when the body of *Klal Yisrael* is under siege.

Yet with great pride I can say that men and women on the streets of Yerushalayim are not depressed. Life goes on at an amazing pace. The number 2 bus is full, and the stores are lined with American and French teenagers full of laughter and pride. We are a great people!

Ki Savo – “When you arrive in the Land”. We have arrived! *Hashem* gave us a gift called *Eretz Yisrael*. He gave it to us once and because of our behavior He took it back. He gave it to us a second time and because of our *mishuga'as* He took it away. Now, He's giving it to us for a third time! Once again – we have arrived!

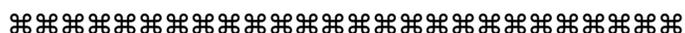
What should we be saying to *Hashem* when we arrive? This week's *Parsha* tells us. We should hold up our first fruits and declare:

I have arrived in the Land that *Hashem* swore to our forefathers to give to us. Our fathers moved to Egypt, few in number, and there we became a nation – great, strong and numerous. The Egyptians mistreated us and afflicted us, and made us slaves. We cried to *Hashem* and He saw our oppression. *Hashem* took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with awesomeness, with signs and with wonders. He brought us here, to this place, He gave us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey, and here are the first fruits of that land that You have given me.

Simply put: this Land is a gift from You. This gift is part of a historical process. We acknowledge, *Hashem*, that this is Your Land. We acknowledge that it is a great spiritual treasure. We thank You, *Hashem*, for bringing us here.

Rashi teaches us that from the moment *Hashem* created the world – *Bereishis* – He was waiting for this moment of *Reishis Bikurim* – bringing our first fruits before Him. No other sacrifice or tithe comes with such an elaborate proclamation or ceremony. But *Hashem* waited 2,500 years for a simple Jew from Petach Tikva or Kfar Saba to come to Yerushalayim with a basket full of grapes in his hand, to make the statement: “I have arrived! I understand what I am doing here! I understand how I got here!”

Reishis – *bishvil reishis!* *Hashem* created the world just so that we could come to *Eretz Yisrael*.



www.chinuch.org & www.yeshshem.com

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

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

1. Learn the anniversary of his *petira* or, if this information is not available, the days of *Erev Rosh Chodesh*, *Rosh Chodesh* and the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month can be utilized for a connection.
2. Light a twenty-five-hour candle in his or her honor. There is no specific *berocha*. Some say the following: This candle is being lit in the merit of _____.

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

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

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

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

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת נַשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק
בֶּן/בַּת _____, יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתְּקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שָׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחְשָׁבָה, בֵּין
בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וּבְפָרֵט לְנַפְשׁ רִיחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי / צַדִּיק _____. יְהִי רָצוֹן שְׁתֵּהֵינָה
נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים.

Translation:

Behold, I am lighting this lamp for the resting and uplifting of the soul of my father/my mother/the *Tzaddik* _____ the son/daughter of _____ – A *tefilla* that is found in the *sefer Alef HaMogan* from the *Pele Yo'etz* in *Parshas Vayeitzei*, page 24 – 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 teachings or writings.

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

21st of Elul – Friday Night / Shabbos Kodesh ~ September 20, 2019

Rav Yonoson *ben* Rav Nosson Nota Eibeschutz. Born in Cracow, he became head of the Prague *Yeshiva* at the age of twenty-one. In 1741, he became the *Rav* in Metz, and in 1750 he became the *Rav* of Altona/Hamburg/Wandsbeck (AHU), where he had major disagreements with Rav Yaakov Emden. He was learned in many areas, including *Halocha*, *Kabbola*, philosophy and science. He was the *mechaber* of many *Halachic* works, as well as collections of sermons and unpublished works on *Kabbola*. Thirty of his works in the area of *Halocha* have been published. His works include *Urim V'tumim*, *Kereisi Ufleisi*, *Yaaros Dvash*, and *Ahavas Yehonoson* (a

commentary on the weekly *Haftoros*), (1690–5524/1764);

Rav Avrohom Yaakov Zalaznik, *Rosh Yeshiva Eitz Chaim*, (5770/2010);

Rav Yaakov *HaLevi ben* Moshe Moellin (the *Maharil*). Born in Mainz, Germany, he was the primary *talmid* of Rav Sholom of Neustadt. The *Maharil* authored *Minhagei Maharil*, the primary source of *Minhagei Ashkenaz*, cited frequently by the *Rema* in the *Shulchon Aruch*. The *Maharil* lived through the mass slaughter of Jews in Austria in 1420 and the Hussite wars in 1421, which brought suffering to the Jews of Bavaria and the Rhine, (5125–1365/5187–1427) [22nd of *Elul*, per *Yated* 2006];

Rav Boruch Yitzchok Levine. His paternal grandfather was Rav Menachem Nachum, who was very close to the *Chofetz Chaim* and was a *talmid* of Rav Nachum of Horodna, the *Chofetz Chaim's* mentor. His maternal grandfather was Rav Yehuda Leib Davidson, a *talmid* of Rav Yisrael Salanter, who served as *Rav* in Des Moines, Iowa, and later in Ohio and Los Angeles. Shortly after his *bar mitzva*, Rav Boruch Yitzchok went to learn in Grodna under Rav Shimon Shkop, then to Baranovich to learn under Rav Elchonon Wasserman for three years. He moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1938 and headed for the Lomza *Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva. Within a few months, he married the daughter of Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Tikochinsky. Shortly thereafter, he became *Rav* of the Mekor Chaim suburb of Yerushalayim and started a *Yeshiva* there with the assistance of Rav Yitzchok Sher of Slobodka, (5678/1910–5748/1988).

22nd of Elul – Motzei Shabbos ~ September 21, 2019

Rav Boruch of Kortova, a *talmid* of the *Rif*, (4887/1127);

Rav Yissochor Dov Ber (Bertzi) Leifer, (5666/1906);

Rav Mordechai Dov Twerski *ben* Rav Meshulam Zusia Yitzchok of Hornesteipel, *mechaber* of *Ha'emek She'ela*. He was the grandson of the *Mitteler Rebbe* and a descendant – *ben achar ben* – of the Rebbe Reb Zusha of Anipoli. He was raised by his maternal grandfather, the Cherkasser *Rebbe*, after his father passed away, so he adopted the family name, Twerski, (5663/1903).

23rd of Elul – Sunday Night ~ September 22, 2019

Rav Uri, the *Seraph* of Strelisk, *mechaber* of *Imrei Kodesh*. A *talmid* of Rav Shlomo of Karlin and of Rav Mordechai of Neshchiz, he was the brother-in-law of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov. His main *talmid* was Rav Yehuda Zvi Hirsch, the first of the Stretyn dynasty, (5586/1826);

Rav Moshe Betzalel Alter, (5703/1943);

Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Biderman of Lelov-Yerushalayim, (5741/1981);

Rav Yosef Babad, the *Minchas Chinuch* (a commentary on *Sefer HaChinuch*), Rav of Tarnopol, Poland. His last name is an acronym for *B'nei Av Bais Din*, (5634/1874);

Rav Yitzchok Menachem *ben* Rav Shmuel Tzvi Danziger, the Alexander *Rebbe*, *mechaber* of *Akeidas Yitzchok*, killed in Treblinka with eight of his children, *Hy"d*, (5702/1942);

Rav Yisrael of Pиков, son of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, (5578/1818);

Rav Meir Yehuda Getz, *Rav* of the *Kosel* and *Rosh Yeshivas Bais El*. After one of his sons, a paratrooper, was killed in the battle for Yerushalayim during the 1967 Six-Day War, Rav Getz moved to the Old City and settled in the Jewish Quarter. He established a *Yeshiva* there, and took up the duties he held until his *petira*. In July 1981, Rav Getz was constructing a new *shul* behind the Wall that would face the Temple Mount. While the construction was going on, workers accidentally discovered Warren's Gate and an open area behind it that they believed to be from the period of the first *Bais HaMikdosh*, (5684/1924–5755/1995);

Rav Nachman Dovid Dubinky, born in the Old City of Yerushalayim, where his father came after leaving Russia as a Breslover *Chassid*. His father was *niftar* when Rav Nachman was sixteen years old. He learned in *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim* for decades. There, he heard *shiurim* from Rav Isser Zalman and Rav Aharon Kotler, as well as the *Gidulei Shmuel*, Rav Shmuel Gedalya Neiman, and the *Darchei Dovid*, Rav Mordechai Dovid Levine. Rav Nachman lived in Bais Yisrael and a few other places, before settling in Botei Machsa when he and his *Rebbetzin* got married in 1932, after which they moved to Botei Natan where he lived for the next seventy years. Rav Nachman's occupation through the years was learning *Torah*, (5671/1911–5766/2006).

24th of Elul – Monday Night ~ September 23, 2019

Chavakuk *HaNovi*, (3280/480);

Rav Yisrael Meir *ben* Rav Arye Zev *HaKohen* Kagan of Radin, the *Chofetz Chaim*, (5598/1838–5693/1933);

Rav Mordechai Yaffa, *Rav* in Vienna, (5381/1621);

Rav Moshe Charif, *Rav* of Lvov, (5462/1702);

Rav Yosef Moshe Shapira of Zaloshitz, the *Bris Avrom*, (5575/1815);

Rav Avrohom Yosef Igra of Zeshilin-Cracow, (5578/1818);

Rav Bentzion Uziel, first *Sefardi* chief *Rav* of *Eretz Yisrael*, (5713/1953);

Rav Chaim Milkovski, father of the current Amshinover *Rebbe* of Bayit Vegan, (5753/1993);

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, *Dayan* in Slutsk and London, and chief *Dayan* of the British Empire. He learned at the *Bais Yosef Yeshiva* of Novardok under the *Alter*, Rav Yoizel Horowitz, as well as at Telz, Mir and Slabodka. He eventually became a close *talmid* of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Rav Yechezkel spent the first half of his life serving as a *Rav* or *Dayan* in various communities, and in 1924, he became *Rav* of Slutzk, with a *kehilla* of over ten thousand Jews. After the Russian Revolution, Rav Yechezkel fought desperately against the Communist decrees to destroy religion, and he was sentenced to five years in Siberia in 1929. In 1931, he was released, and the chief *Rav* of the British Empire, Rav Yosef H. Hertz, persuaded him to serve as *Av Bais Din* in London. In 1951, Rav Yechezkel moved from London to *Eretz Yisrael*, where Rav Yitzchok Sher invited him to give regular *shiurim* in Slabodka in Bnei Brak. Rav Yechezkel wrote twenty-five *seforim* in his lifetime, the best known being his monumental *Chazon Yechezkel*, a commentary on the entire *Tosefta*, (5646/1886–5736/1976);

Rav Yitzchok Flusberg. Born in Tel Aviv, Rav Yitzchok learned at the *Chevron Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim under Rav Meir Chodosh. For a number of years, he served as *Rosh Yeshiva* at *Tiferes HaCarmel* in Chaifa. He was among the founders of Gerrer *shtieblech* in Golders Green, London and in Toronto, and was one of the primary founders of the *Mifal Chessed* organization of Ger in *Eretz Yisrael*, (5701/1941–5764/2004).

25th of Elul ^ First day of Creation – Tuesday Night ~ September 24, 2019

Rav Elozor, son of Rav Shimon *bar* Yochai. Rav Elozor is well featured in the *Zohar* as he reveals many secrets along with his father. He is also the cause of many of Rav Shimon's revelations by asking questions of his father. It says in the *Talmud* that Rav Elozor was a very large (some would say obese) man. The story continues that he was taken into a tiled room and given a sleeping draught after which his stomach was cut open and a large amount of fat was taken from his body. He would leave this fat in the sun and it did not decay. Some say his *petira* was in 123 and some say the date is the 9th of *Tishrei*, (3862/102);

Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. The son of Rav Yitzchok of Drohovitch, he was introduced by his father to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* at a young age. He was also a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. Many of his teachings are collected in *Mayim Rabim*. His *talmidim* included Rav Yehoshua Heschel of Apta. The Zlotschover *Maggid* also had five sons, each of whom became *Rebbe* in a different place. They were: Rav Yosef of Yampola, Rav Mordechai of Kremnitz, Rav Yitzchok of Radvil, Rav Binyomin of Zbariz and Rav Moshe of Zvhill, the first Zvhiller *Rebbe*, (5481/1721–5546/1786);

Rav Aharon *ben* Rav Yaakov Abuchatzera, (5661/1901);

Rav Avrohom Horowitz, *talmid muvhok* of the Steipler Gaon. He learned at Novardok *Yeshiva* in Tel Aviv, then at *Eitz Chaim* in Yerushalayim. When he was eighteen, he married the daughter of Rav Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach, father of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. He became the *chavrusa* of the *Steipler Gaon* for decades and wrote a *sefer* called *Orchos Rabbeinu*, detailing the customs and daily life of the *Steipler* and the *Chazon Ish* (with whom he was also very close). He also authored a set of *Halachic seforim* called *Devar Halocho*, (5685/1925–5764/2004).

26th of Elul ^ Second day of Creation – Wednesday Night ~ September 25, 2019

Rav Eliyohu Tzarfati, *mechaber* of *Eliyohu Zuta*, (5565/1805);

Rav Elyokim Getz of Ostroh *ben* Rav Yaakov Yosef (Reb Yeivei). He printed the *seforim* of his illustrious father. He was known for his devotion to providing for the destitute, (5584/1824);

Rav Chaim Pinto of Mogador, *Mekubol* and chief *Rav* of the Jewish community of Mogador, Morocco. The famous Pinto family was dispersed worldwide – primarily to Morocco, the Ottoman Empire, and Holland – after 1497, when Portugal expelled its Jews. Rav Shlomo Pinto married his second wife, Chiyuna Benveniste, and moved to Agadir, Morocco. In 1758, Chiyuna gave birth to their son, Rav Chaim, whom they named after Rav Chaim Vital. Ten years later, Rav Shlomo passed away, leaving his son an orphan. The Sultan of Morocco, Sidi Mohammed, closed down the port of Agadir, replacing it with the new port of Mogador (or Essaquire) that he had completed in 1765, far south on Morocco's west coast. Mogador's thriving businesses were jumpstarted by thirteen businessmen known as the *toujjar el Sultan* (the traders of the Sultan) – ten of them Jews and three of them Moslems – and thanks to them and others, Mogador helped open Morocco to Europe. Within twenty years, the Mogador Jews would comprise half or more of the town's six thousand residents. Young Chaim moved to Mogador and learned in the *Yeshiva* headed by the *Av Bais Din*, Rav Yaakov Bibas. Over time, Rav Chaim became an accomplished *Mekubol* renowned for his *ruach hakodesh*. Rav Chaim was survived by his four distinguished sons, Rav Yehuda, Rav Yosef, Rav Yoshiyahu and Rav Yaakov, (1758–5605/1845);

Rav Shmuel Abba Zikelinsky of Zichlin, an important *talmid* of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, and subsequently a *Rebbe* in his own right, (1810–5639/1879).

27 Elul ~ Third day of Creation – Thursday Night ~ September 26, 2019

Rav Moshe Segal of Levov, known as *Rosh HaGola Umanhig HaMedina*, (5479/1719);

Rav Yitzchok Chiyus (Chayes), *Rav* in Skolya, *mechaber* of *Zera Yitzchok* on the *Mishna*, (5486/1726);

Rav Nosson *HaKohen* Adler, *Rebbe* of the *Chasam Sofer*, *mechaber* of *Mishna DeRabbi Nosson*, (5560/1800);

Rav Yitzchok Isaac Eliezer Hirschowitz, *Rav* of Wirballen, (5701/1941);

Rav Yaakov Leib of Kvahl, (5593/1833);

Rav Sholom *ben* Rav Elozor Roke'ach of Belz (the *Sar Sholom*), founder of Belz *Chassidus*, (1779–5615/1855);

Rav Binyomin Tzvi Auerbach (or Tzvi Binyomin Auerbach). Born to Rav Avrohom, a *mohel* in Strasbourg, France, he served as a *Rav* in Darmstadt for ten years after earning *semicha* as well as a PhD in philosophy and Semitic languages. While living in Frankfurt, Rav Auerbach wrote the *sefer Bris Avrohom* in memory of his father. He also spent much of his time editing the *sefer Ha'Eshkol*, written by the *Raavad* of Norvona. Years later, when he became the *Rav* of Halberstadt, he published his work as a commentary named *Nachal Eshkol*, (1808–5633/1873);

Rav Moshe Nota Yungreis, (55649/1889).



Hillula De'Tzaddika

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS AND CUSTOMS

The *Pnei Menachem* of Ger (*Teruma*) cites the *Degel Machene Efraim* (*Mattos*) that the *Mishna* in *Chagiga* 20b rules that you can *toivel keilim* inside other *keilim* for *tahara* – the *Pesak Halocha* allows us to immerse a vessel inside another vessel to purify it in the *mikve*.

Keilim here hints at the souls of the *Tzaddikim* who act as large vessels as a vehicle for purifying the souls of *Klal Yisrael*. Through the *Tzaddik's tahara* – through his soul's purification – he can purify the other vessels, the souls of other Jews. Those *talmidim* and all who cleave to that *Tzaddik* – even after his passing, even if someone just received a little and even if they never met or knew him and just studied his *seforim* – this too is enough!

May the souls of the *Tzaddikim* purify us all, *Amen*.



Segulos Yisrael

Segulos Sources and Meanings

This Week's Segula

Three Segulos from the Lelover Rebbe of Beit Shemesh

The Lelover Rebbe, *Shlit"á*, of Beit Shemesh, spoke about three *segulos* for *Yom HaDin* (for *Rosh HaShana*) this year to the *Chassidim*:

1. Give In and Give Up – Be *Mevater* because *kol hamaavir al midosav maavirin lo al kol pesho'ov* (*Rosh HaShana* 17a) – Whoever knows how to give in, or give up his place or turn for another, or is willing to overlook it even when he's been wronged, then on high this is done for him as well and his sins are forgiven and “overlooked” by the *midas hadin* – the attribute of strict justice.

2. “Anyone who judges others favorably will be judged favorably” (*Shabbos* 127b). Judge others favorably and give them the benefit of the doubt – when you judge others favorably and give them the benefit of the doubt it is reciprocated on high and then you are also judged favorably and given the benefit of the doubt.

3. *Kol hamerachem al habriyos merachmin olov min hashomayim* – Whoever shows mercy to *Hashem's* creatures is in turn shown mercy from Heaven – remember that the *Targum* of *rachem* is *ahava* – love. *Ahavas Yisrael* – *ve'ohavta lerei'acha komocho* – is a great *segula*!



Ma'Asay Ha'Tzaddikim

WEEKLY STORIES

Yahrzeit 21st of ELUL

Rav Avrohom Yaakov Zalaznik, Rosh Yeshiva Eitz Chaim

Rav Avrohom Yaakov Zalaznik was born on the 16th of *Kislev* 5673/1912 in *Yerushalayim*. His father, Rav Shlomo Zalman Zalaznik, was *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Eitz Chaim*. He was brought up by his grandmother after being orphaned of his mother at the age of two.

As a child he learned in *Talmud Torah Chayei Olam* and even then was outstanding in his *hasmoda*. Friends would later relate how young Avrohom Yaakov would make use of the short walk home from the *Talmud Torah* by reciting *Mishnayos baal peh*. He later learned in *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim*, becoming a *talmid muvlok* of the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer.

Rav Isser Zalman was extremely fond of his *talmid*, and when he returned to Lithuania to participate in the *chanukas babayis* of *Yeshiva Kletzk*, he told Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel that in Yerushalayim he had found three *lamdonim* with whom he could converse in *Torah*; one of them was Rav Avrohom Yaakov Zalaznik.

He finished *Shas b'yinn* for the first time at the age of seventeen.

Rav Avrohom Yaakov's *hasmoda* and continuous *chazora* was breathtaking. When a grandson told him that he had finished *Maseches Kesubos*, the grandfather replied that in his younger years he learned *Maseches Kesubos* 280 times! At the age of eighteen, Rav Avrohom Yaakov received *beter boro'a* from Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank.

At the age of twenty, Rav Avrohom Yaakov married Rebbetzin Itta, the daughter of Rav Yisrael Sholom Luria, *Rav* of the Kerem neighborhood. The *Rebbetzin* took care of all the needs of the home, enabling her husband to dedicate his life to *Torah* and *tefilla*. Rav Avrohom Yaakov would regularly return home from the *Bais Medrash* just twenty minutes before *Shabbos*, after having spiritually prepared himself for the holy day.

The Zalazniks set up their home in the Kerem neighborhood and Rav Zalaznik *davened* in the local *shul*, where he would often have lively discussions after *davening* with the other *Gedolei Yisrael* – Rav Eliezer Menachem Shach, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel and Rav Ezra Attiya – who *davened* there.

He was also close with Rav Yosef Sholom Elyoshev, and learned *b'chavrusa* with Rav Ovadia Yosef.

Rav Avrohom Yaakov would regularly travel to the *Chazon Ish* in Bnei Brak, who praised his greatness in *Torah*. In 5717/1957, Rav Avrohom Yaakov was appointed a *Maggid Shiur* in *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim*, and after the *petira* of Rav Isser Zalman in 5723/1963, was chosen to be the main *Maggid Shiur*.

After his father was *niftar* in 5735/1975, he became the official *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Eitz Chaim*.

In 5737/1977, Rav Avrohom Yaakov was accepted as a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* in *Eretz Yisrael*, and also became one of the heads of *Vaad HaYeshivos*.

Rav Avrohom Yaakov devoted much time to *tefilla*, *davening* for the sick and those who needed *yeshuos*, and many of his *talmidim* and family merited *yeshuos* through his *tefillas*.

He was also known as a *Gaon* in *middos*, being very careful not to hurt anybody, even young children. If he ever thought that he had perhaps upset even a young child, the elderly *Rosh Yeshiva* would go to great lengths to appease the child.

In his later years he fell ill and was hospitalized. Rav Avrohom Yaakov was *niftar* on the 21st of *Elul* 5770/2010, at the age of ninety-seven. He was buried on *Har HaZeisim*. Rav Zalaznik leaves behind his *seforim* *Or Yaakov* on *Shas*.

Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.

www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-21-elul-august-27/



YAHARZEIT 22ND OF ELUL

Rav Yissochor Dov Ber (Bertzi) Leifer

Rav Yissochor Dov Ber Leifer was the son of Rav Mordechai of Nadvorna.

His first wife was the daughter of Rav Eliezer Brandwein of Ozipolah-Stretyn. After her *petira*, he married the daughter of Rav Yehoshua Heschel Eichenstein of Chodorov-Ziditchov.

Following the *petira* of his father on the first day of *Sukkos* 5655/1894, Rav Yissochor Ber, fondly known as Rav Bertzi, was appointed *Rebbe* in Satmar, where he lived.

As he was renowned for his *mofsim*, many came to him for *berochos* and *yeshuos*.

He was a *masmid* who constantly returned to his learning after dealing with his petitioners.

Rav Bertzi was *niftar* on the 22nd of *Elul* 5666/1906.

All his sons served as *Rebbs*: Rav Meir in Cleveland, Rav Issomor in Bishtina, Rav Aharon Moshe in Grossvardein, Rav Dovid in Banya, Rav Yosef in Pittsburgh and Rav Sholom in Breiten.

His sons-in-law were Rav Yitzchok Yechezkel Hochman of Kishinev; Rav Meir of Satmar; and Rav Yissochor Dov Rosenbaum of Strozhnitz.

Zechuso yogen oleinu.

www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-22-elulaugust-28/



YAHARZEIT 23RD OF ELUL

Rav Uri, the Seraph of Strelisk

Rav Uri was born in 5517/1757 in a small village near Yanov. His father, Rav Pinchas, was given a *berocha* by the Mezritcher *Maggid* to merit a son who “will light up the Jewish world”.

After his marriage, Rav Uri settled in Lvov (Lemberg), where he devoted himself to learning *Torah* with *hasmoda*.

Rav Uri traveled to the courts of numerous leading *Rebbs* — the *Rebbe Reb* Elimelech of Lizhensk; Rav Pinchas of Koritz; Rav Yaakov Yosef of Ostroha; Rav Zusha of Anipoli and others — until he met Rav Shlomo of Karlin and became one of his foremost *talmidim*.

In 5552/1792, after the tragic murder of his *Rebbe*, Rav Shlomo, *Hy"d*, Rav Uri returned to Lvov and opened his own court. He later moved from Lvov to Strelisk, by the name of which town he became known.

Rav Uri was famous for his style of *tefilla*, full of fervor. The thousands of *Chassidim* who flocked to his court felt his *hislabavus*, which awakened them to *teshuva*.

Every day before going to *daven*, Rav Uri would bid farewell to his household, in case his *nesboma* would leave his body while he *davened* in his usual fiery manner. He would also tell them that the manuscripts in the drawer were not his own, but belonged to his *Rebbe*, Rav Shlomo of Karlin.

Rav Uri taught his *Chassidim* to work on their *middos* and uproot from within them any lust for money. It is said that there was not even one wealthy Jew among the Strelisker *Chassidim*, and Rav Uri himself lived in extreme poverty.

Rav Uri's foremost *talmid* was Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Stretyn. The bond between them was extraordinary. Rav Yehuda Tzvi became a *Rebbe* in Stretyn after Rav Uri's *petira*.

One of the *talmidim* of Rav Uri was the *Sar Sholom* of Belz. One time, as he sat at Rav Uri's *tisch*, he cried out, "Oy, Tatte!"

The Strelisker gave a roar, as was his custom, and shouted, "And maybe He is not your Father?"

Rav Sholom understood that Rav Uri still had lessons to teach him to assist him in his growth in *ruchniyus*. And so he remained in Strelisk for an entire year.

Rav Uri once said: "Whoever said that one must pray with a whole heart? Perhaps it is preferable to pray with a broken heart."

Rav Uri said: "There are four separate courts in Heaven: a *Sanhedrin* of seventy-one; a smaller *Sanhedrin* of twenty-three, a Heavenly *Bais Din* and an earthly one. Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov served in one of these *Botei Din*, but since he was so punctilious and strict, he was promoted to the greater *Sanhedrin*. He left a vacant place in the *Bais Din*, which awaits a *Tzaddik* to occupy it."

Those who heard his words did not dream that he was foretelling his own imminent *petira*. But a mere two days later, on the 23rd of *Elul*, 5586/1826, Rav Uri returned his *nesboma* to its Creator.

Some of the *divrei Torah* of Rav Uri were compiled by his *talmid*, Rav Binyomin Zev Sheinblum of Lvov, and published under the name *Imrei Kodosh*.

Zechuso yogen oleinu.

www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-23-elulaugust-29/

www.dailyzohar.com/tzadikim/78-Rabbi-Uri-of-Strelisk

An esrog from Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden)

By: Nissan Mindel ~ Published and copyrighted by Kehot Publication Society

www.chabad.org/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/4776/jewish/An-Etrog-From-Eden.htm

It was the first day of *Sukkos*, and all the congregants in the *shul* of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk were in a festive mood. One could feel the *Yom Tov* spirit in the atmosphere.

As Rav Elimelech stood at the lectern and began reciting *Hallel*, all eyes turned upon him. There was something unusual in his manner this *Sukkos*. Why did he stop so suddenly in the middle of his swaying to sniff the air as he held the *esrog* and *lulav* in his hands? And why did he not go through the *tefilla* in his usual leisurely manner? It was evident that something was on his mind, something rather exciting, by the look on his radiant countenance.

The minute the *davening* was over, Rav Elimelech hurried to where his brother Rav Zusha (who had come to spend *Yom Tov* with him) was standing, and said to him eagerly, "Come and help me find the *esrog* which is permeating the whole *shul* with the fragrance of *Gan Eden*!"

And so together they went from person to person until they reached the far corner of the *shul* where a quiet-looking individual was standing, obviously engrossed in his own thoughts.

"This is the one," called out Rav Elimelech delightedly. "Please, dear friend, tell me who are you and where you obtained this wonderful *esrog*."

The man, looking somewhat startled and bewildered at this unexpected question, replied rather slowly, carefully choosing his words, "With all due respect to you, *Rav*, it is quite a story. Do you wish to sit down and listen to it all?"

"Most certainly I do," answered Rav Elimelech emphatically. "I am sure it will be a story worth hearing!"

"My name," began the quiet-looking man, "is Uri, and I come from Strelisk. I have always regarded taking the "four species" on *Sukkos* as one of my favorite *mitzvos*, and so, although I am a poor man and could not normally afford to buy an *esrog* according to my desire, my young wife, who agrees with me as to its importance, helps me by hiring herself out as a cook. Thus she is independent of any financial help from me, and I can use my own earnings for spiritual matters. I am employed as *melamed* (teacher) in the village of Yanev, which is not far from my native town. One half of my earnings I use for our needs and with the other half I buy an *esrog* in Lemberg. But in order not to spend any money on the journey I usually go on foot.

"This year, during the Ten Days of Repentance, I was making my way on foot as usual, with fifty gulden in my purse with which to buy an *esrog*, when, on the road to Lemberg, I passed through a forest and stopped at a wayside inn to have a rest. It was time for *mincha*, so I stood in a corner and davened *mincha*.

"I was in the middle of my *tefilla* when I heard a terrible sound of moaning and groaning, as of one in great anguish. I hurriedly finished my *davening* so that I could find out what was the trouble, and if I could help in any way.

"As I turned toward the man who was in obvious distress, I beheld a most unusual and rough-looking person, dressed in peasant garb with a whip in his hands, pouring out his troubles to the innkeeper at the bar.

"From the somewhat confused story, between his sobs, I managed to gather that the man with the whip was a poor Jew who earned his living as a *baal agola* (owner of a horse and cart for transportation). He had a wife and several children and he barely managed to earn enough to make ends meet. And now, a terrible calamity had befallen him. His horse, without which he could do nothing, had suddenly collapsed in the forest not far from the inn, and just lay there, unable to get up.

“I could not bear to see the man’s despair and tried to encourage him, by telling him that he must not forget that there is a G-d above us Who could help him in his trouble, however serious it seemed to him.

“I’ll sell you another horse for fifty gulden, although I assure you he is worth at least eighty, but just to help you out in your difficulty!” the innkeeper was saying to the wagon driver.

“I haven’t even fifty cents, and he tells me I can buy a horse for fifty gulden!” the man said bitterly.

“I felt I could not keep the money I had with me for an *esrog* when here was a man in such a desperate plight that his very life and that of his family depended upon his getting a horse. So I said to the innkeeper, “Tell me – what is the lowest price you would take for your horse?”

“The innkeeper turned to me in surprise. If you pay me on the spot, I will take forty-five gulden, but absolutely not a cent less. I am selling my horse at a loss as it is!”

“I immediately took out my purse and handed him forty-five gulden, the wagon driver looking on, his eyes nearly bulging out of their sockets in astonishment. He was just speechless with relief, and his joy was absolutely indescribable.

“Now you see that *Hashem* can help you, even when the situation appears to you to be entirely hopeless!” I said to him as he hurried off with the innkeeper to harness the newly bought horse to his forsaken cart tied to the stricken horse in the forest.

“As soon as they went off, I hurriedly got my few things together and disappeared, as I did not want to be embarrassed by the thanks of the grateful wagon driver.

“I eventually reached Lemberg with the remaining five gulden in my pocket, and naturally had to content myself with buying a very ordinary-looking but kosher *esrog*. Usually my *esrog* is the best in Yaney, and everyone comes to make a blessing over it, but this year I was ashamed to return home with such a poor-looking specimen, so my wife agreed that I could come here to Litzhensk, where nobody knew me.”

“But my dear Rav Uri,” cried out Rav Elimelech, now that the former had finished his story, “yours is indeed an exceptional *esrog*! Now I realize why your *esrog* has the fragrance of *Gan Eden*! Let me tell you the sequel to your story.

“When the wagon driver whom you saved thought about his unexpected good fortune, he decided that you must have been none other than Eliyohu *HaNovi* (the Prophet Elijah) whom *Hashem* had sent down to earth in the form of a man, in order to help him in his desperation. Having come to this conclusion, the happy wagon driver looked for a way of expressing his gratitude to *Hashem*, but the poor man knew not a Hebrew word, nor could he say any *tefillos*. He racked his simple brain for the best way to give thanks.

“Suddenly his face lit up. He took his whip and lashed it into the air with all his might, crying out with all his being, ‘Dear Father in Heaven, I love You very much! What can I do to convince You of my love for You? Let me crack my whip for You as a sign that I love You!’ Saying which, the wagon driver cracked his whip into the air three times.

“On the eve of *Yom Kippur*, *Hashem* up above was seated on His Throne of Judgment, listening to the first *tefillos* of the Day of Atonement.

“Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev, who was acting as the Counsel for Defense on behalf of his fellow Jews, was pushing a wagon full of Jewish *mitzvos* to the Gates of Heaven, when the *Soton* appeared and obstructed his path with piles of Jewish sins, so that Rav Levi Yitzchok just got stuck there. My brother, Rav

Zusha, and I added our strength to help him move his wagon forward, but all in vain; even our combined efforts proved fruitless.

“Suddenly there came the sound of the cracking of a whip which rent the air, causing a blinding ray of light to appear, lighting up the whole universe, right up to the very heavens! There we saw the angels and all the righteous seated in a circle, singing *Hashem's* praise. On hearing the wagon driver's words as he cracked his whip in ecstasy, they responded: ‘Happy is the King Who is thus praised!’

“All at once, the *Maloch* Michoel appeared, leading a horse, followed by the wagon driver with whip in hand.

“The *Maloch* Michoel harnessed this horse to the wagon of *mitsvos*, and the wagon driver cracked his whip. Suddenly the wagon gave a lurch forward, flattening the piles of sins that had been obstructing the way, and drove it smoothly and easily right up to the Throne of Glory. There the King of kings received it most graciously and, rising from the Throne of Judgment, went over and seated Himself on the Throne of Mercy. A happy New Year was assured.

“And now, dear Rav Uri,” concluded Rav Elimelech, “you see that all this came about through your noble action. Go home, and be a leader in Yisrael! For you have proved your worthiness, and you shall carry with you the approval of the Heavenly Court. But before you go, permit me to hold this wonderful *esrog* of yours, and praise *Hashem* with it.”



Yahrzeit 23rd of Elul *Rav Yitzchok Menachem Danziger of Alexander, the Akeidas Yitzchok*

Rav Yitzchok Menachem Danziger was born in 5440/1880. He was the son of Rav Shmuel Tzvi of Alexander, the *Tiferes Shmuel*, and grandson of Rav Yechiel, the first Alexander *Rebbe*.

He grew up and was educated in the court of Alexander under his grandfather, his uncle Rav Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchok (the *Yismach Yisrael*) and his father.

Following the *petira* of his father on the 29th of *Tishrei* 5684/1923, thousands of Alexander *Chassidim* – Alexander was the second largest *Chassidic* court in Poland – accepted Rav Yitzchok Menachem as their *Rebbe*. Initially he refused, but following the pleas of seventy leading *Rabbonim* in Poland who were Alexander *Chassidim*, he had to accept.

Rav Yitzchok Menachem led his *Chassidim* with *Abavas Yisrael*, receiving everyone warmly. His answers to the *Chassidim* were known for their brevity and clarity.

He founded a *Yeshiva* in Alexander that grew into a chain of *Yeshivos* across Poland. Rav Yitzchok Menachem attended the third *Knessia Gedola* of *Agudas Yisrael* in 5697/1937, where he was honored.

When the Nazi regime overtook Poland, Rav Yitzchok Menachem fled Alexander to Lodz, where the majority of his *Chassidim* lived. From there, he fled to Warsaw, where he was in the ghetto for the next two years, working in the shoe factory of Rav Avrohom Hendel, with many other *Rebbes*.

The *Rebbe* received a certificate and the right to travel to *Eretz* Yisrael through the Italian consul, but refused to desert his *Chassidim*.

In Elul 5702/1942, the *Rebbe* was placed on a train to Treblinka. The factory owner, Rav Avrohom Hendel, ran over to the Nazi in charge of the transport and explained that the *Rebbe* was one of the better workers in the factory and was much needed to help make boots for the Nazis. The SS officer slapped Rav Avrohom across his back, knocking him to the ground.

The *Rebbe* reached Treblinka on the 23rd of *Elul*, in the same train as his only son, Rav Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchok. The *Rebbe* wrapped himself in *tachrichim* and began reciting *Viduy*. He was killed that day. All his eight children and numerous grandchildren were killed in the war. *Hashem yinkom domom*.

Some of Rav Yitzchok Menachem's *Divrei Torah* were compiled in a *sefer* aptly named *Akeidas Yitzchok*.

Zechuso yogen oleinu.

www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-23-elulseptember-18/



Yahrzeit 23rd of Elul

Rav Yisrael of Pikov,

Son of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev

From the Journeys of Rav Yisrael of Pikov and Rav Moshe Leib Sassover: Thirteen Reasons for Happiness

Rav Mordechai of Slonim told the following story of the travels of Rav Moshe Leib Sassover and Rav Yisrael of Pikov, the son of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev:

They were traveling from town to town to raise funds for redeeming captives. It was winter and bitterly cold, and just as the sun set, they found an inn to spend the night. Their lodgings were old and shabby. The decrepit room featured a cracked ceiling and peeling paint, and as they stoked the stove to heat the miserable accommodations, melting snow and ice dripped through cracks in the ceiling onto their beds. Rav Yisrael was especially distressed since he was unused to such conditions.

To cheer him up, Rav Moshe Leib gave him thirteen reasons to rejoice. "One, if you had an injury on your right side, you would not be able to lie on your right side. Two, if you were injured on the left side, you would not be able to lie on the left side either. Three, if you were injured on your back, you would not be able to lie on your back." And so continued Rav Moshe Leib Sassover until he had come up with thirteen reasons for Rav Yisrael to be happy. Indeed, he succeeded. Rav Yisrael was so happy that he stood up and together they danced with joy.

How Rav Yisrael of Pikov Succeeded his Father as *Rav* of Berditchev

Immediately after the Berditchever passed away, a committee elected his son, Rav Yisrael of Pikov, as his successor. They handed him an official Rabbinic certificate proclaiming him the new chief *Rav* of Berditchev.

At that time the honorable and noble Rav Efraim Kalker was visiting Berditchev. Rav Efraim was the son-in-law of Rav Yechiel, the son of the Sudilkover *Rebbe* (mechaber of *Degel Machaneh Efraim*). Rav Efraim was accustomed to traveling to Berditchev on *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur*. For *Sukkos*, however, he would go to visit his *Rebbe*, Rav Tzvi Leib of Alik. When Rav Levi Yitzchok passed away, Rav Efraim launched a campaign to elect Rav Tzvi Leib of Alik as the new *Rav* of Berditchev instead of Rav Yisrael. He enlisted the help of some of his friends and colleagues among the wealthy citizens of Berditchev, and since Rav Efraim was a well-known and distinguished personage, his campaign was successful. Together, his group wrote up a contract proclaiming Rav Tzvi Leib as the new *Rav* of Berditchev, and they traveled to Alik to ask Rav Tzvi Leib to move to Berditchev and become its *Rav*.

Rav Tzvi Leib agreed and traveled with them to the city. The Berditchever's widow and her son, Rav Yisrael, were quite upset when they heard this news. Rav Yisrael himself went to see Rav Tzvi Leib while he was conducting the third *Shabbos* meal.

When Rav Tzvi Leib saw Rav Yisrael, he rose in his honor and said, "Make way for the *Rav* of Berditchev!" He seated Rav Yisrael at his right, at the head of the table, a place of honor. Then he said, "Do not worry, Rav Yisrael. Do not think that I will remain here acting as the *Rav* of Berditchev. Your saintly father, may his righteous memory be a blessing, was just sitting in this exact spot as I spoke *divrei Torah*, and he told me not to encroach on your position. He also said that if you had been present when he was here during my *Torah* discourse, you would have merited to see him every *Shabbos*, during *sholosh seudos*."

That night, and immediately following *Havdola*, Rav Tzvi Leib left Berditchev and returned home, saying that he had promised Rav Levi Yitzchok that he would not even spend the night in Berditchev. On the way, he stopped at the house of Rav Levi Yitzchok's widow and related the entire story to her before he departed.



Yahrzeit 24th of Elul Rav Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan, the Chofetz Chaim

Halachist, *Torah* leader of his generation, and affectionately known as the *Chofetz Chaim*, the title of one of his books.

As a nine-year-old boy, he entered the great *Yeshiva* in Vilna, where he soon gained a reputation as a genius. He grew not only in wisdom but also in piety. As he matured into manhood, his unselfish devotion to others and uncompromising honesty set an example for his generation and all generations that were to follow. After marrying at seventeen years of age, he continued his *Torah* studies, in spite of extreme poverty, spending every waking moment engrossed in the holy books. The *Chofetz Chaim*, who refused to accept a post as *Rav*, opened a general store. His wife, insisting that he continue his *Torah* studies, managed the store. The *Chofetz Chaim* supervised the absolute accuracy of the weights and measures, the quality of the merchandise, and the fairness of the prices, to make certain that no one was deceived or overcharged in any way.

In 1869, he founded the *Yeshiva* of Radin, which attracted *talmidim* from all over Europe. His *sefer*, *Chofetz Chaim*, made a profound impact on *Torah*-observant Jewry. It is a compilation of the laws concerning

loshon hora (spreading gossip and slander), a grave offense that is often ignored. The title *Chofetz Chaim* is based on the verse: “Who is the man who desires life, who loves many days that he may see good? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit” (*Tehillim* 34:13-14) (*Chofetz Chaim* translates as “desires life”). Thanks to the *Chofetz Chaim*’s writings, a growing awareness has emerged of the harmful effects and the seriousness of *loshon hora*.

A major achievement was his work *Mishna Berura*, a comprehensive commentary on the *Orach Chaim* section of the *Shulchon Aruch*, which deals with the general laws of daily conduct, such as *tefillos*, *tefillin*, *berachos*, *Shabbos*, and *Yomim Tovim*. *Mishna Berura* explains these laws and their application in present-day situations. It consists of six volumes and took twenty-five years to complete. Since its publication, *Mishna Berura* has enjoyed extraordinary popularity. It is a part of virtually every Jewish home library, its pages consulted daily by scholars, *talmidim*, and laymen alike.

Immigration to America made him fearful for the well-being of *Yiddishkeit* in places where Jewish settlements were not well-organized. He recognized the trials of the new immigrants and, to fulfill their needs, he wrote *Nidchei Yisrael* (Dispersed of Yisrael), replete with detailed laws specifically related to the new life of the new arrivals and heartfelt words of inspiration and encouragement to strengthen them in overcoming obstacles and preserving their Judaism.

His caring eye observed the young conscripts forced to live far from any semblance of Jewish life and desperately in need of special guidance. For them he composed *Machane Yisrael* (The Camp of Yisrael). *Machane Yisrael* offers advice to Jewish soldiers on how to observe Jewish traditions in the army, as well as special *tefillos* to be said before going into battle.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was a true leader of his people, caring for their needs, bearing the burden of each one of them.

May the merit of the *Tzaddik* the *Chofetz Chaim* protect us all, *Amen*.

Rav Yisrael Meir *HaKohen* Kagan was perhaps the greatest Jewish figure and one of the most influential *Rabbonim* in modern Jewish history. He is known popularly as the *Chofetz Chaim*, after his classic work on guarding one’s tongue, which he published in 1873 when he was thirty-five. He was recognized as both an outstanding scholar and an extraordinarily righteous man. His impact on Judaism was phenomenal.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was born in Dzyatlava in 1838 and was *niftar* in Radin in 1933. His many works continue to be widely influential in Jewish life worldwide. When he was ten years old, his father was *niftar*. His mother moved the family to Vilnius in order to continue her son’s education. His mother later remarried and moved to Radin. When Rav Yisrael Meir was seventeen, he married the daughter of his stepfather, and settled in Radin.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was a modest and humble man. He served as the town *Rav* of Radin for a short period. His distaste of the pulpit Rabbinat led him to resign from this position. For a while he had a shop selling household provisions, which his wife managed while he supervised the absolute accuracy of the weights and measures, the quality of the merchandise, and the fairness of the prices, to make certain that no one was deceived or overcharged in any way. He spent his days learning *Torah* and disseminating his knowledge to the common people. He later turned to teaching in order to support himself and his family. From 1864 to 1869 he taught *Talmud* in Minsk and Washilishok. In 1869, he organized a *Yeshiva* in Radin. The *Yeshiva* was a success and grew to world famous prominence. It later became known as *Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim* of Radin.

In addition to spreading *Torah* through his *Yeshiva*, the *Chofetz Chaim* was very active in Jewish causes. He traveled extensively to encourage the keeping of the *mitzvos* among Jews, totally disregarding his welfare. He became one of the most influential *Rabbonim* within Orthodox Judaism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, taking a central leadership role in the World *Agudas Yisrael* movement in Eastern Europe.

The *Chofetz Chaim* authored dozens of *seforim*, all which have been printed and disseminated by the tens of thousands. Most widely acclaimed is his *Mishna Berura*, a six-volume comprehensive commentary on *Shulchon Aruch Orach Chaim*, which has become the final arbiter in *Halacha*. His first *sefer*, published in 1873, deals with the biblical laws of gossip and slander and which in recent decades has gained worldwide popularity.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was a tremendous supporter of the Jewish community in *Eretz Yisrael* and a dear friend and admirer of Rav Shmuel Salant, the chief *Rav* of Yerushalayim. The *Chofetz Chaim* wielded great influence, particularly in Europe, and he used that authority to assist Rav Salant in maintaining the viability of Jewish settlement in *Eretz Yisrael* and its funding via the Rebbe Meir *Ba'al Hanes* Salant charity fund.

The *Chofetz Chaim* passed away in 1933 at the age of ninety-five. He was mourned by the entire Jewish world. Even the gentile world had held him in the greatest esteem. The New York Times of September 16, 1933 wrote a lengthy obituary lauding this legendary leader of world Jewry. Time magazine in its September 25, 1933 issue also published a brief but notable obituary as quoted here:

Died. Rav Yisrael Meir *HaKohen*, the *Chofetz Chaim*, the uncrowned spiritual "King of Yisrael". *Talmudic* scholar, venerated by the world's Orthodox Jewry as one of thirty-six saints whose piety dissuades the Lord from destroying the world; in Radin, near Wilno, Poland. Thousands of pilgrims sought his blessing in Radin where he founded a *Yeshiva* (Talmudic school). He was the *Chofetz Chaim* (Desiring Life) by virtue of his book of that name listing the forms of slander from which a pious Jew must refrain. A onetime storekeeper, he humbly closed his shop when his popularity diminished the trade of other storekeepers, living the rest of his life in poverty.

May the memory of the *Chofetz Chaim* be a blessing to all of *Klal Yisrael*.

www.rabbimeirbaalhaneis.com/Rabbi%20Yisrael%20Meir%20Kagan.asp

Rav Yisrael Salanter Poses a Question to the *Chofetz Chaim*

After the *Chofetz Chaim* completed his *sefer* on *loshon bora*, Rav Yisrael Salanter asked him, "Is there any value to your *sefer*, since realistically people will not be able to avoid the pitfalls of speaking *loshon bora* anyway?"

The *Chofetz Chaim* answered that if his *sefer* would successfully elicit a sigh of sadness from the heart of a Jew over his speaking *loshon bora*, all his toil and efforts in writing and publishing the *sefer* were worthwhile. (*B'Yad HaLoshon*)

www.revach.net/daily-reminder/zechiras-miriam/Rav-Yisroel-Salanter-Poses-a-Question-to-the-Chofetz-Chaim/2338

A Lesson From The Technological Revolution

The communication revolution started back in the days of the *Chofetz Chaim* when telegrams were the common way of quickly communicating important messages. However, it was not cheap and you paid per word. I remember the days when they were still used. Each word was written only after a lengthy *din v'cheshbon* to determine if it was really necessary or if it could be shortened. The few times that my parents received a telegram, the messages came out so cryptic that you needed to be a genius to decipher them.

This, says the *Chofetz Chaim*, (*Chovas HaShmira, Asara Devorim*) is a wonderful lesson in *Shmiras HaLoshon*. One day we will also give a *din v'chesbon* on each word...and the price will be far more than the most expensive telegram.

www.revach.net/daily-reminder/zechiras-miriam/A-Lesson-From-The-Technological-Revolution/3215

Chofetz Chaim - Will Your Plaque in The *Bais HaMikdash* Bring You Eternal Pride or Shame?

The *Chofetz Chaim* (*Shem Olam* 1:17) says that whoever helped build the second *Bais HaMikdash* is listed in *Sefer Nechemia* with details of their contribution. While these people acted from the goodness of their hearts, they were unaware that their contributions would be memorialized in *Tanach* and become part of *Torah Shebichsav!*

How sad it is, says the *Chofetz Chaim*, for the noblemen of Tekoa, who did not lend any assistance toward the building of the *Bais HaMikdash*. Just like their brethren who helped, they are also written in *Nechemia* as refusing to help in this great project. Because of a little laziness their names are exposed forever to all the people on earth and all the *Malochim* above as those who did not help. What they wouldn't give now to have this *pasuk* erased, says the *Chofetz Chaim*. But now it is too late and history cannot be rewritten.

All this was recorded in detail for the second *Bais HaMikdash*, which was only a temporary structure. What about the third *Bais HaMikdash* that will last forever? Surely every contribution will be recorded, says the *Chofetz Chaim*. While it is true that the third *Bais HaMikdash* will not be built by man but rather *Hashem* will build it from fire, this fire is from the *mitzvos* that we all perform. Each *mitzva* is a contribution to the building of the third *Bais HaMikdash* and each *aveira* obstructs its building.

Although no one truly knows our deeds and intentions now, when the third *Bais HaMikdash* is built the dedication list will be revealed. Those who contributed will stand proud (although surely upon receiving the honor will regret that they did not contribute even more), while those whose misdeeds obstructed the building will hide in shame for all eternity. What will be the most shameful of all are those who pretended to be builders with their outwardly good deeds but will be exposed as obstructors.

The *Bais HaMikdash* is going up fast and will soon be here. Hurry, as the deadline for dedications will close before you have secured the eternal glory you seek.

www.revach.net/galus-geula/moshiach/Chofetz-Chaim-Will-Your-Plaque-in-The-Bais-HaMikdash-Bring-You-Eternal-Pride-or-Shame/5244

If It Were the *Chofetz Chaim's Shabbos*

The *Chofetz Chaim* once traveled to another city, and the people of the city emerged to greet the *Godol HaDor*. Many wealthy men of the city were among those who came to greet the *Chofetz Chaim* and receive a *berocha*.

One wealthy man approached the *Chofetz Chaim* and gave him a sizable donation for *Yeshiva Radin*. The *Chofetz Chaim* grabbed the man's hand and began to cry bitterly, saying, "This hand gives *tzedoka* with such respect, and alas it is *mechallel* the *Shabbos!*" The *Chofetz Chaim* continued to hold the man's hand and cry, and the wealthy man's heart melted, and he too began crying bitterly.

The wealthy man said, "Rebbe, I promise you that from today I will keep the *Shabbos*. But please allow me to be able to perform *melocha* this coming *Shabbos* at least, so I can wrap up my affairs."

The *Chofetz Chaim* answered with great emotion, “My dear son, if it were my *Shabbos* I would be *mochel* you and allow you whatever you request, but it’s the *Shabbos* of *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*, the King of kings. I can’t allow even one moment of *chillul Shabbos*!

The wealthy man accepted the words of the *Chofetz Chaim*, and began keeping the *Shabbos* from that week, eventually becoming fully observant. (*Vekorosa LeShabbos Oneg*)

www.revach.net/shabbos/story/If-It-Were-The-Chofetz-Chaims-Shabbos/3894

A few anecdotes about the *Chofetz Chaim* from *Chofetz Chaim Al HaTorah*

It couldn’t hurt?

Once the *Chofetz Chaim* asked someone how he was doing and the latter answered, “It wouldn’t hurt if things were a little better.”

“How do you know it wouldn’t hurt?” admonished the *Chofetz Chaim*, and he continued, “*Hashem* knows better and He knows best; He is kind and merciful; He is *Rachum VeChanun* and always seeks to do better for us. If He is not giving you what you think would be better – that is a sign that it’s good as it is!”

Moving Up in Life

The *Chofetz Chaim* believed that there are two types of *yichus* (pedigree) that we can be proud of: *Torah* and poverty. How much more so did he value those who, in poverty, toiled in *Torah* despite deprivation. This can be illustrated by the following true story:

There was a wealthy local, who used to donate generously and support the poor and many *Torah* institutions. The amount of charity and kindness this Jew did cannot be written down. When the Communists took over and confiscated his property and wealth he was reduced to such dire poverty that he barely escaped to *Eretz Yisrael* with the clothes on his back, and not a penny to his name.

When the *Chofetz Chaim* heard this, he gave a lesson in *emuna* and *bitochon*, saying, “The custom is that whoever studies and passes exams earns a degree. A doctor who has earned his license to practice medicine naturally strives to rise through the ranks to eventually earn a PhD as a professor. This wealthy man has risen to the highest of heights; he has now become a poor man. I am confident that he will overcome this *nisoyon* (test) without complaining or rebelling; rather he will accept it with *simcha*.

Chains of Pain and Suffering

The *Chofetz Chaim* gave the following *moshol*:

Imagine a person who is imprisoned, with his feet and hands chained to prevent his escape. If the prisoner attempts to break the chains it won’t help. His feeble attempts to extricate himself against the iron chains cause him to strain, rolling and thrashing about in a useless struggle that leads nowhere. The chains cut deeper into his flesh; better that he should just accept his fate.

So too concerning someone who suffers: the *yisurim* he feels are like chains. If he struggles against them and fights them, will that free him? The pain and suffering will only be magnified! Wouldn’t it be better if he accepted that this is all from *Hashem*? This acceptance itself will heal him.

Worries

The *Chofetz Chaim* used to say:

Everyone has worries – better we should worry about *ruchniyus* (spiritual) matters and not have to worry about *gashmiyusdike* (physical) ones!

www.dailyzohar.com/tzadikim/76-Yisrael-Meir-HaKohen-Kagan

Once, a person with a certain sickness came to the *Chofetz Chaim* for a blessing. The *Chofetz Chaim* blessed him that he would have a complete *refua* but he made him promise not to reveal to anyone that he guaranteed his *refua*. After a few months, this person was healed completely.

Several years later, this fellow's brother-in-law contracted the same disease and he asked his sister to find out what happened that he was healed. The husband refused to say, since he had promised the *Chofetz Chaim* not to reveal the promise to anyone. After badgering her husband to reveal his secret, the fellow relented.

After several days, this fellow contracted the dreaded disease again. He ran to the *Chofetz Chaim* to ask forgiveness and to receive his blessing again. When he finally told the *Chofetz Chaim* the whole story, the *Chofetz Chaim* started to cry and told him that he could not help him. When the fellow inquired why that was so, the *Chofetz Chaim* replied, "When you came to me originally, I was a younger man. I undertook to fast many, many days in your *zechus* that you should become well. Unfortunately, I am a bit older and weaker and do not have the strength to undertake so many fasts anymore."



Yahrzeit 24th of Elul

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky was born in a small *shtetl* near Vilna. He learned in the Novardok *Yeshiva*, and received *semicha* at eighteen from Rav Yechiel Mechel Epstein, the *Aruch HaShulchan*. Later he learned in Telz and in the Ramailles *Yeshiva* in Vilna.

Later, Rav Yisrael Yehonoson Yerushalemsky, *Rav* of Ihman, took him as a son-in-law. In his father-in-law's home he advanced in *boro'a* while continuing to learn in depth under Rav Chaim Brisker.

For a while he served as a *Ra"m* in the Lubavitcher *Yeshiva*; from there he went on to become a *Rav* in Smuliyon, and then in Smulevitch, near Minsk, where he stayed nine years. In 5683/1923 he became *Rav* in the city of Slutzk.

Slutzk, in Belarus, was already under Communist control. With *mesirus nefesh* Rav Yechezkel openly practiced *Yiddishkeit*, encouraging his flock and leading the charge. The Russians, unable to swallow the "brazen acts" of the *Rav*, exiled him to Siberia, where he suffered for two difficult years. Only after intense *bishtadlus* by many *Gedolim* was he freed, and told to leave the country.

He traveled to London, where he became *Rav* of the Machzikei HaDas *kehilla*. Later he became *Rosh Bais Din* in London.

In 5711/1951 he reached *Eretz Yisrael* and settled in Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim. Despite his advanced age, he traveled weekly to Bnei Brak to deliver *shiurim* in *Yeshivas Slabodka*.

His widely acclaimed *sefer, Chazon Yechezkel* on the *Tosefta*, was hailed by *Torah* leaders as a magnificent illumination of an area of *Torah* that had previously been obscure because of the many difficult passages it contained. He undertook this monumental task in response to a simple comment made by Rav Chaim Brisker that the available version of the *Tosefta* was full of errors. He also produced *Dinei Momonos* and other *seforim*.

Rav Yechezkel was *niftar* at the age of ninety on the 24th of *Elul* 5736/1976.

Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.

www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-24-elulseptember-19/



Yahrzeit 25th of Elul

The Tanna Rav Elozor

Fifth-generation *Tanna*, son of the great *Tanna* Rav Shimon bar Yochai and a colleague of Rav Yehuda *HaNossi*.

Rav Elozor is mentioned in the *Mishna* three times (*Beitzta* 4:5; *Temura* 4:4; *Nego'im* 12:2), but several anonymous *mishnayos* have been ascribed to him (*Chulin* 30a, *Bechoros* 51b). He is frequently mentioned in *beraisos*, *Tosefta* (especially those of *Zevachim* and *Menochos*), Babylonian *Talmud*, Jerusalem *Talmud*, and a few Aggadic teachings. He engaged in debates and discussions with Rav Yehuda *HaNossi* (*Bava Metzria* 84b), Rav Yose, Rav Meir and Rav Yehuda (*Sota* 34a; *Rosh HaShana* 4b).

Rav Elozor and his father Rav Shimon *bar* Yochai escaped from the Romans by hiding in a cave for thirteen years. He participated with his father in the authorship of the *Zohar*, and a considerable number of teachings are ascribed to him.

Rav Elozor was very strong and heavy, and he had a large appetite (*Pesikta d' Rav Kahana* 90:2; 91:2).

Rav Elozor accepted under compulsion a position in the Roman administration as an official responsible for the apprehension of thieves. This aroused the opposition of the sages, including Rav Yehuda *ben* Korcha, his teacher, who reprimanded him by saying, "Vinegar, the son of wine! How long will you continue to hand over the people of our G-d to be killed?" Rav Elozor responded, "I am pruning the thorns from the vineyard." Rav Yehoshua *ben* Korcha returned, "Let the Master of the vineyard come to prune His thorns." (*Bava Metzria* 83b)

He was once worried that he turned somebody over to the government unjustly, so he prayed that he should be afflicted with suffering. Every evening he called for afflictions, "Come unto me, my brothers and friends," and in the morning he sent them away so that he would be able to study *Torah*. He became so afflicted that every morning they removed sixty basins of blood from him. His wife prepared sixty kinds of "pap" (meals made of figs) every day to heal him. When his wife discovered that he was requesting the suffering, she was annoyed that he had caused her so much trouble and expense, for all the money that she received from her father she spent on remedies for his illness. She left him and went to her father's house.

In the meantime, a storm had arisen at sea and a boat coming from Rav Elozor's town was in danger of sinking. The sailors began praying, and they finally cried out in desperation, "Save us, O God, for the sake

of Rav Elozor *ben* Rav Shimon...” The storm subsided, and when the sailors reached land they visited Rav Elozor and presented him with sixty slaves, each bearing sixty purses of money. They also prepared sixty kinds of pap, which he ate and was healed. One day his wife sent her daughter to see how Rav Elozor was faring. Rav Elozor told his daughter, “Go and tell your mother that I am richer than her parents,” whereupon his wife returned to him. When he recovered and went to the *Bais Medrash*, they brought before him sixty specimens of blood, and he purified them all and declared all of them clean. The other sages wondered whether it was possible that there was no doubt about a single one of the specimens. Rav Elozor responded, “If it is not as I said, then let there be at least one female among them.” All the children born were males, and they were named “Elozor” after him.

Before he passed away he told his wife, “I know that the sages are angry with me [for turning over many of their relatives] and they may not attend my funeral. You shall leave me in the attic and do not be afraid of me.” She followed his wishes and kept him in the attic for eighteen to twenty years after his *petira*. She would ascend to the attic every day to examine his hair and would not find anything. When one day a hair fell out, blood was visible. She once found a worm in his ear and was upset, until he appeared to her that night in a dream and told her, “It is nothing to be upset about, for this is a punishment for my having allowed a young scholar to be insulted in my presence...”

After his *petira*, whenever two people came to his house for a lawsuit, they would stand at the door and state their cases. A voice would then issue from the attic: “You, *ploni*, are just/unjust with your claims.” A neighbor once said to Rav Elozor’s wife during a quarrel, “Let her be like her husband, who was not worthy of burial!” When the sages heard of this, they said that it was an insult to the deceased and he must be buried. According to others, Rav Shimon *bar* Yochai, Rav Elozor’s father, appeared to the sages in a dream and said, “There is a young pigeon among you and you are neglecting to bring it to me.” When the sages went to bury him, the people of Achbarin refused to give them the body, because as long as his body was in the attic no wild beast had ever come to the city. On *Erev Yom Kippur*, when the townspeople were busy, the sages hired some men from the neighboring village of Biri to remove Rav Elozor’s body. The sages brought him to his father’s cave in Meron to be buried.

Rav Elozor was married to the daughter of Rav Shimon *ben* Yose *ben* Lekunya. He had a daughter and a son. His son Yose almost turned to a life of crime. Rav Yehuda *HaNossi*, however, placed him under the care of Rav Shimon *ben* Yose *ben* Lekunya, and the boy eventually became a talmid of Rav Yehuda *HaNossi*. After Rav Elozor was niftar, Rav Yehuda *HaNossi* wanted to marry his widow. She refused, saying, “May a vessel that was used by a holy one be used by an ordinary one?” Rav Yehuda *HaNossi* responded, “Allowing that he was greater than I in *Torah*, was he superior to me in good deeds?” She answered, “I do not know if he was greater than you in *Torah*, but in deeds I do know, for he accepted suffering on himself” (*Bava Metzja* 84b).

May the merit of the *Tzaddik* Rav Elozor protect us all – *Amen*.



Yahrzeit 25th of Elul
Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov

Chassidic leader, *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*.

Rav Yechiel Michel's father, Rav Yitzchok of Drohobitch, initially an opponent of *Chassidus*, became an ardent admirer of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. Young Yechiel Michel received instruction from the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, becoming one of his most prominent *talmidim*. After the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* passing, Rav Yechiel Michel became a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. A master of homiletics and a spellbinding orator, he was a highly sought-after preacher and lecturer.

The Zlotchover *Maggid* was largely responsible for introducing *Chassidus* to the Jews of Galicia. He suffered much from the *Misnagdim* who opposed the "new sect", judging it dangerous and heretical. In the wake of excommunication and book burnings directed against *Chassidim*, he was forced to move from town to town, serving as *Maggid* in the Galician communities of Brody, Alek and Zlotchov, finally finding refuge in Yampol in Volhynia, the cradle of *Chassidus*.

Rav Yechiel Michel had one daughter and five sons, all eminent *Torah* scholars. *Chassidim* call them the *Maggid's* five *Chumoshim* (Books of the *Torah*). Although he did not write any *seforim* himself, his thoughts and perspectives have been compiled into a work entitled *Mayim Rabim*. He founded a multi-branched dynasty and had numerous prestigious *talmidim*, foremost among them Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heshel of Apta, also known as the *Oheiv Yisrael*, and Rav Mordechai of Neshchiz, known as the *Rishpei Eish*.

May the merit of the *Tzaddik* Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov protect us all – *Amen*.

A Pound of Candles

In his youth, the famed *Maggid* of Zlotchov, Rav Yechiel Michel, lived in a certain town, where he would sit all day in the local *Bais Medrash* (study hall and *shul*) and pursue his studies.

In that town there lived a simple Jew who earned his livelihood by transporting travelers and merchandise in his wagon. One day, the wagon driver came to the local *Rav* in a state of great distress. "Help me, *Rebbe!*" he wept. "I have committed a terrible sin. I have desecrated the holy *Shabbos*. How can I atone for my transgression?"

"How did this come to pass?" asked the *Rav*.

"Last Friday," the man explained, "I was returning from the marketplace with a wagonload of merchandise when I lost my way in the forest. By the time I found my way to the outskirts of the city, the sun had already set. So preoccupied was I with my worry over the merchandise, that I failed to realize that the *Shabbos* had arrived until it was too late..."

Seeing how broken-hearted the man was, the *Rav* comforted him and said: "My son, the gates of repentance are never closed. Donate a pound of candles to the *shul* and your transgression will be forgiven."

The young prodigy, Rav Michel, overheard this exchange, and was displeased by the *Rav's* approach. "A pound of candles to atone for violating the *Shabbos*?" he thought to himself. "The *Shabbos* is one of the most important *mitzvos* of the *Torah*. Why is the *Rav* treating the matter so lightly?"

That Friday afternoon, the wagon driver brought the candles to the *shul*. As Rav Michel watched disapprovingly from his table against the back wall, he placed them on the lectern for the *shul* beadle to light in honor of the *Shabbos*. But this was not to be. Before the beadle arrived, a stray dog carried off the candles and ate them.

The distraught penitent ran to report the incident to the *Rav*. “Woe is me!” he wept. “My repentance has been rejected in Heaven! What shall I do?!”

“You’re making too much of the matter,” the *Rav* reassured him. “These things happen -- there’s no reason to deduce that *Hashem* is rejecting your repentance. Bring another pound of candles to the *shul* next week, and everything will be alright.”

But when the beadle lit the candles on the following Friday afternoon, they inexplicably melted down, so that by the time *Shabbos* commenced, nothing was left of them. And upon his third attempt on the week after that, a strong wind suddenly blew out the candles just when *Shabbos* began and it was not possible to relight them.

The *Rav*, too, realized, that something was amiss, and advised the wagon driver to seek the counsel of the great *Chassidic* master, *Rav Yisrael Ba’al Shem Tov*.

“Hmm...” said the *Ba’al Shem Tov*, upon hearing the man’s story. “It seems that a certain young scholar in your town finds fault with the path to repentance that the *Rav* has prescribed for you. Never mind. Next week, donate another pound of candles to the *shul*. This time, I promise you that everything will be alright. And tell *Rav Michel* that I would be honored if he could trouble himself to come visit me.”

Rav Michel wasted no time in abiding by the *Ba’al Shem Tov*’s request. But no sooner had he and his coachman set out that all sorts of troubles beset their journey. First, the wagon tumbled into a ditch. Then, an axle broke many miles from the nearest town, after which they lost their way altogether. When they finally found the road to *Mezhibuzh*, it was late Friday afternoon and the sun was about to set. They were forced to abandon the wagon and continue on foot.

Rav Michel arrived at the *Ba’al Shem Tov*’s door an hour into *Shabbos*, weary and traumatized by his near-violation of the holy day. “Good *Shabbos*, *Rav Michel*,” the *Ba’al Shem Tov* greeted him, “come in and warm yourself by the fire. You, *Rav Michel*, have never tasted sin, so you did not comprehend the remorse a Jew feels at having transgressed the will of his Father in Heaven. I trust that you now understand something of the agony that our friend experienced. Believe me, his remorse alone more than atoned for his unwitting transgression...”
By *Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin* From *Rav S.Y. Zevin’s Sippurei Chassidim*; translation/adaptation by *Yanki Tauber*
www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/39769/jewish/A-Pound-of-Candles.htm

The *Ba’al Shem Tov* in Heaven

By: *Yitzchok Buxbaum*

Rav Yechiel Michel of *Zlotchov* was one of the greatest *talmidim* of *Rav Yisrael Ba’al Shem Tov*, the founder of *Chassidus*. Many years after the *Ba’al Shem Tov*’s passing, *Rav Yechiel Michel*’s young son *Yosef* became critically ill, and his condition steadily deteriorated until he was on the verge of death. Just then, news reached *Rav Michel* that opponents of the *Ba’al Shem Tov* were planning to burn the *Chassidic* book *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* (“The Generations of *Yaakov Yosef*”) in a certain city. This book, written by another great *talmid* of the *Ba’al Shem Tov*, *Rav Yaakov Yosef* of *Polnoye*, was the first *sefer*, and at that time the only one, that contained the teachings of the *Ba’al Shem Tov*.

Rav Yechiel Michel realized that this was an attempt to suppress the new *Chassidic* movement, and that the situation was urgent. He decided to travel to that city and try to prevent this terrible desecration. He instructed his family that if (G-d forbid) his son died when he was gone, they should delay the burial until he returned home. Shortly after he left, *Yosef* entered a deep coma. He seemed to have stopped breathing, and they thought he was dead, but they delayed his burial as they were told. After three days, however, *Yosef* began to perspire. He opened his eyes and told this story:

“When I went into the coma, I felt my soul leave my body. Immediately, an angel came to take me to a certain heavenly palace. Since the angel was not permitted to enter that palace, I entered alone and stood by the door. Inside, the heavenly court was in session, and I saw two angels arrive with a book that contained a record of all my sins. It was so large and heavy that it was difficult for them to carry. As I looked on, another angel came with a thin book of my good deeds, but they were not equal to the sins, which outweighed them. Then a third book was brought in, of my sufferings, and they caused many of my sins to be erased. Nevertheless, because of the sins that remained, the court decided to condemn me to die from my illness, and they were about to pronounce the sentence and write the decree.

“At that moment, my father – who had made a soul-ascent to protest before the heavenly court – came to that palace, entering with a commotion and loudly complaining about those who wanted to burn the book with the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* teachings. He vigorously protested, saying, ‘It will be a terrible *chillul Hashem* (desecration of the divine name) if it's burned. It can't be allowed!’

“Just then, my father noticed me standing near the door, and said, ‘Yosef, why are you here?’

“‘Father, I don't know,’ I said. ‘But please speak to the court on my behalf.’

“‘I certainly will,’ my father answered. Then he continued to protest about the book burning as before, and pleaded passionately that it not be permitted.

“But the court answered, ‘This matter belongs to a higher jurisdiction,’ – because in Heaven there are higher and higher courts, one above the other—an appellate court, a supreme court, and so on. My father then left to make an appeal to a higher court, and completely forgot about me.

“I stood near the door, worried and troubled. Not long after this, Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye also made a soul-ascent and came to that heavenly palace where the court was sitting. He entered, and also shouted and pleaded while weeping, complaining about those who wanted to burn his book. Then he noticed his friend's son standing by the door, and said, ‘Yosef, why are you here?’

“‘*Rebbe*, I don't know,’ I said. ‘But please speak to the court on my behalf.’

“‘I'll certainly say something on your behalf,’ said Rav Yaakov Yosef. The court then told him too that the issue of the book was a matter for a higher court. Rav Yaakov Yosef immediately left to appeal to the higher court, and totally forgot about me. I, meanwhile, continued to stand there worried and troubled, because I had no one to help me or to be my advocate.

“Suddenly, there was such a great commotion that all the worlds trembled, and a proclamation echoed throughout the heavens: ‘Make way, make way; the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov* is entering the palace!’ (The *Ba'al Shem Tov*, as we said, had already passed away and was in the other world.) As soon as the *Ba'al Shem Tov* came in, he saw me standing alone by the door, and said, ‘Yosef, why are you here?’

“‘Holy *Rebbe*, I don't know,’ I said. ‘Could you please speak to the court on my behalf?’

“‘I certainly will,’ said the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, and he immediately went and spoke to the court about me, asking them to dismiss my case and let me go in peace. He then returned to me and said, ‘You can leave now and go home.’

“By this time, I was curious about what would happen in Heaven, and wanted to stay a little longer to see what the *Ba'al Shem Tov* would do there. But two burly angels immediately came, took me under the arms and escorted me out. They then took me down, down, down, to the lower world, until I saw a repulsive corpse

lying on the floor, for my family, thinking I was dead, had taken me off the bed and put me on the floor with my feet pointed toward the door, according to custom. And the angels said, 'Enter that corpse! – they wanted me to return to my body. But I was disgusted by the body and the suffering in this world, and absolutely refused. I cried and pleaded with them, but they forced me to enter against my will. Then I began to perspire, opened my eyes, and am telling you this story.'"

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/357534/jewish/The-Baal-Shem-Tov-in-Heaven.htm

Keeping the Law

Disciples asked the *Maggid* of Zlotchov: "In the *Talmud* we read that Avrohom *Avinu* kept all the laws. How could this be, since they had not yet been given to him?"

"All that is needful," he replied, "is to love *Hashem*. If you are about to do something and you think it might lessen your love, you will know it is sin. If you are about to do something and you think it will increase your love, you will know that your will is in keeping with the will of *Hashem*. That is what Avrohom *Avinu* did."



Yahrzeit 26th of Elul

Rav Chaim Pinto

Chief *Rav* of the Jewish community of Mogador, Mekubol ~ A man of wonders and miracles during his lifetime, and for those who visit his gravesite.

In the days before *Pesach*, a stranger was seen wandering through the streets of Mogador in Morocco. Even though he was dressed in rags, he did not look like a beggar, and from the fringes on the garment he was wearing it was clear that he was a Jew.

Some of Rav Chaim Pinto's *talmidim* wondered about this man when they saw him in the city market. And when they returned to the *Yeshiva*, they told the *Rav* about him. Rav Pinto had them describe the man in great detail. Then he asked them if the man had looked happy or sad. They told the *Rav* that he had looked terribly sad. Indeed, just looking at his face made them sad as well.

Now, *Pesach* is a time to remember the poor, and it was Rav Pinto's custom to invite the poor Jews of the city to his *Seder*. So on the eve of *Pesach* he sent his *talmidim* into the city to bring back all the poor Jews they could find. He told them to search especially for the stranger they had told him about and to be sure that he came back with them.

The *Rav's* *talmidim* searched every corner of the city for the poor, who were delighted to learn that they would have a place to celebrate the first night of *Pesach*. But when the *talmidim* finally found the stranger, he was sitting alone under a barren tree, and he refused to accompany them to the *Rav's* *Seder*. "For you it is the holiday of *Pesach*," he said, "but for me it is a time of mourning." The *talmidim* did their best to persuade him, but in the end they returned empty-handed.

Now, when they told Rav Pinto that the man had refused their invitation, the *Rav* said, “If you can’t convince him to come here, whisper this word in his ear...” and he whispered it to each of his *talmidim*. So the *talmidim* returned to the stranger, still sitting under the tree, and they tried once more to invite him to join the *Rav*’s *Seder*. Again he refused, but this time one of the *talmidim* whispered the *Rav*’s word into the man’s ear. And as soon as he heard it, the man’s eyes opened wide. He stood up and agreed to accompany them at once.

When that Jew arrived at the *Rav*’s house, he was greeted warmly by Rav Pinto. The man returned the *Rav*’s greetings, and then he asked, “How is it, *Rav*, that you knew the name of the ship that brought about my misfortune?”

“Join our *Seder*,” Rav Pinto replied, “and you will understand how it became known to me. For now, please make yourself at home. I will have a bath prepared for you, and my *talmidim* will give you fresh clothing.”

The man thanked the *Rav*, but he was still curious about how he had known his secret.

That night, when everyone was seated at the *Seder*, Rav Pinto introduced the guest and asked him to tell the others his story. This he did. “I was born in the city of Marrakesh,” he said, “and I traveled to Spain and worked there until I became quite wealthy. After several years, I began to miss my native land of Morocco, and thought about returning there to raise a family. With all that I had saved, I bought precious jewels.

“There was a widow whom I befriended. When she learned I was planning to return to Morocco, where her daughter lives, she asked me to bring her daughter her rightful inheritance, jewels that had belonged to her father. I agreed to do so, and I carried everything in a wooden case. But when a storm sank the ship in which I was traveling, the case was lost at sea. Somehow I managed to grab a plank and reached the shores of this city a few weeks ago. I know that I am fortunate to be alive, but after all these years, I have nothing. Even so, that is not what grieves me the most. Above all, I am heartbroken that I cannot fulfill my mission for the widow.”

Now, when all those seated at the *Seder* heard this story, their hearts went out to the poor man who had suffered such a misfortune. Among them, there was one beautiful young woman who had tears flowing down her face. And when the man saw her grief, he, too, broke down and wept.

Rav Pinto said, “Do not grieve as we celebrate the *Seder*, but watch closely.” He pointed to the *Kiddush* cup, which was filled with wine, and made a pronouncement over it. That pronouncement called forth Rahab, the Angel of the Sea.

Just then everyone at the table heard a deep voice say, “Yes, Rav Pinto, what is your command?” They trembled with fear, for they could not see where the voice was coming from. Then the *Rav* said, “I call upon you, Rahab, Prince of the Sea, for help in finding what has been lost.” Suddenly, to everyone’s amazement, the *Kiddush* cup began to grow larger and larger, and the wine in it was transformed into the waves of the sea. One after the other the waves rose and fell and eventually they cast up a small wooden case, which floated on the surface. The guest could hardly contain himself. “Master, that is my case!” he cried.

“Take it out!” said Rav Pinto. So the man reached into the enormous cup, took out the wooden case and set it on the table. At that instant the cup returned to its original size, and the waters in it became wine once more.

As everyone watched in awe, the man opened the case and saw that nothing was missing. He shed tears of joy. Then Rav Pinto said to him, “Now, let me introduce you to the widow’s daughter to whom you were delivering the jewels.” At that, the young woman who had wept at hearing the man’s tale stood up with a radiant smile and the man almost fainted with surprise. When he had regained his composure, he picked up the

wooden case and placed it in her hands, much to the delight of everyone present. Then Rav Pinto smiled and said, “Know that nothing happens by accident. All is foretold by the Holy One, blessed be He, as is your meeting here today, for now I can tell you that I heard a Heavenly voice announce that you two are destined to marry.”

So it was that everyone celebrated that *Seder* with great happiness, and not long after, the couple was wed. From then on, every *Pesach*, when they filled the *Kiddush* cup, they told the story of Rav Pinto and the wine cup that had changed their lives.

May the merit of the *Tzaddik* Rav Chaim Pinto protect us all – *Amen*.



Yahrzeit 27th of Elul

Rav Nosson Adler

Leaving Greatness in His Wake

Sometimes it is hard to recognize true greatness. Sometimes a *nesboma* descends from such a lofty place in *Shamayim* that it never really lands on earth. It doesn't adjust to life in this world. Its unconventional ways alienate the people around it, and it ends up spending its time here distanced from the masses known as humanity. Such a *nesboma* was Rav Nosson Adler.

Rav Nosson Adler had many *talmidim*. Famous among them through his devotion to his great *Rav* through thick and thin, was the *Chasam Sofer*, Rav Moshe Sofer. Upon his *Rav's* command he cut off his relationship with his father, and later even left his hometown of Frankfurt upon his *Rav's* command. Later, after he returned and Rav Nosson Adler's feud with the *Kehilla* reached its breaking point, the *Chasam Sofer* left Frankfurt together with his *Rav* who was appointed *Rav* of Boskowitz, and the *Chasam Sofer* never returned to Frankfurt.

Rav Nosson Adler was born in Frankfurt in 5502/1741. When he was a mere ten years old, the *Chida*, Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai, who was in Frankfurt collecting money for *Eretz Yisrael*, said about him the famous words that the *Isha HaShunamis* said about Elisha: “I now know that there is a holy man of *Hashem* among us.” His main *Rebbe* was Rav Dovid Tevele Shiff who later became the chief *Rav* of England. He also learned under Rav Yaakov Shimon *HaKohen*, a *talmid* of the *Pnei Yehoshua*.

Rav Nosson Adler was a *Mekubol* and formed a group around him to conduct himself *Al Pi Kabbola*. He davened with *Sefardi Havara* (pronunciation), and in his *minyán* they did *Bircas Kohanim* every day. Because of these customs and because their use of *Kabbola* was making the community at large fearful, in 1779 the *Rabbonim* gave him an ultimatum either to disband this group or be put into *cheirem*. Rav Nosson Adler ignored this challenge to his ways and openly went against the *Kehilla*.

In 1782 Rav Nosson Adler became *Rav* of Boskowitz but there as well there were people who could not get used to his ways. He was ultimately forced to leave after three years and returned to Frankfurt. After four more years in Frankfurt with little change, Rav Nosson Adler was put into *cheirem* that lasted until shortly before his *petira* in 1800.

Rav Nosson Adler did not leave behind any children. His only daughter, the light of his life, was *niftar* when she was twelve years old, while he was serving in Boskowitz. The *Chasam Sofer* relates that Rav Nosson

Adler did not complain and accepted the decree with great *simcha*. However, he relates, the *Shabbos* during the *shiva* when he was called for *Maftir*, a single tear escaped his eyes during the reading of the *Haftora*. He quickly wiped it and returned to his happy self without a trace of sadness.

His life and his ways were shrouded in mysticism, allowing only the greatest of the great to understand his lofty level. He did not leave behind any *seforim*, although a *sefer* was published from the cryptic notes in the margin of his *Mishnayos*. Aside from his legacy that is hard to relate to, he left the world a precious treasure in his *talmid* the *Chasam Sofer*. In this world, that is how we know and remember him. But in *Shomayim* he is known for so much more.

Yebi Zichro Boruch!

www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/Rav-Nosson-Adler-Leaving-Greatness-In-His-Wake/4081

Rav Nosson Adler Dances for The Donkey

One cold winter day, the *Gaon*, Rav Nosson Adler, was traveling together with his esteemed *talmid*, the *Chasam Sofer*. The horses pulling the wagon were trudging through the heavy snow with great difficulty. Suddenly, one of the horses collapsed and died, and the second horse was not strong enough to pull the wagon alone. The wagon driver, having no other choice, starting walking to the nearest village to obtain an additional horse. The two venerated passengers waited in the wagon.

Eventually, the wagon driver returned, leading a...donkey. When Rav Nosson saw the donkey, he descended from the wagon, and began to dance happily in the snow. “*Rebbe,*” asked the *Chasam Sofer*, “Why are you so happy?”

“Don’t you see?” asked Rav Nosson. “The wagon driver brought a donkey instead of a horse. Who would ever have thought that I would merit fulfilling the *mitzva* of “Do not plow with an ox and donkey together”? At home in Frankfurt, I never imagined that I would merit fulfilling this commandment. Now that *Boruch Hashem*, I merited it, I am filled with joy!”

The passengers instructed the wagon driver to return the donkey, and he brought back a horse in its place. (*Ukarasa Lashabbos Oneg*)

Rav Nosson Adler’s powerful memory was truly phenomenal. All that he ever learned remained indelibly etched into his mind to the end of his days.

Due to this he never allowed himself to commit his *chiddushim* to writing. Rav Nosson maintained that the *beter* to write that which is really part of the Oral *Torah* is only based on the fact that *Chazal* saw the power of forgetting as a threat to passing the *Torah* down from one generation to the next. If so, since he himself never forgot, the permission to write did not include him.

Any novellae we have of his, therefore, were written by his *talmidim*, particularly his *talmid muvhok*, the *Chasam Sofer*.

His *talmidim* related that in his old age, Rav Nosson Adler was testing a *talmid* on his learning. In the middle it seemed to the young *talmid* that the elderly *Rav* was falling asleep and he took the opportunity to skip one *Rashi* and so to finish faster. Immediately, Rav Nosson prompted him on the piece he had skipped.

Rav Nosson's *derech halimud* was a style that everyone soon learned to recognize. He would always repeat the *Mishnayos* and lay out in order the words of the *Gemora* and *Rishonim* according to the *Mishna*. He would then learn the *Mishna* with the *Gemora*, the *Rif*, the *Rambam*, the *Mordechai* and the *Shulchon Aruch*.

Once when the *Rav* was traveling through Prague, the *Gedolim* of that city, having heard of his *derech halimud* and unusual memory, gathered to hear him. During their learning, one of the *Talmidei Chochomim* wanted to point out that the *Rav* had forgotten to mention the words of the *Mordechai*. Without a stop, Rav Nosson turned aside to the man and explained, "The words of the *Mordechai* in this *Mishna* are not his own. It was a mistaken *talmid* who wrote them" – and continued learning.

He would humbly accord the greatest respect to any *Talmid Chochom* who chanced to be a guest at his house, which was open to all.

Upon hearing that the *Shaagas Arye* had begun a self-imposed *golus*, wandering from place to place together with his *Rebbetzin*, Rav Nosson went to the attendant of the public guest house with a request: If he noticed a *Talmid Chochom* with his wife he should notify the *Rav*. Chances were that this would be the *Shaagas Arye* and it would not be fitting to accommodate him in the public guesthouse.

It was late one night, when a strange couple arrived at the guesthouse. Still, before they retired, the man began to study by the light of a candle. The other residents – a group of simple people – began to protest, claiming that the newcomer was disturbing their sleep, though he had been almost hidden in a corner. The man promptly rose and went outside to learn the rest of the night by the light of the moon.

Daybreak came and the attendant was astonished to behold the newly arrived guest breaking out in an ecstatic dance. As his wife looked on he said to her, "If you only understood the *chiddushim* that were revealed to me this past night, you too would dance for joy."

All at once the attendant recalled the instructions of Rav Nosson Adler. This must be the *Shaagas Arye*, he realized, and rushed to call the *Rav*.

A long *Torah* conversation confirmed the surmise of the attendant. Rav Nosson invited the illustrious *Rav* and his *Rebbetzin* to his home. However, once they were there, he had a new suggestion. Rav Nosson told the *Shaagas Arye* that in his opinion it did not befit a giant of the *Shaagas Arye's* stature to wander around. Rather, he should take on a position as *Rosh Yeshiva* or even *Rabbonus*.

"Where?" asked the *Shaagas Arye*.

Turning to a nearby closet, Rav Nosson withdrew a *Ksav Rabbonus* he had received from the Jewish community in Metz and sat down to write a letter.

"Regarding your letter in which you requested that I become *Rav* of Metz, I would like to recommend a certain *Talmid Chochom* who is erudite in the entire *Torah* and is far better suited to the position than I."

It was only a matter of days before a reply arrived from Metz, stating that since the *Rav* recommended this man so highly they were enclosing a *Ksav Rabbonus* for him! And that is how the *Shaagas Arye* came to be *Rav* of Metz.

In the moving *hesped* that the holy *Chasam Sofer* wrote about his *Rebbe*, he related that although no one notified him of his *Rebbe's* passing, he had a strange dream, wherein he beheld a *Sefer Torah* wrapped in a black cover. "I wondered in the dream why the *Sefer Torah* was wrapped in black, until I was told that the *Sefer Torah* was burning, (which meant) that my *Rebbe* had ascended to the heavens."

The *hesped* relates further what happened when a fire broke out in the Judengasse in Frankfurt. Hungry flames licked at the houses, easily devouring everything in their path. It was only after the flames had been doused and the panic had somewhat subsided that the *Yidden* could take stock of the *neis* that had occurred. The buildings on either side of Rav Nosson's house and those opposite had all been destroyed, while the Rav's house stood out unscathed – literally “an ember saved from the flames”.

Furthermore, Rav Nosson Adler had been engrossed in *tefilla* when the fire broke out. Wrapped in his *tallis* and *tefillin*, he did not react at all to the commotion around, but continued his *tefillos* uninterrupted.

The *Chasam Sofer* also gives us an exceptional depiction of Rav Nosson Adler's absolute self-control. When his only daughter passed away at a young age, the bereaved father accepted the heavenly decree with love and did not cry. Only when he was called up to the *Torah* for *Maftir*, and then read the *Haftora* did he allow one single tear to escape his eye, after which he never referred to the tragedy again.

On another occasion, the *Chasam Sofer* retold his *talmidim* of the seemingly magical powers of his *Rebbe*, which was, in fact, his *koach haTorah*.

A slanderer once informed the government that Rav Nosson Adler was in possession of a lot of illegal gold and silver. Soon, his studies were interrupted by a rude, loud knocking on the door. The government's agents had come to search the premises. His *talmidim* panicked – and rightly so, for the *Sefer Torah* of Rav Nosson was adorned with exquisite and valuable *klei kodesh*.

Rav Nosson, however, kept his calm demeanor and instructed the *Chasam Sofer*, then a young *bochur*, to hold the *sefer Torah* with all its silver and to stay still.

The agents made their way through the house doing a thorough search, but found nothing.

“The fact that my master and teacher could turn me and the *Sefer Torah* into someone that sees but is not seen is not new to me,” recalled the *Chasam Sofer* later, but the *chiddush* was that he endangered himself by using the *koach hakedusha* all for the sake of the *Sefer Torah*.

When the *Chasam Sofer* was in Pressburg, a poor man came to the door begging for alms. Upon his departure, the *Chasam Sofer* broke out into a happy smile. When his *talmidim* asked the reason for his joy, the *Chasam Sofer* replied:

“You surely know that my great master and *Rebbe* suffered because of many Jews who sought to degrade him, which caused me much pain. Seeing this, my *Rebbe* once reassured me, ‘Don't worry, in the end, each of my enemies will come to your door to ask your favor.’ The one you saw here today was the last of my *Rebbe's* oppressors.”

www.chareidi.org/archives5774/yomkippur/fsradlerykr74.htm



Yahrzeit 27th of Elul *Rav Sholom Roke'ach,*

the Sar Sholom of Belz



The *Sar Sholom* could trace his ancestry to the great *Gaon*, Rav Eliezer of Amsterdam, *mechaber* of *Ma'aseh Roke'ach*. Orphaned at a young age, he was brought up by his uncle, Rav Yissochor Ber, the *Rav* of Skol, under whose tutelage he studied *Talmud* and *Halocho* with great intensity. The fire of his *Chassidus* was nurtured by his mentors, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, Rav Yehoshua Heschel of Apta, the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz and Rav Uri of Strelisk.

After his marriage, he devoted a thousand days and nights to the uninterrupted study of both the revealed and *kabbalistic Torah*, emerging as a recognized scholar of eminent stature. Young *talmidim* and accomplished scholars flocked to him in even larger numbers, to see and to learn, foremost among these the renowned Rav Shlomo Kluger of Brody. In Belz, Rav Sholom blazed a new trail: the fusion of excellence in *Torah* scholarship with the burning mystical zeal of *Chassidus*. Since the beginnings of the movement, the *Misnagdim* had accused *Chassidim* of devoting too much time to joyous celebrations in fellowship with their *Rebbs*, at the expense of *Torah* study, which is the bedrock of Judaism. By stressing the overriding importance of in-depth *Torah* study, the Belzer *Rebbe* removed the stigma of superficiality that had plagued *Chassidus*.

He did not commit any of his discourses to writing. They were recorded from the memories of his followers, who collected and published them: *Rav Sholom of Belz Al HaTorah* (Hebrew).

Rav Sholom of Belz, also called the *Sar Sholom*, erected a magnificent *Yeshiva* and study hall in Belz that became the spiritual center for tens of thousands of Belzer *Chassidim* in Galicia. He was succeeded by his illustrious son, Rav Yehoshua. In the 1940s, the Nazi persecutions all but wiped out the splendor that was Belz. After the Holocaust, the disconsolate scattered remnants of Belzer *Chassidus*, under the leadership of the surviving scion of the Belz dynasty, the young Rav Yissochor Dov, miraculously restored the former grandeur of Belz. Today, the glorious new Belzer *Yeshiva* building graces the Yerushalayim skyline, and Belzer centers of learning can be found in every major city in America, *Eretz* Yisrael and Europe, teeming with thousands of eager young *talmidim* and mature scholars. Indeed, with the help of *Hashem*, Belz has risen from despair and is now carrying on the traditions of *Torah* and *Chassidus* of the first Belzer *Rebbe*, the *Sar Sholom*.

Reading the *Purim Megilla*

Once when Rav Sholom, before gaining prominence, visited the *Chozeh* of Lublin on *Purim*, the *Chozeh* honored him by asking him to read *Megillas Esther* for the entire congregation. After Rav Sholom finished the reading, the *Chozeh* remarked, "I have heard this story many times, but I never, in my life, heard this story the way this *avreich* told it tonight."

Building the *Bais Knesses*

While the big *shul* in Belz was being built, Rav Sholom was constantly seen browsing through a certain book of *Kabbola*. One day the book disappeared, and construction was halted until the book was found again. On another occasion the construction was halted when Rav Sholom announced that he needed two rare books in order to allow the construction to continue. Fortunately, it just so happened that there was a book dealer in town who had these books, and when the requested books were handed to Rav Sholom, the construction was

allowed to continue. Years later his son and successor Rav Yehoshua remarked that he had looked through those books and never saw any connection between the books and the building of a *shul*.

Chazan in the Days of Awe

Rav Yehoshua, son and successor of Rav Sholom, said the following about the timing of his father's departure: "It is known in the *Poskim* that the *shliach tzibbur* [cantor] during the *Yomim Noro'im* [*Rosh HaShana* to *Yom Kippur*] requires preparation and abstinence three days in advance; therefore, my father was requested by the heavenly *Yeshiva* three days before *Rosh HaShana* in order to serve as the *chazan*."
www.rabbishimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=belz.htm

Pesach on Rosh HaShana

In the dread moments before blowing the *shofar* every *Rosh HaShana*, Rav Sholom of Belz, with inspired elation, would deliver words of instruction and exhortation to the assembled *Chassidim*. On one such occasion, speaking of the miracles wrought for *Klal Yisrael* before the Exodus, he quoted the *pesukim* that tell how *Hashem* sent Moshe to bring them out of Egypt.

In response to Pharaoh's question of "Who exactly will go?" Moshe answered,

"We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go." (*Shemos* 10:8–9).

Pharaoh finally called for Moshe and said: "Go, serve *Hashem*; only leave your flocks and herds behind. Your little ones also shall go with you."

To this Moshe replied, "Our cattle too shall go with us; no hoof shall be left behind; for we will take some of them to serve *Hashem* therewith." (Ibid. 24,26)

Having quoted these *pesukim*, Rav Sholom recited the *berocha* that precedes the blasts of the *shofar*, performed the *mitzva*, and went on directly to the *Mussaf tefilla*, as usual. The *Chassidim* were wonderstruck. No one understood the relevance of those verses to the moments before the blowing of the *shofar* on *Rosh HaShana*, but they held their peace, thinking it unseemly to ask their *Rebbe* for an explanation.

One of his *Chassidim*, Rav Elimelech of Tlust, was accustomed to journey to Belz every year for *Rosh HaShana* and then to proceed to visit Rav Meir of Premishlan after the holiday. On this occasion, as soon as he stepped over the threshold of the *Tzaddik's* room in Premishlan, Rav Meir said, "Elimelech! Please repeat for me the *Torah* discourse that the Belzer *Rebbe* delivered this year before the *shofar* was blown."

The *Chassid* told him what Rav Sholom of Belz had said and added that all those who heard it were at a loss to see the connection between *Rosh HaShana* and the dialogue that preceded the Exodus.

The *Rebbe* from Premishlan at once waxed eloquent in praise of the discourse which the *Rebbe* from Belz had given: in his profound insight he had penetrated through all the heavens and had averted ominous decrees that had threatened *Klal Yisrael*; through his words on *Rosh HaShana* he had proven to *Hashem*: "Father! In Your own holy *Torah* it is written that no evil shall hold sway over *Klal Yisrael*!"

Seeing that the dazed Elimelech had no conception of what he was talking about, Rav Meir added, "Let me explain to you what the intention of the holy *Rebbe* from Belz was: You see, on *Rosh HaShana* this year, when all of Creation was arraigned before the Heavenly Court, *Soton*, the Prosecuting Attorney, was most outspoken in his accusations of *Klal Yisrael*. In fact, a decree was at the point of being promulgated which

would have wrought havoc with the lives of little Jewish children. But the *Rebbe* of Belz argued fervently that these children would grow up and serve their Maker.

The next design was a decree of extermination to be issued against the cattle of *Klal Yisrael*. The *Tzaddik* of Belz did not let that pass either, arguing that “we will take some of them to serve *Hashem* therewith”. And in this manner he mitigated the verdict, by quoting the *pesukim* that spell out the argument between Pharaoh, representing *Soton*, and Moshe, the *Tzaddik* of the generation. Thus the decree against the cattle of the Jews was also averted.

“However,” concluded Rav Meir, “since the *Tzaddik* of Belz made no mention of birds, this year will see an epidemic affecting them, because the decree hanging over them was not annulled.”

And so it was. That year a contagious disease struck the domestic poultry of the Jews of those parts, but neither man nor beast was affected.

www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380109/jewish/Passover-on-Rosh-Hashanah.htm
Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *A Treasury of Chassidic Tales* (Artscroll).

When the famous *Tzaddik* (pure, holy man), Rav Sholom Roke'ach, the first *Rebbe* of Belz, traveled to the wedding of his son (and successor) Rav Yehoshua, he and his entourage were stopped at the Russian border. Czarist Russia oppressed all Jews, and *Rebbes* even more, and they didn't want another *Rebbe* in their country, even for a few days. So the *Rebbe* and his group stayed a long time in the border city of Chortkov.

Upon being informed that they were running short of money, the *Rebbe* said, “I must unpack my work tools.” The *Chassidim* were bewildered – is the *Rebbe* a carpenter?

“No,” he replied. “Announce in the city that anyone who needs ‘special help’ (a *yeshua* meaning ‘salvation’: inspired help from Heaven) should come and offer a contribution, and he will get what he wants.”

Several people came, one of them a boy who was crippled from birth! Upon leaving the *Rebbe's* house, he threw away his crutches. This caused an uproar, and people started streaming to the house. Among them was a boy who had been blind from birth, and the doctors had given up hope for him. The *Rebbe* passed his holy hands over his eyes, and he left the *Rebbe's* house seeing – a second wonder. Quickly the word spread around the whole district that there was a miracle worker in Chortkov.

Not far from Chortkov lived an elderly *Tzaddik*, Rav Chaim Kosover (the grandfather of the first Viznitzer *Rebbe*). He was disturbed by this, and went to see the younger “miracle worker” himself. Apparently there is also a limit to how much a *Tzaddik* is permitted to change nature.

The Belzer *Rebbe* welcomed him with great respect and honor, and assured him there was no change of nature here. He explained thus: “The boy's mother was once engaged to another young man, but she had regrets about it and canceled the engagement, and married another man. (This is rare in certain religious circles, where it is strongly discouraged and considered preferable to marry and divorce.)

“The poor first man got sick, and died, literally, of a broken heart. When his soul came up above, he said he wanted to call the *kalla* (bride) to the Court (since she caused him to die, he wanted her to die to stand with him for judgment in the heavenly court).

“They told him that her time had not yet come, but what vengeance would he like? He requested that her first son should be blind. They agreed, and told him that when her first son would be born, he – the soul – must go down and cover the boy's eyes and stay there in order for this to be carried out. And so it happened.

“When the boy came into my room, I saw the fiancé’s soul blocking his eyes, and I said to him, ‘Enough, you can go back up already.’”

“So you see, Rav Chaim, it really wasn’t a miracle at all!”

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Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from [geocities.com/theholypeople/](http://geocities.com/theholypeople/). Ezra Rebhun, an American-born graduate of Brandeis University, is today a Chassidic Jew living in the holy land. He heard this story from Reb Moishe Ortner, who heard it from the previous Belzer *Rebbe*, Rav Aharon. (He adds that it is also written in Hebrew in the first volume of *Admorei Belz* by Reb Yisrael Klapholtz z”l, page 175) [www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=565-55](http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=565-55)

Rav Shmuel of Lubavitch, the “*Maharash*”, in the years before he became *Rebbe*, did his best to keep a low profile. Once, when on a trip to Europe, he dressed as an ordinary businessman, rather than in the *Chassidic* garb more appropriate to the son of a *Rebbe* and a profound *Torah* scholar in his own right.

He spent one *Shabbos* during his journey in Belz. At the time of Seuda Shlishis he went to the famed shul of the *Sar Sholom* of Belz (which the *Rebbe* had finished building with his own hands in 1843. Still incognito, he stood off to the side in a remote corner of the room, which by then was crammed from wall to wall with ardent *Chassidim* awaiting the entrance of their *Rebbe*.

When Rav Sholom at last entered, a path directly from the door to his chair at the head of the table opened before him, like the splitting of the Red Sea. He took a few steps then suddenly halted. He didn’t look around because at that stage in his life he was blind, but he began to inhale the air. “I smell something special,” he announced.

He turned and walked slowly in the direction of the *Maharash*, the whole time continuing to sniff. When he reached him he took his hand and said, “Young man! From me, one cannot hide.” He then took the young *Maharash* with him to the head of the table.

On the way, a few of the *Chassidim*, who suspected that the *Rebbe* had made a mistake due to his failed eyesight, whispered to him, “*Rebbe*, our Master, this guy is just a businessman.”

The Belzer smiled and said, “True, he is indeed a merchant. And his merchandise is the best of all.”

~~~~~

[Translated and adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Sipurei Chassidim, Moadim* page 302. All rights reserved to the translator and to Ascent-of-Safed. www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=545-35]

Through The Window

On the first night of *Selichos* nearly two hundred years ago, instead of going to the large *shul* to signal the beginning of the *tefillos*, the *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom of Belz, ordered his attendant to harness the horses. He said they would be going into the forest.

The astonished attendant wanted to remind the *Rebbe* that thousands of *Chassidim* were waiting in the *shul*, but he knew better than to ask questions and went out to prepare the wagon. After a half-hour drive the *Rebbe* signaled to him to stop. They alighted and walked down a narrow path till they saw a small hut in the distance. The *Rebbe* told the attendant to wait for him, and then tiptoed alone up to the window and peeked in.

An old Jewish man was sitting alone at a table. On the table was a bottle of vodka and two small cups, one in front of him and the other before the empty seat opposite him.

Through the window the *Rebbe* couldn't hear what the old man was saying, but he saw him raise his cup in a toast, drink it, and then drink the second cup as well. This he repeated two more times, after which the *Rebbe* tiptoed back to the attendant. They walked quickly to the wagon and the *Rebbe* motioned to him to drive back to Belz.

Meanwhile, the *Chassidim* had been waiting for over an hour and were becoming worried. But when the doors of the shul opened and the *Rebbe* entered, the congregation fell silent. All eyes followed him to his place at the front of the *shul*, and then the room burst into *tefilla* as they began *Selichos*.

When *Selichos* ended, the *Rebbe* turned to his attendant and said, "There is an old man who came in after everyone and I'm sure he will finish after everyone also. He's the one I saw in the house in the woods. Please wait for him to finish, and then tell him I want him to come to my study where I'll speak to him privately."

Half an hour later, the simple Jew was standing in fear before the holy *Rebbe*.

"Sit down, Yitzchok," said the *Rebbe*, indicating a chair. "I want you to tell me what you did in your house before you came here tonight. What were those two cups of vodka for and what was that strange *l'chayim* you made?"

"The *Rebbe* knows that?" he exclaimed, his eyes bulging in amazement. Then he started to shake. "How does the *Rebbe* know?"

"I sensed that something important was going to happen," the *Rebbe* answered, "so I drove to the woods and peeked through your window. But I want to understand what you were doing."

"The *Rebbe* peeked through my window! How could it be? I am a nothing!"

Now the poor *Chassid* was really confused. He was silent for a moment. Then, realizing that there was no alternative, he sank down onto the chair and began to explain.

"I'm a poor man, *Rebbe*, I have no children and my wife passed on years ago. I live alone with just a few farm animals. That is, until a few months ago when my cow became sick. I *davened* to *Hashem* to heal the cow. 'After all,' I said to *Hashem*, 'You create the entire world and everything in it; certainly You can heal one cow!'

"But the cow got worse. So I said, 'Listen, *Hashem*, if You don't heal that cow I'm not going to *shul* any more!' I figured that if *Hashem* doesn't care about me – I mean, it's nothing for Him to heal one old cow – so why should I care about His place?"

"But the cow died anyway. I got mad and...and...I stopped going to *shul*."

"But then my goat got sick! I said to *Hashem*, 'What! You haven't had enough? Do You think I'm bluffing? Listen, if this goat dies I'm not putting on *tefillin* any more!' But the goat died and so I stopped putting on *tefillin*."

"Next, my chickens got ill. I told *Hashem* that if they die I'm not going to recite *Kiddush* or do anything special for *Shabbos*. Well, a week later I was without chickens and *Hashem* was without my *Kiddush*."

“I held out for over a week until suddenly I realized that the time for *Selichos* was approaching. I thought to myself, ‘What, Yitzchok, you aren’t going to go say *Selichos* with the *Rebbe*? What, are you *meshuga*?’ But on the other hand I was angry with *Hashem* and had vowed I wasn’t going to *shul*.

“But then I remembered that once I had an argument with Shmuel the butcher. For about a month we didn’t even say hello. Then one night he came to my house with a bottle of vodka and said, ‘Let’s forget the past and be friends; enough enemies we have among the *goyim* – why be enemies?’ So we made three *l’chayims*, shook hands and even danced around a little together. *Boruch Hashem*, we were friends again.

“So I figured I would do the same thing with *Hashem*. I invited Him to sit opposite me, poured us two cups and said, ‘Listen, *Hashem*, You forget my faults and I’ll forget Yours. All right? A deal? *L’chayim!*’

“So I drank my cup and understood that since *Hashem* doesn’t drink, He probably wanted me to drink His. And after we did it twice more I stood up and we danced together! Then I felt better and came to *Selichos*.”

The *Rebbe* looked deeply into Yitzchok’s innocent eyes. In a serious tone, he said, “Listen to me, Yitzchok. Before we began *Selichos* I saw that in Heaven there was a terrible decree on our holy congregation, because the *Chassidim* were saying the words in the *siddur* but they weren’t really *davening* seriously to *Hashem*. Of course, there are a lot of distractions and other excuses; nevertheless this terrible decree was looming.

“But you, Yitzchok, you talked to *Hashem* like He is your friend. Yitzchok, your sincerity saved the entire congregation!”

~~~~~

Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition of Rav Tuvia Bolton for *Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim* ([www.ohrtmimim.org](http://www.ohrtmimim.org)). Actually, I first heard this story from a mutual teacher of Rav Bolton and mine, the venerable *Chassid* Rav Abba Pliskin, of blessed memory. I had expressed astonishment when he said, “It has been known for *Chassidim* to arrive tipsy for *Selichos*,” and [a version of] this story was his reply. [www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=204-51](http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=204-51)



**Say it (especially with your children) at least once a day:**

**Based on *Chovos HaLevovos* - Duties of the Heart ~ *Sha’ar HaBitochon* – the Gate of Trust  
There are seven qualities that *Hashem* has that can strengthen our trust in Him:**

- 1. *Hashem* loves me.**
- 2. *Hashem* is with me, wherever I may be. And He is always ready to help me.**
- 3. *Hashem* is stronger and cleverer than anyone in the world. And He can find solutions to any problem there is – even if it may seem impossible.**
- 4. *Hashem* knows what is best for me, better even than I myself can know.**
- 5. Just as He has helped me already numerous times on the path I travel, He shall help me again.**
- 6. No one can do anything at all to help me or harm me, besides *Hashem* who controls everything over the entire world.**
- 7. The Master of the World desires and searches for ways to act with *chesed* – loving-kindness – more than the nicest, kindest person you could ever imagine.**

**והבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו!!!**

# Zera Shimshon



## Ki Savo

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

He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sayna and Rigiyov, 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 6<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5539 (1779).

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמות

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מוכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות רפואה שלימה

רחל בת שרה

לזוג הגון במזרה

אלישבע נעמי בת רחל

להצלחת

האנשים החשובים שעל פי עידודם יצא

הגליון מכה אל הפועל

בשורות טובות ישועות ונחמות

לעילוי נשמות יעקב יצחק בן ר' בנימין

ברוך פרי בטןך וגו' ברוך טאנך ומשארתיך וגו' ארור טאנך ומשארתיך ארור פרי בטןך  
(כח' ד', ה' יז, יח')

*Blessed will be the fruit of your womb. Blessed will be your fruit basket and kneading bowl. Cursed will be your fruit basket and kneading bowl. Blessed will be the fruit of your womb (28:4,5,17,18).*

The Zera Shimshon asks why in the blessings, the Torah mentions that there will be blessings, first in ones offspring and then in the food and produce, while in the curses, the order is reversed – first the Torah says that the food and produce will be cursed and then the offspring will be cursed?

The Zera Shimshon answers with the following Gemara. The Gemara (Nidda 31b) says that when a boy comes to the world he comes with his loaf. When a girl comes to the world, she comes without it.

The Maharsha explains that this means that a boy has his own mazal. A girl however, doesn't come with her own mazal since her mazal is dependent on that of her father or her husband.

With this Maharsha, the Zera Shimshon explains a different Gemara which says (Kiddushin 82b), fortunate is the one who's offspring are male, unfortunate is the one who's offspring are female.

The Zera Shimshon explains that since a boy is born with his own mazal, it can happen that although the father's mazal is not a good one, being that the son has a good mazal, it can benefit his father. And thus, the father is fortunate. (Example, if the father's mazal is to have a hard time supporting his family, still, if his son's mazal is the he will have things easy, it will benefit the father's ability to support his son.)

Therefore, by the blessings, the Torah first says that the fruit of the womb will be blessed and only then will the food and produce be blessed. The Zera Shimshon understands the blessing of the womb to mean that one will be blessed with boys. This is because once one has boys, it will bring him more blessing in his food and produce since there will be more mazals affecting his income.

By the curses however, it says that one's food and produce will be cursed, meaning that his mazal will be a bad one. Then the Torah continues and says that he will be cursed in a way that he will not be able to change this by that fact that he will not have the blessing of the womb, which in this case means boys – who could change his mazal. He will instead have girls, this way his mazal will be the same since his daughter's mazal is dependent on his.

*(It is important to note that every child is a blessing, girl or boy. The Zera Shimshon only means to explain that since, incidentally, a boy has his own mazal, it can bring blessing to his father, not that a boy is a bigger blessing than a girl.)*

לעילוי נשמות דוד בן תמר

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לזכר נשמות

יעקב יצחק בן ר' בנימין

לרפואה שלימה

רוני דינה בת סימי

דוד בן שרה

לזוג הגון במהרה

אלישבע נעמי בת רחל

להצלחת

הג"ר נחום צבי בורחל ומשפחתו

שורך טבוח לעיניך ולא תאכל ממנו חמורך גזול מלפניך ולא ישוב לך צאנך נתונות לאויביך  
ואין לך מושיע (כח' לא')

*Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes but you will not eat from it. Your donkey will be stolen from you and it will not be returned to you. Your sheep will be given to your enemies and you will have no way to save them (28:31).*

This passuk is one of the many pessukim in this week's parsha that depicts the punishments that will befall the Jewish people, should they not keep the Torah. The Zera Shimshon points out regarding each animal, the Torah changes its description of what will happen. The ox will be slaughtered in front of you and you will not be able to eat it; the donkey will be stolen and not be returned to you and by the sheep etc. and you will have no way to save it. The Zera Shimshon explains these differences, as additional nuances of each of these punishments - in the following manner.

The Gemara (Baba Kama 79a) says that if someone steals an ox and slaughters it in the property of its original owner, as long as he did not remove it from the property, he is exempt. Therefore, the punishment that the Torah illustrates here is that the ox will be slaughtered in front of you - in your own property and the offender will not be obligated to pay the required five times the value of the stolen and slaughtered ox. The owner may think that maybe at least I will be able to salvage some meat, on this the Torah says, that even that he will not have.

Regarding the donkey, the Zera Shimshon explains the wording of the passuk - *Your donkey will be stolen from you and it will not be returned to you*, based on what the Gemara says (Baba Kama 94b) that when a robber comes to return an item he stole, Chazal are not happy with those who take the items back (since it stopped robbers from doing Teshuva. See the Gemara). Here the passuk is saying that the punishment mentioned is that even after the donkey is stolen, should the robber decide to do Teshuva, the donkey will not be returned to you, because, technically you should not take it back.

*Your sheep will be given to your enemies and you will have no way to save them.* The Zera Shimshon explains this based on the Mishna (Baba Kama 10:2) that if a garment was stolen from someone and the robbers gave him a different garment, he is allowed to keep it. Rav Ovadia MiBartenura explains that this halcha is only relevant if the robbers were Jewish but not if they are non-Jews. The reason for this is because if the robbers are Jewish, the original owner gives up hope since in order to retrieve his stolen article, he would have to procure witnesses which is not always possible. Therefore, the owner just gives up hope and the new owner may now keep it. However, if the robbers were non-Jews, then the original owner does not give up hope since the non-Jewish court system will many times rely on an assessment of the situation without requiring witnesses, therefore, the original owner does not give up hope since he hopes he can retrieve his article.

With this the Zera Shimshon explains the passuk (you will have no way to save them) to mean that even though the robbers will be non-Jews and usually one can get the stolen articles back in a non-Jewish court, still the Torah here is saying that regardless of this you will not be able to retrieve them.

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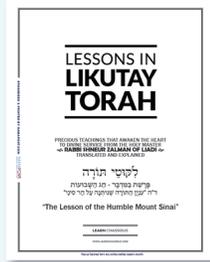
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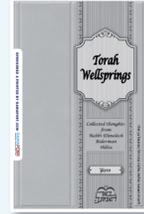
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