

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



בְּעִזּוֹת הָ' יְהֻבָּךְ

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לזכות רפואה שלמה
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יעקב משה בן דברוה שירה
ו אברהם יהודה בן שרה רבבה

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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

VAYIGASH

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

EVERY JEW CAN APPROACH HASHEM

And Yehudah approached him and said, "Please my master."

The Modzitzer Rebbe in Divrei Yisrael writes, that since the pasuk does not tell us who Yehudah approached, we can explain 'him' to be referring to Hashem. The pasuk can now be understood as follows: "And Yehudah approached 'Him' - Hashem." Yehudah stands for every Yehudi - any Jew, no matter who he is, what level he is on, what he has done wrong in the past or whatever his shortcomings are; any Jew can approach Hashem. So long as one is a Jew, he can approach Hashem through tefillah.

When a Jew prepares himself to stand before his Maker, he might begin to have second thoughts and doubt himself. He might even lose hope and think, "I am sullied and tainted by my past sins and misdeeds, how can I now approach Hashem?" This pasuk comes to emphasize exactly this point - one must never give up hope and never despair! If a person is ready to repent and return to Hashem and approach Him, then he must be ready to declare, "No matter how far I feel I have drifted, I am still a Jew and I can approach my Master!" Even if we may be impure, the Shechinah, Hashem's Devine Presence, still rests within us all. Even if a Jew sins, he remains a Jew.

This lesson is also gleaned from the words of the pasuk where Yehudah says, "Bi Adoni." Besides for their literal meaning of, "Please my master," they can also be translated as, "Inside me is Hashem." This idea serves as a constant chizuk to a Jewish person. No matter where a person feels he is holding and regardless of what he may have done, within him is a

לזכות רפואה שלמה

Yosef ben Perel

Yechiel Mechel Nachman
ben Elka Feiga

*May these terror victims of
Motzei Shabbos Chanukah have
a quick and full recovery, I"H.*

The Ram HaTorah Staff
רשות ההוראה

holy spark of sanctity, a share of Divinity which should remind him that - "I am a Jew and I have a spark of Hashem within me, and I can always approach Hashem in repentance and teshuvah and pray to Him."

The words "Bi Adoni" impart another important message. They teach us that - 'Bi HaDavar Taluy' - it is all up to me. No one will, or can do teshuva for me. It is all in my hands. Only I can do what is meant for me to accomplish. With this in mind, we can approach Hashem and with His help, may our tefillos be answered Amen.



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

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

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

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

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

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

Later, the Rebbe Elimelech became well known as a great *Tzaddik* and *Rebbe*. When the Linsker *Rav* passed away, his son Rav Naftoli wanted to travel to Rebbe Reb Elimelech and study under him and become his *talmid*. He was deterred, however, by the memory of how he

had poked fun at the *Tzaddikim* as a young boy. Nonetheless, after some hesitation, Rav Naftoli decided to approach Rebbe Reb Elimelech, ask his forgiveness and to ask the Rebbe to accept him as a *talmid*.

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

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

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

When Rav Naftoli heard this news, he went into town and, since he was from a wealthy family, he had no trouble borrowing some money and purchasing other goods on credit. Quickly he bought all the missing items: a new *tallis* for the *chosson* and food and drinks for the wedding feast! Soon the *chosson* and *kalla* were brought in and the Ropshitzer set a lavish banquet before them. Then he got up and stood himself on the table in front of all assembled and he began to recite *badchonus* – grammen, rhymes, jokes and all manner of witty and clever songs and dances to bring cheer to the crowd and a smile to the lips of the *chosson* and *kalla*! Everyone was overjoyed and there was great *simcha*!

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

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

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

Meanwhile, the Ropshitzer had dressed up as a hunchback and used flax to make himself a long, silly beard, and he stood disguised on the table engaged in *badchonus*, rhymes, jokes, dancing, and playacting. The *shamash* did not recognize him, but Rav Naftoli recognized the *shamash* all right! He jumped off the table, grabbed the *shamash* and began to

dance with him until the *shamash* felt all his bones mending and straightening out. The *shamash* felt a great spiritual bliss and was drawn in, mesmerized by the performance, standing transfixed with no desire to go back.

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

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

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

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

הילולא

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלף המגו מבעל הפלא יועץ על פרשת ויצא עמוד כ"ד]

הריini מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעלוי נשמת אבי / אמי מורתاي / הצדיק
בון/בת _____, יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתקבב ברחמים

וְבָרְצֹו כֵל מַעֲשָׂה הַטוֹב שֶׁאָנִי עֹשֶׂה, בֵין בְמַחְשָׁבָה, בֵין בְדִיבָר, בֵין בְמַעֲשָׂה וַיְהִי הַפָּל
לְזִכּוֹת וְלִמְנוֹת וְלִעְלּוֹת לְנֶשֶׁמוֹת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפִרְטָן לְנֶפֶשׁ רֹוח וְנֶשֶׁם שֶׁל אָבִי / אָמִי /
צָדִיק . יְהִי רָצֹן שְׁתַהְיוֹנָה נְפָשׁוֹתֵיכֶם אֲרוּרָת בָּצְרוֹר מְחִים.

Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



YAHRZEITS BEGINNING SHABBOS VAYIGASH

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

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

* 7th of Teves ~ Begins Friday Night (Jan 3rd)

- * **Rav Moshe Dovid Walli** (Vally; Vali) (1697–1777). The foremost *talmid* of the *Ramchal* in Padua, Italy, he practiced as a physician in Padova. When the *Ramchal* was forced to leave Italy, Rav Moshe Dovid was appointed head of his academy in Padua. Also known as the *Rama”d Vali*, he wrote a commentary on *Chumash* (*Ohr Olam* on *Bereishis*; *Bris Olam* on *Shemos*; *Avodas HaKodesh* on *Vayikra*; *Shivtei Kah* on *Bamidbar*; *Mishneh LaMelech* on *Devorim*), *Nach* and *Likkutim*, (5538/1777);
- * **Rav Tzvi Hirsch**, son of the *Ba’al Shem Tov*, (5540/1779);
- * **Rav Rephoel Shlomo Laniado** (1740–1793). Originating from Spain through their progenitor, Rav Shmuel, the Laniado family was among the most famous and well established in the Syrian city of Chaleb. Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado was a prolific writer, and is well known for several *halachic* works: *HaMaalos LeShlomo*, *Bais Dino Shel Shlomo*, *Lechem Shlomo* and *Kisei Shlomo*, (5554/1793);
- * **Rav Mordechai Yosef Leiner** of Izhbitz (1800–1854 [1878, according to *Yated* 2007]), founder of the *Chassidic* Court at Izhbitz, after leading a group of *talmidim* from the court of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. Born in Tomashov, Poland, in 1800, he was a childhood friend of Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, later to become the Kotzker *Rebbe*, and they studied together in the school of the *Chassidic* Master, Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis’cha. His *sefer Mei HaShilo’ach*, is considered a fundamental work of Izhbitz and Radziner *Chassidus*. Among his *talmidim* were Rav Tzodok *HaKohen MiLublin* and Rav Leibel Eiger, (5615/1854);
- * **Rav Sholom Yosef Friedman** of Husyatin (1879 [1851, according to *Yated* 2007]). Son of the first *Rebbe* of Husyatin, Rav Mordechai Shraga (the youngest son of the Rizhiner *Rebbe*, who had moved to Husyatin in 1865 and was *niftar* in 1894. He was the father of Rav Moshe of Boyan-Cracow (“Reb Moshenu”), (5640/1879);

- * **Rav Yosef Elyashiyov.** Born in the former Soviet Union to Rav Tzion, who was killed by the authorities for his efforts to promote Judaism, he moved from Samarkand to Tashkent after marrying; there, he and his wife raised their seven children. While living in Tashkent he had to spend seven years away from home — four years in custody on suspicion of underground religious activity and three years hiding from the KGB, who had him under surveillance for his activities to promote Judaism. In 1971, he managed to secure an exit visa and left his home and his family, traveling to *Eretz Yisrael*. He opened the first *Shaarei Tzion* institutions in 1980, naming them after his father. He then started a *kollel*, with the goal of drawing *avreichim* from Bukharan families, as well as a school in Kiryat Ono for Bukharan immigrants. Today, a total of 4,500 students, from kindergartners to *avreichim*, study at *Shaarei Tzion* institutions, (5768/2007).
- * **8th of Teves ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Jan 4th)**
 - * **Rav Yosef Dov HaKohen Lieberman.** Rav Lieberman was a well-known figure in Williamsburg as the *Menahel of Torah Vodaas* and *Tzeilemer Yeshivos*. His *Daf Yomi Shiur* is still remembered by many. He was *niftar* at the age of ninety-four in 1986 after delivering his regular *shiur* on Friday morning, (5747/1986);
 - * **Rav Boruch Tzvi HaKohen Moskowitz.** Rav Moskowitz was the post-World War II *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Paksh. He was a close *talmid* of the *Keren L'Dovid*. He is the *mechaber* of many *seforim*, including *Tenuvos Boruch on Sugyos*, *Mishmeres Tzvi Al HaTorah* and *Nishbah L'Avosecha on Pirkei Avos*. He left many *talmidim* in America, *Eretz Yisrael* and England, (5711/1950).
 - * **History:** A *taanis tzibbur* (communal fast) was declared to commemorate the translation of the *Torah* to a foreign language (Greek) under King Ptolemy (*Shulchon Aruch Orach Chaim* 580:2).
- * **9th of Teves ~ Begins Sunday Night (Jan 5th)**
 - * **Ezra Hasofer and Nechemya** (313 BCE or 320 BCE);
 - * **Rav Ezra** of Gerona, the Ramban's teacher in Kabalah. He himself learned Kabbalah from Rav Yitzchak Sagi-Nahor, son of the Ravad III (1227);
 - * **Rabbeinu Yosef**, son of Rav Shmuel HaNaggid, and son-in-law of Rav Nissim Gaon of Kirouan. He was murdered in an Arab pogrom with another 1500 Jews in Spain (1067);
 - * **Rav Yehudah** ("Reb Yiddel") Weber, Rosh Yeshiva of the newly established Pupa Yeshiva, first located in Queens, then in Ossining, in Westchester County (1920-2006).
- * **10th of Teves ~ Begins Monday Night (Jan 6th)**
 - * **Zecharia ben Berechya ben Ido HaNovi** (320 or 313 BCE);
 - * **Malachi HaNovi** (320 or 313 BCE). His *petira* ended the era of prophecy;
 - * **Rav Yehuda Eilenberg**, *mechaber* of *Minchas Yehuda*, (5371/1610);
 - * **Rav Nosson Sternhartz** (or Sternberg) of Breslov, *mechaber* of *Likutei Halochos*. As a young man, he lived in Nemirov, nine miles north of Breslov. Despite family opposition, Nosson became the *talmid* who recorded Rav Nachman's thoughts, edited his writings and wrote the early history of the Breslover *Chassidim*, (5605/1844);
 - * **Rav Meir Sholom Rabinowitz** of Kalushin (1851–1901). Born to Rav Yehoshua Osher of Zelichov, the son of the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha, he became a son-in-law of his older brother, Rav Yaakov Tzvi of Porisov, *mechaber* of *Atara Lerosh Tzaddik*. He served as *Rav* of the *kehillos* of Porisov, Gravlin and Kalushin. He became *Rebbe* after the *petira* of his brother in 1889. Many of his ideas in *Torah* and *Chassidus* were recorded by his son and

- successor, Yehoshua Alter, in the *sefer Nahar Sholom*, (5662/1901);
- * **Rav Noach** of Hordishitz, (5664/1903);
 - * **Rav Refoel Wexelbaum**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Itri;
 - * **Rav Yechezkel Halshtuk**, the Ostrovitzer *Rebbe* (1887–1942), born to Rav Meir Yechiel, founder of the court of Ostrovte (Ostrowiec), a town that lies along the Kamienna River, a tributary of the Vistula, and which is situated in the Polish highlands just north of the Swietokrzyskie Mountains. At eighteen, Rav Yechezkel married Rebbetzin Baila Mirel, daughter of Rav Naftoli of Meilitz, who was a grandson of Rav Naftoli of Ropshitz. In 1911, he was appointed *Rav* of the town of Inovlod; and ten years later, he was appointed *Rav* of Nashelsk. He succeeded his father as *Rebbe* after the latter's *petira* in 1928. He founded a *Yeshiva* named *Bais Meir*, in honor of his father. He and twenty of his *Chassidim* were murdered by the Nazis during *davening* on the night of *Assora BeTeves*. His *Rebbetzein*, seven sons and one son-in-law were all murdered by the Nazis. Some of his writings were published after the war under the name *Kodshei Yechezkel*, (8th of *Teves*, according to *Yated* 2006 and *Yated* 2007), (5703/1942);
 - * **Rav Shabsai Yogel**, born in Piask, Russia (1875–1957). After studying in Eishishock as a youngster, he learned in Volozhin until it was closed by the Russian authorities, at which time he returned to Piask until he married Liba Kletzkin from Slonim. He then moved to Slonim and learned in one of the Novardok *kollelim*. In 1906, he was asked to head the Slonim *Yeshiva*, founded by Rav Shlomo Zalman Kahana in 1816. The *Yeshiva*'s first *Rosh Yeshiva* was Rav Avrohom Weinberg, who later became the founder of the Slonimer *Chassidic* dynasty. In 1929, Rav Shabsai visited *Eretz Yisrael* for the first time; two months later, his son Shlomo perished in the Chevron massacres. During the early years of World War II, Rav Shabsai and his family moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. Since the *Yeshiva* in Slonim had been destroyed by the Nazis, he rebuilt it. He decided to do so in Ramat Gan, which at that time was a spiritual wasteland, (5718/1957).
 - * **Rav Avrohom Abba Leifer**, the Pittsburgher *Rebbe*, the *Admor* of Petersburg-Ashdod. *Mechaber* of *Emunas Avrohom*, son of Rav Yosef (*Tzidkas Yosef*), and son-in-law of Rebbe Issomor of Nadvorna. His son, Mordechai Yissochor Dov Ber Leifer of Pittsburgh, is *mechaber* of *Pisgomei Oraisa*, (5750/1989).
- * **11th of Teves ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Jan 7th)**
- * **Rav Moshe** of Ostraha, *mechaber* of *Arugas HaBosem*, (5545/1784);
 - * **Rav Shlomo Eiger**, *mechaber* of *Gilyon Maharsha*, son of Rav Akiva Eiger, (5612/1851);
 - * **Rav Shlomo Zalman Ullman** of Makava, *mechaber* of *Yerios Shlomo*. Son of Rav Sholom Charif, Rav Shlomo Zalman served as *Rav* of Rendick for two years and of Makova, Hungary, for thirty-nine years. He fought against any inroads of the Reform movement for much of his life. At the end of his *sefer*, Rav Shlomo Zalman added *Kuntres Bais Yad*, where he expounds on fourteen differences in the *sugya* of *eid echod ne'emanim b'issurim*. This *kuntres* is the basis of many *halochos* of *issur ve'heter*, (5626/1865);
 - * **Rav Yehoshua Horowitz** of Dzikov, *mechaber* of *Ateres Yeshua*, (5673/1912);
 - * **Rav Dovid Twersky** of Zlatipoli, eldest son of Rav Yochonon of Rachmastrivke, the son of Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl. Rav Dovid married Rebbetzin Bas-Tzion Tzipora Feiga, daughter of Rav Aharon of Karlin. With his father's *petira*, Rav Dovid became *Rebbe* in Rachmastrivke, along with his brothers, but moved his court to Zlatipoli, (5675/1914);
 - * **Rav Moshe Bergman**, *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Rashbi Yeshiva*, (5738/1977);
 - * **Rav Yaakov Yosef Shlomo Halperin**, the Vasloier *Rebbe*, grandson of the first Vasloier

Rebbe, Rav Sholom Halperin. His father, Rav Chaim Dov Halperin, was the *Rebbe*'s only son and moved from Romania to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1950 and was *niftar* in 1957. Rav Yaakov Yosef himself was succeeded by his son Rav Avrohom Shimshon Sholom, who lives in Bnei Brak, (5745/1984);

- * **Rav Shmuel Dovid Tzvi Mayer** (known as Rav Dovid Hirsch), *menahel* of *Yeshiva Bais Binyomin* in Stamford, Connecticut, (5764/2003).

* **12th of Teves ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Jan 8th)**

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

* **13th of Teves ~ Begins Thursday Night (Jan 9th)**

- * **Rav Moshe ben Dovid Biderman**, the Lelover *Rebbe* (1776–1850 or 1851). Born in abject poverty, he married Rachel Rivka, a daughter of the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha. After the latter's *petira* in 1813, he became a *Chassid* of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, along with his friend, Rav Yitzchok of Vorki. In 1843, he finally agreed to a leadership position, agreeing to be *Rav* of the community of Przedborz, Poland. In the last years of his life, he decided to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. He and many of his *Chassidim* arrived at Akko on *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan*. He traveled to Yerushalayim, but immediately took ill. Tragically, between the illness and the Arabs, he was never able to *daven* at the *kosel*, his life-long dream. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Elozor Mendel; a vibrant community of Lelover *Chassidim* still exists in *Eretz Yisrael* today. Sadly, the community in Przedborz – about 4,500 Jews – was liquidated at Treblinka, (5611/1850);
- * **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Vishiva, the *She'eris Menachem*, (5702/1941);
- * **Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon**, *Rosh Yeshivas Lomza*. Among the *Roshei Yeshiva* who traveled to the United States to raise funds during World War II were Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel from Mir, Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon from Lomza, Rav Aharon Kotler from Kletzk, Rav Shimon Shkopf from Grodno, Rav Elchonon Wasserman from Baranowitz and Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz from Kamenetz, (5726/1965);
- * **Rav Yitzchok HaKohen Huberman**, the *Tzaddik* of Raanana. (1896–1977). He was born in Tomashov (Tomaszow Lubelski), near Lublin. An 1895 census reveals that, out of a population of 6,077, over half the citizens, 3,646, were Jews. The first *shul* in this town was built in 1594, but after the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49, only eighteen of the original two hundred families still remained. The most famous Jew of the town was the Kotzker *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Tomashov, who lived there until he left for Kotzk. Rav Yitzchok became a follower of the *Imrei Emes* of Ger and, after his mentor's *petira*, of his son, the *Bais Yisrael*. In 1940, Josef Stalin deported 200,000 Polish Jews, including Rav Yitzchok, to forced labor camps in Siberia and elsewhere. This saved their lives, since most of those left behind were murdered by the Nazis when they invaded Russia, a year later. After the war, Rav Yitzchok served as a *Rav* for six years in Germany before moving to *Eretz Yisrael*, and settling in Raanana. Rav Yitzchok wrote a collection of *chiddushim* on *Megillas Esther* and entitled it *Higida Esther*, in his mother's memory, (5738/1977).



❖ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❖

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

בית הקברות הוא מקום מנוחת הצדיקים ומתוך כך הוא מקום קדוש וטהור התפילה נתקבלת שם יותר, אך אל ישם מגמותו נגד המתים, אך יבקש מהש"ת שיתן עליו רחמים בזוכת הצדיקים שוכני עפר, ויקיף הקברות, ויתן צדקה קודמת שיאמר התהינota.

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



❖ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❖

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Avrohom Abba Leifer, 10th of Teves

Pittsburgher Rebbe

Saved By A Prayer

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

Though most of the captured Jews

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

personal redemption at every *Pesach Seder*.



A Holy Messenger

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



The Niggun That Celebrated the Broken Engagement

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



Rav Shlomo ben Rav Akiva Eiger, 11th of Teves

Rabbi Akiva Eiger's Berocha

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

HaShomayim:

The *Rebbe* was always involved in the fight against assimilation and when a Jew from Florida appeared before the Pittsburgher *Rebbe* and cried that his daughter was engaged to be married to a *goy*, the *Rebbe* was so moved and distressed by his plight that he pledged to stop at nothing to rescind the harsh decree. He flew to Florida and against all odds fought and used all his ways and means until succeeded, in an almost supernatural manner, to cancel the marriage and avert the decree.

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

interruption whatsoever!

Once, after such an occasion and a *shiur* was interrupted, yet Rav Shlomo resumed as if nothing had changed, his *talmid*, Rav Davidson, asked, “*Rebbe*, how is it that you can resume your *shiur* and pick up exactly where you left off without having to pause and review?! Its amazing!”

“It is all due to my father’s *berocha*!” explained Rav Shlomo Eiger. “When I was a *chosson* under the *chuppa*, my father gave me a *berocha*. He said, ‘You are now marrying into an important, wealthy family, your father-in-law has many business dealings and you will be leaving my care and will inevitably become involved in these matters, which will force you to interrupt your studies and teaching. My *berocha* is that you should be able to immediately resume your learning, study

and teaching *Torah* without losing your train of thought and to pick up exactly where you left off without need for review or preparation – and this will give you peace in your *Torah* study!’ *Boruch*

Hashem, as you can see,” concluded Rav Shlomo, “my holy father’s *berocha* was fulfilled!” (*Chut HaMeshulash* p. 224 footnotes)



Rav Yehoshua ben Meir Horowitz, 11th of Teves

The Dzhikover Rebbe, Mechaber of *Ateres Yeshua*

Please Don’t Lick the Bones

Once, on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* during the *Rebbe’s Rosh Chodesh seuda*, the *Tzaddik* entered, looked around and declared, “I see here many soldiers have gathered, now I wish to admonish you all – although you may be forced to eat *treifos*, I beg you, do not lick the bones in delight!”

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



The General of Gehinnom

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

(*Mareh Aish* #117)



Rav Moshe Sofer of Pshevorsk, 12th of Teves

Mechaber of *Ohr Pnei Moshe*

Shirei Menochos

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

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



Rav Mordechai Chaim Kastelanitz, 12th of Teves

“Reb Mottel Slonimer”

A Niggun Made from a Golden Mitzva

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

This story comes from Reb Mottel Slonimer. Reb Mottel Slonimer once passed by a house, from where he heard a very powerful but sad *niggun*, which touched the heart. He wondered, “This feels like a very *heilige* (holy) *niggun*”. Upon entering the house, he asked the *ba’al habayis* (master of the house) to explain what this *niggun* was all about. And here our story begins.

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

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

The boy grew up, got married and moved to a town in the southern part of *Eretz Yisrael*, far away from Teverya. In those days, a journey from Teverya to the south of *Eretz Yisrael* could take several hours, even the good part of a day. The son

was financially successful, and from time to time would send his father a golden Napoleon coin, which was worth a lot of money. His father asked him in a letter: “Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?”

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

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

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

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

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

Sure enough, he again received an

urgent letter from his daughter-in-law: "Come quickly, your son is very ill!"

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

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

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

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

“But I just want to be with you!”

Then, in the dream, the son began to sing a *niggun*. And he continued to sing it, as his father joined in. They sang it

together for a long time, until eventually the father learned to sing it alone. And then, the son disappeared and the dream was over. “Then I awoke,” said the father to Reb Mottel Slonimer. “And whenever I’m sad, I sing this *niggun*. This is the *niggun* my son taught me.”

Said Reb Mottel Slonimer: “This is the *niggun* of *Kibbutz Av va’Em*.” What is the *niggun*? This is the *niggun* that connected the father to his son, and to the next world... [Adds Yitz:] A *niggun* made from the Golden *Mitzva* of *Kibbutz Av va’Em*.

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

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

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



לזכר נשמת אמונה והחשובה, נשח יקרה ועדינה אשר יראת ה' ובבעל מדות טובות
מרת יויל ז"ל בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ז ע"ה הד"ד מעיר נירעדהו יע"א
ונכרת הרה"ה רבי אהרון צבי טערקלטביב יי"ע מברד
אשת הרה"ה מו"ה אברם חיים ע"ה גאלדענברג

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

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

היא הודה היא הדורה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר זכר צורה (וקיבלה הגיירה)
נפטרה כ"ט בת תשעים שנה ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק
תמלין טוב בעוד משפחתה הקירה ותקים לתchia לקץ והימן מהרה תיעצ'בה'

RAMCHAL - Parshas VaYigash

THE WATERS OF THE NILE RIVER THE SOURCE OF EGYPT'S LIFE

And Yaakov blessed Pharaoh (*VaYigash* 47:10)

The *Ramchal* cites *Chazal* who said that Yaakov blessed Pharaoh that the waters of the Nile river should rise up and water the land.

The *Ramchal* explains that Egypt symbolizes the right side, receiving from the attribute of *Chessed* and loving kindness. So long as the Nile river flooded it hinted at the supremacy of the Egyptian's root source in *Chessed* which flooded them with an abundance of *Shefa* since waters allude to *Chessed* as well. The opposite is also true, when the Nile failed to provide water and dried up this demonstrated that they lacked *Shefa*. This is the secret why all matters in Egypt depend on water.

Pharaoh who ruled as king of Egypt stood over the Nile when he dreamed his dreams because that was his root and his source. This is also the secret why when *Hashem* smote Egypt with the ten plagues that the first plague was to transform the waters of the Nile into blood.

The *Ramchal* explains that this is the way to subjugate and conquer the wicked we must overturn their natural order. Therefore, the first order of business was to transform their life-giving waters of the Nile into blood, hinting at the transformation from *Chessed* into *Din*, from loving kindness into harsh judgment to judge them.

We see clearly a demonstration how all the matters of Egypt were dependent on the waters since that was their source [the Nile was their source of life.] This is why Yaakov blessed the Nile river - he drew out their sustenance to feed [Pharaoh] from the power of his own root source.





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