

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

❁ VA'ESCHANAN ❁

❁ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❁

Sowing the Seeds of the Zera Kodesh

## Dvar Torah

Three Maamorim/Essays – Tefilla Transcends Time

Daven Anytime

*“And I entreated Hashem at that time, saying...” (3:23)*

The *heilige* Ropshitzer points out in *Zera Kodesh* that the *pasuk* neglects to tell us at which time Moshe entreated Hashem. He explains that this omission of time is done on purpose to teach us the profound lesson that there is no set time for asking Hashem; we can always approach Him whenever we wish.

A person, says the Ropshitzer, should never say to himself, “Right now, at this moment, I don’t have the wits to pray. I am not in the correct frame of mind. Later, when I am free and I have the time and my mind is unburdened – then I will *daven* to Hashem.” This is an incorrect manner of thinking. Instead, *daven* now, at any time, in any way, in any frame of mind. There is no wrong time to ask and *daven*; *daven* at any time, no matter what time it is and what is going on with you and around you at that time.

This is the meaning behind the *pasuk* (*Devorim* 4:29), “And from there seek out Hashem,

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your G-d, and you will find Him". There the *pasuk* also does not specify the time or location.

The explanation of that *pasuk* is similar: at any time and in any place, no matter where you are or when you are – from that place seek *Hashem* and you will find Him.



### All Tefillos for All Times

Another explanation given in *Zera Kodesh* is that Moshe asked *Hashem* to open up the gates of prayer for him at any time. And Moshe's *tefillos* were indeed accepted, as *Hashem* said, "Climb up to the top of the mountain – *Rosh HaPisga*" (3:27). Moshe was asking, explains the Ropshitzer, that any type of *tefilla* that a Jew *davens*, at any time, should be included and incorporated into his own prayer. That is why the *pasuk* says "at that time" and does not specify when that time is. Moshe was saying that all future *tefillos* that will be said for all time to come will all be incorporated and included in this *tefilla* that he was *davening*.

Another explanation given by the Ropshitzer in *Zera Kodesh* is that Moshe *davened* and asked that Klal Yisrael should be able to *daven* properly whenever they wish, that even in *Golus* they should be able to *daven* properly.

That is why the *pasuk* says *bo'eis hahi* – "at that time". The *pasuk* does not specify a time because it refers to all times, that we should be able to *daven* to *Hashem* at all times, even now in *Golus*, when we *daven* for the pain and anguish of the *Shechina*, so to speak.

Furthermore, the Ropshitzer cites the *pasuk* in *Tehillim*: 69:14 "And I, may my prayers be to You, *Hashem*, at an *eis rotzon* – an auspicious time". The *Zera Kodesh* says that Moshe *davened* to *Hashem* asking further that whenever we *daven*, at any time, it should be an *eis rotzon*, a favorable and auspicious time to draw down *Hashem's* will from the attributes of mercy, where *Hashem* said (*Shemos* 33:19) that He would favor whomever He found favorable, even if they are unworthy.



### A Battle Between the Throat and the Windpipe

Another explanation that the Ropshitzer gives in *Zera Kodesh* is that a person must serve *Hashem* in all ways, even with the material world. Even through such physical acts as eating and drinking, a person should not think to fulfill his desires; rather, his intentions should be loftier: to eat in order to have strength to serve *Hashem* with *Torah* and *tefilla*. This is because when we use our mouths to vocalize our *Torah* study and *tefillos*, we release breath, called *hevel*.

The letters that spell *hevel* are *hei*, *lamed* and *bais*, alluding to *hei*, the five books of the *Chumash* and *lamed bais*, the first and last letters of the *Torah* (which begins with the *bais* of *Bereishis* and concludes with the *lamed* of *Yisrael* at the end of the last *pasuk* in *Devorim*). The letters of *hevel* also spell *lahav*, "flame" and *halev*, "the heart" because when we vocalize words of *Torah* and *tefilla*, the heat of our breath inflames us with excitement, which is generated from our hearts. This is why we eat – to have the strength to engage in *Torah* study and *tefilla*, and so we have demonstrated how to serve *Hashem* even through physical acts.

There are two limbs in the human body that correspond to these two types of divine service: the throat and the windpipe. The windpipe is used to express the heat of breath that

forms the vocal sounds of our spiritual prayers and *Torah* study, whereas the throat is used to swallow food and drink to nourish the body physically.

Man must see to it that his actions by eating through the throat should serve the windpipe, that he should eat to nourish and strengthen himself so as to be able to properly express *hevel* and *lahav* from *halev* through his windpipe in vocalizing the words of *Torah* and *tefilla*. This is the primary reason for Creation – to serve and praise *Hashem*.

This counterplay between throat and windpipe and their conflict occurred between Kayin and Hevel. Kayin represents the throat, since his actions were performed to fulfill his desires, which is why his offering was rejected. Hevel, on the other hand, represents the windpipe and the *hevel* that it expresses, because he offered the choicest and fattest of his flocks to *Hashem*. Even of what he ate was made an offering and given over to a higher purpose: to uplift the *hevel* of *Torah* and *tefilla*.

This is what the *Torah* is teaching us: the throat must serve the windpipe and give the windpipe strength. Kayin and Hevel's story is as an example for all future generations, teaching us that when Kayin murdered Hevel it was to satisfy his desires and fill his throat and stomach.

When *Hashem* asked (*Bereishis* 4:9), "Where is your brother Hevel?" He was asking, "Why are all your actions to fulfill desires? Where is your brother Hevel? Why are you not seeking to uplift your desires to express the *hevel* of *Torah* and *tefilla*?"

This is all hinted at in our *pasuk*: *Vo'es'chanan El Hashem*, whose initials are *vov, alef, yud* and spell *ayo* – "where?" *Bo'ei hahi leimor* – the initials are *bais, hei, lamed* and spell *hevel*, asking, "Where is Hevel? Where is the emphasis on serving *Hashem* with *Torah* and *tefilla*?" This is why Moshe, a *gilgul* of Hevel, was asking *Hashem* to let him see *Eretz Yisrael*. He knew that the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* had the power to rectify this error that had been promulgated by Kayin and Hevel.



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 blessing, and people would like to express themselves in a *tefilla* when lighting the candle. This is not only true on a *yahrzeit* but on every *Yom Tov* as well.

The author of the *Pele Yo'etz*, Rav Eliezer Papo (1785–1828), did in fact compose such a

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

**Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle**

[תְּפִילָּה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגֵּן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרִשְׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי נְשָׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק  
 בֶּן/בַּת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
 וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שֶׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל  
 לְזָכוֹת וּלְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפֶרֶט לְנַפְשׁ רּוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
 צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ . יְהִי רָצוֹן שֶׁתְּהִינָה נְפֻשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצֵרוּר הַחַיִּים.

**Translation:**

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

See more at: [www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm](http://www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm)



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❁



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Biographical information and yahrzeits compiled by Reb Manny Saltiel and [www.anshe.org](http://www.anshe.org)

❁ 16<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Friday Night (Aug 16<sup>th</sup>)

- \* Rav Menachem Mendel of Strizov, *mechaber* of *Sova Semochos*, (5591/1831);
- \* Rav Yitzchok Meir Levin, chairman of the world *Agudas Yisrael* organization, (5731/1971);
- \* Rav Moshe Perdo, a *Sefardi* sage, *mechaber* of the *sefer Tzedek Umishpot*, (5648/1888);
- \* Rav Bechor Aharon Alachadeef, a *Sefardi* sage from Teverya, (5669/1909);
- \* Sir Moshe (Chaim) Montefiore, (5645/1885).

❁ 17<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Aug 17<sup>th</sup>)

- \* Rav Shimshon Wertheimer, (1658–1724). Born in Worms, Germany, he learned in the Yeshivos of Worms and Frankfurt. After marrying the daughter of the Rav of Manheim in 1684, he moved to Vienna. Within a few years, he became the wealthiest Jew of his day. He served as finance minister for Austrian emperors Leopold I, Josef I, and Karl IV. In exchange for his services, Rav Shimshon requested better treatment for his fellow Jews

throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He negotiated the Jews' right to live in major cities, including Vienna and Frankfurt, saved the Jews of Rothenberg from expulsion and intervened to save the Jews of Worms and Frankfurt. He was also a *Talmid Chochom* and helped to establish forty *kehillos* in Hungary. He founded and endowed a *Yeshiva* in Frankfurt, setting up his son-in-law, Rav Moshe Kann, as *Rosh Yeshiva*. In Vienna, he set up a *Bais Din*. In 1712, he rebuilt the city of Nikolsburg, which had burned down. Rav Shimshon was also in charge of transferring monies to *Eretz Yisrael* from all of Europe. He also left behind *kisvei yad* (manuscripts) on *Torah, Medrash* and *Kabbola*, (5484/1724);

- \* **Rav Osher**, *mechaber* of *Mayim Adirim*, (5564/1804);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Mordechai** of Pintchov, (5584/1824);
- \* **Rav Shlomo Chaim Perlow** of Koidenov, son of Rav Aharon, the son of Rav Mordechai Yaffe of Lechovitch. They were direct (*ben acher ben*) descendants of the *Levush*. He was raised by his maternal grandfather, Rav Osher Perlow of Karlin, after his father was *niftar*, and therefore he is also known by the last name Perlow. After his uncle, Rav Noach of Lechovitch, passed away, all the *Chassidim* flocked to Rav Shlomo. He had several sons who became great *Rebbes* in their own rights, (1862 / 5622);
- \* **Rav Shmuel Eibschutz**, *Rav* of Apta, (5600/1840);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Levi** (1783–1879). Born in Sarajevo to Rav Menachem Levi, he emigrated to *Eretz Yisrael*, and became chief *Rav* of Yerushalayim in 1845. He passed away in Yaffo, (5639/1879).

## ❖ 18<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Sunday Night (Aug 18<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Moshe Bernstein**, *Rosh Yeshiva* Kamenitz. Born in the town of Turetz, he learned in Mir. He became the son-in-law of Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz. He hired Rav Elya Lopian as *Mashgiach* under the recommendation of Rav Moshe Aharon Stern, (5716/1956);
- \* **Rav Tzvi Arye Twersky** of Zlatipoli-Tchortkov, (5728/1968);
- \* **Rav Shlomo Chanoch** *ben* Rav Yechezkel *HaKohen* Rabinowitz, the fourth and last *Rebbe* of Radomsk, who perished with his family in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was a great-grandson of the *Tiferes Shlomo*. He was known for the network of *Yeshivos Kesser Torah* he had established throughout Poland and Galicia. The Radomsker *Chassidim* during the period between the two World Wars were counted among the three largest *Chassidic* movements in Poland, (5702/1942).

## ❖ 19<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Monday Night (Aug 19<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yaakov** *ben* Rav Machir Kuli (Culi), *mechaber* of *Me'am Loez* and *Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez* (5492/1732);
- \* **Rav Shimon Sholom Kalisch**, the Amshinover *Rebbe* (1863–1954), born to Rav Menachem of Amshinov, a grandson of Rav Yitzchok of Vorka, founder of the Vorka-Amshinov dynasty. During his teens, Rav Shimon was sent to learn with his uncle, Rav Yeshaya of Peshis'cha. His uncle was so impressed with him that he took him as a son-in-law. In 1918, Rav Menachem of Amshinov passed away, and his older son, Rav Yosef, took his place as *Rebbe*. Rav Shimon was sent to Otvotzk, a suburb of Warsaw. He also became a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*. In 1933, he spent a full year in *Eretz Yisrael* with his son, Rav Yerachmiel Yehuda Meir. Although he wished to stay, his obligations forced him to move back to Europe. The *Rebbe* escaped to Kobe, Japan, along with a group of

*talmidim* of *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*, and the entire *Mir Yeshiva*. After the war, he spent eight years in America. He passed away while planning his immigration to *Eretz Yisrael*. He is the *mechaber* of the *sefer, Mashmia Sholom*. His son, Rav Meir, became the *Amshinover Rebbe* in Bayit Vegan and was *niftar* in 1976, (5714/1954);

- \* **Rav Naftoli** *ben* Rav Yehuda of Nemerov, one of the closest *talmidim* of Rav Nachman of Breslov and one of the two witnesses to the promise about reciting *Tikun HaKlali* at Rav Nachman's *kever*, (5620/1860);
- \* **Rav Arye Leib Balchover** of Zaslev, *mechaber* of *Shem Aryeh*, (5611/1851);
- \* **Rav Aharon Menachem Mendel** of Alesk, (5683/1923);
- \* **Rav Menachem Nachum** *ben* Rav Yitzchok Friedman of Boyan-Czernowitz (1868–1936/5696). The eldest of the *Pachad Yitzchok's* four sons, he was the grandson of Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger, (5696/1936).

## ✧ 20<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Aug 20<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson** (1878–1944/5704), born to Rav Boruch Schneur, the eldest of the seven sons of the third Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel (the *Tzemach Tzedek*). He was a devoted *Chassid* of Rav Sholom Dov Ber Schneerson, the fifth Lubavitcher *Rebbe* (the *Rebbe Rashab*). After the *Rebbe Rashab* passed away, Rav Levi Yitzchok became equally dedicated to his successor, Rav Yosef Yitzchok, or the *Rebbe Rayatz*. Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana had three sons. The eldest, Rav Menachem Mendel, became the seventh Lubavitcher *Rebbe*. Rav Levi Yitzchok was considered one of the greatest *Talmudic* and *Kabbalistic* scholars of his generation. Rav Levi Yitzchok was chief *Rav* of the major Ukrainian city Yekaterinoslav (today called Dniepropetrovsk) during the bloody Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent Communist oppression until his arrest and exile. For his stance against Soviet efforts to uproot Jewish learning and practice, he was eventually arrested, tortured and banished to a remote village in Kazakhstan. His spirit, however, was not extinguished, even while his body was broken and eventually gave way to his early passing. Soviet Jewry is not alone in the debt of gratitude it owes to Rav Levi Yitzchok. His personal example serves as a shining beacon of inspiration for all of us today, and for all generations to come. We are also collectively indebted to Rav Levi Yitzchok and his life's partner, Rebbetzin Chana, for giving us their son, the *Rebbe*, whose application of their teachings and way of life to all the rest of us changed the very course of world Jewry, (5704/1944);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Zerachya Azulai**, a great-grandson of the *Chida*, (5630/1870);
- \* **Rav Eliezer** of Azipalle (Uzipoli), youngest son of Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Strettin, (5625/1865);
- \* **Rav Meir Rabinowitz** (1916–2006). The son of the Skolya *Rebbe*, Rav Dovid Yitzchok Eisik Rabinowitz, Rav Meir was born in Vienna during World War I. He spent three months in forced labor, and escaped with the help of Skolya *Chassidim*. Arriving in Manhattan's Lower East Side, he and his brother opened a Skolya *Bais Medrash*. He, his wife and daughter followed his father to Williamsburg, then to Boro Park. When the *Rebbe* was *niftar* in 1979, Rav Meir refused to take over and appointed his son-in-law, Rav Refoel Goldstein. Being entirely *mevatel* himself, he served his son-in-law with the same *kovod* he had shown his father, (5766/2006).

## 21<sup>st</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Wednesday (Aug 21<sup>st</sup>)

- \* **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik** of Volozhin and Brisk (1853–1918/5678). Son of the *Bais HaLevi*, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Rav Chaim was born in Volozhin, but moved with his family to Slutsk while still quite young, when his father became *Rav* of the city. When Rav Chaim was twenty, he married Lifsha, the daughter of Rav Refoel Shapira, the son-in-law of the *Netziv*. Since Rav Refoel was a *Rosh Mesivta* in Volozhin, Rav Chaim moved there. When Rav Refoel moved away, Rav Chaim took the post of *Rosh Mesivta* of Volozhin in 1880. In 1892, following the closing of the Volozhin *Yeshiva*, Rav Chaim moved to Brisk where he succeeded his father as the community *Rav*. Rav Chaim is buried next to the *Netziv* in the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw. His oldest son was Rav Moshe, who was the father of Rav Yosef Dov and Rav Aharon Soloveitchik. His other famous son was Rav Yitzchok Zev (the *GRIZ*), also known as Rav Velvel, the *Brisker Rav* of Yerushalayim, (5678/1918);
- \* **Rav Alexander Sender** *ben* Rav Yitzchok of Komarna. His father was a *talmid* of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, (5578/1818);
- \* **Rav Dovid Hager** of Zebultov, *mechaber* of *Tzemach Dovid*. His father was Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov. He is a son-in-law of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov, (5608/1848);
- \* **Rav Aharon** *ben* Rav Yissochor Dov Roke'ach, fourth-generation Belzer *Rebbe* (1880–1957/5717). He escaped the Nazis and reached *Eretz Yisrael* in 1944, establishing his court in Tel Aviv. The current Belzer *Rebbe* is his nephew. The numerous stories of his *tzidkus* (righteousness) and miracles are legendary. Many of the great *Tzaddikim* in *Eretz Yisrael*, from all segments, were very close to him. He lost his whole family to the Nazis during the Second World War. The fascinating story of his escape can be read in *Rescuing the Rebbe of Belz*, published by Artscroll, (5717/1957).

## 22<sup>nd</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Thursday Night (Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>)

- \* **Rav Mordechai** *ben* Hillel, the “Mordechai” (~1230–1298). A descendent of the *Ravya*, he was a principal *talmid* of the *Maharam miRottenberg*, and a close friend of the *Rosh*. The Mordechai cites views of French and German authorities and brings the *piskei Halocha* of the *Tosefos* without the discussion. He, his wife and their five children were all burned at the stake during the Rindfleisch pogroms, when over 100,000 Jews in Bavaria and Austria were murdered, and well over a hundred communities disappeared, (5058/1298);
- \* **Rav Meir HaGodol** of Premishlan. One of the closest *Chassidim* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*; his grandson (also Rav Meir) became more famous than he, (5533/1773);
- \* **Rav Eliyohu HaKohen Dushnitzer**, *Mashiach* of Lomza *Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, *mechaber* of *Nachlas Eliyohu*. He was involved with the famous *dybuk* story, which also involved the *Chofetz Chaim*, (5709/1949);
- \* **Rav Shmuel Meyuchas** of Yerushalayim, (5531/1771).



## ❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

### WHAT'S BEHIND *Yahrzeit* MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

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



## ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

### STORIES & ANECDOTES

#### Sir Moses Montefiore, 16<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

Born in Livorno, Italy, in 1784, of *Sefardi* descent, Sir Moses traced his lineage back to the exiles from the Spanish Expulsion. When he was still a young child, his family resettled in England. Young Moshe became a member of the London Stock Exchange at a time when there were only twelve licensed Jewish brokers in all of England. In a matter of a few years he had amassed great wealth and had become a member of the London Aristocracy. In 1812, he married his wife, Judith, whose sister was the wife of Reb Nathan Meyer Rothschild, one of the wealthiest Jews in Europe at the time. Sir Moses eventually became the stockbroker for his brother-in-law and as a result of their partnership they

amassed a tremendous fortune. In addition, he was a partner in a large insurance company as well as a gas company that introduced gas lighting to many of the major cities of Europe. Sir Moses also had a hand in building railroads and many other industrial and financial enterprises. As the years passed, Moses and Judith grew together in their *Yiddishkeit*. In 1837, Montefiore was appointed Sheriff of London. In the same year, Queen Victoria, who had recently ascended the British Throne, awarded him the honorary title of Knighthood, bestowing upon him the title “Sir” Moses. In 1846, he was elevated to the rank of Baron. By the time he was forty-one years old, Sir Moses, with

his wife's encouragement, decided to retire from business affairs and devote the rest of his life, time and considerable resources to Jewish affairs. The welfare of the Jewish people became his sole business for the next sixty-some years and his list of accomplishments is truly magnificent. When he was appointed Sheriff of London, he specifically wrote in his contract that he would be absolved from working on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. He also specified that he was to be absolved from entering a church on non-Jewish holidays. Even when he was traveling, he almost always made sure to travel with an entourage of at least ten Jews to ensure that he would have a *minyán*. He also took along with him one of the many *Sifrei Torah* that he owned.

In 1840, a monk named Thomas disappeared from his home several weeks before *Pesach*. The French consul in Damascus blamed the Jews for his

disappearance and claimed that they killed the monk to use his blood for *matzos*. Prominent Damascus Jews were imprisoned and tortured. Many died and some, who could not withstand the torture, "confessed" under duress to the crime. Upon learning of it, Sir Moses traveled to Damascus to save the honor of the Jewish people. In 1846, Sir Moses was invited by the Russian government to visit Russia in connection with its Jewish situation. Upon returning to London, he demanded equal rights for the Jews and stressed that it would also be an economic blessing for the country. Montefiore's hundredth birthday was celebrated as an official holiday in London and he was accorded great honor by both Jew and non-Jew alike. The Montefiores passed away childless, but they left behind a legacy of *tzedoka* and *chessed* that endures to this very day.



## Rav Shimon Sholom Kalisch, 19<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

the Amshinover *Rebbe*

The *Chassidim* recount that after the *petira* of Rav Yitzchok of Kalisch (the founder of the line of *Rebbes* of Vorki and Amshinov), his son Rav Yaakov Dovid went from Amshinov to Kotzk. Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk asked him if he had seen his father, Rav Yitzchok of Vorki, in a dream, and Rav Yaakov Dovid said that he had not. Rav Menachem Mendel then said to him, "I saw your father. I was looking for him in the world above because I wanted to see him. Therefore I asked where our Rav Yitzchok was, and the ministering angels told me to go look for him in a higher abode. At first I looked for him among the *talmidim* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, but they told me that he was in a higher abode. I then looked for him in the abode of the *Acharonim*, of the *Bais Yosef* and the *Rema*, but I did not find him there. Finally, I went to the abode of the *Amoro'im*, and

when I asked where our Rav Yitzchok was, they told me that he could be found by a river not far from there. I approached the river and found him standing, bent over his cane, looking at the river. 'Rav Yitzchok,' I asked him. 'What are you doing here?' He replied, 'This river is made from the tears of the Jewish people. I cannot leave this place.'

This story is typical of all the *Rebbes* of Vorki and Amshinov, among them being Rav Shimon Sholom Kalisch of Amshinov. All these *Rebbes* possessed an extraordinary love for the Jewish people.

Rav Shimon Sholom was born to Rav Menachem, the *Rebbe* of Amshinov, in 5643 (1883). From an early age he demonstrated great intelligence and a heart filled with kindness. Everyone loved him, but his father, Rav Menachem, loved him

the most. He would say to him, "Shimoli, my son, *Chassidus* has three principles: Love of *Hashem*, love of *Torah*, and love of *Eretz Yisrael*." In fact, Rav Shimon saw in these the guiding principles of his life, and he strived with all his might to acquire them and to make them an integral part of his character.

In his youth, he walked about in his father's *Bais Medrash* and chatted with the *Chassidim* who came to him for help. He spoke to their hearts and encouraged them, making sure to provide them with something to eat and drink, as well as a place to sleep.

Later on he married the daughter of Rav Yeshaya Kalisch of Peshis'cha, his uncle. At his father-in-law's home, he advanced in *Torah* and *Chassidus* to such a degree that he became a great *Chassidic* leader.

After the *petira* of his father, Rav Shimon Sholom inherited a portion of his *Chassidim*. He settled in Otbotzk, near Warsaw, and directed its community with great love. His *Chassidim* purchased a villa in the forest for him, and his *Bais Medrash* was always full of Jews who came there seeking his advice. The *Rebbe* knew a tremendous amount about business and industry, and great industrialists came to see him for business advice.

His noble appearance, long beard, and pleasant-looking and smiling face made a great impression on those who saw him. He behaved with extreme modesty, which earned him the hearts of the Jewish masses. The *Rebbe* saw only the good in people, and to him there were no evil Jews; there were only bitter and unhappy people who were worthy of immense pity. Whoever had problems could find refuge with the *Tzaddik* of Amshinov.

For close to thirty years, the *Rebbe* led the *Bais Medrash* of Otbotzk. Crowds rushed to his *Bais Medrash* on *Shabbos* and the holidays, and the talks he gave to

the *Chassidim* revealed his great love for every Jew.

In 5694 (1934), he left for *Eretz Yisrael*, where he remained for more than a year. Upon his return to Poland, he was filled with praise for the Holy Land and was in the habit of saying, "I am a Jew of *Eretz Yisrael*." He was preparing to go and settle there, when all of a sudden the Second World War erupted and the *Rebbe* had to flee from Warsaw. He first found refuge in Lithuania, the center of the *misnagdim*, but something surprising then happened: the *misnagdim* also went to him for advice and blessings! Many saw a *Chassidic Rebbe* for the first time in their lives, and they were impressed by the radiance of his face, his way of life, and his charisma. Many devoted themselves to him and became his followers.

From Lithuania he wandered as far as Japan, and finally ended up in Shanghai, China, where he stayed for the remainder of the war. During his exile in Shanghai, the *Rebbe* revealed his character by his splendor and the goodness of his heart. His home was open to everyone, and around him gathered *Yeshiva talmidim* who had managed to flee war-torn Europe. He cared for these refugees with great devotion and provided them with food. He also prevented them from giving up hope, reminding them that deliverance can come in the wink of an eye. Thanks to these good deeds of his, many escaped annihilation.

After the war, the *Rebbe* arrived safely in the United States. His *Chassidim* purchased a house for him in Borough Park, Brooklyn, and there he reopened his *Bais Medrash*, this time in the land of America. There too he made numerous *Chassidim*, and many were those who came to see him. The *Rebbe* turned many away from sin, as *Shabbos* desecrators began to observe it because of him. He built *Talmud Torahs* and *mikves*, and he participated in many conferences designed to strengthen *Torah* observance. Before long, the *Rebbe*

had won over the Jews of America and his home became a center of attraction for all types of Jews.

In 5714 (1954), he decided that his place was in *Eretz Yisrael*, where his *Chassidim* impatiently awaited him, and so he purchased a ticket and prepared to leave. However, the *Rebbe* suddenly fell ill, and on the 19th of *Av* his soul departed in holiness and purity. His *Chassidim* brought

his body to *Eretz Yisrael* and buried him in Teverya.

The *Rebbe* left behind an only son, Rav Meir Kalisch, who settled in Yerushalayim and founded the *Shem Olam Yeshiva* in memory of his illustrious father.

[www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim\\_eng/155\\_rabbi\\_shimon\\_shalom\\_kalish.html](http://www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/155_rabbi_shimon_shalom_kalish.html)



## Rav Menachem Nachum of Boyan-Czernowitz, 19<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

The eldest of the *Pachad Yitzchok's* four sons, Rav Menachem Nachum, was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Kislev* 5629 (1869). Being the firstborn, his father made a *Pidyon HaBen* (redemption of the firstborn son) when he was thirty days old. When the infant was carried in, people noticed that he had kicked off part of the blanket covering him and commented about his vigor. The *zeide* (grandfather), Rav Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger, remarked, "It seems that this child will not succeed in concealing his holiness." The words of the Sadigerer *Rebbe* were borne out in later years. The child grew up to become the famous Rav Menachem Nachum, noted for his fiery zeal in his worship of *Hashem*.



Every Friday night, when Rav Menachem Nachum recited *Kiddush*, his face was afire like a torch. He became so excited when he uttered the first words that the cup shook violently in his hand and most of the wine spilled. Often the cup fell from his hand, but the *Rebbe* was so engrossed in the words that he never realized that his cup had been refilled and replaced in his hand.

Those who saw his *Kiddush* never forgot it, even many years later. In a letter,

one of his *Chassidim* described the *Kiddush*: "At the appointed time the *Rebbe* arrived, his appearance like that of a *malach* (angel). In a lion's voice he started to recite *Kiddush*, all the while our hearts were thumping with fright. Within the first few seconds, all the wine had spilled from the cup – such was his *dveikus* (attachment to *Hashem*). I don't believe that anyone who was there wasn't moved to thoughts of *teshuva*."

When one of Rav Menachem Nachum's *Chassidim* described his *avoda* to his youngest brother, Rav Mordechai Shlomo, he exclaimed, "What's the *chiddush*? My brother is on the *madreiga* (level) of *Tzaddikim* from previous generations."

Similarly, when he would say *Torah*, it was also with great *dveikus*, often accompanied with sighs and sobs. By the end of the *tisch*, (the *Rebbe's* table) there wasn't a dry eye in sight. The *Chassidim* returned home after *Shabbos* purified and uplifted from what they had seen and heard. An extraordinary story is told from when Rav Menachem Nachum was still a young child. A group of *Chassidim* were busy discussing *Moshiach* and the final *Geula*. In the middle of their conversation, Rav Menachem Nachum came over to them and told them, "When *Moshiach* comes, we will be the generals." One of the *Chassidim* proceeded to ask the young boy when he

thought *Moshiach* would finally come. Rav Menachem Nachum started to answer him, but as he was about to explain, he suddenly fainted. When word of the incident reached the ears of his *zeide*, he warned his *Chassidim* that from then on they could not speak to him regarding such topics!

Rav Menachem Nachum grew up under the close scrutiny of his *zeide*. He acquired a prominent place among the elder *Chassidim*. Blessed with an excellent memory, he helped transcribe the *Divrei Torah* that his *zeide* delivered during the *tisch* on *Shabbos*. A letter written by Rav Dudia of Berditchev (*mechaber* of the classic *sefer Tehilla LeDovid*), bears testimony to the young boy's brilliance. In the letter, written when Rav Menachem Nachum was just twelve years old, he writes, "The additions between the lines are the sections of the *Rebbe's Torah* that I wasn't able to recall and was reminded of by the young Rav Menachem Nachum *shlit"a*."

Rav Menachem Nachum was not just a son to his father, but a fervent *Chassid* also. At the *chassuna* (wedding) of one of the children of the Belzer *Rav*, Rav Yissochor Dov, in 1899, the Belzer *Rav* asked Rav Menachem Nachum, who had attended the *chassuna*, to stay for *Shabbos Sheva Berochos*. Rav Menachem Nachum refused, telling him that when he left Boyan he had not told his father that he would be away for *Shabbos*. The Belzer *Rav*, however, did not take 'no' for an answer and told him that he could tell his father that he had been pressured into staying for *Shabbos*. Rav Menachem Nachum still refused and answered, "I have never yet excused myself to my father!" The Belzer *Rav* was extremely impressed with his response and did not press him further, and when Rav Menachem Nachum left on his journey home, the Belzer *Rav* accompanied him to the station as a sign of respect for him.

To what extent Rav Menachem

Nachum respected and stood in awe of his father can be seen from his *tzavo'a* (ethical last will) that he wrote before his *petira*. In it he wrote, "I command that they bury me in the hut where the holy body of my father *zt"l* is buried, but it should be as far away from my father's *kever* (grave) as possible."

The Boyaner *Rebbe* also held his son in high esteem, relying on him as his representative on various occasions. One year, during one of the winter months, bad weather prevented the Boyaner *Rebbe* from being able to perform the *mitzva* of *Kiddush Levona*. The last possible night to be *mekadesh* the *levona* (to bless the new moon) arrived, and still there was no sign of the moon. The *Chassidim* became worried that their failure to perform the *mitzva* was a bad omen of things to come. They asked the *Rebbe* to *daven* that the clouds should clear so that they should not miss out on this important *mitzva*. The *Rebbe* instructed them to go to his son, Rav Menachem Nachum, and tell him in his name that he should see to it that there be a clear *levona*. Rav Menachem Nachum accepted the *shlichus* and a few minutes later the clouds cleared, leaving the moon shining brightly for all to see.

The Boyaner *Rebbe* trained his son to take over his position. On one occasion the Boyaner *Rebbe* spoke of his wish to live in *Eretz Yisrael*. He told his *Rebbetzin*, "We will go and settle in *Eretz Yisrael*, and as for the *Chassidim*, *Boruch Hashem* we have whom to leave them with."

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 changed his plans and the Boyaner *Rebbe* was forced to flee to Vienna where he was *niftar* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Adar* 5677 (1917). For the Boyaner *Chassidim* this second blow was enough almost to break them. Not only had the *Rebbe's* court in Boyan been totally destroyed, they had now lost their crown as well.

Rav Menachem Nachum decided to move to Czernowitz, where there was a large Boyaner *Bais Medrash* that had been

opened many years earlier. Vienna was overcrowded with refugees and the atmosphere of confusion and turmoil was not conducive to rebuilding Boyaner *Chassidus*.

Next to the *Bais Medrash*, a large court was built. From there Rav Menachem Nachum was able to lead his *Chassidim* in style as his father had done in Boyan. On the arrival of the new *Rebbe* in Czernowitz, thousands turned out to accompany him as he entered his new court for the first time.

The *Rebbe's* court became a magnet for the thousands of Boyaner *Chassidim*, a beacon of light in the ever-darkening gloom. The *Rebbe* would sit and listen to the woes and worries of his *Chassidim*, as one by one they loaded him with the problems in their hearts. Due to the war many had lost their homes and their jobs, and they had no one to help them. For hours on end, day after day, the *Rebbe* would sit and listen to their woes as they poured out their hearts to him, leaving his room only after he had succeeded in comforting them, convincing them that through their *bitochon* combined with the *zechusim* of the *Tzaddikim*, all would turn out for the best.

Even when the situation seemed hopeless, the *Rebbe* still did not rest from *davening*, begging *Hashem* to help His *Yidden* and improve their lot. A *Chassid* whose sister was lying in hospital in critical condition came to the *Rebbe*, begging him to *daven* for her. The *Chassid* gave the *Rebbe* an enormous sum of money as a *pidyon* (soul redemption), hoping that it would help his sister somehow. The *Rebbe*, however, did not accept the money and told him, "What do you want? To bribe me with money?" Hearing the *Rebbe's* negative reply, the *Chassid* started to cry, begging the *Rebbe* to have pity on his sister and save her. The *Rebbe* took the *pidyon*, and after he wished the ill lady a speedy recovery asked the man to leave the room. No sooner had the door shut, than the

*Rebbe* started to pace up and down in great *dveikus*, imploring *Hashem* to have mercy and revoke the decree. The same day the woman had a miraculous recovery, living to an old age. On one of the rare occasions that the *Rebbe* spoke about himself, he said, "It doesn't take me long to understand the problems of others, and it doesn't take me long to secure a *yeshua* (favorable outcome) for them."

The *Rebbe* took onto himself the worries of Klal Yisrael, carrying the heavy burden on his shoulders. Only through superhuman strength was he able to soldier on, not allowing the constant problems to break him. On one occasion, after he heard of a particularly distressing problem, he commented to one of his close *Chassidim*, "*Chazal* (our sages) tell us, if a person has a problem he should speak it over with others. One person on his own cannot cope with a problem and therefore *Chazal* advise us to speak over the problem with a second person... *Nu*, and what should I do?" The *Rebbe* added with a sigh, "I sit here the whole day and everyone tells me their problems and I have to bear it all!"

Besides the thousands of Boyaner *Chassidim* living in Europe, the *Rebbe* also had many *Chassidim* living in *Eretz Yisrael*. Due to the high costs involved, most of them could not afford to go to see the *Rebbe*. Therefore, it was with great *simcha* (joy) that they received the news that the *Rebbe* had agreed to their request to visit *Eretz Yisrael*.

During the four weeks that the *Rebbe* spent in *Eretz Yisrael*, he infused new life into his *Chassidim*. He took a ship from Trieste to Alexandria in Egypt from where he traveled by train, arriving in Lod on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5687 (1927). From Lod, the *Rebbe* traveled to Tzefas, where an estimated crowd of four thousand people came out to welcome him. While in Tzefas, he went to *daven* at the *kever* of the *Arizal* and the other *Tzaddikim* buried there. His *tefillos*, which were accompanied by hot

tears, aroused the many onlookers. After he finished *davening*, he spoke a few words. "When one realizes the greatness of the *Gedolim* (luminaries) buried here, and thinks that we were *zoche* to have them as our leaders, it is possible to come to *gaava* (arrogance) *chas vesholom*. Instead, one has to make sure, as my holy *zeide* from Sadiger once said, 'When a person remembers the *kedusha* (holiness) of the *zeides* and compares it to our own lowly *madreiga*, he becomes humble and small in his own eyes and not *chas vesholom* haughty."

In a letter from one of the *Chassidim* who accompanied the *Rebbe*, he wrote, "When these words left the *Rebbe's* mouth, tears streamed down from his eyes. All those around him also cried with true broken hearts, and I could not stop myself from crying along, and cried then with such a broken heart like I have never cried before."

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of *Sivan*, the *Rebbe* left for Yerushalayim, and again thousands turned out to meet him with the *Rav* of Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld at their head. Despite the royal welcome, the *Rebbe* was not *besimcha* (joyful). He told his *Chassidim*, "In Yerushalayim one sees the *Churban* (destruction) in every corner." His body became covered in boils and blisters from his anguish. His pain was such that he couldn't sleep at night and spent the time pacing up and down in his room.

When the *Rebbe* arrived back in Czernowitz, he told his *Chassidim*, "The reason for my trip was to heal my *neshoma*, (soul) and even though the journey was very difficult, my *neshoma* gained from the trip. If *Hashem* helps a person to prepare himself properly in *chutz laaretz*, (outside *Eretz Yisrael*), then when he arrives in *Eretz Yisrael*, he truly feels the *kedusha* (holiness) of the land in all his bones."

For almost twenty years, the *Rebbe*

led his flock. In his last years, as the threats from Germany became louder and louder, his whole being was totally given over to entreating *Hashem* to annul the evil decrees. When a *Chassid* asked him for a *berocha* (blessing) to a certain problem, he answered, "Now isn't the time to worry about people's private problems; now is the time to worry about the *klal* (community) as a whole." To a second person he commented, "The plight of the *Yidden* doesn't leave my mind for a second." Although his *tefillos* had always been full of sighs and tears, in his last years his tears became a veritable flood as he poured out his heart in constant *tefilla*.

Although the *Rebbe* had been suffering for a number of years from a severe kidney disorder, he had managed to conceal it from even his closest *Chassidim*. Although he suffered terrible pains, in his typical way he had managed to hide it.

The severity of his pain can be seen from what the *Rebbe* wrote in his *tzavo'a*: "Even though *Chazal* say that a person only suffers if he has sinned, and who can say that they are innocent from sin? A person knows how he has acted, and I don't *chas vesholom* feel that I have committed such a sin that I should have received such suffering...". His pains were such that his *zeide*, the Sadigerer *Rebbe*, said, "*Tzaddikim* accept suffering on themselves to atone for the sins of the generation."

In his last year, his illness became worse and the doctors decided that he would have to undergo an operation. The *Rebbe*, however, refused to hear of it. The family decided to ask the *Rebbe's* cousin, the Sadigerer *Rebbe*, Rav Avrohom Yaakov, to try to persuade the *Rebbe* to change his mind. The Sadigerer *Rebbe* agreed and went especially to Czernowitz to speak to the *Rebbe*. On various occasions the Sadigerer *Rebbe* would relate the following story, which he himself had witnessed:

When he opened the door to the room where the *Rebbe* was lying in bed, he

stopped in shock. Standing next to the bed was the *Rebbe's* father, the *Pachad Yitzchok* of Boyan. Immediately, the Sadigerer *Rebbe* closed the door and went away. An hour later, the Sadigerer *Rebbe* returned and when he opened the door for the second time, the *Pachad Yitzchok* was still standing there in the same place. The Sadigerer ended this story saying, "From this incident I understood that his days were numbered, and he was already busy preparing to leave this world."

Ten days before his *petira*, the



### Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, 20<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson was born in 1878, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan*, in the town of Podrovnah (near Gomel), to Rav Boruch Schneur and *Rebbetzin* Zelda Rochel Schneerson. Rav Levi Yitzchok was the eldest of four children: two brothers, Rav Shmuel and Rav Sholom Shlomo, and one sister, *Rebbetzin* Rada Sima. His father, Rav Boruch Schneur, was a great-grandson of the third Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, known as the *Tzemach Tzedek*.

As a small child, Rav Levi Yitzchok showed signs of being a prodigy, as the *Rebbe Rayatz* would later write: "Already from a young age, his extraordinary talents were discovered." He mastered *Kabbala*, *Talmud*, and *Chassidic* philosophy and was ordained by the leading *Torah* authorities of his time, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk and Rav Eliyohu Chaim Meizel of Lodz.

In 1900, at the age of twenty-two, Rav Levi Yitzchok, who had already become renowned as a *Kabbalistic* and *halachic* scholar, married *Rebbetzin* Chana Yanovsky. The daughter of Rav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, the *Rav* of Nikolayev and *Chassid* of the *Rebbe Maharash*, the fourth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, young *Rebbetzin* Chana was known as a scholar in her own

*Rebbe* agreed to travel to Vienna to undergo medical treatment. After a few days his condition took a sudden turn for the worse.

During his last hours on the 19<sup>th</sup> of *Av* 5696 (1936) he lay peacefully in bed, his face radiant as he prepared himself to meet his Creator. His whole being glowed with *kedusha* as his holy *neschoma* ascended. *Zechuso yogein oleinu.*

[www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chapt6.htm](http://www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chapt6.htm)

right. Rav Sholom Dov Ber Schneerson, the fifth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, had suggested the match. The wedding took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of *Sivan*, in Nikolayev, where Rav Levi Yitzchok and *Rebbetzin* Chana would remain for almost a decade.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and *Rebbetzin* Chana gave birth to three sons: Menachem Mendel, Dov Ber and Yisrael Arye Leib. The eldest, Menachem Mendel, was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* 1902 and would grow up to become the seventh Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, known as the *Rebbe*.

In 1909, at age thirty-one, Rav Levi Yitzchok was called upon to serve as *Rav* of the Ukrainian city of Yekatrinoslav (known today as Dniepropetrovsk). The fifth *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Dovber Schneerson, was instrumental in securing the position, and he sent letters to various community leaders, including Sergei Pavlov Fallei, one of the city's most respected members of the Zionist movement. Rav Levi Yitzchok also met with Menachem Ussishkin, a community activist who had served as secretary of the First Zionist Congress. Following his appointment as *Rav*, Rav Levi Yitzchok eventually assumed the position of chief *Rav* and served the community for thirty-two years, until 1939.

Aside from a small *Chassidic*

constituency, the Jewish community of Yekatrinoslav included many non-religious professionals, who also held Rav Levi Yitzchok in great esteem. His wife, Rebbetzin Chana, who was fluent in several languages, contributed to her husband's success and influence as a communal leader.

During his years of leadership, Rav Levi Yitzchok resolutely engaged in religious activism, never giving in to the ever-growing pressure from Soviets. He oversaw the building of a new *mikve* and clandestinely officiated at weddings and circumcisions. One area of particular note was his involvement in the production of kosher-for-*Pesach matzos*. As all factories in Russia were owned by the government, it was their policy that set the standard for the *matza* production.

Yet, even the Soviets knew that for the Jews to purchase their *matzos*, they would require a *Rabbinic* authority to provide *halachic* certification. When they turned to Rav Levi Yitzchok, who was renowned as the chief *Rav* of a prominent city, he demanded that he be allowed to install his own *rabbinic* supervisors, otherwise he could not offer certification. When they refused, Rav Levi Yitzchok remained steadfast. He traveled to Moscow and met with the Bolshevik revolutionary, Mikhail Kalinin, to explain his position. Rav Levi Yitzchok's efforts bore fruit and the Soviets relented. The *Pesach matzos* would be produced under the proper *rabbinic* standards.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* 5699 (March 28, 1939), at three o'clock in the morning, four agents of the NKVD arrived at the Schneerson home on 13 Barikadna Street.

Stationing guards at each of the doors, they began to search the house. Rifling through the thousands of folios of Rav Levi Yitzchok's written works on *Kabbola*, *Halocha*, and *rabbinic* correspondence, they confiscated his *rabbinic* ordination certificates and a

petition from the community of Jaffa that he emigrate and serve as chief *Rav*, along with visas for the entire family.

Finally, at six o'clock in the morning, after they had ended their search, Rav Levi Yitzchok was arrested for his activities on behalf of Judaism in the Soviet Union. After more than a year of torture and interrogations in Stalin's notorious prisons, Rav Levi Yitzchok was tried in Moscow and sentenced to five years of exile in Central Asia. Rebbetzin Chana subsequently followed him to be with him at his remote location of exile.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana's first home in Chi'ili was a single room in the dwelling of a crude Tartar couple who had a young child. The room had no door and was damp, muddy and filled with swarms of mosquitoes. They lived in extreme poverty and discomfort, with no privacy. Though they never discussed it, pangs of hunger tormented them. Once, they did not taste a piece of bread for an entire month.

With World War II ravaging Europe, many refugees and displaced people ended up in the Kazakhstan region where Rav Levi Yitzchok had been exiled. Rav Levi Yitzchok soon became well known among the Jewish refugees. Large groups of men and women, especially those women whose husbands were taken away for the war effort, would visit the esteemed *Rav* and his wife, seeking counsel on various matters.

With meager resources at their disposal, and facing a constant threat to their very lives, Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana heroically reached out to their brethren in need, helping in every which way, materially and spiritually.

In 1944, as Rav Levi Yitzchok's sentence was nearing its end, his physical condition began to deteriorate. Though he was unaware of this, a serious illness was spreading through his body, severely

weakening him. Meanwhile, friends in nearby Alma Ata resolved to secure the *Rav's* release. They contributed thousands of rubles, giving most of their wealth, in order to acquire the proper permits for the relocation. After six weeks fraught with setbacks and obstacles, they were finally able to obtain the release documents.

Immediately after *Pesach*, Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana left Chi'ili and arrived in Alma Ata. In this large city, their living conditions improved somewhat, and they worked more vigorously to help others in need. Yet, through the summer, the *Rav's* illness grew worse. A young friend made a special trip from Leningrad to Alma Ata, together with a well-known doctor. The doctor did not have a good prognosis for the *Rav*. He had no cure for his ailment.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana endured those heartbreaking days with exceptional strength and fortitude. Despite the dire conditions, they continued to welcome any depressed or broken person into their home, attending to his or her specific needs and providing food when necessary.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Av*, Rav Levi Yitzchok's condition turned critical. Although he was no longer able to speak, he still continued to murmur words of *Torah* or *Tehillim*. That evening, Rebbetzin Chana took a short rest so that she would have the strength to continue caring for him; when she awoke, she found the house filled with people. Her husband had returned his pure soul to its Maker.

[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/117515/jewish/Rabbi-Levi-Yitzchak-Schneerson.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/117515/jewish/Rabbi-Levi-Yitzchak-Schneerson.htm)



Once as part of the census, the Russian government sent out a questionnaire asking several queries of its citizens. Among the questions was: "Do you believe in G-d?"

Many Jews were inclined to answer in the negative because they feared arousing government suspicion and/or losing their jobs. When the *Rebbe's* father learned of this, he gave an impassioned sermon, explaining that denying belief in *Hashem* was equivalent to heresy. No matter what the risks, every Jew was obligated to answer affirmatively.

Among his listeners was a government employee whose wife had already filled out the census form for him, stating that he did not believe. The words of the *Rebbe's* father motivated him so powerfully that he went to the census office and asked the government to correct the form. He wanted to be listed as a believer.

Later when the *Rebbe's* father was arrested, his interrogators asked him how he had dared to make such statements. He answered that his words were totally in support of the government. "Jews inherently believe in *Hashem*," he told his questioners. "I was merely exhorting them to tell the truth and not lie to the government."

[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2658219/jewish/Do-you-believe-in-Gd.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2658219/jewish/Do-you-believe-in-Gd.htm)



The following story happened in the USSR in 1935, a time when Soviet oppression was at its peak, and the KGB was tracking all Jewish activity as "counterrevolutionary" and "anti-government":

One night, at 11 o' clock, a knock was heard on the door of Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, the chief *Rav* of the city of Dnepropetrovsk. An older woman entered the apartment. She looked around nervously to make sure that there was no one there besides the *Rav* and his family.

"*Rav*," she whispered. "I have come from a distant city that I cannot identify by name. In another hour, at midnight, my daughter and son-in-law will be here too.

They are both serving in high-level government positions; coming here is fraught with danger for them. It was only after I begged and pleaded with them to go to a *Rav* who would arrange a proper Jewish wedding for them that they promised me they would. But they set the condition that the *chupa* (wedding ceremony) would take place at your home, honored *Rav*, and nowhere else. I came in advance to give you time to prepare for their arrival.”

At exactly midnight, the couple arrived. They were immediately brought into a side room so that no one would see them.

The *Rav* began to prepare for the marriage ceremony. First, he needed to get a *minyan* (quorum of ten adult male Jews). By now it was after midnight. The streets were empty, deserted; not a living creature could be seen. Where would it be possible to get another eight to complete a *minyan* at this hour?

The marriage needed to take place that night at any cost. A delay could not be afforded. It was necessary to get eight “kosher” Jews, people who could be relied upon to keep a secret and not tell anyone what they had seen. Otherwise, the lives of the *Rav*, the young couple, and everyone present would be in danger.

Within half an hour, the room held nine men. Only one was missing, a tenth man for the *minyan*.

What did the *Rav* do?

In *Rav* Levi Yitzchok’s apartment building, a young Jew had been assigned by the government to serve as head of the housing committee. It was his responsibility to spy and keep careful tabs on any irregular movements in the home of the *Rav*, and verify that no religious ceremonies were taking place. It was to him that the *Rav* sent a messenger, asking him to come.

When he arrived, *Rav* Levi Yitzchok

told him that he wanted him to serve as the tenth man of a *minyan*, so that he could conduct a Jewish wedding for the young Jewish couple who was getting married that night.

“Me?!” he jumped back as if bitten by a snake.

“Yes, you!”

The young man rushed to the windows and closed all the shutters. Then he sat down quietly, and alertly watched the unfolding events.

The *Rebbetzin* brought a big tablecloth to serve as the *chupa* canopy, and four of those present, like living posts, held up its four corners.

When the *kesuba* (marriage contract) was drawn up, the bride and groom were summoned from their hiding place in the other room. The bride’s face was veiled, and the groom tried to cover his face, too, so he would not be recognized.

The ceremony began. No candles were lit due to the bride and groom’s fear of discovery. Seven circles were conducted around the groom as is customary, and the *Rav* arranged the marriage and recited the blessing over the wine. The groom put the ring on the bride’s finger and said, “Behold you are betrothed to me...” The ceremony was complete.

It was now 1:30 a.m. The bride and groom hurried to vacate the premises, as did all the other participants – except for two.

These were people who held Communist Party cards. They took their cards out of their pockets, approached *Rav* Levi Yitzchok, and said emotionally, “As of now, *Rav*, we are with you and we do not want to part from you. All of this” – pointing to their cards – “is worth nothing to us when we are with you, honored *Rav*...”

From the memoirs of *Rebbetzin* Chana Schneerson (1880-1964), mother of the *Rebbe*, *Rav* Menachem Mendel

Schneerson, of righteous memory.

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[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/960577/jewish/A-Tenth-Man-for-the-Minyan.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960577/jewish/A-Tenth-Man-for-the-Minyan.htm)



## Rav Eliezer of Uzipoli, 20<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

Rav Eliezer was a *Chassidic* leader, son of the *Tzaddik* Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Strettin (who was the foremost talmid of the famous *Chassidic Rebbe*, Rav Uri of Strelisk). He was born in Poland.

Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Strettin had four righteous sons, who he said were the incarnations of Dovid *HaMelech's* warriors. He said about his son Eliezer, that he performed his spiritual work with a great degree of concealment and modesty that even fooled the *Soton*.

Like his father, Rav Eliezer *davened* and sang with tremendous joy. He showed a great deal of love toward all Jews, never displayed anger, and distributed great amounts of money to *tzedoka*. He was known as a man of miracles and wonders.

Rav Eliezer was *niftar* in Strettin and left behind two sons, Rav Nachum of Burstein and Rav Uri of Stanislav.

[www.dailyzohar.com/](http://www.dailyzohar.com/)



## Rav Chaim Soloveichik of Brisk, 21<sup>st</sup> of Menachem Av

Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin

### Rav Chaim *HaLevi* Soloveitchik – a Bigger *Ba'al Chessed* or *Gaon*?

It is said that Rav Chaim Brisker was a *Ba'al Chessed* of unimaginable greatness, but this part of his character was overshadowed by his genius. The *Chofetz Chaim* was a *Gaon BaTorah* beyond comprehension but this *Gadlus* was overshadowed by his character.

His house was open to the public and people would make themselves at home as if they owned the place. At times Rav Chaim would not go to sleep because someone was in his bed. The Brisker *Rav* said that his father's home was much worse than a *Reshus HoRabbim* (public area). If you made your bed in the street, the authorities would come and take it away. In his father's house, there were no rules and people did whatever they wanted.

In 1895, after a fire destroyed many homes in Brisk, Rav Chaim slept on the floor in the hallway of the *shul* and, despite

the pleas of his family, refused to sleep in his home when so many *Yehudim* did not have a roof over their heads.

Rav Chaim hated money and when it came into his hands, he made sure it did not remain in his possession very long, certainly not overnight. His family would hide any money they had in the house. At some point, the *Kehilla* of Brisk stopped giving him his paycheck and gave it only to his wife, because he would disburse it immediately to the poor.

To describe his *chedsed* is impossible. To try to describe his *Torah* is downright *chutzpa*. We will share one story that gives a glimpse of how he felt about *Kevod HaTorah*. One *Motzo'ei Shabbos*, after spending many hours dictating twelve pages of *chiddushim* into the wee hours of the morning to one of the *shochtim* in Brisk who would write for him, he stopped and reached out for the papers and tore them into shreds, declaring, "False *Torah* cannot

exist. The world only needs authentic *Torah!*”

Rav Chaim was the son of the *Bais HaLevi*, Rav Yosha Ber Soloveitchik, the *Rav* of Brisk. He married the daughter of Rav Refoel Shapiro, the son-in-law of the *Netziv*. He had three sons: Rav Velvel, who succeeded him and is known as the Brisker *Rav*, who escaped Europe during the Holocaust with his older sons (Rav Yosef Dov, Rav Dovid, Rav Refoel and Rav Meir) and replanted the Brisker dynasty, with *Yeshivos* and all, in Yerushalayim; Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, who immigrated to the United States and became *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon*, where he was succeeded by his two sons, Rav Yosha Ber and Rav Aharon; and Rav Yisrael Gershon, whose son was Rav Moshe Soloveitchik of Switzerland.

Before becoming *Rav* of Brisk, at a very young age Rav Chaim was co-*Rosh Yeshiva* of Volozhin, together with his wife’s grandfather, the *Netziv*. In the early years of the *Netziv*’s tenure at Volozhin, Rav Chaim’s father, the *Bais HaLevi*, was co-*Rosh Yeshiva* with the *Netziv*, but their vastly different personalities forced them to split up. Rav Chaim’s famous *talmidim* included, first and foremost, his sons as well as Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rav Elchonon Wasserman and Rav Shimon Shkop.

Rav Chaim was *niftar* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Av* 5678/1918. Through these *talmidim* and the *Yeshivos* who follow his *Derech HaLimud*, as well as every *ben Torah* who gets a *geshmak* out of repeating a *chiddush* from Rav Chaim, Rav Chaim continues to live in the hallowed halls of every *Yeshiva* today and in the heart, mind and mouth of every serious *Talmid Chochom*.

*Yehi Zichro Boruch!*

[www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/Reb-Chaim-Halevi-Soloveitchik-A-Bigger-Baal-Chesed-Or-Gaon/3995](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/Reb-Chaim-Halevi-Soloveitchik-A-Bigger-Baal-Chesed-Or-Gaon/3995)

## **Rav Chaim Brisker’s Glass Does Not Shatter**

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik made a *Seudas Mitzva* in his house. The table was set with his finest glass and china in honor of the occasion. One of the the participants got up from the table and accidentally took the tablecloth with him as he got caught on it. The tablecloth crashed to the floor with all its expensive and delicate contents falling to the ground.

Everyone was horrified and turned to look at Rav Chaim, waiting for his reaction. Rav Chaim told everyone not to worry and assured them that nothing broke. They slowly approached the wreckage and unraveled the tablecloth. Sure enough every single piece was intact and nothing was damaged.

All eyes turned to Rav Chaim for an explanation. Rav Chaim explained that he was not a *novi* or a miracle worker. He only knew the *Kabbola* that he had from Rav Chaim Volozhin. Rav Chaim Volozhin said that no harm will ever come to something bought from money earned honestly and fairly. Rav Chaim said that since all his money was earned fairly he was sure that nothing could have broken. And so it was.

[www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Chaim-Briskers-Glass-Doesnt-Shatter/4141](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Chaim-Briskers-Glass-Doesnt-Shatter/4141)



## **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik’s Door**

Rav Chaim Brisker was an incredible *Ba’al Chesed*. His home was totally *hefker* to all those who wanted to enter. People ate his food, took away his *seforim*, and even slept in his bed, leaving him nowhere to sleep some nights. His concern for others was so great that it did not dawn on anyone that they were inconveniencing him – and they probably weren’t. His house was the local “hangout” for anyone who had nowhere to go.

Someone once asked why he had a door on his house if it performed no

function whatsoever, since it was always open. The answer was obvious. According to one *dei'a* (*halachic* opinion), in order to put a *Mezuza* in a doorway, it needs to have a door. The door is there just to make sure that the *Mezuza* is 100 percent *l'chat'chila*. Why else would someone have a door?

[www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Brisker-Door/4259](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Brisker-Door/4259)

### **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik's Demands**

In the home of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, everything was *hefker*. Anyone off the street could come in and take whatever they wanted and no one in the family was allowed to utter a single word. Families would sometimes come in and take a room for themselves and no one would say anything.

His son, the Brisker *Rav*, said that he once came to his own bed at night and found someone lying in it. He had no place to sleep that night but did not say anything to anyone about it.

Rav Dovid Soloveitchik said that one time his father, the Brisker *Rav*, was writing a *D'var Torah* that his father, Rav Chaim, had told him to write for him. As he was in middle of writing, a *schlepper* barged in from the street and asked the Brisker *Rav* for the pen. The Brisker *Rav* told him he would give it to him in a minute when he had finished writing. When Rav Chaim heard this, he screamed, "What is going on here that we don't lend our pens...?!" (*Holchei Nesivos – Middos Tovos*)

[www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Demands/4941](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Demands/4941)

### **Rav Chaim Brisker Heeds the *Bubba Meisa***

One time Rav Chaim Soloveitchik paid a visit to his elderly cousin. When he walked into the house, a button fell off his coat. His cousin quickly took out some thread and sewed the button back on while Rav Chaim was wearing the coat, which is said to make someone forget his *Torah*. Rav Chaim then employed the known antidote and took the edge of the collar and put it in his mouth.

Puzzled, Rav Chaim's cousin said to him, "Do you really believe in these *Bubba Meises*?"

Rav Chaim answered that when it came to anything to do with forgetting *Torah* he did not play around – and he even took *Bubba Meises* very seriously. (*Dirshu Chizuk*)

[www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/Rav-Chaim-Brisker-Heeds-The-Bubba-Meisa/3891](http://www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/Rav-Chaim-Brisker-Heeds-The-Bubba-Meisa/3891)



### **Rav Chaim on *Chessed***

A person who closes his *Gemora* because he must perform a *Chessed* is considered to have his *Gemora* still open. A person who opens his *Gemora* to avoid doing a *Chessed* is considered to have his *Gemora* still closed.

- Rav Chaim Brisker

[www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/Rav-Chaim-on-Chessed/5097](http://www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/Rav-Chaim-on-Chessed/5097)



### **Rav Aharon Roke'ach of Belz, 21<sup>st</sup> of Menachem Av**

When Rav Aharon of Belz hastily dressed and left the *mikve* when his father Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz wanted to come in, his father said, "If my body were as holy as his I wouldn't feel the need to ever go the *mikve*." The *Shineve Rav* once said about

Rav Aharon that it seemed the *Yetzer Hora* completely forgot about him.

Rav Yeshayale Tchoiver said that Rav Aharon never committed any *aveira*. There was only one *pasuk* that he was not

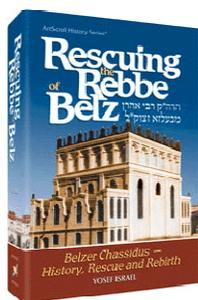
*mekayem: Ein Tzaddik baaretz asher yaaseh tov v'lo yecheta* – “there is no person in the world who only does good and does not sin”. This *pasuk* the flawless Rav Aharon did not keep.

Rav Meir Arik said that even more amazing than his *Gaonus* in *Torah* was his awesome *Kedusha*. From his youth, Rav Aharon ate once a day and slept only two hours a night. “What should I do? My body doesn’t need more,” he would say. “But for those who need more it is forbidden for them to afflict themselves.”

Rav Aharon was born in 1880, the *bechor* (firstborn) of the Belzer *Rebbe*, Rav Yissochor Dov. Rav Aharon was a *Gaon* in all facets of *Torah*, and even in his lifetime his father delegated *psak Halocha* to his young son, Rav Aharon. In 1927, Rav Yissochor Dov was *niftar* and during the *levaya* Rav Aharon, who was then forty-seven years old, was crowned the next *Rebbe* of the Belzer dynasty.

In the 1930s, Belz flourished under Rav Aharon’s leadership. Rav Aharon was a strong leader and took a stand against the inroads of the *Haskola* in Belz, making many new *takonos*. Rav Aharon’s fame spread throughout Europe, so much so that when the Nazis invaded, Rav Aharon was one of their top targeted *Rabbonim* and his capture became a priority for them. Belz was invaded on *Hoshana Rabba* in 1939, which set off four years of miserable and miraculous wandering and escape, until a worldwide effort brought Rav Aharon and his brother safely to the shores of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Aharon was weakened both physically and emotionally after his *kehilla* and his entire family were killed. Rav Aharon spent years hiding and avoiding capture in ghettos including in Sokal, Premishlan, Vizhnitz, Bochnia and



Budapest, Hungary, before his final escape. In Budapest he was *mechazek* the Jews who had not yet felt the vicious claws of the Nazis but were about to, although they did not believe it would happen.

In *Eretz Yisrael*, Rav Aharon settled in Tel Aviv where he worked to replant Belz from the ashes of destruction. *Eretz Yisrael* was *zoche* to have Rav Aharon for thirteen years, first in Tel Aviv and later in Yerushalayim. Rav Aharon was not *zoche* to have any children from his marriage after the war and was succeeded by the current Belzer *Rebbe*, Rav Yissochor Dov, the son of his younger brother, Rav Mordechai, the *Admor* of Bilgoray who never left his side through all his trials and tribulations.

Rav Yissochor Dov was born to Rav Mordechai in 1948 in *Eretz Yisrael* but was orphaned when he was only one year old when Rav Mordechai was suddenly *niftar* in 1949. He was then raised by his uncle, Rav Aharon, who was *niftar* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Av* 5717/1957 at the age of seventy-seven. Rav Aharon is buried on *Har HaMenuchos* in the *Chelkas HaTzaddikim* next to Rav Moshe Feinstein and the *Tchebiner Rav*.

*Yehi Zichro Boruch.*

[www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Holy-Aharon-Of-Belz-Reb-Aharon-Rokeach-The-Belzer-Rov/4687](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Holy-Aharon-Of-Belz-Reb-Aharon-Rokeach-The-Belzer-Rov/4687)



### **The Belzer Rav’s Taxi Lesson**

When bending over to get into a taxi, Rav Aharon of Belz quipped that you can learn from here that in order to get anywhere in life, a person must first lower himself completely.

-Rav Moshe Aharon Stern, *Mashgiach* of Kaminetz

[www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/The-Belzer-Rovs-Taxi-Lesson/4686](http://www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/The-Belzer-Rovs-Taxi-Lesson/4686)



### **Rav Binyomin Mendelson Cancels his Trip to the Chazon Ish After Showing his Kvittel to the Belzer Rav**

Rav Binyomin Mendelson was the legendary *Rav* of the famous religious farming settlement of Komemius. He would be *mechazek* the farmers to keep all the *mitzvos* of agriculture in *Eretz Yisrael*, especially the great challenge of *Shmitta*. He would often visit the Belzer *Rav*, Rav Aharon, for a *berocha* for the settlement's *hatzlocha*.

One time a baby boy was born in Komemius and the father wanted Rav Mendelson to be the *sandek*. Rav Mendelson declined the honor because he had already been *sandek* at the *bris* of the man's older son and the *Rema* says that one person should not be *sandek* twice, since it is a *segula* for wealth and we want to spread it around. The father was insistent that the *Rav* take the *Kibud* and since some people are *noheg* to give it to the *Rav* more than once, Rav Mendelson was in a quandary.

He decided to travel to Bnei Brak to ask the *Chazon Ish* his opinion on the matter. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Rav Mendelson decided to go into the Belzer *Rav* with a personal *Kvittel*

and *Kvittlach* from all the people of Komemius hoping to get a *berocha*.

When he came in to the Belzer *Rav*, he passed him all the *kvittlech*. Rav Aharon then told Rav Mendelson that he would only read Rav Mendelson's *kvittel* and not the rest of them, since when the *Rav* gets a *bracha* it flows to all his constituents as well, so it was unnecessary to read each individual request.

Then the Belzer *Rav* went on to explain himself. He said the *Rema* says that we do not allow one person to be a *sandek* twice, since we want to spread the wealth. However, said Rav Aharon, we know that there is a *minhag* to give it to the *Rav* more than once. We see from this *minhag* that when the *Rav* gets a *berocha* it goes to everyone, and therefore he can be *sandek* many times without hoarding the wealth.

When Rav Mendelson heard these prophetic words, he accepted the *berocha* of the Belzer *Rav* and headed straight back to Komemius without any more questions. And of course, he gladly accepted *sandeka'us* at the *bris*.

[www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Binyomin-Mendelson-Cancels-His-Trip-To-The-Chazon-Ish-After-Showing-His-Kvittel-To-The-Belzer-Rov/4688](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Binyomin-Mendelson-Cancels-His-Trip-To-The-Chazon-Ish-After-Showing-His-Kvittel-To-The-Belzer-Rov/4688)



### **Rav Meir HaGodol of Premishlan, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Menachem Av**

Rav Meir was born in 5471/1711 to Rav Yaakov of Premishlan, known as *Yaakov Ish Tom*. Rav Yaakov traced his *yichus* to Rav Yaakov of Korbil, the *Rishon* who wrote *She'eilos U'Teshuvos Min HaShomayim*. Rav Meir's son was Rav Aharon Leib, who was the father of the well-known Rav Meir'l Premishlaner. Rav Meir's other sons were Rav Dovid of Kalisch and Rav Pesach Chassid.

In his younger years, Rav Meir supported himself by selling goods for various vendors. Even among the local gentiles he gained a reputation as "Meir the

trustworthy", for his fair business practices and *ehrllichkeit*.

After a while, Rav Meir gave up working so he would be free to learn in the *Bais Medrash* all day. He suffered debilitating poverty but stood steadfast in his decision to devote himself entirely to the service of *Hashem*.

One day a merchant showed up in town with a honeycomb, insisting that he would only sell it to "Meir the Trustworthy" and no one else. In no hurry to conclude his *shiurim*, Rav Meir made the merchant wait

until the end of the day. Later that night, after returning from the *Bais Medrash*, Rav Meir paid a high price for the honeycomb (his *ehrllichkeit* would not let him buy it for less), even though he was forced to borrow money to do so.

Taking it apart, the *Rebbetzin* discovered that there was barely any honey in the honeycomb; but then, inspecting it more closely, she found that it concealed a huge sum of money. Rav Meir refused to derive benefit from his *metzia* without further investigation. In the end, after satisfying himself that this was indeed *yad Hashem*, he kept the money.

When his grandson, Rav Meir'l of Premishlan, told this story, he added, "Great *malochim* put the money there, because of his strong *middas habitochon*."

According to a *mesora*, Rav Meir *HaGodol* wrote a *sefer* called *Ohr Toraso shel Rav Meir*, but the *sefer* was burned.

*Zechuso yogen oleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-22-avaugust-18/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-22-avaugust-18/)



### **Tied up Above**

Rav Meir of Premishlan's trek to immerse in the *mikve* attracted much attention. The *mikve* was situated at a point in a river on the slope of a tall mountain. When the road was icy, the people had to detour around the mountain so as not to slip. Rav Meir, however, would march straight up the mountain and would never falter. When asked by some youngsters the secret to his success he responded, "*Az mir zenen tzi gebinden oyven falt min nisht arup hinten* – When one is connected Above, one does not fall down!"

*Toras Menachem* 5711, volume 2, page 105



## **Rav Raphael Meyuchas, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Menachem Av**

Rav Raphael Meyuchas ben Rav Shmuel (1695?-1771) also known as (Raphael Meyuhas Bekor Shmuel) author of *Pri HaAdama*, served as Chief Rav of Eretz Yisrael (Rishon l'Zion) from 1756 until his petira in 1771.

**"Rabban Gamliel, the son of Rav Yehuda HaNasi, used to say, '...those who work for the community should do so for the sake of Heaven, for then, the merit of their forefathers aids them.'" (Avos, 2:2)**

When Rav Ovadia Yosef used to teach the above *Mishna*, he would illustrate it with the following true story:

It was on the fifteenth of *Cheshvan* in the year *Tav-Pay-Gimmel* when the wicked Yusef Pasha was appointed as ruler. He soon came to Yerushalayim's gates, bringing with him woe, trouble, and

calamity for the Jewish citizens of the Holy City.

He hatched cruel and wicked plots against the hapless Jews and threw their leaders in prison for fictitious offences, often torturing false confessions out of his victims, then taking hefty bribes from their loved ones, families, and community, in order to agree to release them.

Rav Moshe Meyuchas was the chief leader of the Jewish community of Yerushalayim at that time. The wicked Pasha jailed him in iron chains and threatened him with violence and murder if he would not come up with a princely sum of money — 91,000 grush — within three months!

After torturing him, they released him temporarily to attempt to raise the ransom, and the Jewish council met during

this time to discuss the situation and devise a rescue plan.

Rav Avrohom Yitzchok, author of *Zera Avrohom*, who was the head of the council then, suggested they send a trustworthy emissary to the Diaspora community of Costa to help raise funds. They drew lots to decide who would be the shaliach to make the journey, and the lot fell on Rav Raphael Meyuchas Bekor Shmuel, author of *Pri HaAdomo*.

He travelled to the port at *Yaffo* (Jaffa) and was to embark on a ship to Costa leaving that day. He boarded the ship in the evening, and five days after setting sail, they arrived in Costa.

He met with the Mahari Rozanes, author of *Mishna LaMelech* on the Rambam, and told him the entire tale of woe and of the troubles of the Jews of Yerushalayim at the cruel hands of the wicked Yusef Pasha.

The Rav Mishna LaMelech called Reb Jalibi Zonana, head of the Jewish community of Costa, who represented them in all matters before the royal court. Reb Zonana took Rav Meyuchas into his home, fed him, and cared for him to help him recover after his long, wearying journey, then Rav Meyuchas told him, too, his tale of woes. Jalibi sat down on the floor, mourning and weeping for the misery and sufferings of Yerushalayim. He soon arose and went before the royal court himself, begging the king to issue a royal edict to have Pasha rescind his evil decrees. After leaving the king's presence, he appealed to the wealthy citizens of Costa, who all donated to his cause, as did Jalibi, himself.

The Rav Meyuchas blessed them and thanked them for all their help. He then left to return to Yerushalayim by way of Egypt, which he reached on the fourteenth of Adar. Once in Egypt, he met with their Chief Rav, Rav Avraham HaLevi, author of *Ginas Veradim*. Together they spoke, and studied words of Torah. On the

sixteenth of Adar, Rav Meyuchas left, continuing his journey homeward. After midday, he spotted nine Arab brigands coming toward him from beyond the horizon. Their swords were drawn, and their eyes blazed like red fire with fierceness and murder.

In an instant, they killed Rav Meyuchas's donkey and demanded all his money! He gave them all he had; they even stripped him bare and stole his cloak and clothing, leaving him in only his breeches and *tallis katan*, in the hot desert sun.

They pushed him to the ground and one of the thieves struck him a blow on the neck with his sword. Miraculously, his sword blade broke in half. One by one, the nine Arab brigands unwittingly smashed their swords, breaking their blades against Rav Meyuchas! Rav Meyuchas did not feel the blows at all, his neck was stiff as marble. They turned and left him in the desert with no food or water, yet Hashem's salvation came in the blink of an eye! After they had run some two miles away, each of them, one by one, fell paralyzed, unable to move his limbs!

By this time, they were quite terrified, and each one said to his fellow thief, "We must go back to that Jew to be healed and saved!" Amazingly, when they attempted to go forward, they were paralyzed, but to return in the direction of the Rav, they could move freely. And so, they returned all the stolen money and clothes and begged his forgiveness and mercy. The Rav was amazed to see the brigands crawl back to him, begging and sobbing for mercy and forgiveness. After they had given him back all they had stolen from him, they left. The Rav stood speechless and amazed, thanking Hashem for this miracle, wondering what would happen next!

What did happen next did not disappoint: A giant with a fiery countenance appeared and asked Rav Meyuchas where he was headed. When Rav

Meyuchas replied that he was headed for Yerushalayim, the Holy City, the giant responded gently that he had nothing to fear, he would help him. In an instant, as if by miracle, they were in Yerushalayim, safe and sound!

After these wondrous occurrences, Rav Meyuchas took on a *neder*, vowing to observe the seventeenth of Adar as a family

holiday to commemorate his personal delivery and miraculous salvation. This story is printed in the *sefer Pri HaAdama*, which was copied from the handwritten *megilla* of the miracles Rav Meyuchas recounted, having written them on *klaf* parchment himself. Afterwards, he was appointed *Rishon Letzion*, Chief Rabbi, and he served at this post until he passed away.



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

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

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

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

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

Based on *Chovos HaLevavos* - Duties of the Heart ~ *Sha 'ar HaBitachon* - the Gate of Trust

There are 7 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.

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