

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



*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)

## CHUKAS

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

### Dvar Torah

#### Gentle Words

After Miriam passed away, the spring that provided water in her merit for the Jewish people in the desert, dried up. The people complained to Moshe that they were overcome with thirst, and he turned to *Hashem* for direction. "Speak to the rock in full view of the people," said *Hashem* (Bamidbar 20:8), "and command it to give water." Moshe struck the rock, and it gave forth water. *Hashem* then told him, "Since you have not trusted in Me to sanctify Me before the people of Yisrael, you will not lead them into the land I have given them."

What exactly was Moshe's sin? Why did he deserve such a harsh punishment? There is a difference of opinion among the early commentators. Rashi contends that it was because he struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Rambam contends that it was because he spoke harshly to the people, saying, "Listen, you rebels."

It would appear, says Rav Levi Yitzchok, that these two infractions are one and the same, because one led directly to the other. There are two forms of rebuke. In one form, the person who has strayed is rebuked with gentle words. He is shown the great privilege of being a member of the Jewish people, of having a special relationship with *Hashem*. He is told that his soul is a spark of the Divine, hewn from the Throne of Glory and that *Hashem* derives enormous pleasure when even the simplest Jew performs the mitzvos scrupulously. He is

told stories of the great deeds and accomplishments of generations past, stories that will inspire and uplift him. And he is told of the great joy that permeates all of creation when a Jew fulfills his destiny in this world. This form of rebuke persuades the one who receives it to return to *Hashem* with all his heart and to embrace his role in this world with the full exercise of his free will. A person who rebukes in this manner deserves to be a leader of the Jewish people.

The other form of rebuke is sharp and harsh. It seeks to shame a person into fulfilling his obligations. A person who rebukes in this way is not actually bringing the people to the fulfillment of their destined roles. He is essentially twisting their arms and browbeating them into submission even though their hearts are not in it. Such a person does not deserve to be a leader of the Jewish people.

This difference is also manifest in all of creation. When the Jewish people are inspired to fulfill the will of *Hashem* of their own free will, when their actions infuse the entire universe with supernal joy, then all of creation subordinates itself to their will and needs. If, however, the Jewish people act only because they have been shamed into doing so, if their actions do not infuse the universe with joy, then all of creation will not voluntarily strive to fulfill their needs. In this case, the physical world must also be coerced to fulfill the needs of the Jewish people.

When Moshe spoke sharply to the Jewish people, he was not inspiring them to turn away from their erroneous behavior. Rather, he was forcing them to do so with his harsh rebuke. The rock, therefore, would not willingly provide water to slake their thirst. Moshe had to force the rock to give water by striking it rather than just speaking to it. In this sense, his first mistake inevitably led to his second one.



## Story

One day, a tall man with a gray beard knocked on Rav Levi Yitzchok's door. The door opened, and he asked to speak with the rav of the city. The man was shown into Rav Levi Yitzchok's study.

The man presented himself as a *maggid*, an itinerant preacher who earned his living by traveling from town to town preaching to the people, who gave him donations as expressions of their gratitude and esteem.

"Berditchev is beyond my normal circuit," said the preacher. "But I have special needs this year, so I have to travel farther than I normally do. You see, my daughter has come of age, and I have to marry her off. Would you give me permission to preach to the people here in Berditchev?"

"You have my permission," said Rav Levi Yitzchok, "but on one condition."

"And what is that?"

"You may not say anything disparaging about the Jewish people. Do you accept my condition?"

"Of course."

On Shabbos, Rav Levi Yitzchok introduced the preacher and invited him to address the congregation. The preacher stepped forward. He let his gaze sweep over the assembled

crowd, and then he began to speak. He told a few stories that were both entertaining and inspiring, and he saw that he had captured the attention of the people.

“So what do we learn from these stories?” he thundered, swept along by his own passion. “We learn that we have to improve ourselves. We learn that we have to turn away from our evil ways and return to our Creator with broken hearts. Just stop for a moment and think of all the terrible sins each and every one of you has committed during the past week alone.” And then he plunged into a litany of sharp accusations.

Shocked, Rav Levi Yitzchok ran to the *aron kodesh* and flung open its doors. “Master of the Universe,” he cried out in a voice full of pain. “Don’t listen to this man. Don’t believe a single word he is saying. It’s all untrue. Your children are good and faithful. They deserve Your love. Please send this man the money he needs to marry off his daughter so that he doesn’t have to travel around and accuse the Jewish people unjustly.”



## 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 *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

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגֵּן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֶשֶׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלֹוֹי נְשָׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_  
בֵּן/בֵּת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
וּבְרְצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שֶׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחְשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל  
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלֹוֹי לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפֶרֶט לְנַפְשׁ רוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ יְהִי רְצוֹן שֶׁתְּהִינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר 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 ☞



YAHARZEITS BEGINNING SHABBOS CHUKAS

[http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim\\_yahrtzeit/Sivan](http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Sivan)

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

### ☞ 9<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Friday Night (Jun 18<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin**, the Lutzker *Rav* and *mechaber* of *Oznaim LaTorah* (b. 1881). Learned at Volozhin and Slabodka; married the daughter of Rav Eliezer Gordon, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telshe, and moved to Telshe to help run the *Yeshiva*. *Rav* of Voronova at age thirty for two years, befriending Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, then served as *Rav* of Zhetel for eighteen years. In 1914, he fled to Minsk and became a close friend of the *Chazon Ish*. Moved to Lutsk in 1930 and was *Rav* until World War II. He moved to *Eretz Yisrael* during the War. Led by Rav Aharon Kotler and the members of the Israeli Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, *Chinuch Atzmai* was formed in 1953. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin was chosen to head it, (5726/1966);
- \* **Rav Moshe Chevroni**, *Rosh Yeshiva* Chevron *Yeshiva*, *mechaber* of the *Mas'as Moshe*. He was a son-in-law of Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein (*Rosh Yeshiva* in Slobodka, Chevron) and a *talmid* of the *Chofetz Chaim*, (5735/1975);
- \* **Rav Yekusiel Yehuda** *ben* Rav Tzvi Hirsch Halberstam, the Klausenberger *Rebbe* (b. 1905), great-grandson of the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz. He spent most of World War II in concentration camps. During his last fifteen years of life, he founded *Kollelei Shas* in *Eretz Yisrael* and America. These *Kollelei Shas* were intended for premier *avreichim* who were already known for their sharp intellect and *hasmoda*. The goal of the *kollel* was that in the course of three years, the members had to complete the entire *Shas*. Every member had to obligate himself to be tested on seventy-five *blatt* Gemora with *Tosafos* each month and know them by heart! Then, in 1983, at his house in Kiryat Sanz, Netanya, he laid the cornerstone for what would ultimately become *Mifal HaShas*, where *avreichim* would learn thirty *blatt* of *Gemora* with *Tosafos* with a built-in review program and be tested monthly on the material learned. In addition to his tremendous efforts on behalf of *Torah* learning, the *Rebbe* also used his experiences from the war to stimulate him in another area. Having survived the horror of witnessing the murder of his wife and their eleven children, Rav Yekusiel vowed to dedicate his life to welfare and good health of all Jewish children. He founded Laniado Hospital in Netanya in 1975 after fifteen years of fund-raising. His vision of a proper Jewish hospital was confirmed in 1990, as it was one of the only hospitals in *Eretz Yisrael* to have every employee working during the 127-day doctors' strike. After his

*petira*, his eldest surviving son, Rav Zvi Elimelech Halberstam, became the new Sanz *Rebbe* in *Eretz Yisrael*, as well as president of the hospital, (5754/1994);

- \* **Rav Dovid Lipschitz**, president of *Ezras Torah* welfare program in the US, and dean of *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon* (b. 1906). Known as the *Suvalker Rav*, he was born in Minsk, but moved to Grodno as a child, where he later studied in *Yeshiva Sha'ar HaTorah* of Rav Shimon Shkop. He transferred to the *Mir Yeshiva* where he studied under Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel and Rav Yerucham Levovitz. At age twenty-four, he married Tzipora Chava Yoselewitz and two years later, in 1935, he succeeded his father-in-law as *Rav* of Suvalk, a title he carried for the rest of his life. One-half of Suvalk's six thousand Jews (including the Lifshitz family) escaped to Lithuania. In June 1941, Rav Lifschitz arrived in San Francisco on a boat that carried several other leading sages. Rav Lifschitz's first position in the USA was in Chicago, but he soon moved to *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon* (the rabbinical school that later became *Yeshiva University*), where he remained for the rest of his life. A small number of his *shmuessen* were printed posthumously under the title *Tehilla LeDovid*, (5753/1933);
- \* **Rav Mendel Falik**. Born in Paterson, New Jersey, his family moved to Brooklyn when he was eleven years old so that he could have a proper *chinuch*. He attended *Yeshiva Torah Vodaas* until the age of fifteen, when his parents sent their *ben yochid* to the *Yeshiva* of Philadelphia. He then went to *Bais Medrash Govoha*. After several years, he moved to St. Louis, to begin his career as a *marbitz Torah*. For close to forty years, Rav Mendel was a *mechanech* par excellence. For most of those years, he was a *Rebbe* in *Yeshiva Torah Temima*, (5767/2007);
- \* **Rav Yosef Shlomo Dayan**, a *talmid* of Rav Mordechai Sharabi, a great *Sefardi* sage of the twentieth century, (5745/1985).

## ❖ 10<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Jun 19<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Binyomin Levy** of Smyrna, (5481/1721);
- \* **Rav Mordechai** of Kremnitz, one of the five sons of the *Maggid* of Zlotchov, Rav Yechiel Michel. One of his four brothers was Rav Moshe of Zvhill, the first *Zvhiller Rebbe*. Rav Mordechai was also the father-in-law of Rav Aharon II of Karlin (the *Bais Aharon*), (5573/1813);  
**Rav Eliezer** of Neustadt *ben* Rav Tzvi *HaLevi* Horowitz, grandson of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, (5603/1843).

## ❖ 11<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Sunday Night (Jun 20<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yitzchok Chiyus** (Chayes; Chayus), *Rav* in Prossnitz (Prostejov) and Prague and *mechaber* of *Pnei Yitzchok* (which sets *Yoreh Dea* to rhyme); *Siach Yitzchok* (which sets *Hilchos Pesach* to rhyme); and *Pachad Yitzchok*, a commentary on the passage in *Masseches Gittin* which deals with the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*, as well as *Api Rav'reve*, (5376/1616);
- \* **Rav Aharon Moshe Toibish**, *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Jassy (Yassy; Iasi; Yosser; Tirgu-Yasski), Romania, and *mechaber* of *Karnei Re'em* and *To'eifos Re'em*. Yassy, the capital of Moldova, once had forty thousand inhabitants, but fires in 1822 and 1827 reduced that number by a half. In 1854, the whole of Moldova was in Bessarabia, a province of Russia. In 1849, 20 percent were Jews, and in 1908, close to 50 percent were Jews, (5612/1852);

\* **Rav Tzvi Hirsch** of Zhidatchov (Zidichoiv) *ben* Rav Yitzchok Isaac Eichenstein was born in Sambor, Ukraine, in 1763 (some say 1785), and passed away June 22, 1831 (5591), in Zhidatchov, Galicia. He was a famous *Chassidic Rebbe*, a noted Talmudist, *Mekubol* and *mechaber* of *chiddushim* on *Torah* and responsa. He founded the Zhidatchov Chassidic dynasty. Rav Tzvi Hirsch was the oldest of five brothers, all of whom were great *Rabbonim*. He was a *talmid* of the *Chozeh* of Lublin; Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov; the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz; and Rav Mendel of Rimanov. He was very involved in the study of *Kabbola* and wrote *seforim* on *Kabbola* and the revealed *Torah* – and championed the position that the practice of *Chassidus* had to be firmly based on the study of the *Kabbola* of the *Ari HaKodosh*. His many *seforim* include *Ateres Tzvi* on *Zohar* (he is known by the name of this *sefer*) and *Bais Yisrael* on *Torah*.

It is related in *Eser Kedushos* (Piotrkow, 1906 – *Maarekhet Moharaza Mi-Zidachov*, p. 39), that Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Zhidatchov said to his brother Rav Moshe of Sambor that in one of his transmigrations he had been the *Riba* (Rav Yishmoel *ben* Elisha), the *Kohen Godol*.

There is a story told about his father Rav Yitzchok Isaac Eichenstein, who once let out a great sigh. When asked by his wife what that was about, he replied that he was worried about how they (he and his wife) would go to Gan Eden. His wife replied with two words from *Parshas Chukas*: *בַּמִּסְלָה נֵעָלֶה*, (*Bamidbar* 20:19) – “On the highway we will go up.” What she really meant by these words was: “*נֵעָלֶה* – we will go up to Gan Eden, and *בַּמִּסְלָה*, has the first letters of their sons’ names: Beirish; Moshe; Sender; Lipa and Hirsch. Through the merit of our great sons we will merit Gan Eden”, (5591/1831);

- \* **Rav Avrohom Damesek** of Cracow, *mechaber* of *Avnei Kodesh*, (5601/1841);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Leib Tzirelson**, (b. 1859). In 1908, he became *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* in Kishinev. In 1912, he was among core Jewish leaders and *Rabbonim* who laid the foundation of the Agudas Yisrael movement. In 1918, Bessarabia became part of Romania and Rav Tzirelson was nominated chief *Rav* of the whole Bessarabia. In 1920, having enough knowledge of the Romanian language, he was elected to represent Jews of Bessarabia in the Parliament of Romania in Bucharest. In 1922, he became the only Bessarabian Jewish representative in the parliament, (5701/1941);
- \* **Rav Elchonon Bunim Wasserman** (b. 1875), *mechaber* of *Kovetz Shiurim*; *Kovetz Heoros*; *Kovetz Maamorim* and *Ikvesa D'Meshicha*. Born in the town of Birz, Lithuania, he learned at Telshe under Rav Eliezer Gordon and Rav Shimon Shkop. He then lived with and learned from Rav Chaim Soloveitchik from 1897 to 1899. He learned from the *Chofetz Chaim* 1907–10, becoming his closest *talmid*, and then went to Brisk to be *Rosh Yeshiva*. He became *Rosh Yeshiva* of Baranovich after World War I in 1920 and expanded it from sixty to five hundred *bochurim* [12<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, according to some), (5701/1941);
- \* **Rav Shmiel Shmelka Rubin**, the Sulitzer *Rebbe*, (5773/2013);
- \* **Rav Shmuel (“Shmelke”) Pinter**, the Bukovsker *Rebbe*, (5679/1919–5754/1994).

## 🌀 12<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Monday Night (Jun 21<sup>st</sup>)

- \* **Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Osher**, the *Ba'al HaTurim* (1268 [some say 1270/5030]–1340/5100), son of the *Rosh*. He wrote a major work named *Tur*. The *mechaber* is simply known as *Ba'al HaTurim*, meaning author of the *Turim*. The *Ba'al HaTurim* revealed many secrets from the *Torah* in the *Gematria* of words, acrostics, forming of letters and word patterns within the Scriptures, and he revealed many novel *Torah* understandings from similar words

used in other parts of the *Tanach*. His illustrious father, Rav Osher *ben* Yecheiel, famous as the *Rosh*, was one of the greatest Talmudists of his day. He was a *talmid* of the famous Rav Meir of Rothenburg, leader of German Jewry, who was imprisoned by the German government and held for ransom. Count Meinhard of Goitz, then head of the government, would have none but Rav Osher as surety for the raising of the ransom money. Rav Meir, however, forbade his people to ransom him, in order not to encourage the governors of other places to imprison Jewish scholars and leaders for ransom. While Rav Osher and the count negotiated for the release of Rav Meir, and Rav Osher tried to raise the huge sum from the various Jewish communities in Germany, Rav Meir was *niftar* in prison. Rav Osher now considered the negotiations as null and void, but the governor still demanded the ransom money and held Rav Osher responsible for it. Rav Osher, therefore, had to flee Germany, and he successfully made his escape together with his family, among whom was Rav Yaakov, still a young boy. For many years before this happened, German Jewry had suffered terrible persecution and massacres, with the result that the great *Talmud* academies were slowly being destroyed. With the departure of Rav Osher from that country, a great period of Talmudic study in Germany came to an end, but it began to flourish anew in Spain, where Rav Osher finally settled. The Jewish community of Toledo accepted the German refugee as its chief *Rav*. He immediately set up a *Yeshiva* there, and he, with his children after him, exerted a strong influence upon Jewish life and scholarship in Spain, as well as elsewhere. When his father fled Germany with his entire family to Spain in 1803, Rav Yaakov first lived with his brother Rav Yecheiel in Barcelona, and then moved to Toledo, where his father was *Rav*. His younger brother, Rav Yehuda, who would marry Rav Yaakov's daughter, succeeded the *Rosh* as *Rav* of Toledo, while Rav Yaakov himself preferred to take a position on the *Bais Din*. His monumental *halachic* work, the *Arba'a Turim*, includes virtually all opinions available to Rav Yaakov, as well as a wealth of customs. The many commentators on the *Tur* include those of Rav Yosef Karo (the *Bais Yosef*); Rav Moshe Isserles (*Darchei Moshe*); Rav Yoel Sirkes (the *Bayis Chodosh*); Rav Yehoshua Falk (*Derisha uPerisha*); and Rav Yosef Escapa (the *Rosh Yosef*), who deals with only a part of the work. The *Chida* comments that without a proper study of the *Tur* and its commentaries, one cannot begin to determine *Halocha*. Rav Yaakov also authored *Sefer HaRemozim* (also known as *Kitzur Piskei HaRosh*), an abridged version of his father's compendium of the *Talmud*, quoted in *Sefer Meshorim*. Rav Yaakov was *niftar* in Toledo, (5100/1340);



- \* **Rav Eliyohu Boruch Kamai**, Mirrer *Rosh Yeshiva* (b. 1840). A descendant of Rav Avrohom, the brother of the Vilna *Gaon*, Rav Elya was born in Telz. His father passed away when the boy was only two, and the boy's teacher was his stepfather and future father-in-law, Rav Chaim Zev Jaffe. Beginning in 1868, Rav Elya Boruch also succeeded Rav Chaim Zev as *Rav* of the town of Shkod, Lithuania. In 1899, Rav Elya Boruch was called to serve as *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mirrer *Yeshiva*. In 1901, Rav Elya Boruch also became *Rav* of the town of Mir. When his co-*Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Avrohom Tiktinsky, retired in 1907, Rav Elya Boruch named his own son-in-law, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, to the faculty of the *Yeshiva*. Some of Rav Elya Boruch's lectures were published under the title *Zichron Eliyohu*. He was succeeded as *Rav* of Mir by his son, Rav Avrohom Zvi Kamai, who was massacred with

2,300 of his congregants on the 18<sup>th</sup> of *Cheshvan* in 1942, (5677/1917);

- \* Release of Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson of Lubavitch from Soviet prison, (5687/1927);
- \* **Rav Eliyohu Yosef ben Rav Arye Leib Rivlin**. He taught *Chabad Chassidus* in Yerushalayim, and wrote *Ohalei Yosef*, (5565/1805–5625/1865).

## ✧ 13<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Jun 23<sup>rd</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yitzchok Leib Sofer**, of Drohovitch, (5667/1907);
- \* **Rav Moshe ben Rav Naftoli Hirsch Ravkash**, the *mechaber* of *Be'er HaGola*, a commentary on *Shulchon Aruch*. During the fury of the Cossacks in Vilna, most of the community did not believe that the danger was imminent, so they did not escape. A few of the great *Torah* scholars of that generation did, in fact, escape to freedom. Among them were the *Shach*, the *Sha'ar Ephraim* and the *Be'er HaGola*. He spent a few years in Amsterdam until it was safe to return, (5431/1671);
- \* **Rav Arye Leib ben Rav Mordechai HaLevi Epstein**, *mechaber* of *HaPardes*, (5535/1775);
- \* **Rav Mordechai** of Kremnitz [Kremnica], one of the five sons of the Zlotschover *Maggid*, Rav Yechiel Michel, who were referred to as *Chamisha Chumshai Torah*. One of Rav Mordechai's brothers was Rav Moshe of Zvhill, the first Zvhiller *Rebbe*, (5580/1820);
- \* **Rav Dovid** of Rachmistrivka, (5710/1950);
- \* **Rav Chanoch Henoah Dov ben Elozor Rubin**, the Sassover *Rebbe* of London, (5680/1920);
  - Wearing of the yellow star was decreed mandatory for all Jews in the Baltic States, (5701/1941);
  - Minsk (Russia) was captured by the Germans, trapping about forty thousand Jews, (5702/1942);
  - The German army command, led by Erwin Rommel, reached El Alamein in Northern Egypt, 96 km west of Alexandria. After *Gedolim* in *Eretz Yisrael* held massive *tefilla* rallies, the Germans retreated.

## ✧ 14<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Jun 24<sup>th</sup>)

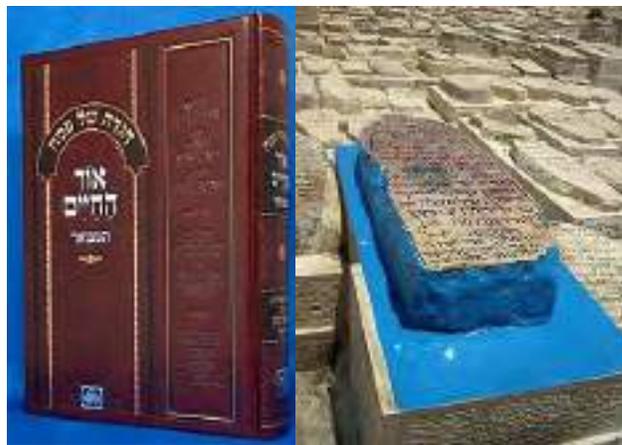
- \* **Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum** of Zutchka (b. 1906). Born in Romania to Rav Issomor Rosenbaum of Nadvorna, he was named after his mother's ancestor, Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarna. At an early age, his family moved to Czernovitz, whose 45,000 Jews constituted about 45 percent of the city's population. The first *Maskilim* settled in Czernovitz at the start of the nineteenth century, and their influence had grown so fast that, by 1849, they controlled the Board of the Jewish Community. It was in Czernowitz that secular Yiddishism held a major convocation and proclaimed Yiddish as the Jewish national language in 1908. After Rav Yitzchok Isaac married his wife, Chana, his father asked him to preside as *Rav* and *Admor* in the town of Vashkowitz. Two years later, he moved to Zutchka, where he remained until World War II. Soon after the war, Rav Yitzchok Isaac moved to Boro Park. After Rav Yitzchok Isaac's father passed away, he settled in Tel Aviv to take over his father's *Bais Medrash*, in 1973. In 1981, he relocated to Bnei Brak. One of the *Rebbe's* sons, Rav Nosson Dovid, took over the Zutchka *Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak, (5760/2000);
- \* **Rav Yosef ben Rav Moshe Trani**, the *Maharit* (b. 1568). Born in Tzefas, he married a descendant of Rav Yosef Caro, but fled Tzefas due to plague outbreak, returning to Tzefas

to head a *Yeshiva* in 1594. He moved to Constantinople in 1604, becoming *Rav* of the city and leader of Turkish Jewry a few years later. He is best known for his *teshuvos*, (5399/1639);

- \* **Rav Shmuel Shatin**, the *Kos Hayeshuos*. [According to some, 18<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*], *Rav* of *Dramesht*, (5479/1719);
- \* **Rav Yaakov ben Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ruderman** (b. 1901), *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ner Yisrael*, *Baltimore*. Born on *Shushan Purim* in 1901 in *Dolhinov*, *Russia*, he studied in *Yeshiva Knesses Yisrael* in *Slobodka*, then headed by *Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel* (the *Alter*) and *Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein*. Among his colleagues in *Slobodka* were *Rav Reuven Grozovsky*; *Rav Ruderman's* first cousin, *Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky*; *Rav Aharon Kotler*; and *Rav Yitzchok Hutner*. In 1926, *Rav Ruderman* published his only written work, *Avodas HaLevi*. In 1930, *Rav Ruderman* joined his father-in-law, *Rav Sheftel Kramer*, at the latter's *Yeshiva* in *Cleveland*. In 1933, *Rav Ruderman* moved to *Baltimore* and founded the *Ner Yisrael Yeshiva*, leading that *Yeshiva* for fifty-four years until his passing. His *petira* in 1987 followed less than one-and-a-half years after the passing of *Rav Kaminetzky* and *Rav Moshe Feinstein*. *Rav Ruderman's* students have published two volumes of his teachings posthumously: *Sichos Levi* contains *mussar/ethical* insights based on the weekly *Parsha*, while *Mas'as Levi* contains lectures on the nineteenth-century work *Minchas Chinuch* and other *Talmudic* and *halachic* insights, (5747/1987);
- \* **Rav Mordechai Attia**, great *Sefardi Rosh Yeshiva* in *Yerushalayim*, (5738/1978).

## ✧ 15<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz ~ Begins Thursday Night (Jun 25<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Chaim ben Rav Moshe Ibn Attar**, the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* (b. 1696). Born into a well-respected family in *Sali*, *Morocco*, *Rav Chaim* spent his early years learning with his grandfather, whose name he shared. *Rav Chaim's* dream was to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. He arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* with thirty followers, four days before *Rosh HaShana* in 1742 and settled in *Acco*. *Rav Chaim* and his students spent *Yom Kippur* in the cave of *Eliyohu HaNovi* on *Har Carmel*. For *Purim* they were in *Tzefas* and *Meron*, where a great deal of time was spent studying the holy *Zohar*. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Elul* 1743, *Rav Chaim* finally arrived in *Yerushalayim* with his group. He immediately established a *Yeshiva* called *Knesses Yisrael* and a second secretive *Yeshiva* for the study of *Kabbola*. One of his new students was *Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai*, the *Chida*, who was only eighteen years old at that time, (5503/1743);
- \* **Rav Arye Leib Ginzberg**, the *Shaagas Arye* (b. 1695/5455). Born in *Pinsk*, he was the son of *Rav Osher*, *Av Bais Din* of *Pinsk*. He is considered one of the greatest minds of his time. The *Vilna Gaon* said that the *Shaagas Arye* was greater than him in *nigleh* (revealed *Torah*), but not in *nistar* (concealed *Torah*). When he was still young, his family moved to *Minsk*. A widow in the city had a complete set of the *Shas* in her home and would loan *masechtos* to any *Talmid Chochom* who needed them. When *Arye Leib* was still a child, he borrowed



*masechtos* from her. Thus, every day, he would complete one *masechta*, and then ask her to exchange it for a different one. In 1725, when he was only thirty, Rav Arye Leib was invited to serve as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Minsk, but the laypersons forced him out, since he was unashamed to rebuke them when he felt that it was necessary. Shortly afterward, he was invited to serve as *Rav* of Volozhin (where he authored *Shaagas Arye*), and later in Metz, Germany. Prior to his *petira*, the *Shaagas Arye* made a *siyum* of *Shas*, which he had reviewed one thousand times during his lifetime. [*Yated* 2005 says 28<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz* and 25<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, according to *Yated* 2007], (5545/1785);

✧ **Rav Dovid Moshe Rosenbaum** of Kretchnif (Kretchinev, Kretchniv, Kretshniff), son of Rav Eliezer Zev Rosenbaum and son-in-law of Rav Chaim Mordechai of Nadvorna. Lived in Rechovot, (5729/1969);

✧ **Rav Mordechai Weinberg**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Montreal, (5752/1992);

✧ **Rav Amrom Blau**, head of *Neturei Karta* in Yerushalayim (b. 1894). He was close with the *Brisker Rav*, the *Chazon Ish* and many other *Gedolim* of the time and earned their respect. There is more than one *Neturei Karta* in Yerushalayim. The *shita* of his *Neturei Karta* was basically the same as that of the Satmar *Rebbe*, Rav Yoel. He fought against the desecration of *Shabbos*



in *Eretz Yisrael*. His brother was Rav Moshe Blau of *Agudas Yisrael*. The *Neturei Karta* movement broke off from *Agudas Yisrael* in 1935 because of their insistence on total separation from the Zionist Jewish community. In 1938, Rav Blau and Rav Aharon Katzenellenbogen seceded from the *Eida Chareidis*. For the most part, the members of *Neturei Karta* are descended from Hungarian Jews who settled in Yerushalayim's Old City in the early nineteenth century and currently number about five thousand. Rav Blau was forced to surrender leadership of *Neturei Karta* in 1965, after he married Ruth Ben-Dovid, who was a divorced woman and a convert from Catholicism, two years after his first wife, Hinda, was *niftar*. She was also a former member of the French Resistance, who had rescued Rav Blau during the Holocaust. In December 2006, Satmar leaders condemned six *Neturei Karta* adherents as reckless outcasts for attending the Holocaust denial conference hosted by Iran. Rav Amrom Blau, as well as his successor, Rav Aharon Katzenellenbogen, was vehemently opposed to activities of this sort. As an indication of his disfavor, Rav Katzenellenbogen went to the Zionist Israeli secular court to enforce an order forbidding Moshe Hirsch to leave *Eretz Yisrael*, to prevent him from engaging in joint activities with Jew-hating Arabs, (5734/1974).



## ❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

### WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

The *Maharil*, in *Hilchos Taanis*, teaches us that the reason why there is a custom to visit the *Bais hachaim* on a fast is because “this place is the resting place of the *Tzaddikim* and is therefore sanctified, pure and holy and our tefillos are more readily heard, accepted and answered when *davened* on holy ground. When you *daven* there, do not make requests of the

dead who are buried there; rather ask *Hashem* to answer you mercifully in their merit. Then circle around the graves and donate charity before reciting *tefillos*."

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

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



## ❖ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❖

STORIES & ANECDOTES

### Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum, 14<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz

*Zutchka Rebbe*

The *Zutchka Rebbe* was my *Rebbe's* uncle; I merited seeing him a few times. One Friday night when I was a *bochur*, I wandered the streets of *Bnei Brak* looking for a *minyan* and asked where the *Nadvorna Bais Medrash* was. Since I was only a block away from the *Zutchka shul*, the passerby figured I meant his *shul*; the *Zutchka shtiebel* was very close but when I went in I realized that this was not *Nadvorna*. Being that the *Rosenbaums* are all

*Nadvorna einiklach* and that the *Zutchka Rebbe* was the *Nadvorna Rebbe's*



uncle, the passerby directed me there and so did *Hashgocha Protis*, for it was my only opportunity to have been *zoche* to daven with the *Rebbe*. His *davening* was on fire and unreal. He was elderly and weak but

the *tefillos* poured out with *emes*. I will never forget how he broke down weeping when he recited the *berocha* in *Chazoras HaShatz* asking *Hashem* to rebuild *Yerushalayim*.



### The Admor of Zutchka

By A. Cohen

A throng of thousands accompanied the *Admor* of *Zutchka*, *Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum*, on his last earthly journey. He was *niftar* at the age of ninety-five.

The *levaya*, leaving his *Bais Medrash* on *Be'er Mayim Chaim* Street in *Bnei Brak*, was attended by many *Admorim* and *Rabbonim*, headed by the *Admorim* of *Vizhnitz*, *Gur*, *Sadigora*, *Alexander*, *Sanz*, *Lublin*, *Strikov*, *Nadvorna*, *Chernobyl*, *Machnovka*, *Bohush*, *Cleveland*, *Kretchinef*, *Darag* and *Viaslava*.

Before the departure of the procession, *hespedim* were delivered by

Rav Shmuel *HaLevi* Wosner and Rav Shmuel Unsdorfer, who announced that in line with the custom of the *Admorim* of Nadvorna, all sons of an *Admor* who has passed away then preside as *Admorim*. Thus, the *niftar's* son, Rav Nosson Dovid, will preside in the *niftar's Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak, while the sons who live abroad will preside in their places of residence.

*Hespedim* were also delivered by the *Admor* of Nadvorna-Chadera, as well as by Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein, the *Av Bais Din* of Ramat Elchonon, and by the *niftar's* son, Rav Nosson Dovid.

In Yerushalayim, the *levaya* set out from Kikar Shabbos, where the *niftar's* son, the *Admor* of Stanislav, arriving from abroad directly to the *levaya* in Yerushalayim, delivered a *hesped*. Yet another *hesped* was delivered by the *niftar's mechutan*, the *Admor* of Erloi. From Kikar Shabbos, the *levaya* proceeded on foot to Har HaZeisim, where the *niftar's* forbears are buried.

Among the masses of mourners in Yerushalayim were many *Admorim*, including the *Admorim* of Belz, *Shomrei Emunim*, Rachmastivka, Mazhmigrad, Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok, Zvhill, Stropkov, the *gaavad* of the *Eida HaChareidis*, members of the *BaDaTz* and many prominent Rabbonim and *Marbitzei Torah*.

Toward twilight, the *Admor* of Zutchka was buried in the cemetery on Har HaZeisim, where *hespedim* were delivered by the *Admor* of *Shomrei Emunim* and the *Admor* of Cleveland.



### Biography

The *Admor* Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Teves*, 5666 (1906), in the city of Chernobyl in the Bokivina region of Romania. His father was Rav Issomor, the venerable *Admor* of Nadvorna, and his mother was the

righteous Malka, daughter of Rav Osher Yeshaya Rubin of Kolbisof, grandson of the *Rav* of Ropshitz. Rav Yitzchok Isaac was named after his grandfather, Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarna.

From his youth, he was known for his tremendous *hasmoda* and industriousness, traits that characterized him throughout his entire life, even in his final days. His father hired one of the prominent Chortkover *Chassidim*, Rav Yitzchok Shapira, to teach his sons.

When Rav Yitzchok Isaac was eight, he and his family moved to Austria, and from there to the home of his grandfather in Kretchinef. Later on, they returned to Chernobyl, where he married Chana, daughter of Rav Nosson Dovid *HaKohen* Hollander, the *Rav* of the Galician city of Amsana. Immediately after his wedding, his father asked him to preside as *Rav* and *Admor* in the city of Vashkowitz. Two years later, he moved to Zutchka.

During the Holocaust, Rav Yitzchok Isaac left Zutchka on foot, along with his family and the entire community. On his back he bore a bag containing his manuscripts, of which he said: "This is my share of all my toil." Nazis, suspecting that they were espionage documents, confiscated them. In order to salvage the documents, the *Admor* gave all of his money to a Nazi officer who promised to return the manuscripts. Of course, the promise was not kept.

During the Holocaust, while living in the city of Balta, he experienced a miracle. The *Admor*, who occupied an upstairs room, hid fifty Jews in the cellar. Nazis arriving at his dwelling conducted a search, and found the *Admor* reciting *Tehillim*. They decided to hang him then and there, and asked, "Are you afraid of G-d?"

"Yes!" he decisively replied. They snatched the *Tehillim* and threw it out of the window, into the muddy yard. (He saved that *sefer Tehillim* until his final

day.) Then they removed the *Rebbetzin* and the children from the room and placed a rope around his neck. The Nazi jeered, "Now pray."

The *Rebbe* began to say *Vidui* from *oshamnu*, *bogadnu* until *rachum vechanun*.

When he reached these words, the Nazi stopped him and said, "Enough!" A commanding officer then entered and said, "Let the *Rav* live a bit longer."

As the Nazi was leaving, the *Admor's* son heard the Nazi mutter, "He's a saintly man. G-d will punish."

The *Admor* publicly commemorated that miracle every year.

Immediately after the war, the *Rebbetzin* became deathly ill. However, she recovered miraculously and lived until 5742 (1982). After the war, the *Admor* reached Prague, and in 5707 (1947) published his *HaMe'oros HaGedolim* about the *Aseres HaDibros*. At the end of the *sefer*, he printed a letter of gratitude to his brother-in-law, the *Admor* of Kachnia of the United States, and to the *Admor's* wife, his sister, who helped secure his release. He then left for America, where he lived until 5733 (1973).

He established his *Bais Medrash* in Boro Park, where he was beloved by all. He was best known for his efforts to safeguard the honor of *Shabbos Kodesh*. During that period, a number of Jewish stores in the area were open on *Shabbos*. When he tried to correct the situation, people attempted to dissuade him, claiming that the storekeepers wouldn't listen to him out of fear that competitors might deprive them of their livelihoods. But he ignored these warnings and, every *Shabbos*, went to the stores with his *Chassidim* and pleaded with the storekeepers in a genial manner to close their shops. Sometimes he was forced to promise them financial help, in exchange for the *damage* that they believed would be incurred by closing their shops on *Shabbos*.

For ten consecutive years, he grappled with this problem, until he finally succeeded in closing all stores for *Shabbos*. He also succeeded in closing a nearby movie theater that was operating on *Shabbos*. Today, no one believes that stores were open on *Shabbos* in the heart of a *chareidi* neighborhood.

He initiated a novel idea in the United States of those days. He would place a set *Shabbos* table on an open truck. A driver would then drive through the Jewish neighborhoods and announce the time of candle lighting.

For many years, he tried to find *halachic* solutions for the problem of opening bottle caps on *Shabbos*. In time, he founded the *Shoneh Halochos* enterprise in Bnei Brak for the review of *Hilchos Shabbos*.

In 5724 (1964), his daughter Shifra, who had been the wife of the *Admor* of Varadan, *Rav Yosef Leifer*, passed away. She was survived by three small daughters. *Rav Yitzchok Isaac* accepted his lot with love.

He was outstanding in his *kibbud ov vo'eim*, even in his final days. A long time after his father had passed away, he would send letters to his sisters every *erev Rosh HaShana*, saying that by honoring his oldest sister he was fulfilling the mitzva of *lerabos ochicha hagodol*.

After the *petira* of his father, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and began to preside in his father's *Bais Medrash* in *Yad Eliyohu*, *Tel Aviv*, where he was active on behalf of the education of Jewish children.

In 5741 (1981) he established his *Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak, and two years later, moved to the current *Bais Medrash* on *Be'er Mayim Chaim Street*, where he founded a *kollel* and *Talmud Torah*. Later on, he also built a *mikve* in the building.

His home was open to all Jews at all hours, and he refused to designate reception hours. He claimed: "The Jews

who seek me need a *yeshua* or an *eitza* now,” stressing that this practice might arouse *rachamim* with *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*, so that all hours would be those of *rachamim* and *eis rotzon*.

His tremendous diligence was exemplary. Once, a great-grandson from abroad, studying in *Eretz Yisrael*, came to visit him. The *Admor* was so immersed in his studies that he did not recognize his own kin, and asked who he was. When the youth explained that he was the *Admor's* great-grandson, the *Admor* blessed him, and returned to his studies. In his *sefer*, *HaTzniyus VeHayeshua*, he apologizes to his offspring for this behavior.

He pored over his *seforim* day and night, and the old-fashioned typewriter on which he personally typed out his many *chiddushim* was constantly on his table.

His *Avodas HaKodesh* was remarkable. He would go before the *teiva* on *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* during all of the services, from the eve of the holiday until its end, including the *Torah* reading and the *shofar* blowing. After the prayer services, his face would glow, and he did not seem tired from the exertion.

He would often restore *sholom bayis* to families, and make peace among people. He did this in a most unassuming manner. He drew many closer to their Father in Heaven.

Once, a *ba'al teshuva* told him about his many difficulties. The *Admor* advised him to study *Orchos Tzaddikim*. When the young man claimed that he had no one with whom to study, the *Rebbe* held a daily *shiur* with him, which continued for two years. When questioned about that practice, the *Admor* replied, “What can I do if I benefit from the *shiur*?”

Once, he became very weak, and the community was asked to *daven* for his recovery. He recuperated, and during the weeks in which he felt better, he would shower *berochos* upon Am Yisrael.

On Sunday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, he felt ill, and was taken to Laniado hospital. During the ride to the hospital, his situation deteriorated. At the hospital, efforts were made to revive him, and top-ranking doctors were brought to his bed. At 1 a.m., he returned his pure soul to its Maker. At the time of his *petira* he was surrounded by a *minyán*, which recited *Pesukei HaYichud* and *Nishmas*.

Despite the late hour, the bitter news spread rapidly throughout the Kiryat Sanz neighborhood, and at 2:15 a.m. the *levaya* left the hospital toward Bnei Brak.

He is survived by an illustrious family. Thirteen years ago, he merited seeing a fifth generation. His sons are: Rav Meir of Caracas, Rav Yisrael of Stanislav; Rav Nosson Dovid, the *Rav* of the Chassidei Zutchka community; and his sons-in-law, Rav Osher Yeshaya of Nadvorna-Chadera and Rav Yosef Leifer of Varadan. He is also survived by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, all of whom are following in his footsteps.

[www.chareidi.org/archives5760/mattos/azuchka.htm](http://www.chareidi.org/archives5760/mattos/azuchka.htm)



### **Zutchka vs. Rabbi X**

I wanted to begin by telling a story of an encounter a friend had with a semi-prominent *Rav*, and then juxtapose it with a story describing how the *Zutchka Rebbe* reacted in a similar situation.

My friend had been married a few years, but things were not going well. The couple had decided on divorce, and they were on their way to the *Rav* to finalize the arrangement. But before they went inside they began to talk. They mutually experienced a longing that they had not experienced in months, or even years. Just before they crossed that irrevocable threshold they had decided that it was not too late to reconcile. Their deep attachment, which had been latent for much time, began to manifest itself in

feelings ever closer to the surface, and decided that they wanted to make the marriage work.

They walked into the *Rav's* quarters, and said with beaming faces, "We've changed our minds! We decided not to go through with the divorce!" The *Rav* opened his eyes wide, a vein about to burst from his forehead, and barked at them, "For this you waste my time? I've been sitting here FIFTEEN MINUTES waiting for the two of you. I could have been doing a hundred other things. Don't you know that I'm a busy man?"

The previous *Zutchka Rebbe* was known never to utter a mundane word. He learned, he taught *Torah*, and accepted petitioners. *Torah* was his entire life. He did not even engage in worldly or mundane speech with his own family. When a granddaughter who lived close by and visited often came into his study one day, he asked, "Who is this?" So much was he involved in his learning. But when someone had a serious problem or a *Torah* matter to discuss, he availed himself completely to him. Once, after his daily *Halocha shiur* in the morning, a man came up to him, and said that he was having trouble following the *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe* established with him a one-on-one *shiur* on the spot, which

lasted for several years. When the man came to the *Rebbe*, and said, "I feel as though I'm taking up the *Rebbe's* valuable time," the *Rebbe* answered, "if you only knew of the great satisfaction I get every day from learning with you."

On one occasion, a couple had come to him in the evening. They wound up staying for four hours, past midnight. When his grandson later questioned him about the unusual amount of time spent with this couple he responded, "This couple was going to get a divorce. I was their last stop. I sat with them, and I delved deep into their hearts, and saw that there was much hope and yearning between the two of them. We talked out the matter, and now they are going to stay married. After all, doesn't it say that when a couple gets divorced the *mizbei'ach* (the altar) sheds tears? Well, tonight I am full of joy knowing that I spared the *mizbei'ach* any unnecessary sorrow. Four hours? Even a whole night would have been worth it for two precious *neshomos* (souls)."

A *Tzaddik*, concerned with the depths of the human soul.

[www.rebbestories.blogspot.com/2009/07/zutchka-vs-rabbi-x.html](http://www.rebbestories.blogspot.com/2009/07/zutchka-vs-rabbi-x.html)



## Rav Yaakov HaLevi Ruderman, 14<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz

*Rosh Yeshiva Ner Yisrael* Baltimore

This article originally appeared in *Yated Neeman*. We abbreviated it because of its length.

As we enter the *Yahrzeit* of the revered *Rosh Yeshiva* and founder of *Yeshiva Ner Yisrael* of Baltimore, the *Yated* presents highlights of his life as told by his *talmidim*. We thank the *talmidim* who shared with us their oral and written memories of the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

### Hallowed Beginnings

Rav Ruderman was born on

*Shushan Purim* in 5660 (1900) in Dolhinov, a small shtetl near Vilna. He was born late in life to his parents, Rav Yehuda Leib and Sheina, the first son after six daughters. Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, Rav Ruderman's illustrious cousin who is named after the same person, related a fascinating story about how Rav Ruderman got his name. A year before his birth, an elderly, childless Jew named Reb Yitzchok assured Rav Yehuda Leib that he would have a son and made him promise to name

the child Yitzchok. Thinking that it was unlikely that he would have a son, Rav Yehuda Leib half-jokingly agreed. A year later, when his son was born, his mother wanted to name him Yaakov after her father. A *shaila* was asked and the *psak* was that he be given both names: Yaakov Yitzchok.

Rav Yehuda Leib was a *melamed*. Rav Ruderman often stated that his father knew *Shas* with *Tosafos* well, but even though he may have eclipsed his father in learning, he did not even approach his level of *avoda* and *Yiras Shomayim*. Rav Yehuda Leib recognized his young son's prodigious talents and encouraged him to learn. The child was awakened early to learn a *blatt* before *davening* and was rewarded for every *daf* memorized. As a result, he mastered *Seder Noshim* and *Nezikin* before his *bar mitzva*.

Shortly before his *bar mitzva*, Rav Yehuda Leib took him for a *berocha* to the Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Ber. The *Rebbe* was so impressed that he blessed the boy that he should grow to be an *odom godol*. The *Rebbe* wanted the youth to learn in Lubavitch, but Rav Yehuda Leib chose instead to send him to Slonim.

The young *illui* from Dolhinov soon developed a remarkable reputation. At that time it was customary for Slabodka *talmidim* to seek exceptional *bochurim* to join Slabodka. The future Chevron *Rosh Yeshiva* Rav Yechezkel Sarna, who was already one of the *Alter* of Slabodka's closest *talmidim*, convinced the young genius to join Slabodka. That decision was undoubtedly a watershed in his life.

It was in the middle of World War I when Rav Ruderman joined Slabodka when it was in the city of Minsk after it had fled eastward, away from the approaching German Army. In Minsk, he merited meeting the revered *Godol HaDor*, Rav Chaim Brisker. It seems that Rav Chaim discerned tremendous potential in the young *illui* and realized that he would need

special care to withstand wartime difficulties. Toward that end, unbeknown to Rav Ruderman, Rav Chaim arranged for a certain wealthy *Yid* to provide him with extra money so that his learning would not be adversely affected by hunger. Only after Rav Chaim's passing in 1918, when the support ceased, did Rav Ruderman become aware of Rav Chaim's role in caring for him.

The *Alter* also displayed an enormous amount of affection toward the youngster. He assigned Rav Yechezkel Sarna to serve as his *eltere bochur*.

Rav Ruderman learned with tremendous *hasmoda*, but he was completely unable to keep to *sedorim* of the *Yeshiva*. The *Alter* gave him latitude to learn in his own way as long as he achieved the pre-set goals. It was decided that he would attempt to complete *Shas* that winter. Rav Ruderman would take long walks during which he would review *Gemoros* and *Sedorim* by heart. He was well on the way to reaching his goal when the *Alter* received a telegram shortly after *Sukkos* advising of the *petira* of Rav Yehuda Leib. Not wishing to interfere with his *talmid's* learning regimen, the *Alter* chose not to tell him the terrible news. Only after *Pesach*, when he had achieved his goal, was he informed of his father's passing. The *Alter* remarked that the completion of *Shas* would be a far greater *zechus* for his father's *neshoma* than all the recitations of *Kaddish* that he missed.

His *talmidim* in Baltimore understand their great *zechus* to have had a *Rebbe* whose every action was a reflection of the *Alter*. On the *Alter's* fiftieth *Yahrzeit*, Rav Ruderman and Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky were invited to Lakewood to speak. Rav Schneur Kotler related that when Rav Yaakov was unable to attend he stated, "The Baltimore *Rosh Yeshiva* is the most reflective personality of the *Alter* in our generation."

One thing in which Rav Ruderman

particularly took pride was the fact that he merited receiving *semicha* from Rav Meir Atlas, the revered father-in-law of Rav Elchonon Wasserman. This *semicha* traced back to the Vilna *Gaon*, as Rav Meir Atlas had received *semicha* from Rav Eizele Charif, who was in turn a *musmach* of Rav Abbale Peslover, who had received *semicha* directly from the *Gaon*; thus Rav Ruderman was a direct link in this chain of the *mesora* back to the Vilna *Gaon*.



### **Building Torah in America**

In 5684 (1924), Rav Ruderman married the daughter of Rav Sheftel Kramer, a son-in-law of Rav Shraga Feivel Frank and brother-in-law of Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein and Rav Boruch Horowitz.

The *Rebbetzin* was his partner and helpmate in all his undertakings on behalf of *Yiddishkeit*. Not only did she free him from the yoke of responsibility in the material aspects of the house, but she was also instrumental in helping him achieve lofty spiritual pursuits. Later, when they moved to America and Rav Ruderman sought to build a *Yeshiva* in a country that had no understanding of the concept, it was the *Rebbetzin* who constantly encouraged him to persevere rather than be deterred by the numerous stumbling blocks placed in his way. It was the *Rebbetzin* who organized fundraisers and donations of staples for the *Yeshiva*. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was eternally grateful for all that she had done and, many decades later, upon her passing several years before his *petira*, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was simply inconsolable.

During the first years after their marriage, the *Rosh Yeshiva* devoted himself to complete immersion in learning. In 1931, the *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Rebbetzin* and their baby daughter immigrated to the United States. Rav Ruderman joined his father-in-law, Rav Sheftel Kramer, in the *Yeshiva* of New Haven that had relocated

to Cleveland, where the latter served as *Menahel Ruchani*.

In 1933, Rav Ruderman decided to accept a position as *Rav* of the *Tiferes Yisrael Shul* in Baltimore with the understanding that he could use the facilities for a *Yeshiva*.

The *Yeshiva's* early growth intensified through the recognition and support of prominent *Rabbonim*. Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, *Menahel* of *Mesivta Torah Vodaas* and unquestionably one of the most important figures in the development of *Torah* in America, sent *bochurim* from New York whom he thought would benefit. Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky sent his children from Toronto, which in those days was considered a major distance away. Rav Yehoshua Klavan, one of the foremost *talmidim* of Rav Boruch Ber and the *Rav* of Washington, D.C., was among the staunchest supporters of the *Yeshiva*. He not only sent a son to learn in the *Yeshiva*, he even raised funds for the upkeep and growth of the *Yeshiva*. Furthermore, during the winter months, when Rav Ruderman would occasionally suffer from laryngitis, Rav Klavan would come from Washington to deliver the daily *shiur*. Rav Naftoli Zvi Yehuda Riff, a grandson of the *Netziv* and the *Rav* of Camden, New Jersey, was also extremely helpful.



### **Total Immersion in Torah**

Without a doubt, it was the power of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* total immersion in *Torah*; his contagious *Ahavas Torah* and his complete belief in the eternity of *Torah* that enabled him to become the quintessential *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Torah* builder. His love of *Torah* was such that it overcame even the most natural human limitations. Once, during the early years of the *Yeshiva* at its current campus, a fire broke out in the building where the *Rosh Yeshiva* lived. Everyone immediately

evacuated the building. Suddenly Rav Ruderman ran back into the burning building, exclaiming, “I forgot an absolutely irreplaceable item!” What was the item for which he risked his life? His very rare copy of the *sefer Nesivos HaMishpot* on Rabbeinu Yeruchem.

His dedication to learning knew no bounds. His encyclopedic knowledge of *Talmud Bavli*, *Yerushalmi*, *Rishonim*, *Poskim*, *Acharonim* and *teshuvos* set a lofty standard for which to strive. The *Rosh Yeshiva* stimulated lively discussions, thereby deepening interest and broadening horizons, by challenging his students to bring proof from one *Gemora* to a seemingly unrelated issue.

He constantly focused the attention of his *talmidim* and their awareness to the breadth and inter-relationship of all of *Torah*. He was always involved in a *kushya*. In fact, he would say that he used questions as memory keys with which to remember the *Gemora*. Therefore, he was always ready with a penetrating query or comment that would lend insight to whatever *Gemora* one mentioned. He lived with his questions and was constantly seen with his lips moving, as he was totally and consistently absorbed in learning.

Rarely was his sleep at night not disturbed by the *kushya* with which he went to bed. This total involvement was transmitted to his *talmidim*.

On par with his love for *Torah*, was the *Rosh Yeshiva*'s love for his students. If ever a *talmid* asked him a good question or related a nice *sevara*, his face would radiate delight. When one of the *talmidim* had the good fortune to ask or say something that was new to him, he would be ecstatic. Many *talmidim* had the fortune to be embarrassed by the *Rosh Yeshiva* when they would be reminded years later of an insightful *Torah* thought that they themselves had long since forgotten.

A revealing incident occurred when

he was learning in Slabodka and a visitor arrived bearing a copy of the newly published *sefer Ohr Somei'ach*. The young *bochur* asked to borrow the *sefer* but was refused permission as the man planned to continue his journey the following day. Rav Ruderman was undaunted. He borrowed the *sefer* for one night promising to return it in the morning. Overnight he went through and mastered the *sefer* in its entirety!

On another occasion, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was once undergoing a lengthy medical procedure. The doctor, wishing to distract the *Rosh Yeshiva* from the pain and unpleasantness, engaged him in small talk. Throughout the procedure the *Rosh Yeshiva* continuously nodded his head in agreement. After leaving the clinic, he explained to the *talmid* accompanying him a wonderful approach to the *sugya* that had occurred to him in the midst of the procedure. He then suddenly interrupted himself, “By the way, perhaps you heard what the doctor was saying to me? I nodded to him out of respect, but what did he want?”

The *Rosh Yeshiva* once complained to his *talmid*, Rav Yisrael Dov Kaplan, today *Rosh Kollel* in Bayit Vegan, “Nowadays, people do not learn. When I was fifteen, learning in Slabodka we would get up at five in the morning and go to sleep after midnight. We learned fifty *blatt* a day, every day!”

Once on a long trip, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was accompanied by two *bochurim* from the *Yeshiva*, who decided to utilize the duration of the journey to go over several pages of *Maseches Berochos* that they had committed to memory. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was seated right in front of them and they noticed that he was shifting about in his seat uncomfortably. From time to time he walked around and fixed them with a piercing look. “What kind of *Gemora* are you using over there – is it a different *girsas*?” he asked. Scarcely concealing their

pride, the *bochurim* replied, “We don’t have a *Gemora*, we’re going over what we learned by heart!” The *Rosh Yeshiva*, with a smile on his face, proceeded to quote the exact language of the *Gemora*.

When he was already in his eighties, a *talmid* relates, “I went to *daven Mincha* with the *Rosh Yeshiva* and he complained that the strong medicines he was taking for his numerous ailments caused him to forget. The *talmid* asked, “Has the *Rosh Yeshiva* forgotten any *Tosafos* in *Shas*?” Immediately, the *Rosh Yeshiva* banged his cane and forcefully said, ‘No! No! No *Tosafos*. I mean a *chiddush* in a difficult *Rambam* that I once said – I have trouble remembering in its entirety.” The *talmid* related that the way in which he could not even contemplate the horror of forgetting a *Tosafos* was an indication of *Ahavas Torah* and devotion to *Torah* that remained with him forever.



### **Transmitting Torah**

Rav Ruderman would show *talmidim* a letter that he received from the Steipler *Gaon* in 5719 (1959). The Steipler sent him a letter requesting financial assistance for printing the first volume of his magnum opus *Kehillas Yaakov*. In the letter, the Steipler wrote that he had seen and learned Rav Ruderman’s *sefer Avodas HaLevi* that he had written in his youth and it features “wonderful *chiddushim* on the most difficult areas of the order of *Kodshim*”. In the letter, the Steipler encourages Rav Ruderman to write more such *seforim*. After showing the letter to the *talmid*, Rav Ruderman said, “I have enough *chiddushim* to write ten more volumes of *Avodas HaLevi*, but I am now writing *leibidige seforim*, living *seforim*, my *talmidim*.”

The *Rosh Yeshiva* continued, “Teaching takes full concentration, as the *Gemora* teaches that only if a *Rebbe* is similar to a *Maloch* should one seek to

learn *Torah* from him. We know that a *Maloch* cannot do more than one *shelichus*, one job at a time. Teaching *talmidim* preoccupies me so completely that I cannot sit and write *seforim*.” Indeed, the *Rosh Yeshiva* invested tremendous effort into teaching and shaping each *talmid*.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* established thousands of *talmidim*. Among them, hundreds became *Gedolei Torah* and *Marbitzei Torah* who continue his legacy and illuminate the *Torah* world with their *shiurim* and *chiddushei Torah*. Although of course, there was a special focus on establishing *talmidim* who would become *Torah* giants in their own right, the *Rosh Yeshiva* understood the individual character of each *talmid* and encouraged them, each in his own way, to make *Torah* a central part of their lives.



### **Individualized Chinuch**

*Talmidim* of *Ner Yisrael* felt that the *Rosh Yeshiva* loved them as a father loves his son. He took an active interest in their needs, listened to their problems and shared their burdens. They, in turn, became greatly attached to him. His relationship with his *talmidim* was very much predicated on an explanation of *Chazal* on the *pasuk* “and you shall teach them to your sons”. *Chazal* say that sons are referring to *talmidim*. “Why, then,” the *Rosh Yeshiva* asked, “did the *pasuk* not write, “and you shall teach them to your pupils?”

“In order to teach us,” he explained, “that *talmidim* are akin to sons. Just as a son never stops being a son, neither does a *talmid* stop being a *talmid*. A *Rebbe* must never imagine that his *talmid* is beloved to him only when he is under his tutelage, receiving his guidance and instruction and that when this period comes to an end, so does the special relationship. The truth goes far beyond this, for upon becoming a *talmid* he becomes a son of his *Rebbe*. Even

when he embarks on his own path, he should remain a son; the bond should not weaken.” This is the way in which the *Rosh Yeshiva* interacted with his *talmidim*. *Talmidim* who visited him after intervals of ten years or more still felt the same warm relationship they remembered from their years in *Yeshiva*.

His emulation of the *Alter* was not simply in treating his students as children; rather, it was in all facets of *chinuch*. He would try to handle each of his *talmidim* in a manner suited to that individual. When it came to delivering rebuke, Rav Ruderman would explain that if he would dare speak to his students in the way the *Alter* rebuked even the greatest *Baalei Mussar* publicly, they would have fled the *Yeshiva* instantaneously. In fact, when the *Rosh Yeshiva* found it necessary to rebuke the whole *Yeshiva*, he would speak very positively even while calling the *talmidim* to task.

Rav Ruderman often cautioned that dealing with *bochurim* is *dinei nefoshos*, a matter of spiritual life and death, and cannot be taken lightly. There were instances when members of the *Yeshiva's Hanhola* thought that a specific *bochur* should be expelled. The *Rosh Yeshiva* consistently held firm to his convictions, explaining that one never knows what the future holds for such a *talmid*; perhaps with a bit more patience he would develop properly. By and large, he lived to see his position vindicated.

From the manner in which the *Alter* cared for Rav Ruderman's every need, he learned that it is every *Rosh Yeshiva's* obligation to deal with every aspect of his *talmid's* life, spiritual and material. The *talmidim* of *Ner Yisrael* all attest to their *Rebbe's* exceptional care and concern for them. He served as a source of strength, inspiration and advice when they were beset with problems. Regardless of the difficulty or complexity of a situation, the *Rosh Yeshiva* could always be relied on for

the requisite counsel and comfort. Throughout the years there were many *bochurim* who came to the *Yeshiva* as refugees or from homeless and troubled backgrounds. They found a home in the *Yeshiva* and a father in the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

In addition, Rav Ruderman loved his *talmidim* and took great pride in those *talmidim* who entered the great profession of *Melamdei Torah*. The clearest proof of this love and pride was his almost regular referral to the verse in *Doniel* (12:3): *V'hamaskilim yazhiru k'zohar horokia, umatzdikei horabim kekochovim l'olom vo'ed*. Rav Ruderman would cite the comment of the *Maharsha* that says, “Just as the stars and moon are in the sky throughout the day, even though they are not seen, so too the teacher remembers and ponders his students even years later.”



### **The Beauty of Middos**

Rav Ruderman's *middos*, his sensitivity to others and feelings of another's pain, were legendary. These *middos* were the product of a lifetime of *Avodas Hashem*. A *talmid* relates how in 1982 he came to the *Rosh Yeshiva's* house to walk him to *Mincha*. When he greeted the *Rosh Yeshiva*, he noticed a broken-hearted expression on his face. The *Rosh Yeshiva* said, “I just heard that Rav Schneur Kotler is very sick. The *Gemora* says,” continued Rav Ruderman, “that if a *Talmid Chochom* is sick, one must beg *Hashem* for his recovery to the extent that one must *become sick over his plight*.” Right then and there, the *Rosh Yeshiva* burst into bitter tears. Only after somewhat composing himself did he go to *Mincha*.

For the next two days, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was unwell and unable to emerge from bed. Dr. Jakobovitz, the resident *Yeshiva Lane* physician, came to check him and could not find anything wrong. “I, however,” explained the *talmid*, “knew what had happened. The *Rosh Yeshiva* had

davened with such effort – he became sick over Rav Schneur’s plight just as the *Gemora* dictates.”

Rav Ruderman was a treasure trove of stories, many of which provided his *talmidim* with insight and understanding of his own behavior. The special care and deference that he exhibited toward his *Rebbetzin* had its source in a story he had heard from the *Chofetz Chaim*. The *Chofetz Chaim* once happened to be with Rav Nochum of Horodna on *Chanuka* evening. It was several hours into the night and still, Rav Nochum had not lit the candles. Finally, very late at night, long after the streets had emptied of people, Rav Nochum’s wife returned home. Only then did Rav Nochum light the *Menora*, long after the time prescribed by *Halocha*. Unable to contain his curiosity, the *Chofetz Chaim* asked Rav Nochum for an explanation. Rav Nochum answered, “The *Halocha* dictates that if one only has enough money for *ner Shabbos* or *ner Chanuka*, *ner Shabbos* takes precedence because of its *sholom bayis* component. My wife,” continued Rav Nochum, “is *moser nefesh* to ensure that I devote my life to *Torah* and *Avodas Hashem*. She enjoys being present for lighting the *Chanuka Menora* and that makes it my responsibility to wait for her and forgo lighting at the proper time.”

The *talmidim* witnessed many occasions when the *Rosh Yeshiva* patterned his actions on the lessons of this story. A case in point was at the Agudah convention. One of the highlights of the convention was Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky’s address after *Sholosh Seudos*. The audience would sit in rapt attention listening until long after *Shabbos* was over. Invariably, Rav Ruderman would leave in the middle to call his *Rebbetzin*. He would always apologize to Rav Yaakov and they would remind one another of the story of Rav Nochum.

One poignant incident made a

tremendous impact on the *Rosh Yeshiva* and was a clear depiction of how a *Rebbe*’s actions influence his *talmidim*. A group of women, wives of *talmidim* of the *Rosh Yeshiva* who live in *Eretz Yisrael*, asked for an audience with the *Rosh Yeshiva* when he attended the last *Knessia Gedola* in 5740/1980. After inquiring after their families, the *Rosh Yeshiva* questioned why they had requested this meeting. They replied that they wished to express their *hakoras hatov*; they felt that their husbands treated them with greater respect and deference because they had seen how the *Rebbe* treated his *Rebbetzin*.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* taught many lessons in consideration for others by personal example. A *talmid* recounts that before joining the *Yeshiva*, he came to the *Rosh Yeshiva*’s house to be tested. In mid-conversation, he suddenly pushed over an inkwell, leaving what would become a permanent stain on the sofa. The *talmid* was in a quandary, but the *Rosh Yeshiva* continued speaking as though nothing had happened while simultaneously attempting to cover the stain to ease the *bochur*’s anguish. When he saw that his attempts were not helping, he began to reassure the *talmid* that nothing happened!

True, words alone are often somewhat of a cliché and the expression on a host’s face usually reveal a true picture of his feelings. “In this case,” the *talmid* related, “the *Rosh Yeshiva* was able to genuinely persuade me with his great wisdom that nothing had happened.” Any damage to the sofa paled into insignificance compared to the suffering of a human being.

The same *talmid* paid the *Rosh Yeshiva* a visit more than three decades later. Drinks were served and another accident occurred. This time, a cup of cream spilled, not on the sofa but on the *Rosh Yeshiva*’s pants. The reaction was identical. The conversation continued as if nothing had happened. The *Rosh Yeshiva*

shifted his legs under the table and once again managed to convince the *talmid* that nothing happened!

The *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Rebbetzin* had one child, *Rebbetzin Chana Weinberg*. His son-in-law, *Rav Yaakov Weinberg*, succeeded him as *Rosh Yeshiva* until his passing twelve years later. They were blessed with six grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren, who were privileged to surround the *Rosh Yeshiva* during his last days. After the *petira* of the *Rebbetzin*, their grandchildren, the *Yeshiva's Menahel Ruchani*, *Rav Beryl* and *Mrs. Aviva Weisbord*, moved with their children into the *Rosh Yeshiva's* home to care for him. The beauty and grace with which they discharged their obligation helped the *Rosh Yeshiva* cope with the loss

of his *Rebbetzin* and added immeasurably to the quality of his later years. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was constantly grateful and continuously expressed his tremendous *hakoras hatov* to the *Weisbords*.

The *Rosh Yeshiva's* entire eighty-seven years comprised one long song of *Torah, limud haTorah*, teaching *Torah*, living with the *middos* dictated by the *Torah* and giving *kevod haTorah*. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, 5747 (1987), the *Rosh Yeshiva* passed on to join his exalted *Rebbeim*, the *Alter* of *Slabodka* and the giants of the era who pre-deceased him. His *levaya* in *Baltimore* was one last manifestation of *kevod haTorah*, as thousands flocked to *Ner Yisrael* to bid farewell to the last link to the greatness of *Slabodka* in our times.



## Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar, 15<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*

[Some say 14<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz* – see *Rav Moshe Franco* of *Leghorn/Livorno*, intro to *Meor Chaim*]

### The Ner HaMaarovi has Gone Out

In the year 5503 on *Parshas Balak* during *Sholosh Seudos*, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* suddenly told the *talmidim*, “I believe that the *Ner HaMaarovi*, the *Western Candle*, has been extinguished.” After *Havdola* the *talmidim* asked the *Ba'al Shem* what he meant. He explained to them, “The holy *Tzaddik*, the *mechaber* of the *Ohr HaChaim*, has left this world. The way I know this is because there is one secret regarding *Netilas Yodayim* (when we wash our hands before *HaMotzi*), and this secret is only revealed to one *Tzaddik* in each generation. Until today, this secret was given to the *Ohr HaChaim* – and now that secret has been revealed to me. I realized that if I have been given this secret I must be the only one who knows – and this must mean that the *Ohr HaChaim* is no longer

with us in this world.” (Gloss *Menachem Tzion* to *Shem HaGedolim Seforim Alef Siman* 54)



### Winning the War

When the *Husyatiner Rebbe* was visiting *Eretz Yisrael* during the *Second World War*, the *Germans* had already reached *Syria* and *General Rommel* was near *Egypt*. The *Rebbe* and his *Chassidim* arrived on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, the *Ohr HaChaim's Yahrzeit*, at his *kever*. Everyone feared that the *Nazis* would reach *Eretz Yisrael* and the *Rebbe* poured out his heart with *Tehillim* to prevent this. After the *Tehillim*, the *Rebbe's* face was aflame and he lay his head on his arm for a moment. When he lifted his head he was smiling and he declared, “The trouble has passed and is gone. No sword of war shall pass through our holy land!” The *Tepliker Rav* asked the *Husyatiner* how he could

confidently say such a thing. The *Rebbe* answered that he gazed at the *tziun* of the *Ohr HaChaim* and saw on it the Divine Name *YHV"H*. He took this as a clear sign that the danger had passed. A day or so later the German Nazis, may their bones decay, suffered devastating defeats near Egypt and Syria, and they lost the Russian front of the war. Thus, in the merit of the *Ohr HaChaim*, *Eretz Yisrael* was saved and spared from the Nazis.



### After Three Times They Gave Up

Rav Chaim Uri Lipshitz used to tell this story about the *Ohr HaChaim* that he heard from the Arabs:

After the Six-Day War, when *Yerushalayim* was under Jordanian rule, the Jordanians decided to renovate and destroy the Jewish cemetery at the Mount of Olives. They began using a tractor to demolish *kevorim* but when the tractor

reached the *kever* of the *Ohr HaChaim* the tractor overturned, killing the Arab driver. That did not deter them, however, and they sent a second tractor, which for some reason broke down just as it reached the *Ohr HaChaim's kever*. They fixed the tractor and had the engine repaired, and then the second tractor also turned itself over and the driver was seriously injured. Finally, they decided to use a metal sledgehammer to demolish the *kever* by hand, but this time somehow the hammer flew out of the worker's hands and struck the foreman in the head. Finally, they admitted that the Divine Hand must be involved and they gave up! From then on their nefarious plot was over; never again did the Jordanians try to demolish the *tziun* of the *Ohr HaChaim*, and eventually control of the *Bais HaChaim* returned to Jewish hands. (*Hillula Kadisha*, 15<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, page 612)



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  
ונגדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטייב 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  
ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין במהר תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה תניצ'ב'ה'

## Ohr HaChaim

*“The gates of heaven opened up and I saw G-dly visions, the Creator of the four corners of the earth, and I gazed and meditated upon that which I had permission to, and began to explain at the beginning of Hashem’s holy words.” (Ohr HaChaim, Bereishis)*

## The Holy Lights of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh – Chukas

### The Pora Aduma Alludes to Harsh Judgments and their Cleansing

**“A red heifer that never carried a yoke” (19:2).**

The *Ohr HaChaim* points out that all the different aspects of the *Pora Aduma* allude to different aspects of harsh judgments. The fact that the *pora* must be a red heifer, for example, alludes to *din*, because the color red symbolizes *dinim*. The fact that the *pora* must be *temima*, entirely red with even just two black hairs rendering it unfit for use (*Mishna Maseches Pora 2:5*) and requiring that even the extremities such as the horns and hooves must also be red and not black and surely not white, all these hint at the overwhelming emphasis on harsh judgment.

In addition, the *Halocha* that the *Pora* must never have carried any burden also alludes to *dinim*, because, explains the *Ohr HaChaim*, carrying a burden is a sweetening and easing of judgment. This is the deeper meaning behind the statement of *Chazal* in *Berochos 5a*, that pain and suffering [like carrying a heavy burden] ease and atone for all a man’s iniquities. The *Halocha* that the *pora* must be burned in the fire also alludes to *din*, since fire represents *dinim*. When all the aforementioned aspects and allusions to *dinim* are gathered together in one *pora* and that *pora* is now burned in fire, this chases away all forms of impurity that had been attached to a dead body [which the ashes of the *pora* purify].

The *Ohr HaChaim* cites the *Sifri Zuta* and the ruling of the *Rambam Hilchos Pora 1:1* that we may not use an *eigel* (a calf) or raise one until it is old enough to be a *pora*. The deeper meaning of this *Halocha* is also because of the allusion to *dinim* which we seek to cleanse, purify and burn away into ash, because the word *Pora* alludes to the *gematria* of the mystical numerical value of the *Par*: 280 *dinim*, as explained by the *Arizal*. We are therefore commanded to take the animal only when it is old enough to be named a *pora* and not an *eigel*, because we want her proper name to allude to the *Par Dinim* and have an equivalent *gematria* value to them.



## *Segulos Yisrael*

### *Segulos Sources & Meanings*

#### **This Week's Segulah**

#### **In Honor of the Yohrzeit of the holy Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh:**

#### **Segulah as a Shemirah - to Guard**

Rav Pinchas of Koretz said that a copy of the *sefer Ohr HaChaim* was a *shemirah* that

guarded the entire city from harm and that to have a copy in one's home was also a *segulah* for *shemirah*.  
(*Ner Maarvi*, page 216).

### **Segulah for Health**

Rav Pinchas Koretzer's son grew ill, and Rav Pinchas accepted on himself to study the *Ohr HaChaim* commentary daily as a *segulah* for *refuah* to heal him.  
(*Ner Maarvi*, page 200/216).

Rav Avrohom Elimelech of Karlin HY"D used to say, that "*Dem Lernen Ohr HaChaim das iz a segulah tzu heintige machlos* — studying the *Ohr HaChaim* is a *segulah* against today's ills."  
(*Ner Maarvi*, age p200/216).

### **Segulah for Teshuva**

It is a *segulah* that you will not leave this world without having repented and done *teshuva* to study the *Ohr HaChaim's* commentary to *parshas Achrei Mos - Kedoshim*.  
(*Kiyumu veKiblua* II, page 256 in the name of Rav Chaim Halberstam).

### **Segulah for Avodas Hashem and Against Tzaros**

The Skver Rebbe told a *yungerman* that complained of lack of feeling and lack of motivation in *avodas Hashem* to study the *Ohr HaChaim* on *parshas Kerias Shema*, that it would give him vitality and give life to his *avodas Hashem*. Similarly to a *Reb* Avrohom Shtern, who complained that he was beset by woes and troubles, the Skver Rebbe told him to study the comments of the *Ohr HaChaim* on *parshas Kerias Shema* forty days straight with no interruption because it would soothe his soul and comfort him in his time of need. (Cited by Rav Mendel Felberboim – *uBecharta BaChaim – Shikun Skver*).

### **Segulah for Yiras Shomayim**

Rav Yissachar Dov of Belz would tell all the young *chassanim*, the newly engaged young men, to study the comments of the *Ohr HaChaim* on *VaYikra* (18:3) *Kemaasay Eretz Mitzroyim*. "*Az di vest das lernen yeden tog, vesti haben a hadracha vi azoy tzu firen nuch der chasuna* — if you study this," he explained to them, "than you will know how to conduct yourselves once you are married."

It is a tradition among the *tzaddikim* that studying the *Ohr HaChaim* is a *segulah* for *yiras shomayim*. (Rav Yosef Greenwald of Pupa).

The commentary of the *Ohr HaChaim* on *parshas Achrei Mos* especially *VaYikra* (8:13) *Kemaasay Eretz Mitzroyim*, is a source and fountain for drawing good character traits and *yiras shomayim*.  
(Rav Eliezer Zisha of Skulen) - (*Ner Maarvi*, page 213).

### **Segulah for Zera Shel Kayama**

The Amshinover Rebbe *Shlit'a* said that it is a well-known tradition from *tzaddikim* that studying the commentary of the *Ohr HaChaim* on the *pasuk VeHigadat LeVincha BaYom*

*HaHu*, on the Seder Night is a *segulah* for having *zera shel kayama* , children that will live and be healthy.

Rav Yosef Meir of Spinka once showed Rav Dovid Sparber of Broshov a section in the *Ohr HaChaim* and pointed out that it was a *segulah* for children. When this was told to Rav Simcha Bunim of Ger, the Rebbe said, "The entire *Sefer Ohr HaChaim* is a *segulah* for having children, it is well-known that he himself had no children and so he put that power and energy investing it into the entire *sefer*.  
(*Ner Maarvi*, page 215).

### **Segulah as a Preparation for Shabbos**

Many Rebbes and Tzaddikim studied and taught a *shiur* in *Ohr HaChaim* on *Leil Shishi*, Thursday night, as a *hachana*, a preparation, for Shabbos *Kodesh*, including: Rav Moshe Yehoshua and Rav Yisrael of Vizhnitz; Rav Menachem Mendel of Deeshz; Rav Avrohom Elimelech of Karlin *HY"D*; Rav Yochanan of Karlin who said, "besides the fact that it uplifts all who study it, it is a preparation for *Shabbos* and it is a *segulah* to uplift the spiritual levels for all who engage in learning the *Ohr HaChaim*, each according to their respective level," and that "*Az MiLernt Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh Donerstog BeiNacht Hat Der Yedid Nefesh an underen ta'am!* — If you study the holy *Ohr HaChaim* Thursday Night then your song *Yedid Nefesh* on *Shabbos* will have a different feel and flavor!"

(Rav Avrohom of Slonim, Rav Sholom Noach of Slonim, Rav Shamshon Aharon of Teplick, Rav Aharon Yehudah Leib Vilner of *Sheeris haPleita* & Kloizenberg) (*Ner Maarvi*, page 214).

### **Segulah to Purify the Soul on Shabbos**

Because Shabbos is the *Yoma DiNishmasa*, day of the soul and the study of *Ohr HaChaim* purifies the soul and refines it, it is therefore a *segulah* to study it on *Shabbos*.

(Rav Dovid Moshe of Tshortkov) (*Ner Maarvi*, page 215).

### **Segulah for Emunah**

Rav Mordechai of Lechovitch and Rav Moshe Kobriner both told their *talmidim* to study the *Ohr HaChaim* on *Bereishis* during the month of Elul because it contained pure refined *emunah* and faith.

Rav Yochanan of Karlin said that the *Ohr HaChaim* is a *segulah* for *emunah*, faith.  
(*Ner Maarvi*, page 215).



*Ma'Asay Ha'Tzaddikim*

**WEEKLY STORIES**

ותמת שם מרים ותקבר שם. ולא היה מים לעדה (כ' א', ב')

*And Miriam passed away etc. and there was no water for the congregation (20:1,2)*

The pessukim preceding Miriam's passing speak about the Para Aduma and the process with which its ashes purify those that have become impure. The Gemara learns out from this juxtaposition (Mo'ed Katan 28a), that the same way the Para Aduma creates purity, so too does the death of righteous people. The death of righteous individuals atones for the sins of the Jewish people.

The Zera Shimshon asks - if the Torah wanted to show that the passing of righteous people atones, and did so by placing the details of the Para Aduma before the passing of Miriam, why didn't the Torah place the laws of the regular korbanos next to her passing? The regular korbanos atone for actual sin whereas the Para Aduma primarily serves to purify an individual who became impure by coming in contact with a death body? Had the Torah prefaced the passing of Miriam with the laws of the standard korbanos, this lesson would have been learned in a far more pronounced manner.

The Zera Shimshon explains that a righteous person's death only atones if the people realize that it was on account of their sins that the Tzaddik passed away. If the passing of a Tzaddik is accompanied by repentance, then the passing serves to atone. This is why even after the passing Miriam the well dried up. Although she passed away and this should have atoned for the sins that the Jewish people had, and in turn the water should have continued to flow, the passing was not enough to bring atonement and blessing, it must be accompanied by the people realizing that the Tzaddik leaves this world when the people are no longer worthy of him being here.

This is why it was specifically the korban of the Para Aduma that serves to teach this lesson.

The ashes of the Para Aduma need water to be added to them in order for them to purify the impure. The ashes alone are not enough to purify anything. The same holds true with the passing of Tzaddikim. Their passing alone is not enough to bring forgiveness and in turn, blessing. On the contrary, if their passing is not accompanied with repentance, bad can follow.

The Zera Shimshon addresses another point regarding the passing of Miriam.

The pessukim seem to be clear that first, Miriam passed away and only then did the Jews complain for water. This makes sense since the well that supplied the Jewish people with water in the desert was in the merit of Miriam. It therefore follows that when she passed away the well dried up and the complaints started.

However, the Yalkut (Shimoni §764) says, that when Moshe Rabbeinu hit the rock to bring forth is water instead of speaking to it as Hashem had commanded him, Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu (20:12) that he will not be the one to bring the Jewish people into Eretz Yisroel. The Yalkut points out the passuk is stated in the plural tense, which the Yalkut explains to be referring to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. Seemingly, due to the incident of the hitting of the rock (Mei Merivah) even Miriam was penalized from entering Eretz Yisroel.

The problem though is that the whole story happened after Miriam passed away. It couldn't have been while she was alive since the water flowed in her merit?

The Zera Shimshon explains that thirty days before a person dies, a person's soul begins to ascend to heaven. This we find even by Moshe Rabbeinu. Right before his passing he said that he was no longer able to properly discuss Torah (see Devarim 31:2 and Sota 13b). This, the Zera Shimshon learns is because his soul had already begun to slowly ascend to heaven and the influence if his soul was less and less in this world.

The same thing happened with Miriam. Although the waters still flowed so long as Miriam was alive, nevertheless, they began to slow down significantly as she got closer to her passing. When she died, they stopped flowing completely.

Thus, the complaining about the water began even before Miriam passed away (other commentaries as well learn that this indeed was the sequence of events however this explanation is unique to the Zera Shimshon). It started when the water flow began slowing down as Miriam's soul began to slowly ascend and her influence in this world began to diminish.

The Zera Shimshon now presents a tremendous novelty. The fact that the water began to slow down and the Jews began to complain about it was in reality a test for Moshe Rabbeinu. Had he not hit the rock he would have passed the test and Miriam would have been granted extra life and they would have all entered Eretz Yisroel. Now that he hit the rock, Miriam passed away and did not enter Eretz Yisroel. This explains how the Yalkut can say that due to Mei Merivah, Miriam did not enter Eretz Yisroel.

# Zera Shimshon



## Chukas

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות חיים דוד בן טויבא חוה להצלחה  
וסייעתא דשמיא בכל מעשה ידיו ובכל  
הענינים

לרפואה שלימה חיים שאול בן רחל  
לאה

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

לזיווג הגון בקרוב ממש בזכות רבינו  
לאלישבע נעמי בת רחל

לזכר נשמת דוד בן תמר

לזכר נשמת יעקב יצחק בן שושנה



**MEOROS**  
**HATZADDIKIM**  
— Lights Of Our Righteous —



*Parshas Chukas*

*He shall be purified by it on the third day and on the seventh day he shall be purified, and if he shall not cleanse himself on the third day, then on the seventh day he will not achieve purity.*

Rav Mordechai suggests that perhaps we can say that this *pasuk* means what the holy *seforim* teach us, that in order to merit the holy light of *kedushas Shabbos* we need to properly behave ourselves all week long, and only by proper action during the mundane workweek, can we prepare ourselves to truly feel the *kedushah* and sanctity of *Shabbos*. As *Chazal* teach us in *Avodah Zarah 3*, that whoever toils and exerts efforts to prepare on *Erev Shabbos*, will have what to eat on *Shabbos* itself - this hints to us that by proper preparation and readying ourselves the week before *Shabbos*, we merit the true sanctity of *kedushas Shabbos*. This is achieved by properly utilizing the days of the week to actualize their potential through *Torah* study and *mitzvah* observance.

Perhaps, we can suggest that this is hinted at in our *pasuk*, that he be purified on the third day, which hints at the *Torah*, which was given during the third millennium - and if we purify ourselves through toiling in *Torah* study all week, then we merit that we are pure in the seventh day that is on *Shabbos* - the seventh day. However, if he fails to do so, then it won't work [and he won't be purified and won't feel the sanctity of *kedushas Shabbos*].

May *Hashem* aid us and help us to properly serve Him all week long and by so doing, thereby we will be protected, and we will keep *Shabbos* properly. Then *Chazal's* words shall be fulfilled *Shabbos* 118a, that by observing *Shabbos* we shall merit the final redemption speedily in our days, *Amen*.





למרות כי ידוע שרבינו הקדוש, מרן עט"ר רבי חיים בן עטר, ה"אור החיים" הקדוש (הילולא: ט"ו תמוז), חיבר תפילות רבות, כפי שהעיד תלמידו מרן החיד"א, הרי שכיום לא נותרו תפילות מתפילותיו שחיבר, מלבד תפילה אחת, שהשתמרה על ידי החיד"א, תלמידו.

תפילה זו תיקן רבי חיים בן עטר, האור החיים, לאמרה בתפילת מוסף של יום הכפירים, בעת ששליח הציבור אומר "ויעבור" (בפעם הראשונה, בעת אמירת י"ג מידות שבע פעמים).

אולם, היות ותפילה זו היא תפילתו של רבי חיים בן עטר, האר החיים הדוש, שכל העולם רעד מקדושתו, ואשר כבר בחייו העידו עליו גדולי מרוקו "איש אלקים קדוש הוא בדורינו ומצוי במחנינו", ושהבעל שם טוב הקדוש העיד עליו ש"כל דבריו ברוח הקודש", ושהרה"ק רבי נפחס מקוריץ העיד על ספרו, "אור החיים", ש"הלימוד בספר זה מסוגל לנשמה כמו הזוהר הדוש, שכן המחבר היה נשמת משיח בדורו כמו רשב"י בדורו!", על כן וודאי מן הראוי והנכון לומר תפילה קצרצרה זו בכל עת מצוא וזו לשון התפילה:

**יהי רצון מלפניך אבינו מלכינו, אלקינו, ידידות אור נפשינו, רוחינו ונשמתינו, למען בריתך אשר כָּרַתָּ לשלש עשרה מידות שאינן חוזרות ריקן לעולם מלפניך, זכור אהבתינו וחיבתנו והשב שכינתך לבית קדשינו ותחזור להשתעשע בנו כימי קדם, כי קשה פרידתך ממנו כפרידת נפשינו מגופינו, המו מעינו, וכלתה נפשינו אל גאולת שכינתך ואל מעון קדשיך, ולרצונך ה' נכספנו, הננו מתחננים ובוכים לפניך, ה' אב הרחמן, על גלות השכינה, הושיעה ה' שכינתך, ודבק נפשינו באהבתך הנעימה והעריבה על נפשינו, וייעול מלכינו בהיכליה.**