

L I F T



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**From
The
Editors**



*E*lul is a time for reflection. As the year comes to a close, we take stock of our past actions, resolving to improve and aim higher in the coming year. Elul is also a time of opportunity when ‘The King is in the field’; Hashem grants us his undivided attention. Our sages tell us, “*Yisroel Oraisu V’Kudsha Brich Hu kula chad.*” (The Jewish people, the Torah, and Hashem are [all] One). Meaning that one connects to Hashem through learning Torah AND caring for another Jew. Although this year it may seem hard to help those in need and learn Torah properly, there are still plenty of ways to take advantage of this auspicious time. Whether it’s by making a phone call to ask how someone’s doing, dropping off food for Shabbos, or tuning in for a *shiur* online, our actions resonate even more than usual by our fellow Jew and by Hashem. We hope that this month’s edition of LIFT unites our community in a spirit of Torah and *Achdus Yisroel*, helping us stay focused and positive, and preparing us for a truly upLIFTING new year.



Cover Photo

In this photo: Rabbi Eliezer Gorelik teaches recently arrived Russian students in Yeshivah high school, circa 1985. In the 1970s-1980s, the Yeshivah Centre initiated a program enabling many Russian immigrants to send their children to a Jewish school.

Letters to the Editor

For any questions, comments, suggestions, or corrections, please contact the editors at liftdownunder@gmail.com

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FEATURE ARTICLE



A Master Storyteller: Rabbi Betzalel Wilschansky



Researched and compiled by Kollel members

Betzalel Wilschnasky was born on the 21st of Shvat, 1898, in Ukraine. From a very young age, Betzalel was known for his brilliant mind. When he was fourteen years old, his parents sent him to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch. Even amongst the great figures of the golden age of Tomchei Temimim, Reb Betzalel quickly established a name for himself. He displayed impressive Torah scholarship with an exceptional aptitude in the area of Halacha. In addition to his diligence in Nigleh and Chassidus, Reb Betzalel absorbed the unique chassidic

atmosphere of the yeshiva, becoming a passionate chosid and yerei shomayim. Reb Betzalel was known affectionately as 'Tzalker Charsoner' (Charson was the town he was born in). Above all else, Reb Betzalel was a master storyteller. He would vividly relay stories of chassidic lore, carefully describing every detail, painting a beautiful picture of what it meant to be a chassid. Reb Betzalel's stories were all vetted and verified, and he was therefore declared a 'bal shemua' - a trustworthy source.

In 1921, Reb Bezalel got married to his distinguished Rebbetzin, Chaya Levin. Chaya was a descendant of the Ramak and the daughter of Reb Shneur Zalman Levin, who was the shochet of Romanova.

In the years following his departure from yeshiva, Reb Betzalel served as a shochet and mohel for many communities throughout Russia. He often displayed great mesiras nefesh against the communist regime.

A story is told that once, in 1933, a man came to Reb Betzalel's house in the town of



Voronezh, asking Reb Betzalel to perform a bris. After agreeing to perform the bris, Reb Betzalel followed the man into a car and soon arrived in an affluent neighbourhood in town. The man led Reb Betzalel to an apartment and knocked on the door. The door was opened by an impressive-looking man, who Reb Betzalel recognised

as a senior officer in the KGB. Reb Betzalel began murmuring Tehillim, thinking he had fallen into a trap. However, to his surprise, the officer told Reb Betzalel that he was the father of the baby, and asked that he perform a bris. After Reb Betzalel completed the bris, the officer told him, "this never happened," and Reb Betzalel returned home safely.¹

Following the Second World War, in 1946, Reb Betzalel ended up in Paris. As a skilled shochet, his services were sought after by Reb Moshe Zalman Feiglin, the founder and leader of the Jewish community of Shepparton, Australia. At the direction of the Rebbe Rayatz, Reb Betzalel and his family immigrated to Australia together with five other Chabad families. Eventually, Reb Betzalel moved into the growing Anash community of Melbourne, where all regarded him as a teacher



and a model Chosid for the younger generation to emulate. Reb Betzalel would often farbreng for the community, saying short chassidic stories which left an impression on all.

Reb Betzalel was instrumental in helping with the Yeshiva centre in its early days. In a letter to Rabbi Shmuel Feiglin, the Rebbe writes, "I received pleasant news in a letter from Rabbi Betzalel Wilschansky, who out of the goodness of his heart works hard in strengthening Yeshivas Ohel Yosef Yitzchok in Australia. Both with his efforts and by convincing others to join him. We are guaranteed that such efforts will be rewarded with much success... He should receive the brocho, "Tzedaka will uplift." May he and his family receive

Above all else, Reb Betzalel was a master storyteller. He would vividly relay stories of chassidic lore, carefully describing every detail, painting a beautiful picture of what it meant to be a chassid.

I received pleasant news in a letter from Rabbi Betzalel Wilschansky, who out of the goodness of his heart works hard in strengthening Yeshivas Ohel Yosef Yitzchok in Australia.

all they need both physically and spiritually. I am sure you will let him know my well wishes, as is written above.

As an honoured senior *chossid*, on *Tisha Bav* he was given *Maftir* in the main *Shacharis minyan*. Bystanders recall how Reb Betzalel broke down sobbing in the middle of reading *Maftir*, while the congregants stood silent in awe.

Reb Binyomin Serebryanski recalls, “My father, Reb Chaim Serebryanski, would deliver a weekly *Chassidus shiur* on Shabbos morning. Afterwards, Reb Betzalel would tell the attendees a *chassidische* story each week. One week, Reb Betzalel faltered and stopped in the

middle. When the crowd urged him to continue, he said that he would not. Reb Betzalel explained that the first part of the story he remembered with absolute clarity, but the rest of the story he could not recall the precise details, and so, he wished not to relay it at all.”

To Reb Betzalel, *chassidic* stories were of the utmost importance and must be passed on with the proper care. To lose the details was to lose the very characteristics of what make *chassidic* stories so timeless, that is why Reb Betzalel researched every nuance of the stories he told.

After spending twenty-five years in Melbourne, Reb Betzalel moved to Sydney, where he continued his efforts in communal affairs. On the second of Sivan, 1981, at



the age of 83, Reb Betzalel passed away.

Reb Betzalel Wilschansky helped lay the roots of the Melbourne Jewish Community as we know it today. Through his efforts, our community is infused with a spirit of *Chassidus*. May his memory be in good standing.

In keeping with Reb Betzalel’s tradition of telling *chassidic* stories, we included two stories that Reb Betzalel shared with the community in Melbourne:²

He Didn’t Hear A Thing

One of the simple *Chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe (Possibly of the Mittlerer Rebbe), made his living as a wholesaler of wheat. He was an honest and trustworthy man. His reputation was such that even the gentiles, who often accused the Jews of cheating them, admitted that he was honest. Once, one of the wealthy nobles (*poretz*) heard about this Jew who had such a sterling reputation and decided it was worthwhile to travel especially and buy from him, as he needed a substantial order. When the nobleman arrived at the home of the *chassid*, the *chassid* was engaged in prayer, and his wife answered the door. When she heard what the businessman wanted, she told him that she could handle the sale and that it was not necessary to disturb her husband. When the *poretz* insisted that he only wanted

to deal with her husband, she explained that he was busy praying. The nobleman said, “Nu, let him interrupt his prayers for a few minutes for the business deal and then he can return to his prayers.” The wife explained that it was impossible to talk to her husband during prayer because he didn’t hear a thing.

Reb Betzalel broke down sobbing in the middle of reading Maftir, while the congregants stood silent in awe.

The man refused to believe her and said that he is probably pretending not to listen, to which the woman responded, “Try speaking to him yourself.” The businessman took out a gun and fired it right next to the ear of the *chassid*, who didn’t even flinch, and it was clear that he hadn’t noticed. The nobleman saw that the woman told the truth, and he picked up and left. Later, after he finished *davening*, his wife told him about the *poretz* who came by wanting to make a large purchase. The *chassid* asked her, “so why didn’t you sell to him?” She answered, “He only wanted to deal with you.” Calmly, the *chassid* responded, “In that case, he will surely return.”

A Tzaddik In Deeds

Reb Hillel Paritcher was extremely punctilious and stringent in his observance of *mitzvos*. The Tzemach Tzedek said about Reb Hillel, “It has been three hundred years since there was such a *tzaddik* in actual practice.” Amongst his stringencies was not to enter a room that had drawings of people on the wall. He didn’t need to enter the room to know if there were pictures. As soon as he opened the door a drop, he could sense if there was a picture, and he would not enter. In each city that Reb Hillel travelled to, he had a set host where he would stay. One of

Reb Hillel’s hosts would set aside a room, and before he arrived, the host would tell his son to clear all the pictures out of the room. One time, Reb Hillel came without any advance warning. When the wealthy man heard the wheels of Reb Hillel’s wagon outside, he immediately told his son to remove all the pictures from the room. The son hurried to take down the drawings;



however, when Reb Hillel arrived at the door, he opened it a bit and didn’t enter. The man realised that his son must have left a picture in the room, and told him to go back and make sure he gets every last image. The son searched but couldn’t find any pictures, yet Reb Hillel still stood at the door. The son searched again until he saw that there was a picture hanging on the inside of the door, but since the door opened inward, it was hidden from view. After the son took the picture down, Reb Hillel entered the room (I heard this from the son of the wealthy man, who was the story’s protagonist.)

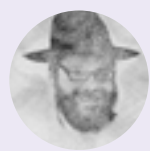
ENDNOTES

- 1 “A Tamim and Chossid without borders.” Beis Moshich, May 28, 2014.
- 2 Transcribed by his grandson, Reb Meshulam Zushe Stillerman. Printed in a Tshura by the Wilschansky family of Morristown.



*Speaking
from
Experience*

How to Structure Your Life



Written by
**Rabbi Elisha
Greenbaum**

Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum learned in Kollel Menachem from 5761 to 5763. He currently is the Shliach to L'Chaim Chabad - Kingston, the Rabbi of Moorabbin Hebrew Congregation, a community mohel, and the Rabbinic Director of Shifra Inc. - Fertility Services Provider to the Victorian Jewish Community.

My grandfather, R' Elchonon Loebenstein a"h devoted his life to serving the Melbourne Jewish community; as a teacher in the Rebbe's institutions, a *sofer* and a *shochet*. He loved the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Torah and greatly admired the Rebbe. However, he remained a *yekke* (German Jew), who had been raised

with the doctrine that one has a moral responsibility to provide for one's own family and he struggled to understand the chassidic lifestyle of spending one's teens and early twenties engaged in full-time Torah study and then getting married, with no obvious future prospects and only then first beginning to think about earning a living.

Though zeida lived for Torah and he himself devoted every single spare moment to learning, every time one of his grandchildren would get engaged, he used to worry again how we could possibly make such a lifelong commitment, with no obvious career ahead of us.

In conversation with me he once quoted the gemoro in Sota, which learns a life lesson from the order with which the Torah listed the ways to avoid being drafted: Anyone who'd a) built a house but had yet to move in, b) planted an orchard but hadn't yet enjoyed its produce or c) recently married but had yet to consummate the relationship, was demobilised (Shoftim 20:5-7). Although seemingly a simple set of protocols defining the system of military conscription, the Talmud learns an interesting life lesson from the order with which the Torah listed the ways to avoid being drafted: *"The Torah is teaching us derech erez - normative behaviour- first build a house*

(arrange habitation), then plant a vineyard (find employment) and then get married" Sota 44a

How then, zeida asked me, could we justify going about it the other way round?

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR DAY

Interestingly enough, when the Rambam quotes this Halochah (Deos 5:11) he changes the order; advising one to first get a job and only then build the house (though the Rambam also agrees that marriage should come last). The Shulchan Oruch Hil. Talmud Torah agrees with the Rambam.

In Reshimos 56 the Rebbe alludes to this discrepancy between the Rambam and the Gemoro and suggests an ingeniously creative explanation; that between them they are actually teaching us the best way to structure our day.

Studying Torah is referred to as strolling in G-d's orchard... while marrying a wife is analogous to the pursuit of material concerns.

House refers to prayer, as it says: *which house will you build for Me* (Yishayah 66:1). Studying Torah is referred to as strolling in G-d's orchard, with the Torah thoughts you originate the fruit of your labours, while *marrying a wife* is analogous to the pursuit of material concerns.

Thus the Torah is teaching us the best way to live your life: Learn Torah first thing in the morning, daven, learn some more Torah and then go to work.



Before davening we are not allowed to learn complex halachos, which will lead us to innovating original concepts (chiddushim), rather we may learn simple halochos, which equate to Torah from the level of chochmo. Then comes davening, followed by in-depth limmud haTorah, bringing the level of Keser into this world. Once you've fulfilled your spiritual responsibilities each morning, you head off to work; elevating this world and refining it, which is best encapsulated by the idea of isha – woman, whose energy force derives from the level of nukvin.

BUT REALLY

The Rebbe's explanation in Reshimos is definitely elegant, but it doesn't answer the underlying question that stems from the literal reading of the gemoro, Rambam and Shulchan Oruch; how does it make sense to get married and assume responsibilities, which we have no obvious means of meeting?

I searched the word *parnos* (livelihood) in Rabbi Seligson's fantastic index to the Rebbe's Torah and was a bit surprised to find the Rebbe didn't often address this question of marrying without prospects. Most of the Rebbe's sichos that I learned

seemed to be directed at younger bochurim, as he would constantly urge his chassidim to devote their youth, adolescence, teens and early twenties exclusively to Torah.

The Rebbe would frequently refer to the Rebbe Maharash's maxim that earning a living nowadays is analogous to the children of the desert who lived *if a man were to postpone marriage until he was securely established with a parnassah and has bought a house – it is easy to imagine the consequences.*

off the *mon*; where there is no direct correlation between the effort expended and the income received. He would also point out that the secular studies studied in school usually have no connection to one's future employment. However, there was little that I could find about

supporting oneself and spouse immediately post-marriage.

In one fascinating letter, written in English to a young man who wished to push off marriage until he'd learned a trade, the Rebbe explained that *"It is true that the rule which you quote (first establishing oneself in a business or profession, then buying a house, then taking a bride) would be the ideal procedure. But it has also been explained that this rule applies only when it is practicable.*

In early times, when standards of living were modest, it was possible to establish oneself with a parnassah at a relatively early age. However, in recent generations, if a man were to postpone marriage until he was securely established with a parnassah and has bought a house – it is easy to imagine the consequences.

Indeed, there is no need to leave anything to the imagination, nor is there any need to go into painful detail as to the state of morality in those circles where marriage is unduly postponed. Compare it with the high standards of morality and family stability in the frum [ultra-Orthodox] circles, where early marriage is the rule.

Later in that letter, the Rebbe points out that *"parents are generally willing to help out their newlywed children until they become entirely self-*

sufficient; there are various relief agencies – federal, state, and city – with various helpful programs, as well as job-training facilities, trade schools, etc., all designed to make life easier in the contemporary complex society.

In summary, from every viewpoint, not least from the viewpoint of a healthy moral society, it is not in the best interest of young people and the society at large to postpone marriage until they are fully independent economically."

Similarly, in a Sicha from 11 Shevat 5718, the Rebbe describes with approval the ancient custom of a newlywed couple being supported by their parents for the first few years of marriage while the groom learns Torah and the Rebbe recommended this tradition be reinstated.

However, it begs the question, what if the couple's parents can't afford to provide full support?

Perhaps that is the greatness of the Melbourne Kollel. A young couple can fulfil the Rebbe's directives to start their married life on the best possible footing, laying down stores of inspiration for the years ahead, all the while being supported by the community. It is a win-win for everyone. The community benefits from the positive examples of inspiration and energy that the young couples demonstrate and for the newlyweds, the Torah they learn is invaluable and sets them up for life.

For a significant proportion of my peers and other Kollel alumni, the years we spent in Kollel were the foundation for

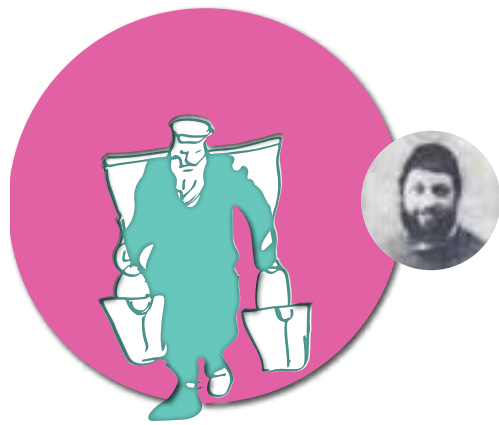
our future careers. We would never have come back to town if it wasn't for the attraction of Kollel and we would most likely not have had the opportunity and privilege to serve the community had we not been gifted those precious years. So many local and international rabbis, shluchim and *Klei Kodesh* received their first grounding in serving the community from the shiurim they gave while in Kollel and the research they conducted while within its portals.

Different times called for radical solutions and the harbinger of authentic yiddishkeit in Melbourne and the very best place to start one's married life is Kollel Menachem Lubavitch. Long may it continue to flourish. 🇺🇸



A Story for the Soul

המעשה הוא העיקר



A Son's Heartfelt Plea

Told by
Rabbi Yossi Gopin

The year was 1891. A bitter winter had affected much of Eastern Europe. Ice, snow, frost, and wind had closed businesses. There was hardly a home where frostbite hadn't yet sunk its finely honed, razor-sharp teeth.

There was a forlorn feeling in the town of Lubavitch, Russia. Thick, dark clouds of illness pervaded the house of Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the beloved fifth Rebbe of Lubavitch. The ailing Rebbe was burning with an unrelenting, life-threatening fever already for two weeks. Not even the slightest sign or suggestion of improvement had been seen and the doctors were very worried.

The Rebbe's only son, Yosef Yitzchok, was frightened. A question, the question, gnawed at his heart, plaguing him and giving him no rest. But who could rest anyway? What's more, even if he could have uttered the words, there wasn't anyone who would listen to him. It couldn't be. Was he, Yosef Yitzchok, a tender boy of ten, really destined to lose his beloved father (G-d forbid)? The strong current of hot tears had refused to abate

all this time. Yosef Yitzchok sat in his room day and night, whispering the holy words of *Tehillim* into the tear-drenched book open in front of him. He knew something had to be done. But what could he, a little boy, possibly do to help his very sick father? A strangely comforting feeling came over him, as a plan began to formulate in his mind. There was something he could do.

It was still dark outside when Yosef Yitzchok quietly crept out of his house. The biting wind slapped at his face as he stomped his way in the snow. Yosef Yitzchok was a boy with a mission. Yosef Yitzchok had a hard time keeping his balance but was determined to stay true to his charge. The streets were emptier than usual because of the early hour. Yosef Yitzchok's eyes filled with resolve as he neared the house of old Zalman Leibel, the *Shamesh* of the *Ohel* of his grandfather Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch, and his great grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, the *Tzemach Tzedek*. "Please take me to the *Ohel*" requested the strong-willed child. "Father is sick, and I must go to pray at the graves of my ancestors!" Zalman Leibel acquiesced to the boy's request. Desperate times called for desperate measures, and desperate would be a hopeful term for the

Rebbe Rashab's current state. The pair made their way through the mounds of snow. At last, they arrived.

The chill in the *Ohel* was familiar to Yosef Yitzchok, and tonight, it was welcome. He found in it the solace of hope, a glimmer of security, almost respite, from the weeks of heartache that had filled his heart. As he held the doorknob, he was overwhelmed by emotion. Yosef Yitzchok's eyes brimmed with tears as he looked at the holy gravestones in front of him, covered by a thin layer of clean snow. As Yosef Yitzchok said the *Birkas HaMeisim* (blessing recited upon visiting the deceased), his entire body trembled, shaking to his very core. The words of *Tehillim* just couldn't come, so huge was the lump in his throat. Finally, he burst into hopeless tears. Yosef Yitzchok felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Zalman Leibel, requesting that he light a candle and recite the *Maane Lashon*. "Beg of your holy grandfathers that they ask for mercy for your father, so he may stay with us here in this world," said Zalman Leibel with emotion. Yosef Yitzchok cried out with a bitter voice, "Revered grandfathers! Holy *Tzaddikim*! Father is sick. Request that he stay alive, that he be healthy, and that he guide me to be a sincere Jew!" Yosef Yitzchok continued crying at his holy ancestors' graves for quite some

time. Unaware of the passing time. Eventually, Zalman Leibel asked him, amidst a tear-streaked face, to take leave of the *Ohel*.

The sky was already brightening as the two trudged homeward. The sun hadn't yet fully risen, but people were already beginning to gather in the marketplace. On their way, the two were stopped by a pair of *Chassidim* who shared excitedly, "*Boruch Hashem*, the fever has broken! The doctors have said that there is no longer a threat to the life of the Rebbe. May he enjoy long and healthy years!" Yosef Yitzchok, at last, arrived home. No one asked him where he had been. It seemed as if no one had even noticed his absence. Yosef Yitzchok was hoping he could go into his father's room to see him, after two weeks of not being near him. Alas, the doctors refused him entry. Disappointed, he went to his teacher, Reb Nissen, to share with him his secret, about his visit to the *Ohel*.

"You have done well," observed his teacher. "What can I do now, to hasten my father's full recovery?" asked the boy. "Have you had anything to eat yet today?" asked his teacher.

His teacher advised him to continue fasting for the rest of the day. Yosef Yitzchok went to *daven shacharis* with the *minyan* and received instructions from his teacher about how to use the rest of his day.

That evening, the doctors came out of the Rebbe's room with beaming faces. "The malady is gone, the fever broken, and all that's needed now is rest" they happily announced.

A few minutes passed, then the attendant came out of the Rebbe's room, to notify Yosef Yitzchok that his father wanted to see him.

His father's pale face and sunken eyes scared the young boy, but he tried as best as he could to put on a brave face. "Yosef Yitzchok, what have you learned over the last few weeks? Have you been careful to *daven* with a *minyan*?" his father asked him in a weak voice. "Every day I *davened* all three *tefillas* with a *minyan*, and I learned plenty. But the doctors warned me to not speak too much. They didn't let me come into your room, and I was worried that if I would speak too much, they would ask me to leave" answered the boy earnestly. The Rebbe smiled. "From now on, they will not stop you from coming into my room. By the way, have you drunk tea yet?" Yosef Yitzchok was stuck. He could never tell his father an untruth, but he did not want to tell him about his fast. Just then, his mother bustled into the room holding a steaming cup of milk. Yosef Yitzchok quietly breathed a sigh of relief. "The doctors said that you must drink three cups of milk before you go to sleep," said the Rebbetzin "Good, when the milk cools Yosef Yitzchok will bring it to me" answered her husband, already sounding much more alert. Joy filled the heart of young Yosef Yitzchok. He would be able to attend to his father and not even have to give up on his fast! What a *zchus*!

From that day on the Rebbe's condition got better and better. Yosef Yitzchok knew that his heartfelt prayers had been answered. 📖



FEATURED SHETLACH IN THIS STORY

ליובאוויטש,
Russia/Ukraine



IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

The Rebbe Rashab.
20 Cheshvan, 5621/November
5, 1860 - 2 Nissan, 5680/
March 21, 1920
The Frierdiker
Rebbe
12 Tammuz, 5640/June 12,
1880 - 10 Shvat, 5710 -
January 28, 1950



Written by

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Part Two: The Mitzvah of guarding the Beis Hamikdash in modern times

³A brief synopsis of part one⁴: Rabbi Moshe Meshil Gelbstein spent his formative years learning from the great rabbinic scholars of nineteenth century Europe. After immigrating to Israel in 1869, Rabbi Moshe Meshil dedicated his life to improving the physical and spiritual conditions found at the Kosel Hamaaravi. Rabbi Moshe Meshil was mechadesh that although the physical building of the Temple has long been destroyed, the Mitzvah of guarding the Beis Hamikdash still applies in modern times. This chiddush was based upon the Rambam's statement that "The reason G-d commanded us to guard the Mikdash Hamikdash is to properly honor the Shechina." Rabbi Moshe Meshil reasoned that because "The Shechina never left Har Habayis" we must honor the Shechina by guarding the physical space where the Mikdash once stood. We will now delve further into Rabbi Gelbstein's chiddush, including who can perform the duty of guarding and where on the Temple mount can they guard.

Can a Levi who is a 'singer' be a guard?

The *Talmud*⁵ teaches משורר ששיער בשל חברו במיתה – "a Levi who was designated as a 'singer' who performed the job of other *Leviim* at the gates was liable for death". What were other *Leviim* doing at the gates? Many understand this as a reference to the guarding of the *Mikdash*.

Since all of today's *Leviim* do not know which family they belong to, and they may come from a family of 'singers', how are they to stand guard?

Rabbi Moshe Meshil addresses this concern in a number of ways:

Firstly, according to some *Rishonim*, the שוער "at the gates" refers to the closing of the doors; not guarding⁶. Therefore, a *Levi* designated as a 'singer' would be allowed to stand guard.

Even according to the view that the prohibition includes standing guard, there are a number of practical ways to circumvent this concern:

The *Mishna*⁷ teaches that the *shemira* was done by רובין. Some *Rishonim* understand this to refer to children under the age of *Bar-Mitzvah*. Since we are not obligated to prevent children from violating Torah prohibitions⁸, the *Shemira* today could be done by a child under *Bar-Mitzvah* even though they may be from the 'singers'.

Another solution would be to have older *Leviim* do the *Shemirah*. The *Rambam*¹⁰ rules that once a *Kohen* become old and can no longer sing, they can continue to serve in other roles including guarding the *Beis Hamikdash*. According to the *Zohar*¹¹, this may apply to any *Levi* over the age of 50.¹²

To be *Yotzai* according to all opinions, Rabbi Moshe Meshil recommends having a *Levi* over the age of 50 and a *Levi* under *Bar-Mitzvah* guarding.

Guarding from outside Har Habayis

Whether or not the guarding must be done in an area which has the status and sanctity of the *Azarah* is subject to a dispute in the *Rishonim*. In a lengthy

pilpul, Rabbi Moshe Meshil asserts that the *Mitzvah* can be adequately fulfilled from outside. Even the *Raavad*, who writes that the guards should stand inside the *Azarah*, would agree that, if necessary, the *Mitzvah* can still be performed by standing outside the *Azarah*. After all, even if the guarding is done from outside *Har Habayis*, it is still a display of honour.

The *Mishnah* records that the *Kohanim* would guard from on high – on top of the roofs of the Temple chambers, while the *Leviim* would stand below. This seemingly indicates that the *Mitzvah* of guarding the Temple must be done within the structure of the actual building. Rabbi Moshe Meshil suggests that this too is not essential. Even if it is to show that the primary guarding is by the *Kohanim* and the *Leviim's* guarding is secondary, this could be achieved in other ways, such as having the *Kohen* indoors and the *Levi* outside.

Our discussion up to this point is based on the understanding that the *Mitzvah* of guarding the Temple is to properly honour the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Restricting access

The *Sifri* and *Rashi* state that the reason for *shmeiras Hamikdash* is to warn and prevent people from entering areas where they are not permitted to go.

Rabbi Moshe Meshil writes¹³ that when he first arrived in *Yerushalayim* and was not yet familiar with the streets, he unknowingly came to the site of the *Kifonos* gate (the western gate of *Har Habayis*) and nearly entered it as he was returning home from the *Beis Midrash*. Since Jews live within 50 *Amos* of the Temple Mount, he reasons, the *Mitzvah* of guarding is certainly required. He concludes his first volume with the following words: "Therefore, it is as clear as the sun in the middle of the day, that according to the opinion of the *Sifri* and *Rashi* that the *Mitzvah* of guarding the *Mikdash*

applies nowadays. If we are able to stand guards at the entrances to warn people who are impure or *zarim* against entering, it would be a Biblical *Mitzvah*."

Proactive steps

Rabbi Moshe Meshil quoted the *Arizal*, who explains that the reason the guarding is done only at night (according to the *Rambam*) is because during the day, the *Korbanos* protected the *Beis Hamikdash* from the forces of *Kelipah*. At night, the *Kohanim* and *Leviim* who were guarding would recite words of *Torah* which would push away the *Kelipos*. This spiritual protection can be observed nowadays through learning *Torah* next to the Temple Mount and can be done even by *Yisraelim*. In the absence of the sacrifices, the guarding would be required even during the day.

Based on his conclusions, Rabbi Moshe Meshil sought to establish *Batei Midrash* next to the *Kosel* where *Kohanim*, *Leviim* and *Yisraelim* would learn the laws of *Kodshim*. He advised the *Kohanim* and *Leviim* to warn those who came to the *Kosel* not to go up to *Har Habayis* or place their hands between the cracks of the *Kosel* and in this way they would be fulfilling the *Mitzvah* of guarding the *Beis Hamikdash*.

He personally raised the huge sum of two hundred and seventy Napoleons and negotiated to rent three courtyards near the *Kosel* to be used as *Batei Midrash*; one for *Nusach Arizal*, one for *Nusach Ashkenaz* and the third for *Nusach Sefard*. However, the Arab owners ultimately backed out and the



idea never came to fruition.

A letter in opposition - the Avnei Nezer

The Avnei Nezer of Sochatchov responded to Rabbi Moshe Meshil in a written *teshuva*:⁴ He begins with a disclaimer, writing that his words are only intended for *Halachic* discussion, but that he does not see himself as an authority to rule practically on a matter pertaining to all of *Klal Yisrael*.

Some of the challenges that he raised:

- Rabbi Moshe Meshil's uses a *kal vachomer* as proof for his position (If the *Mitzvah* of revering the *Beis Hamikdash* applies even when the *Beis Hamikdash* is destroyed, how much more so should the *Mitzvah* of *Shemiras Hamikdash*). However, only the sages of the *Talmud* have the ability to deduce laws based on the thirteen attributes of *Torah* interpretation which include *kal vachomer*.

- Even though the guarding is not due to fear of robbers, nonetheless, to be considered guarding there must be something that is actually being guarded. In the absence of the Temple this no longer applies. *Avnei Nezer* further suggests that the guarding of the *Beis Hamikdash* may be considered part of the *Avodah*. Those who were guarding would have to wear the *bigdei kehuna*⁵ which we no longer have. Further, as it is part of the *Avodah*, a *Kohen* who is impure may not do the *Avodah*, even if they were guarding from outside the Temple Mount. For the principle that a *Levi* who was designated as a 'singer' could not as a guard.⁶

- The *Avnei Nezer* concedes that according to the reason that *Shemiras Hamikdash* prevents those who

are impure from entering, this should still apply today. Even if we cannot appeal to the Sultan to forbid non-Jews from ascending *Har Habayis*, there would still be a *Mitzvah* to prevent Jews from going up.

The Minchas Elozor's criticism

Rabbi Chaim Elozor Shapiro, the *Minchas Elozor* of Munkatch, fiercely opposed Rabbi Moshe Meshil's position. He wrote a *sefer* called *Olas Tamid* on *Mesechta Tamid*. Whilst this *sefer* discussed many parts of the tractate, in the introduction, he writes that the primary motive for writing this work was because "an elder sage from *Yerushalayim*" sought to reinstate the *Mitzvah* of guarding *Har Habayis*. That sage, writes the *Minchas Elozor*, is rubbing salt into our wounds (from the destruction of the Temple).

The *Minchas Elozor* writes that although the sanctity of the *Beis Hamikdash* remains after it was destroyed, there is no longer a *Mitzvah* of guarding it. The eternal *kedusha* only creates the prohibition on entering, which is a passive *Mitzvah* (שָׁב וְאֵל תְּנַשְׂא). It does not obligate the fulfillment of active positive *Mitzvah* (קוּם וְעָשָׂה) of guarding.

Further, the reasons of honouring the *Beis Hamikdash* (*Rambam*) and not diverting our attention from the *Beis Hamikdash* (*Rosh*) only apply to the building itself which was built according to *Ruach Hakodesh* and prophecy.

He brings a proof from *Rambam's* introduction to *Mesechta Zeraim*. *Rambam* explains that the reason *Tomid* comes at the end of the *Seder* is because it does not contain laws that relate to practical *halacha* nowadays. Rather, it is merely relating an account of how things were done in Temple times. If there were still a *Mitzvah* of guarding the *Mikdash*, then the beginning of

Mesechta Tomid, which discusses the laws of guarding the *Beis Hamikdash*, would indeed have practical *halachic* application.

Not only does the *Minchas Elozor* assert that there is no *Mitzvah* to guard *Har Habayis*, he writes that it would in fact be wrong to do so. Since a non-Jewish place of worship now stands on *Har Habayis*, standing guard would appear as though one was guarding and giving honour to this place of worship.

The Munkatcher agreed that there is a need to warn and prevent impure people from entering *Har Habayis* or placing their hands between the cracks of the *Kosel*. But he writes that this is not considered part of the *Mitzvah* of guarding the *Beis Hamikdash* by the *Kohanim* and *Leviim*. Rather, like warning people about all prohibitions, it is the responsibility of the *Beis Din*.

Other opponents

In a letter to Rabbi Moshe Meshil, Rabbi Eliyahu Dovid Rabinovitch Teomim (the *Aderes*), wrote that there is no need to establish guards to prevent someone impure from entering *Har Habayis*, because *Har Habayis* is not in our control and the Moslem authorities will not allow Jews to enter anyway.⁷ With regards to people placing their hands in the *Kosel* cracks, since this would not incur *kareis* (as it is not a complete entry), the *Aderes* reasons, this does not necessitate guards.

The *Aderes* also quoted the adage that where we are unsure as to the *halacha*, we look at what is actually being done. Further, great sages like the *Ramban* and *Arizal* who came to *Eretz Yisroel* and had *ruach hakodesh*, did not try to reinstate *Shemiras Hamikdash* even when the guards could have stood outside and no permission would be required from the government.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky,⁸ *Rosh Yeshiva* of the *Eitz Chaim Yeshiva*, provided three reasons why the *Mitzvah* of *Shemiras Hamikdash* does not apply in our times:⁹

1. The *Mitzvah* is to guard within the *Beis Hamikdash*.
2. *Hashem's* glory has left the *Beis Hamikdash* and non-Jews enter freely, therefore there is no honour in guarding anymore.
3. The *Mitzvah* is upon the tribe of *Levi* as a whole and the Jewish people as a whole. Since there are no legitimate representatives of either group, the guarding cannot be done.

The Rebbe

On *Shabbos Parshas Shemini* 5750, the Rebbe discussed the *Mitzvah* of guarding the *Beis Hamikdash*.¹⁰ The Rebbe questioned that since the *kedusha* of *Har Habayis* remains and there is an obligation to honour the *Beis Hamikdash* even when it is destroyed, why we do not find any effort by *Gedolei Yisroel* throughout history to fulfil the *Mitzvah* of guarding the *Beis Hamikdash*?¹¹ Especially since part of the *Beis Hamikdash* remains in the form of the *aron* which is hidden in one of the tunnels beneath *Har Habayis*?

The Rebbe references the work of *Miskenos LeAvir Yaakov* who concluded that there is still a *Mitzvah* to guard the *Mikdash*. Since *Moshiach* will come in the very next moment and the third *Beis Hamikdash* will descend from where it stands ready in Heaven, the Rebbe reasoned we will need to have the guarding already in place.

The Rebbe provided the following explanation: When *Har Habayis* was under non-Jewish control, establishing the guarding the *Mikdash* would have entailed potential threat to life. This was sufficient grounds to suspend

the *Mitzvah*. Once it has been suspended, it remains so. Even today, when the Jewish people have control and even if there is a peace agreement with our enemies, one does not know what tomorrow brings or how individual radicals may act.¹²

The Rebbe concludes that this discussion only applies to the physical *Beis Hamikdash*. In the spiritual sense guarding the *Mikdash* still applies. The source of the *Mitzvah* to build a *Beis Hamikdash* is "you shall build for me a *Mikdash* and I will dwell within it". The verse literally reads "I will dwell within them." Every Jew must make their own home, room and wealth into a dwelling place for *Hashem* by making sure that they are permeated with holiness and G-dliness. Because *Hashem's* presence rests in our homes, we need to stand guard in honour of the *Shechina*. This is accomplished by holding precious all holy matters to a greater degree than worldly worries.

At the conclusion of *Mishneh Torah*, the *Rambam* writes that *Moshiach* will reinstate the observance of all of the *Mitzvos* as they were in former times. May we merit the immediate coming of *Moshiach* and the third *Beis Hamikdash*, when the *Avodah* of the *Kohanim* and *Leviim* will be reinstated and we will be able to show our honour by guarding the *Beis Hamikdash* and fulfilling this *Mitzvah* once more.

Endnotes

3 In the *Iyun* article of last month's edition we wrote that the *Brisker Rov* was Rav Chaim Soloveitchik. This was incorrect. The personality known as the *Rov* of *Brisk* was Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin who lived in *Yerushalayim* at the time and had formerly served as the *Rov* in *Brisk*. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik (Reb Chaim *Brisker*) never lived in *Eretz Yisroel*.

4 LIFT magazine issue 01 Av 5780.

5 Arachin 11b.

6 Rabbi Moshe Meshil also explains that the prohibition of a *Levi* doing the job of another *Levi* only applies to jobs which require exertion – singing and closing the gates. Standing guard does not require specific active effort.

7 *Tomid* 1:1

8 With the exception of a parent

9 Furthermore, it is also possible that a *Levi* only becomes designated as either a *רוֹשֵׁם* or a *קוֹטֵשׁ* at the age of 25 when they would begin to serve in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

10 *Hilchos Klei Hamikdash* Chapter 3.

11 *Veyechi* and *Behaaloosecha*.

12 In both of the above cases, other *Leviim* could guard alongside the child or elder. Even though they are assisting (*עֵיִסֵם*), the prohibition of assisting is at worst a Rabbinic prohibition. And since the possibility of them being a 'singer' is only doubtful, we apply the principle that we rule leniently when in a doubt concerning a Rabbinic law. The *Mitzvah* of guarding, however, is a Biblical *Mitzvah*; whenever we are in doubt, we rule stringently.

13 In a letter to the *Aderes* (see below).

14 *Teshuvos Avnei Nezer Yoreh Deah Siman 449*

15 Only when the guards would sleep, could they remove their *Bigdei Kehuna*. Because the guarding was part of their *Avodah*, the *Kohanim* could wear the *Avnet* (belt), even though it contained *Shatnez*.

16 Many of the points made by Rabbi Moshe Meshil's, presented above, came from his response to the challenges of the *Avnei Nezer*.

17 Since 1967 Jewish groups and tourists have been allowed by law to go up onto *Har Habayis*. If so, the reasoning of the *Aderes* no longer applies.

18 1871-1955

19 *Ir Hakodesh Vehamikdash* volume 4:4

20 The *Rambam* shiur for that day was the *Mitzvah* of *Shemiras Hamikdash*.

21 The guarding was a display of honour, as evidenced by the fact that it was performed by *Kohanim* and *Leviim* – the *Chashuvim* of the Jewish people.

22 The Rebbe says that this answer would not explain why the *Chabad Rebbes*, who are known to have acted with great *Mesiras Nefesh* for *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, did not seek to reinstate the guarding of the *Mikdash*.

Humans Of Melbourne:

Emmanuel Althaus

Part I



Interviewed & Transcribed by
Rabbi Boruch Moshe Broh

Emmanuel Althaus was born in 1946 and immigrated to Australia from Europe at the age of 3. He has spent decades as a respected businessman and a leader in communal affairs. Having grown up in Melbourne and raised a family here, he provides a unique insight into the growth of the Melbourne Jewish Community

The Althaus family has a long history with Chabad, when did it begin?

My family's connection with Chabad begins with a man by the name of Binyomin Althaus, who was not a *chassid*. When it came time for his son, Pinchos Todres, to study in a *yeshiva*, the only one near him was that of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Despite his philosophical misgivings, Binyomin sent his son there. Pinchos Todres promptly became a staunch *chassid*. This was to such an extent that when the *Tzemach Tzedek* passed away, Pinchos Todres immediately became a *chassid* of the Rebbe Maharash, even before he officially became Rebbe.

Pinchos Todres had two sons, Binyomin and Reb Eliyahu (Elya) Chaim. Together, they helped facilitate the Rebbe's *shidduch*. Binyomin, in turn, had three sons - Pinchos Todres (who left Russia in 1937 and was one of the founders of Kfar Chabad), Menashe (who was killed in WW2), and my father, Shmuel Bezalel. My father was born in 1910 in Nikolaev. Years later, my family moved to Leningrad and shared a courtyard with the Friediker Rebbe.

How did your family escape Russia?

In 1942-1943, during the Second World War, my father was arrested by the KGB and sent to Siberia for two years. Luckily, because of the need for soldiers, the Russian government allowed prisoners to fight in the Red Army and gain an immediate release. My father volunteered and was accepted into the Army. After arriving at the barracks, his sergeant handed him a rifle and instructed him for about ten minutes in the proper use of a gun. That was the entire extent of his training. My father was then deemed ready to fight, despite not knowing the front of the rifle from the rear. His job was to lead the horses that transported the canons. Once, while performing these duties, he got lost in a thick

fog and ended up wandering around the forest. After roaming for many hours, he bumped into a random Russian soldier. The soldier enquired as to what he was doing there and he replied that he was leading the horses to a particular command centre. The soldier observed that he was going in the wrong direction and directed him to the correct path. My father finally arrived at his destination only to find that the area had been bombed and destroyed, with not one person left alive. This was

My father finally arrived at his destination only to find that the area had been bombed and destroyed, with not one person left alive

clear *hashgacha pratis* as my father's ignorance in leading horses got him lost and saved his life! Later in his army service, my father was shot in the leg. The doctors seriously considered amputation, but *Boruch Hashem*, after medical treatment



Humans Of Melbourne: Emmanuel Althaus

they were able to save his leg. As a result of his injuries, my father was discharged early and returned home in good health.

After the war, my family began planning their escape from Russia. I was born in Leningrad, in September of 1946. When I was just ten weeks old, our family left Russia with several hundred other *Chabad* families by securing false Polish passports. With these passports, we were able to leave Russia in a single operation known in *Chabad* circles as “The Great Escape.” We ended up in a displaced persons camp in Austria for about five months, and from there we travelled on to Paris.

In 1947, the Rebbe (who was then known as the Ramash), came to Paris to pick up his mother and bring her to New York. While in Paris, the Rebbe requested to see some of the children from the community. My father showed the Rebbe his three boys who were all fast asleep. When the Rebbe inquired as to our names, my father pointed to Shimon, Binyomin and myself. After taking my father aside so us children wouldn't wake up, the Rebbe asked him why I was named Emmanuel. My father responded “When we were planning our escape my wife became pregnant. We prayed to *Hashem* that we should escape successfully, Therefore, we named our child Emmanuel, which means, ‘*Imonu Kel*’ - *Hashem* is with us.” The Rebbe responded, “*ah glayche nomen*” - a fitting name!”

How did your family end up in Australia?

While we were living in Paris, Bezalel Wilshanky commenced negotiations with Reb Moshe Zalmen

Feiglin to be brought down to Australia as a *shochet*. After the Friediker Rebbe endorsed this employment opportunity for Reb Bezalel, my father decided to jump onto the same bandwagon, so to speak, and emigrate to Australia. Having been involved in illegal activities during and after the war, he was terrified of returning to the clutches of the KGB. My father figured that Australia was the furthest he could get from Russia, and so he wrote to the Friediker Rebbe asking for his endorsement. The Friediker Rebbe was very much in favour of this move, and in the end, five families came here as a result. What started as a request ultimately ended up becoming a *shlichus*. In June 1949, we left Paris and arrived in Australia at Port Melbourne on July 4th. Aron Feiglin met us with a bus that took us from the ship straight to Shepparton.

What was the Jewish education like in your youth?

My schooling began in 1952 at Mt Scopus College. In the afternoons I attended *Talmud Torah Haskalah* in Carlton to learn extra *Limudei Kodesh*. In 1956 *Yeshiva* school started. I joined the highest grade in *Yeshiva* at the time which was Grade 5. I continued in *Yeshiva* until the end of Form 2 (year 8). Unfortunately, there were not enough kids at that time to establish further grades in the *Yeshiva* school. Instead, a *Kol Hayom cheder* (similar to *mesivta*) was founded. I learnt in the *cheder* until the end of 1961. My teacher was Reb Laizer Herzog (the late brother of Izzy Herzog a”h).

“I loved your answer, but I couldn't let you get away with it!”

You had a unique relationship with Rabbi Groner, when did it begin?

When we were kids learning in *Kol Hayom* Rabbi Groner used to come on Fridays to *farher* us. On one such occasion, Rabbi Groner came into class and said, “Milkeh,” (some people used to call me that) “it's

your turn to be *farhered*.” He began by asking me a whole complicated *shailo* about a *shomer chinam* and a *shomer sochor*. He went on for about five minutes, but I was lost after the first minute. To cover my ignorance, I asked him if he would repeat the question. He thought I was taking the mickey out of him (which I did a lot) and he began to repeat the question, raising the volume of his loud booming voice. He ended the question with: “Milkeh, *vos toot men az der shomer iz geshtorben* - Milkeh, what happens if the *shomer* died?” Without missing a beat I answered, “you bury him.” Oh boy, that was not the answer he was expecting. Everyone burst out laughing. Rabbi Groner got very upset, muttered something, and then stormed out of the room. A few minutes later I got a message from Mrs Gabbay (the *Yeshiva* secretary) that Rabbi Groner wanted to see me. I was so scared. When I got to his office he stood up and walked towards me. I was anticipating my punishment, but instead, he bent down and gave me a friendly ‘knip’ on the cheek. With an enormous smile on his face, Rabbi Groner told me, “I loved your answer, but I couldn't let you get away with it!” I will never forget his answer. Now that's a real *mechanech*!

In 1961 there was a fire which burnt down the *Yeshiva Shul* building. The *Sifrei Torah* and *tefillin* inside were destroyed. My *tefillin* were amongst those lost in the fire. After hearing about what happened to my *tefillin*, Rabbi Groner loaned me his own pair. I used Rabbi Groner's *tefillin* during my time in *yeshiva* in Israel, until I saved up enough money to buy a new pair from a *sofer* in *Yerushalayim*. In total, Rabbi Groner's *tefillin* were returned after about three years. Yet, not once during that time did he indicate that he might have a need for his *tefillin*. To this day, I do not know if he had a spare pair, or if he bought a new pair after lending me his own.

Rabbi Groner was one of a kind. Despite our niggling and one-upmanship of each other, we were *Yedidim* to the very end.

During Rabbi Groner's final days, I went to visit him at Cabrini Hospital. When I got to his room, Rabbi Shimshon Yurkewitz told me that visitors were not allowed. Rabbi Groner spotted me from his bed and laboriously beckoned me in. I stood next to his bed, and we held hands for two minutes. Not a word was uttered. There was no



Amazingly, a year later, after twenty years of childlessness, this couple had a child.

need to say anything; we both knew what the other was thinking. It was a truly emotional experience, one which I will never forget.

How did your father become known as ‘The Kalistever Rebbe’?

As neither the *Yeshiva* school nor the *Kol Hayom cheder* proceeded beyond the eighth grade, I went to Taylors College which was a school for migrants, older people, and for those who didn't have a background of secular studies. At that time, 1961, my parents lived in Sherbrooke Forest, while my brother Binyomin and I shared a small two-bedroom apartment in Melbourne with Reb Mulik Gurevitch and his wife, who were newlyweds.

My parents had established a *kosher* guest house called CHEDVA in Sherbrooke Forest. As it was only twenty-five miles from the city, *Yidden* would frequently come to stay or visit. My father was a *chassidische yid*, and a funny man. He was also a consummate people's person and a great host. One time, a certain *gvir* came to CHEDVA. Unfortunately, the *gvir* and his wife were childless. My father advised them to say *Tehillim* and give additional *tzedaka* as a *segula* for a child. The *gvir* took my father's words literally and began following his advice. A year later the *gvir* returned with *tanos*, "you said that if we follow your advice we will have a child, why don't we have one yet?!" The *gvir* was so upset with my father that he began dissuading people from coming to the guest house, jeopardizing my parents *parnasah*. My father wrote to the Rebbe about the intolerable situation. The Rebbe responded, "In general one shouldn't give *brochos* to those in need when they aren't sure the *brocho* will be *mekuyam*, for the intentions may be misconstrued. However, being that the *brochos* were already given, *b'ezrat Hashem* the *brocho* will be fulfilled." Amazingly, a year later, after twenty years of childlessness, this couple had a child. That is how my father came to be known to some people by the nickname the 'Kalistever Rebbe' (Kalist is a township near Sherbrooke Forest).

How was your experience in yeshiva in Israel?

In January 1963, at the tender age of sixteen years and three months, I was sent off to learn in *Kfar Chabad*, together with my cousin Sholom Mendel Kluwgant. I went to *Kfar Chabad* on the advice of the Rebbe, who told me I should study there and not in New York.



Towards the end of 1964, when I was finishing my second year of learning in *Eretz Yisrael*, I had yet to visit a *kibbutz*. When the *yeshiva* had a break for a week they closed the *yeshiva* building and I was left without a place to stay. I decided that this was my best opportunity to finally experience *kibbutz* life so off I went to *Kibbutz Tzvi* in Beit Shar. When I returned to *yeshiva*, the *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Nochum Trebnik, approached me as soon as I arrived. He asked me, "where have you been?" I understood from his tone that he knew where I had been, so instead of offering a lie, I told him the truth. He replied, "*es past nisht* for a *bochur* in *Tomchei Temimim* to go to a *kibbutz*. I believe I have to send you away." I thought this was extremely unfair, especially since other people had done the same thing and gone unpunished (of course, I would never do them in). After voicing my protests, Rabbi Zalmen

The Althaus family has an ingrained love for Beis Harav, and my father did anything he could for them.

said, "when Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman (the *yeshiva mashpia*) comes back from the *Shiur* he is giving, we will discuss your situation. Whatever he decides we will listen to." We each laid our claims before Rabbi Shlomo Chaim. I was very nervous about the outcome. My father had no money and I would have nowhere to go if I was kicked out of *yeshiva* early. This worried me greatly. After thinking about it for a few minutes, Rabbi Shlomo Chaim said, "*Ich loz nisht az men zol em avekshicken* - I do not give permission to send him away." Reb Nochum Trebnik asked him, "why not?" Reb Shlomo Chaim responded, "*az ich volt geven in zayn platz, volt ich geton der zelber zach* - If I were in his place, I would have done the same thing." He understood me well, living with what it states in *Pirkei Avos*, "*al todin es chaveroi ad shetagia limkomo*" - do not judge a person until you have lived in their place. Reb Shlomo Chaim took me under his wing and those thirteen *Yiddish* words he uttered kept me on the straight and narrow path. This episode still lives with me until today.

What memories do you have of your first yechidus with the Rebbe?

I was in *Kfar Chabad* till September/Elul of 1964. I then travelled to New York for the *Yomim Noraim*. When I arrived in New York I had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. At that time I was having trouble with my vocal cords; I was constantly hoarse and was not feeling well at all. During the *yechidus* the Rebbe asked me, "How are you doing?" I answered that I wasn't feeling so well. The Rebbe responded, "*Bay mishpachas Altgauz feert men zich tzu zayn frailach* - the custom of the Althaus family is to be happy." (In Russian there is no 'H', instead, the Rebbe pronounced Althaus with a 'G'). After telling the Rebbe that I was planning to fly back to Melbourne for my brother Binyomin's wedding, the Rebbe asked me to send his regards to my father. The Rebbe then asked me, "Where are you staying?" I responded, "I don't have a place right now." Usually, the *hanholo* of the *yeshiva* at 770 would arrange a place for new students. A new *takono* had just been established that before one could join the *yeshiva* he had to be *farhered* by Rabbi Mentlik. I had not yet had a chance to be *farhered* and so I wasn't sure where I would stay. The Rebbe replied, "When you leave the

yechidus speak to the 'people in the office' (a reference to Rabbi Binyomin Klien a"h). Tell him that I say that you should be considered a *bochur* in the *yeshiva*." After the *yechidus* finished, I went outside and recounted this to Rabbi Klein. As we were talking he received a phone call from Rabbi Chodakov, requesting that I go to his office. I was shaking in my pants as I walked to Rabbi Chodakov's office, worrying about what I may have done wrong. Rabbi Chodakov told me that the Rebbe had just called him and directed him to arrange a place for me to stay, as I was to be considered a *bochur* in the *yeshiva*. I felt great. I walked back to Rabbi Klien's office where he confirmed that I no longer had to worry about having a *farher*!

Although my *yechidus* was scheduled for just a few minutes, it ended up lasting for over twenty minutes.

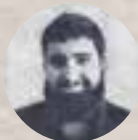
During my stay in New York, the *hanholo* of the *yeshiva* arranged for Rabbi Dovid Raskin to be my personal mentor. Rabbi Raskin looked out for me and made sure I was taken care of.

TO BE CONTINUED





A BUBBE MAASE



Written by
Mendel Gurkov

The times they are a-changing

That didn't go as planned. Maybe I jinxed it when I wrote in my last column about life getting back to normal and being able to see people again. I probably should have just kept my big mouth shut.

Ever since Melbourne has moved into stage four lockdown (which has me feeling like the sole survivor of an apocalypse every time I step outside after eight PM), I can't help but reminisce about better times. On more than one occasion my wife has found me staring

into space, thinking about times bygone when getting milk from the grocery store wasn't a punishable offense. The more I reminisced, the more I realized how enjoyable it is to be nostalgic. There's nothing like taking a trip down memory lane. Talking about the good ole days brings about a spirit of camaraderie, and remembering simpler times enables one to appreciate the small things in life, to 'slow down and smell the roses'.

I recently read a *sicha* where the *Friediker Rebbe* writes about his childhood growing up

in Lubavitch, Russia, *"When the calendar turned to Shabbos mevorchim Elul in the village of Lubavitch, the days were still warm and sunny, but something in the air had changed. There was a scent of Elul and one could feel the breeze of Tesbuva. Every Yid was deep in thought, analyzing his actions in the service of G-d, as mundane worries began fading from the mind... With great excitement, one waited for "G-d to awaken me from my slumber" through the sound of the shofar. One eagerly anticipated the first blow, which let it be known that the gates of the 'month of mercy'*

were open... The days of Elul were incomparable to the rest of the year. Lying in bed six-thirty in the morning, one could already hear the early risers minyan finishing davening in shul. The shofar is blown. The sound of the shofar awakes one. Elul is upon us. One hurries to dress, unhappy with his conduct, thinking why did I sleep so late? A fleeting image passes in one's mind, of Moshe Rabeinu accepting the Torah on Har Sinai. These are special days, and one can accomplish wondrous things. One has to be a Mensch, one cannot waste this precious time sleeping." When reading this splendidly written passage a warm feeling of nostalgia washed over me. I was whisked back in time, to an age when Judaism was taken earnestly, and life had a beautiful simplicity to it.

In a recent scientific study on the psychology of nostalgia, researchers found that being nostalgic boosts one mood, leading to self-confidence and optimism towards the future. However, there is a flip side to this study. Researchers found that most people engage in nostalgic memories when they are feeling down and that after the pleasant feelings dissipate, the person's mood usually remains low; in some instances even regressing into a state of depression.

Memory is a tricky thing. We tend to view the past through rose-tinted glasses, conveniently 'forgetting' our unpleasant experiences, choosing to focus on the good times instead. While it's true that times were simpler way back when, it is important to remember that there were also plenty of challenges in the past. There is an inherent danger in overlooking past difficulties; doing so often prevents us from properly moving forward. By wistfully reimagining what once

was, we sometimes excuse our shortcomings, convincing ourselves that there's nothing we can change about the current state of our lives. How many times have you mused, "If only I was born back in the day, life would have been so much easier."

There's a tale about a woman who one night finds her husband deep in thought, just staring at the wall. She watches as he wipes a tear from his eye. "What's the matter, dear?" she whispers. The husband answers, "I am just remembering when we first met twenty years ago. Do you remember back then?" The wife is moved to tears thinking that her husband is so caring, so sensitive. "Yes, I do," she replies. The husband pauses. The words were not coming easily. "Do you remember when your father caught us secretly dating?" "Yes, I remember," said the wife, lowering herself into a chair beside him. The husband continues, "Do you remember when he said, "Either you marry my daughter, or I will send you to jail for twenty years" "I remember that too" she replies softly. He wipes another tear from his cheek and says, "I would have been released today."

Okay, I am being a bit facetious. But seriously speaking, there is an old *Chassidic* saying, "*Amal iz Amalek*" - the *Yiddish* word for *amal* (past) has the same spelling as the *Hebrew* word '*Amalek*'. The connotation is that we must not bemoan the changing times, for it leads to a spiritual numbness and a loss of passion in our service to G-d. This is the same manner in which the nation of *Amalek* sought to influence our forefathers in the desert.

Nostalgia is a double-edged sword that must be handled carefully. One cannot move forward without reckoning with the past, but being stuck in the past inhibits one from properly moving forward. How does one properly balance these two conflicting attitudes? I am not sure (what am I, a psychologist?!), but after reading the *Friediker Rebbe's sicha* I noticed something; although my heart longed for a simpler time, instead of lamenting how times have changed, I made a resolution to take *Elul* more seriously this year and maybe even do a little *Tesbuva*.

Perhaps that's the secret of nostalgia; it's about knowing that when it comes to our core beliefs, what once was will always be. While circumstances change, the things we hold dear remain the same. Reminiscing about the days of old helps us recognize that even today, in the hustle and bustle of our tech-filled world, the values we've cherished for millennia still apply. By taking an honest, unadulterated look at our experiences, we can use the good, the bad, and the ugly as a bridge to our past, and a map to our future.

If that's too hard, you can always try to get your dose of nostalgia by using a payphone somewhere. Just make sure it's not after eight PM.

Either way, you know what they say about nostalgia; It's not what it used to be.

Yours truly -

Mendel Gurkov 





SPOTLIGHT

Rav Binyomin Yehoshuah Zilber זצ"ל



Written by
Rabbi Michael Stern

This article is based on the book
Rebi Binyomin Hatzadik
Written by M. Rubinson.
Published by Hamefoar, 2019.

Binyomin Yehoshuah Zilber was born in Poland, 1917, to a family of *Chassidim*. At the young age of seven, Binyomin's mother passed away, leaving only his father to care for him. When Binyomin reached adolescence, in an act of *mesiras nefesh* for *limud HaTorah*, Binyomin's father borrowed thirty zlotych (a large amount

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of money in those days) to bring his son to Warsaw to find a *yeshiva*. Unsuccessful in finding the right *yeshiva* in Warsaw, Binyomin was sent to a *yeshiva ketana* in Brisk, Belarus. After studying for two years in Brisk, Binyomin joined the *Nevardok Yeshiva* in Mezritch, Poland.

Whilst in *yeshiva* in Mezritch, Binyomin befriended Shmuel Artzi (the future father in law of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu). In 1933, they came together as part of a *kvutza* to *Eretz Yisroel* to form the *Bais Yosef Nevardok Yeshiva* in *Bnei Brak*. Artzi wrote about his friend from

youth, "Binyomin came to us from Brisk. He was a *masmid* in *Torah*. Binyomin used to *daven* quietly, as opposed to the custom in *Nevardok*. We respected him, even becoming slightly jealous of him. He drew our attention because he was considered exceptionally '*frum*' and always walked with his hands on his heart. The *Musar* of *Nevardok* puts great emphasis on *tikkun hamidos* and he exemplified such conduct. The *bochurim* said that he was born without a *yetzer hara*, that is how he got the name '*Binyomin Hatzadik*'."

Although Binyomin's fellow *bochurim* felt he did not need to work on his *midos*, Binyomin placed great emphasis on *tikkun hamidos* and became known as one of the last of the great *Nevardokers*. At the end of each day, Binyomin would make a *cheshbon nefesh*. Years later, after Rav Zilber's passing, many private notes of resolutions from his *cheshbon hanefesh* were found. One of the practices he began during his days in *Nevardok* was to spend the month of *Elul* in *hisbodedus*. *Hisbodedus* is the



practice of secluding oneself from the outside world and contemplating one's spiritual stature. Although he received permission from his wife before marriage to continue to practice *Hisbodedus*, he suspended this custom to help raise his family. After the children had grown, he resumed his custom. Rav Zilber would leave home and stay in a *yeshiva* dormitory during this time, completely seclude himself, and only return home after *Yom Kippur*. Rav Zilber kept this practice for over sixty years. He also kept a *taanis dibur*, not speaking about anything other than *Torah* and *tefillah* during the forty days between *Elul* and *Yom Kippur*.

The *yeshiva* in *Nevordok* was a branch of the more extreme schools of *Mussar*, emphasizing self-effacement and disdain for the physical world. Rav Zilber was one of the few in our generation who maintained the *Nevordok* ethos. In his later years, after his appointment to *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah* (The council of great scholars of the land of Israel), Rav Zilber needed to be aware of world events and issues as part of his position. However, being that his time was very precious and he did not want to waste it reading newspapers, he decided to allot himself only the time he was able to read while standing on one foot. Whatever he succeeded in reading until he fell to the ground was fine, beyond that he felt it was not necessary.

Rav Zilber was known as a great *posek*, with his area of expertise being *Orach Chaim*. His three-volume work, *Beis Boruch*, is highly regarded by many *poskim*. In general, he felt that the *Mishnah Berurah* was too complicated for *baalei batim* and that the laws of *Orach Chaim*, which deal with the intricate *halachic* details of daily life, are more



shave lechol nefesh (easily understood by the general public). In the introduction to *Beis Baruch* he writes, "Throughout this *sefer*, I have brought many direct quotes from the *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe. I was *medayik* to quote his exact words because the Alter Rebbe's *signon* is 'tzach v'noki' (clear and succinct). He is able to answer many questions with just a few words."

Rav Zilber also wrote a *kitzur* (summary) of practical *hilchos Shabbos* titled *Bris Olam*. This was the first *Kitzur Hilchos Shabbos* ever published, even before the *sefer Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasa*. *Bris Olam* became very popular in both *Eretz Yisroel* and around the world, with over seven editions being published. As a result of the popularity of the *sefer*, Rav Zilber received many letters with questions about the material he discussed. Rav Zilber penned an extensive response, which eventually was published as a fourteen volume set of *tshuvos* titled *Az Nidabru*. In the *hakdama* to the first edition of *Az Nedabru*, Rav Zilber cited *Chazal*, "When two *talmidei*

chachamim listen to each other, *Hashem* listens to them." Rav Zilber wrote further, "Whenever possible, I cited the entirety of the letter of the questioner before writing my response. This is to emphasize the obligation to listen to others and to learn from them." Such conduct is unique, as most *seforim* of responsa only cite a summary of the question posed. A story is related that after printing one of the later volumes of *Az Nidabru*, a member of Rav Zilber's family fell ill. Rav Zilber made a *cheshbon hanefesh* and then told his grandson, "In the volume that was just printed, there is certain *tshuva* to a *talmid chochom* that I am concerned was written with a tinge of *zilzul* (lack of respect). Therefore, I am requesting that all three hundred volumes that were printed be put in *shaimos*." After putting the volumes in *shaimos*, Rav Zilber's family member miraculously recovered.

Although Rav Zilber was a *Litvak*, being a *mekurav* to the *Chazon Ish* and many other great Lithuanian *gedolim*, he managed to retain his independence. In 1975, the Rebbe launched *Mivtza Neshek*. The campaign called upon all Jewish women, includ-

ing girls from the age of three, to light *Shabbos* candles. After a *Litvish Rosh Yeshiva* voiced his halachic reservations, Rabbi Zilber staunchly defended the Rebbe's position, writing, "We must accept *Mivtza Neshek* with respect and love... *Mivtza Neshek* proves that 'Lo alman Yisroel' (Israel is not orphaned). There are *gedolim* who are concerned not only about their followers but for all of *Klal Yisroel*. The previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rebbe Rayatz of blessed memory, related a story: Once, *baalei batim* in Vilna complained to Rabbi Chaim Ozer of blessed memory that Chabad is adding *Yomim Tovim*. Rabbi Chaim Ozer responded, 'While they are adding, we are subtracting?.. We must respect anyone who is involved in spreading *Yiddishkeit*."

In 1989 there was a split in the *Agudas Yisroel* political party. Most of the *Litvish Rabbonim* left the *Agudas Yisroel* in opposition to the *Chasidic* contingency. Rav Zilber was the only non-*Chasidic* member who remained, refusing to get involved in the argument. Rav Zilber paid a heavy price for this, with much of the *Litvis* community turning against him, eventually leading him to leave *Bnei Brak*. During this tumultuous time, Rav Zilber showed his solidarity with *Chabad* by traveling to *Kfar Chabad* on *Yud*

Alef Nissan, and to various *Kinusim*.

Rav Zilber's refusal to bow to pressure expressed itself when it came to the issue of *Shleimas Haaretz*. In contrast to the mainstream *Litvish* view, Rav Zilber sided with the Rebbe, feeling strongly that giving any land away was prohibited and endangers Jewish lives. He was the only member of the *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah* who signed a *Kol Korei* (a proclamation by leading rabbis) prohibiting the surrender of *Gush Katif*.

Rav Zilber cared deeply that there should be *Achdus Yisroel*. In the *hakdama* to his last volume of *Az Nidabru*, Rav Zilber writes, "In this *sefer*, I deal with *inyonim* which are subject to *machlokes*, such as *sheitlach*. The underlying issue of this *machlokes* is whether a *sheitel* should be partially covered or not. My intent is not to decide the *halacha*, especially since most will not listen to my opinion anyway. Rather, I intend to show that each side has a disadvantage and no one should be able to claim 'I am better'. The manner in which opponents of *sheitlach* have attacked their adversaries demonstrates that unfortunately, we have yet to recognize that *eilu ve'ilu divrei Elokim chaim* (both

opinions are the word of G-d). It is a well-established notion that *minhagim* vary depending on the local. For instance, the *Beis Yosef* rules that women do not make a *Bracha* on positive *mitzvos* bo und by time, while the *Rama* permits it. The *halacha* is that *Sephardic* women follow the opinion of the *Beis Yosef*, while *Ashkenazic* women follow the opinion of the *Rama*. Yet, I was shocked to recently read in a *sefer* by a modern-day *Posek*, that one should not answer *amen* to *Ashkenazic* women who make a *Brocha* on the *Dalet Minim*! It is as if we have two *Torahs*! Instead of *elu ve'ilu divrei Elokim chaim*, the verse 'vathi haemes nederes' (and the truth will form groups and be lost forever), has become reality.

After leading a full life, on the twenty-fifth of *Elul*, 2010, at the age of 93, Rav Zilber passed away.

Rav Binyomin Zilber was a great *Posek* and devout Jew. His Halachic prowess is unmatched in the laws of *Orach Chayim*. Yet, perhaps his most impressive attribute was his understanding and tolerance of his opponents. Rav Zilber was able to stand for what he believed in, and simultaneously appreciate the opinion of others. Rabbis come and go, but leaders who care for all of *Klal Yisroel* are unique. May his memory be a blessing upon us all.



Presented by
Rabbi Yossi Moshel

LOCH iN KOP



Riddle me this

What are two things which that when separate, the former is permitted and the latter is forbidden. However, when they joined, the former becomes forbidden and the latter permitted?

What did Iyov, Yisro, and Bilaam have in common?

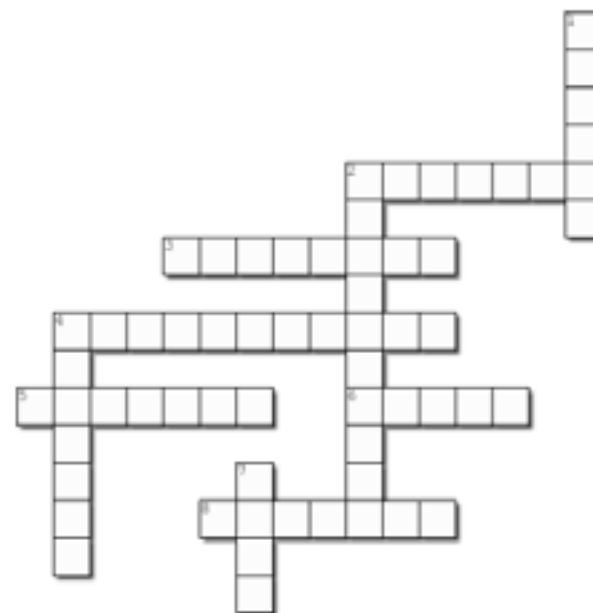
Which word in Tehillim contains the letter Mem 5 times? (hint: it is found in a 'good' Kapitel)

What was Haman's profession before he became viceroy to Achashverosh?

The Shulchan Aruch rules that one who eats on Yom Kippur in a way of achilah gasa (gorging) is 'ossur aval pottur' (forbidden but not punished after the fact). Why is the person not punished, the law is that once a person eats a kzayis or two on Yom Kippur they are chayav for violating the prohibition of eating on Yom Kippur?

Answers: He was a hairdresser for 22 years. They were all advisors to Pharaoh in Egypt. On erev Yom Kippur just before the fast the person ate a little less than achilah gasa, then once the fast started he ate a bit more, thereby eating in a way of achilah gasa before transgressing and eating a forbidden amount (of a kzayis) on Yom Kippur. Salt and meat. Meat is forbidden before salted but once salted the formerly permitted salt becomes forbidden and the formerly forbidden meat becomes permitted. (אין זהו אלא ענין של אכילה גסה ופוטור)

Crossword Puzzle

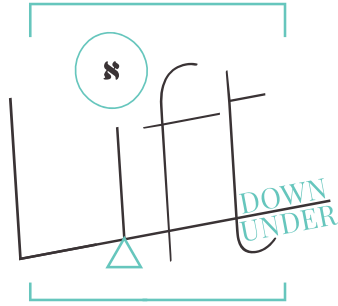


Across:

- Repentance
- The Alter Rebbe's birthday
- Yisroel
- Wake up early
- King
- The day Tomvhei Temimim was founded

Down:

- A ram
- The world's birthday
- 'I am to my...'
- 'The Eli___blows'



*In dedication to the Rebbe's shluchim worldwide.
May they merit to be mekuyam their
shlichus bemiluyo.*

KOLLEL MENACHEM SHIURIM FOR THE MONTH OF ELUL:

Daily Mon-Thu

10 am

Gemara shiur with Rabbi Szmerling

10:45 am

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch with Rabbi Mendel Gurkov

Sunday evenings

with the Kollel Rabbis

Monday evenings

with the Rosh HaKollel Rabbi Y Johnson

Tuesday evenings

parsha with Rabbi Leor Broh

Wednesday evenings

Nach with Rabbi Yossi Gordon

Thursday evenings

Halacha with Rabbi Mottel Krasnjanski

Thursday evenings

Sefer Hachinuch with Rabbi Binyomin Cohen

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