



SILENCE SPEAKS HONOR



Issue #10

הגהת השו"ת תשפ"ז

Stories of Salvation

Firsthand accounts of miraculous yeshuos in the zechus of kabbalos in kedushas hatefillah.

The Man Who Would Not Speak in Shul: An Unbelievable Story About the Power of Silence

Told by Yonatan Yosef Dagmy, founder of Shul.com, Deal, NJ

Many years ago, I began working with the Chevra Kadisha in Brooklyn and Staten Island. In 2020, I relocated to Miami due to COVID-related restrictions and closures in New York, and I continued doing Chevra Kadisha work there as well.

There was a gentleman named Moshe Melamed. I never met him personally. He was 82 years old, with a heart condition, and it seemed he was having palpitations or a heart attack, so he called paramedics. When they arrived, they were afraid of exposure to the coronavirus—afraid to even help him. They went back and forth, never properly giving him the oxygen he needed, and within a few minutes, took him out, huffing and puffing his last breaths. He died that same day.

Moshe was buried in Miami. Because of pandemic restrictions on gatherings, there was barely a minyan at the graveside—about thirteen people came. Miami's protocol at the time required each body to be sealed in a thick plastic zippered bag, meant to prevent the spread of the virus. Anyone familiar with Miami knows how humid and hot it is—bodies placed in bags like that deteriorate very quickly: the smell, the decomposition, everything breaks down faster. However, there was no choice. He was buried there.

The Dreams Begin

About 30 days after he passed, Moshe came to his wife, Nina, in a dream. He asked her several questions, but the central one was: *Why was I buried in Miami?* »

Pearls on the Parashah

Insights on Tefillah from the Parashah

515 Exalted Hours

Moshe Rabbeinu davened 515 *tefillos*, asking that he be permitted to enter Eretz Yisrael, until Hashem asked him to cease davening. The *sefarim hakedoshim* teach us that these *tefillos* took place during the days from Rosh Hashanah on. Chazal tell us (*Berachos* 32) that for the *chassidim harishonim*, each *tefillah* took one hour.

If we calculate the hours from Rosh Hashanah until just before dawn on Shemini Atzeres—when the judgment is sealed, according to the Zohar HaKadosh—we will find that it comes to 515 hours.

Thus, had Moshe Rabbeinu continued davening one more *tefillah*, it would have taken him into the time of the גמר החתימה, *the conclusion of the judgment*, and the Ribbono shel Olam would not have denied his request. (Meir Einei Chachamim)

Secrets of the Sages

Kedushah Beis Hamedrash as espoused by the Tzaddikim

Rav Yaivi of Ostroh

20 Tishrei 5551 (1790)

The mitzvah of *Anochi Hashem*: One who wishes to fulfill this mitzvah, and to accept upon himself the yoke of His kingdom, should not speak in shul—as it is written in the Zohar: ... 'and one who speaks mundane words in the Beis HaKnesses... woe is to him, because he has no portion in the G-d of Yisrael.'

Wishing our readers, and all of Klal Yisrael,
a wonderful and joyous Yom Tov Sukkos!

Stories of Salvation (cont.)

« Moshe and Nina had already both purchased *kevarim* in Eretz Yisrael together. But due to COVID and the restrictions on travel and on moving bodies internationally, it had been too difficult to arrange the transfer. At the time, the New York coroner's office was essentially the main hub in the United States for processing bodies being sent to Israel—most other locations that wanted to send a body to Israel would first route it through New York. But Moshe's family couldn't manage the logistics in time. He had only one son, David, and so Moshe was buried in Miami instead.

Nina saw him in the dream but didn't think much of it.

About a week later, he came again—and again asked her why she had buried him in Miami, insisting, *The body is supposed to be in Eretz Yisrael. We bought these plots together so we could be there.*

Nina mentioned it to her son, who is a Rav in Miami and a *talmid chacham*. He didn't take it too seriously at first, but he told her he would look into the matter.

Moshe kept returning. Again and again, in dream after dream, he told her the same thing: *You weren't supposed to bury me in Miami. It had to be Eretz Yisrael.*

Eventually, calls were made to *rabbanim* in Eretz Yisrael—including Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi and others. Based on how the question was initially posed, they quickly dismissed it: One doesn't simply move a body, it isn't that simple, it's not something done casually, they said. So, the matter was set aside again.

However, Moshe kept coming back in dream after dream. After almost two and a half years of these recurring dreams, Nina and her son finally decided to take it seriously. They approached a *dayan* on a Beis Din in Eretz Yisrael and received a *psak halachah*

authorizing what's called a *hatmanah*—a reinterment, in which the body is removed from the ground and reburied elsewhere. This is a recognized process discussed in the *Shulchan Aruch*, with established *halachos* governing it.

The Reburial

The family opened the *kever*, removed the wooden *aron*, and had the body flown to Eretz Yisrael—three years after Moshe's original passing. David stayed behind in Miami; Nina traveled to Eretz Yisrael for the reburial at Har HaMenuchos.

During the ceremony, the Chevra Kadisha began rushing the process. The family was confused—generally, the Chevra Kadisha rushes because it is considered better for a *niftar* to be buried as quickly as possible after death. However, this man had already been gone for three years. What was the hurry?

The workers looked at them and said plainly: *This aron is heavy.*

At first, everyone assumed there had been a mix-up—it happens, unfortunately, that bodies are mixed up during transport, especially by plane, and

identification is usually confirmed before burial, but mistakes can occur. Given that the body had spent three years in a bag in Miami's ground, in that humidity, logically, there should have been nothing left, and whatever remained would have smelled terrible.

But the Chevra Kadisha insisted: this *aron* was too heavy—there had to be a mistake.

They performed an identification. They opened the bag.

It was Moshe Melamed, 82 years old, exactly as he had been buried.

Moreover, **the body was complete. Warm. His hair was perfectly preserved. No smell. No worms. This was after three years in the ground, sealed in a plastic bag, in Miami's heat and humidity.**

I can tell you from firsthand experience that bodies deteriorate quickly—after even a

single week, changes are already significant. Here, three years had passed, and the body was whole.

The Chevra Kadisha at Har HaMenuchos was shocked, even frightened. This is an organization run with extraordinary strictness: nothing is moved, nothing is placed, without extremely tight control, tighter than almost anywhere else in the world.

Before proceeding with the burial, they called in Rav Ovadia Yosef Toledano—grandson of Chacham Ovadia Yosef, and a *Dayan* on the Beis Din of Rav Asher Weiss—to see the sight firsthand. After examining the body, he instructed them: Inscribe on the gravestone, *"Lo shalta bo rima—worms did not touch this body."*

They completed the burial—and that should have been the end of the story.

The Investigation

However, it wasn't—not for me, relates Yonatan Yosef. I had returned to Deal, New Jersey, when I heard this account from my Chevra Kadisha contacts in Israel, and I couldn't let it go. As someone who loves learning Torah and is fascinated by how the world works, this case gripped me. I had never encountered a body that hadn't deteriorated—never even seen a body a week old without an odor. Moreover, I have been present for the burials of people of real significance to their communities; even then, decomposition and odor were unavoidable.

So, after the summer, I flew back to Miami and called David Melamed, Moshe's son, with whom Nina now lived. I asked to stay with him for a few days. He welcomed me and showed me around his home. I sat with Nina and asked her to tell me about her husband, who he really was.

She told me: Until about age 52, Moshe was a regular person—not religious, not observant. He became a *ba'al teshuvah* in his 50s. He was a simple businessman who owned taxi medallions—she thought around 20 or 30—and managed them for a comfortable but modest income. Nothing extravagant.

I looked around the house and pressed further. I asked if he'd been a great *ba'al tzedakah*. No, she said. I asked if they were known for *hachnasas orchim*. Not



R' Moshe Melamed A"H

particularly. I asked about any specific *chessed* he was known for. No.

There was not even a substantial library of *sefarim* in the home—a *Chok LeYisrael*, some *Tehillim*, but not a complete *Shas*. By every visible measure, an unremarkable, simple man.

I could not reconcile it. How could someone this ordinary—by every external sign—have a body that resisted decay for three years, in our era, not some story from centuries past?

So, I spent the next four days investigating. I asked around at shuls, spoke to people who had known him, and met with *rabbanim* familiar with him. Mostly, no one had anything particularly notable to say.

Eventually, I found it: The one thing Moshe was scrupulously careful about, from the moment he became a *ba'al teshuvah*, was that **he never spoke in shul**.

He kept this with real seriousness—the kind of intensity sometimes seen in those newly returned to *Yiddishkeit*. He genuinely couldn't understand how people could talk during davening or on the phone during *tefillah*.

This conviction once led to a painful moment. In his 50s, a visitor from Eretz Yisrael—a man with a large hat and a long beard—was seen talking during *Kaddish*. After the *tefillah*, Moshe approached him respectfully and said he didn't understand. Wasn't one not supposed to speak during the *Kaddish*? The man, unaware that Moshe was a relatively recent *ba'al teshuvah*, responded with contempt, saying, “*Who do you think you are? What do you know? That is chutzpah—you deserve two slaps in the face!*”

Moshe was devastated. He had looked up to this person, and instead of a respectful answer, he received public humiliation. He held back tears, left the shul, and stayed away for several weeks afterward.

He was, physically, an entirely unremarkable man—clean-shaven, nothing distinctive in appearance.

The Grave

At Har HaMenuchos, his headstone reads: Moshe Melamed, and the inscription *Lo shalta bo rima ad shehuva l'menuchas olamim b'Eretz HaKodesh—that worms did not touch him until he was brought to eternal*

rest in the Holy Land—after three years. He passed away in the Hebrew year 5780 and was reburied in 5783.

It should be understood that inscriptions at Har HaMenuchos are not casually approved. The powers that be there are exceptionally strict about what may be written on a stone—and yet this was permitted.

The Deeper Lesson

Yonatan Yosef reflects: We often try to emulate those whom society regards as *elyonim*—elevated, supreme figures—without knowing who is truly considered elevated in the eyes of *Shamayim*, and who is considered *tachtonim*, lowly.

He connects this to a well-known tradition about the Tosfos Yom Tov. During the years of Tach veTat (1648–1649), when Cossacks in Ukraine massacred hundreds of thousands of Jews, without firearms, by brutal manual violence alone, the Tosfos Yom Tov performed a *she'eilas chalom*, seeking to understand from *Shamayim* why this had happened. He was shown that it was because shuls had been turned into places of idle, disrespectful talk—desecrated by conversation during *tefillah*, *Kaddish*, *Kedushah*, and the *Krias HaTorah*. From this came the well-known *Mi Sheberach*, recited when the Torah is opened, promising blessing and success to those who remain silent during *davening*.

Moshe was scrupulous about this one thing—never speaking in shul—and it protected his body from natural decay after death. The storyteller adds a *kal v'chomer*: Moshe lived to 82 in good health; if his body resisted deterioration after death, how much more so had his life, while he lived, been spared hardship.

He asks: How can someone claim to long for the Beis HaMikdash, to want to serve Hashem there or bring *korbanos*, if he does not even hold basic reverence for the *Mikdash Me'at*, the local shul? The verse ומקדשי תיראו commands fear and reverence for Hashem's dwelling place—a mitzvah, he notes, that is not always taken with the seriousness it deserves.

This, he emphasizes, is not a legend from centuries past, not a story about someone unknown and unverifiable—it is something witnessed within living memory, confirmed by many. He gives the location so others may go and daven there: **Moshe Melamed ben Nesanel v'Orah Shimshi**, who passed away on 29 Adar. His grave is at Har HaMenuchos, Givat Shaul, Chelkat Darom, Gush 4 Aleph, Shura 41, grave number 5.

A Closing Word

The storyteller closes with direct, practical guidance: Achieving this level of merit is as simple as coming to shul and remaining silent. He notes—somewhat pointedly—that this is not something typically emphasized by Rabbanim: if someone knows he cannot control the urge to talk, to check his phone, to lose focus, he is better off davening alone at home than coming to shul and desecrating the *Mikdash Me'at* through talking during *Kaddish* or *Kedushah*. Davening at home, *byachid*, at least avoids that transgression entirely.

He offers an analogy. Imagine going to traffic court over a DMV ticket and deciding to chat casually in front of the judge—unthinkable, given the fear people naturally have of that setting. However, in shul, he observes, people often act as though it's their own home—sometimes, he suggests, because

their name is on a plaque on the wall, as though that confers some ownership. It doesn't work that way; in *Shamayim*, no plaque and no name carry that kind of weight.

Silence in shul, he concludes, is the truest expression of reverence for the *Borei Olam*—because it is the one time and place the *Shechinah* is specifically invited to be present, and speaking during that moment constitutes, in his words, the greatest possible

desecration and *chillul Hashem*.

The greatest blessing, he says, comes from this simplicity: remaining silent during *tefillah* — for the protection of body, health, well-being, income, children, and grandchildren alike.



The Hallel of Yom Tov

Several years ago, on the first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, a Yid approached me and related that on the first day of Yom Tov, the *Ba'al Tefillah* for Shacharis in his shul had drawn out the davening in an exaggerated fashion—but this is how it is; on Yom Tov, the shuls generally send up the finer *chazzanim* who like to “treat” people to their liturgical abilities. Not everyone understands that drawing out the davening in such a way causes people to lose focus, perhaps taking a leaflet into their hands... losing the warmth of the Yom Tov’dig Hallel entirely.

“On the next morning, the second day of Yom Tov,” the Yid continued his account, “I found myself sitting next to the previous day’s *ba'al Shacharis*—and lo and behold, as the *chazzan* was concluding the *pesukim*, the former *ba'al tefillah* was perusing one of the leaflets in shul!

“Can you imagine?! He himself doesn’t have the patience to hear the *chazzan* out—but he has no problem subjecting the hundred people in the *kehillah* to his own vocal antics. Was this his calculation?! That everyone should be reading as he sings?!”

I told this Yid that I don’t know this *ba'al tefillah*, and I don’t want to know his name, but if we wish to judge him favorably, we can explain his behavior with the following *mashal*:

Baruch Hashem, matters have improved, and weddings don’t conclude as late as they used to in years past. However, occasionally, you’ll find parents who forget about the clock...and they draw out the wedding into the wee hours of the morning.

The question then arises: Everyone knows that this is a tremendous imposition on all the family members who are forced to sit there until the end and must nevertheless be at work at 9:00 the following morning.

If so, how is it possible that the same father who sat at the wedding of his nephew last week until very late, barely able to keep his eyes open, should tonight so nonchalantly add another song to the repertoire and another *mitzvah tantz* for a great uncle?! He knows how it feels, and he’s not an uncaring person... why, then, doesn’t he think about others?!

The answer is very simple. Sometimes, when people make a *simchah*, they’re on top of the world, they’re living in another universe, and they forget how they felt just one week earlier.

The same—I said as I sought to calm this perturbed Yid—applies to your *ba'al tefillah*. He understands well that it’s improper to unnecessarily prolong davening. It’s just that when he’s up there at the *amud*, his vocal cords are wide open, and he has the entire *kehillah* captive... he forgets what it’s like to have to stand there and listen endlessly while doing nothing.

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We must clarify that we’re not talking here about a sweet, beautiful davening. The Rema (*Siman 281*) indicates that on Shabbos and Yom Tov, one should daven with extra sweetness, and it is certainly improper to rush through davening. We’re referring here to prolonging davening to an exaggerated extent.

We live today in a world where people have trouble sitting idly

for even one minute. We see this during the weekday, when people sit idle for ten seconds... they’re immediately on their cellphones, checking whether someone called them.... If no one answers, they’ll call someone else, and if they don’t have anyone to call, they’ll call a hotline to listen to something. They cannot sit idly.

**

A Yid related to me that he was recently inspired to stop reading pamphlets during davening after his son gave him a jarring awakening.

In keeping with the *minhag* of Klal Yisrael, he *bentches* his children every Friday night. One Shabbos, he called over his son, who was sitting on the couch, his nose in a pamphlet. His son came over, but his eyes were still glued to whatever he was reading. As his father placed his hands on the child’s head to give his *berachah*, the boy still had not removed his gaze from the magazine.

His father asked him nicely to put the pamphlet down, and he did, but it was soon back in his hands.

With that, the father learned a vital lesson. Am I any better?, he thought. I come to shul, and I supplicate Hashem ברכנו אבינו, *berach us, Father in heaven. And the Ribbono shel Olam wants to give us His blessings.... But our eyes are glued to a publication or a pamphlet.*

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In light of this, it is incumbent upon the *gabbaim* in every shul to send up *ba'alei tefillah* who do not unnecessarily prolong the davening, so that the people won’t be tempted to read extraneous materials during davening. In truth, it’s a basic halachah in *Shulchan Aruch* »

לְדוֹד ה' אֲוִי וְיִשְׁעִי

The Minhag of Reciting *L'Dovid* (3)

Communities Where “L'Dovid” Is Not Recited

In the majority of holy *kehillos* in Klal Yisrael—everyone from Ashkenazim and Sfardim, Chassidim and Litvishe *Yidden*—the custom from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Shemini Atzeres is to recite the *mizmor* “*L'Dovid*” following davening. Still, there are some communities where the minhag is not to say *L'Dovid*.

Stories and anecdotes are told regarding a number of luminaries from the Chassidic movement providing reasons they did not take part in this custom. According to one opinion, the reason some rejected this minhag is because—according to them—its source is impure, originating from the *sefer Chemdas HaYamim*, which is mired in a controversy regarding the identity of its author and whether or not he was identified with the Shabsai Tzvi cult (*we will elaborate on this below*).

Sacrificing It All for Fellow *Yidden*

The following incredible incident involving the greatest tzaddikim of the Chassidic movement is related to the origins of the *minhag* to recite *L'Dovid*.

Rav Shime'le Zelichover was a great tzaddik who served as the mashgiach of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin under Rav Meir Shapiro. Once, he entered the Beis Medrash of the

Sanzer Rebbe, a grandson of the Divrei Chaim, and asked the following question: Why is it that while in the court of Sanz the custom was not to recite *L'Dovid*, in Shineve [an offshoot of Sanz] it is recited?

Not waiting for an answer, Rav Shime'le answered his own question with the following story:

In the times of Rav Eliyahu Ba'al Shem (*a 16th-century gadol who lived in Worms*), a count in a certain region didn't have children. He asked the *Yidden* in his jurisdiction to daven for him, threatening that if he didn't soon have a child, he would expel all the *Yidden* from the area. Rav Eliyahu Ba'al Shem promised the poritz that he would have a child within a year, and that is indeed what happened.

When Rav Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov—a direct transmitter of the Torah of Rav Eliyahu Ba'al Shem—would tell this story, he qualified it, saying, “Don't think this came easy to him.... Initially, he went to the side of *kedushah*, but he could not draw down a *yeshuah*. He then went to the side of *tumah*, but still couldn't effect a *yeshuah*. Until he went to the *Sitra Achara* itself, and from there obtained this child....”

Continued the Ba'al Shem Tov, “Do not think that Rav Eliyahu got away with ‘sixty fiery lashes’ [a term in the Gemara referring to a severe spiritual punishment] for what he did; they wanted to do far worse to him... but since he had sacrificed so much for his fellow

Yidden, they compromised and gave him the following punishment: two *tefillos* that he had instituted—the recitation of *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* and the *tefillah* of *K'gavna*—should be abolished.”

When Rav Shime'le Zelichover finished his story, he continued with the following anecdote, which is also related to the *mizmor* of *L'Dovid*:

Once, the Mezricher Maggid came into the Beis Medrash and asked his talmidim to gather around. He split them into two sets: One group was instructed to recite *K'gavna* on Friday night, while the second group was told to say *L'Dovid* in Elul and Tishrei. The Apta Rav was in the first group, while the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizensk was in the second. »

With this, Rav Shime'le explained why some tzaddikim did say *L'Dovid* while others didn't. Both are rooted in the directives of previous great Tzaddikim.

(Some have pointed out that the “Ba'al Shem” in this story is actually Rav Binyamin Beinisch of Krotoschin (an 18th-century mekubal) who authored *Sefer Shem Tov Kattan*. Indeed, the earliest source for the recitation of *L'Dovid* is Rav Binyamin Beinisch, which makes it likely that the incident happened with him.)

In another source of Sanzer *minhagim*, it is written that the Divrei Chaim explained his *minhag* not to say *L'Dovid* because he doesn't recite any *tefillah* that doesn't »

« (see *Siman 53:11*) that a *chazzan* shouldn't extend the davening without permission from the people, and Chazal have already warned us regarding the severity of *tircha d'tzibura*, inconveniencing the *tzibbur*.

With regard to *krias HaTorah*, it is likewise important for those receiving an *aliyah* to keep in mind their responsibility not to make extensive *Mi SheBeirachs* for as many people as possible—but rather rely on the ultimate *Mi*

SheBeirach authored by the Tosfos Yom Tov, bequeathing so many *berachos* to everyone who guards their tongues from talking during davening.

May all Klal Yisrael merit a wonderful and joyous Yom Tov.

« have a source in *Shulchan Aruch* or *Kisvei Arizal*.

The Shefa Chaim of Sanz-Klausenberg explained the words of his holy ancestor as follows: In our times, we lack the necessary focus and concentration on the words of davening, and most of our davening is superficial. Therefore, while we have no choice but to recite those Tefillos mentioned in *Shulchan Aruch*; anything added afterward is best not said, since we're not worthy of it.

Interestingly, we find a similar explanation in the name of the Vilna Gaon (*Sefer Maaseh Rav*). The Gra did not recite *L'Dovid* following davening because it wasn't instituted by Chazal or the *Poskim*.

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An Impure Source

Rav Pinchas Chaim Taub of Rozla (*an important Hungarian Rebbe and forebear of the Admorim of Kalov*) writes in a letter to his son regarding this

minhag, opening a complex layer of this entire matter.

He writes as follows:

Regarding the recitation of *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* beginning on Rosh Chodesh Elul, you already know that we do not say it, as is the custom in some places. Know, my son, that all the mentions of this in the *sefarim*—the *Sefer Shem Tov* and the *siddur Rav Shabsi*—do not originate with the Arizal at all. »

The Controversy Around the Sefer

Although this essay is not the place to delve into the longstanding controversy surrounding the *Sefer Chemdas HaYamim*, a brief overview of the debate and the story behind the *sefer* is essential for a fuller understanding of the subject. We will therefore offer a glimpse into the controversy and its fascinating history.

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As noted, *Sefer Chemdas HaYamim* was first printed (*anonymously*) in Izmir in the year 1730. It was brought to print by the great Gaon, Rav Yisrael Yaakov Elgazi, a great Sephardic *mekubal* who stood at the helm of Yeshivas HaMekubalim Beis Keil in Yerushalayim. The Sephardic *gedolim* accorded great reverence to the *sefer*, which is filled with words of inspiration and *yiras Shamayim* alongside countless *minhagim*, *tefillos*, and *segulos*—all predicated on the Torah or the Arizal and his holy students.

The first to attack the *sefer* was Reb Yaakov Emdin, “the Yavetz,” who was known to conduct a fierce battle against any and all remnants and vestiges of the infamous Shabsai Tzvi cult. He suspected that the author was none other

than the false prophet, “Nathan of Gaza,” who was one of the greatest supporters of Shabsai Tzvi.

In contrast, the great Sephardic *mekubal* Rav Chaim Palagi mounted a vociferous defense of the *sefer* in his own *Sefer Kol HaChaim*. He expounds on the way it has become so popular and accepted throughout Sephardic Jewry.

In 1902, the great *mekubal* from Grodno and Yerushalayim, Rav Menachem Menchin Halperin, authored the *Sefer Kevod Chachamim* to defend the *sefer* and its author, strongly asserting that it has no connection to Sabbateanism. This opened a whole new front in the controversy, with many pamphlets and essays being authored on both sides of the issue during the mid-1900's.

One of the great opponents of Rav Halperin's *sefer* was the Minchas Elazar

of Muncacz, who wrote a scathing essay, “*Meishiv MiPnei HaKavod*,” printed in his *Chamisha Meoros* series, in which he concludes: Be the author whomever he may be, even if he was a great tzaddik, still, foreign hands mixed into it and placed forbidden matters into it. Even if only rare pieces were inserted into it, who is capable of ascertaining and refining the good from the bad...?

In recent years, several alternative assumptions have been made regarding the identity of the author of *Chemdas HaYamim*. Some have attributed it to Rav Binyamin HaLevi, a student of the Arizal, while several contemporary scholars and researchers assert that the author is none other than Rav Algazi himself, who compiled it from earlier works.

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The Neshamah Has Been Rectified

Interestingly, it is reported in the name of the Ropshitzer Rav that since “a certain tzaddik” descended from the author of *Chemdas HaYamim* and made *tikkunim* (rectifications) for his *neshamah*, it is permitted today to learn from the *sefer*. Some say this tzaddik was Rav Chaim of Krosno, a student of the Ba'al Shem Tov, who was very active in learning the *sefer* and performing *tikkunim* for the author's *neshamah*.



« Rather, all these mentions are really quoting the *Sefer Chemdas HaYamim*, about which we have been warned by our teachers not to pay any heed.

Moreover, for this reason, you will see, my son, that the great tzaddikim—Rav Ephraim Zalman Margalios in his *Sefer Mateh Ephraim*, as well as the Yismach Moshe—write extensively about the *Yehi Ratzon* we say prior to the recitation of *Tehillim*. “Had they known that its source is in this *sefer*, they wouldn’t mention a word about it,” he writes.

Regarding the recitation of *LDovid*, I know with certainty that our great master, the light of the exile, the Chozeh of Lublin, did not say it, and neither did his holy students; the Yehudi HaKadosh, my holy ancestor of Zidichov, and the Rebbe of Ropshitz, also did not say it due to this [aforementioned] reason.

In the year 1927, I vacationed in Karlsbad. There, I encountered the Porisover Rebbe, a descendant of the Yehudi HaKadosh. He related to me that it is a tradition handed down to him that his illustrious ancestor did

not recite *LDovid* because he heard from his Rebbe, the Chozeh of Lublin, that the source for this is in *Chemdas HaYamim*. This brought me great joy. In addition, the Sanzer Rav also did not recite *LDovid*.

Moreover, the tzaddikim who did say it surely didn’t know that the source was in this *sefer*, for had they known, they surely wouldn’t have said it. Since they saw it in the *siddur*, they likely assumed that the *minhag* originated from the Arizal—but this is not so.

What is indeed the source?

However, the contention that the source for *LDovid* is the *Chemdas HaYamim* doesn’t really stand up to scrutiny. The main problem is the timeline: the *sefer* was first printed in the year 1730 in Izmir, but we find the *minhag* mentioned in *sefarim* printed much earlier. The *Sefer Shem Tov Kattan* was printed in 1705 in Salzbach, the *Sefer Zechirah* first appeared in Hamburg in 1709, and the first edition of *Sefer HaMussar* was printed in 1724.

HaGaon Rav Moshe Halberstam of the Badatz Eidah HaCharedis and a descendant

of the Divrei Chaim reconciles the Sanzer *minhag* (see *Divrei Moshe, siman 34*) by explaining that although there are indeed earlier sources, the *minhag* was primarily disseminated by the *Chemdas HaYamim*. For this reason, the Sanzer Rav refrained from it. “This is the tradition I received from my ancestors,” writes Rav Halberstam.

Others, however, point out that when we look deeper, it seems more likely that the *minhag* actually originated from the other sources—because the *Chemdas HaYamim* says it is to be recited as a part of *Selichos*, together with other chapters of *Tehillim*. In contrast, in his *sefer Amtachas Binyamin*, the *Shem Tov Kattan* writes that it should be recited following *Shemoneh Esrei*, as we do.

They also point out that if it were true that the *minhag* originated from the *Chemdas HaYamim*, why don’t we find that the usual opponents of the *sefer* and its author—such as the Minchas Elazar and the Yavetz—would battle against the *minhag*?

Practically, Rav Moshe Halberstam rules, one should follow the *minhag* of his parents and rebbeim. “And Hashem seeks the heart.”

Given 26 Years of Life!

A Breathtaking Account from HaGaon Rav Aharon Schiff, Chief Rabbi of Antwerp

Editor’s note: During his *derashah* at a *Chanukas HaBayis* for the Aleksander Shul in Boro Park, the *rav* spoke about the severity of talking during davening, and he related the following incredible story of a *Yid* who was granted 26 years of life in the merit of his *kabbalah* to be silent during davening. The story was related a few months after this person’s passing.

...As I’m speaking to you about *kedushas Beis HaMedrash* and about davening, I would like to convey to you a personal matter.

When I became the *rav* of the Aleksander Beis Medrash in Antwerp,

it occurred to me that as I was about to become the *rav* in a *Beis Medrash*, it would be appropriate to receive the blessings of the Aleksander Rebbe. I made the journey to Eretz Yisrael to visit the Imrei Menachem of Aleksander, and I asked him, “Rebbe, every *kehillah* has its own path in *avodas Hashem*.... What can I do, in my leadership role, to lead this *kehillah* in the path of the tzaddikim of Aleksander—of the illustrious previous Rebbe’s and of the current Rebbe, *shlit”a*?

The Rebbe related that the “Alter Rebbe” of Aleksander, during his time

in the town of Turtshin, on his first Shabbos there encountered a *Yid* who was talking during davening. The Rebbe grabbed him by the collar and led him out of the shul. And the Rebbe communicated the following request: **The only thing that must happen in our Beis Medrash is silence!** We all know how important it was to the Rebbe that it should be silent in Shul, even between *aliyos*. There should be no talking at all.

I have already related this story, and I will tell it here again:

Recently [in the year 2025], Reb Yosef Sterling of Zurich, Switzerland, left this world. [He was a well-known philanthropist and *ba’al chessed* who was *niftar* at the age of 59]. When the Aleksander Rebbe visited Switzerland in 2011, I joined him and stayed at Reb Yosef’s home.

Cont. on page 9

A Patient Prayer: Inspiration Towards Reciting *Pesukei d'Zimra* Meticulously

Rabbi Yitzchock Elozor Moshkowits, *shlit"a*, The Shotzer Rabbe

Supplications of Sacrifice—*Tefillos* That Bring Forth *Mesirus Nefesh*

Chazal placed into the order of *tefillah* the final five chapters of *Tehillim*, comprising the majority of the *Pesukei d'Zimra* section of davening. The *mefarshim* wonder about this. How do these come to be part of our *tefillah*, and why specifically these chapters?

One explanation offered is that the atmosphere of the world is filled with *kelipos* due to *aveiros* and impurities; these prevent the *tefillos* from ascending heavenward. However, when we recite songs and praises to Hashem, we break the spell of the *kelipos*.

A second explanation is that it is difficult for a person to constantly be in a state of being prepared for *mesirus nefesh*. This doesn't only refer to jumping into the fire *al kiddush Hashem*. Even the act of refraining from stealing or withholding from eating something without a reliable *hechsher* is also a form of *mesirus nefesh*. Moreover, this sense of self-sacrifice can be acquired only through these chapters in *Tehillim*.

Why is this?

The answer is that *Ahavas Hashem* is not a simple matter. We say, "I love You, Hashem," but do we even know Who He is?! We know that there's a Creator of the world Who orchestrates everything in the world. What is even our connection to Him?

However, when we say these five chapters found in *Pesukei d'Zimra*, which are filled with expressions of the mercy and kindness of Hashem, and of the love that Hashem has for His children—the kindness and benevolence He has bestowed and continues to bestow upon us—this infuses us with so much *emunah*.

When one becomes immersed in these *tefillos*, he becomes elevated and ecstatic, he becomes uplifted and joyful, he acquires *Ahavas Hashem*, and he becomes closer to Hashem. **In this way, he lives with a spirit of *mesirus nefesh* the entire day.** Thus says the Ba'al HaTanya in a letter to Rav Aleksander MiShklov.

Every *pasuk* in *Pesukei d'Zimra* is a prophecy. Dovid HaMelech attained the pinnacle of prophecy and authored these praises. He experienced so much pain and suffering in his life, but nevertheless he lived with great joy. He served Hashem with tremendous love—and that is what he infused into these *pesukim*.

The Healing Power of This Prayer

Sadly, the *Pesukei d'Zimra* do not receive the honor they deserve; hurrying through these exalted verses is truly nothing less than a *chillul Hashem*. However, so much depth and meaning lie therein, and if we reflect on what we are saying, it has the power to purify and elevate our thoughts and, indeed, our entire person.

Every *Yid* must study these *pesukim* in depth, no less than he would a *sugya* in Gemara: *What am I saying here? Which matter in emunah are these words telling me? What information necessary for my very life is being taught to me here?*

Rashi in *Meseches Berachos* states that the *Pesukei d'Zimra* must be sung. Near my home in Eretz Yisrael, there's a Yemenite yeshivah, and indeed, the *bachurim* of this yeshivah sing these *pesukim* every day, in the most beautiful, heartfelt melody. It's so moving to hear 150 *bachurim* engaged in this *avodah* with their unique tune...

A Sephardishe *Yid* related to me that he experienced a miracle with the power of this song. He had been very unwell, and he began a campaign to remind people that they must *daven* in a singsong. Hashem soon healed him completely.

A Plea for Patient Prayer

The truth is that we can understand and excuse people who skip through these *pesukim* without properly thinking about it. After all, people are busy and harried.... It is difficult for people today to properly concentrate on the meaning of these words. It's a defense... but we must do better.

Treating *Pesukei d'Zimra* lightly is a terrible thing—everyone understands this. There are shuls where it takes 12 minutes to get through the entire *Pesukei d'Zimra*, and woe to the *chazzan* who takes a second more than that.... In my opinion, it's a terrible crime. Who knows how many *tzaros*, *R"l*, come from this denigration of such an exalted *avodah*—giving a "quota" for how long it must take....

I once asked the *gabbai* of a shul, "Why not 15 minutes... why only twelve?" He told me, "*Nah, that's too much.*"

I think it is incumbent upon the shul *gabbaim* to address this error. Twelve minutes for *Pesukei d'Zimra* is a joke. We can make a campaign for this—just as great things have been accomplished in the areas of Torah learning, *shemiras einayim*, *kedushas hatefillah*, etc. These matters were greatly neglected—until someone came along and created an awakening. People now travel to the Tosfos Yom Tov, and the world of *kedushas hatefillah* has been transformed. There have been breakthroughs in so

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« many areas—except for the *quality* of davening.

Davening Meticulously Pushes Away All the Tzaros

The Stropkover Rebbe said in the name of his father, the Shiniver Rav, that when a person davens slowly and meticulously, he merits השראת השכינה—he will see that there is a Creator of the world.

In the *Sefer Neta Sha'ashuim*, it is written that one who davens slowly is considered “a great tzaddik.” He says that this is true even if it isn’t difficult for him; he enjoys it, and he should know that with this, he avoids much suffering. He writes further that clarity in *emunah* in Hashem comes to a person through *Pesukei d’Zimra*.

Holding Back the Redemption, Ch”v

The Baal HaTanya says (*end of Sefer HaTanya*) that hurrying through davening holds back the coming of Mashiach. This is the primary obstacle to our redemption. Tradition has it

that as the Ba’al HaTanya was saying this, he cried out, “*Oy vey, Oy vey!*”

The truth is that this is very easy to understand—for in davening, we experience the fundamentals of *Yiddishkeit*, eliciting the inner *yiras Shamayim* from a person so he will perform mitzvos in the right way, with heart and soul. But if we mouth the words without heart, we thus hold back the coming of Mashiach.

The elders among us still recall how people used to daven with thought and meditation. I recall being present at the *Selichos* of the Divrei Yoel of Satmar. There were such sobs and tears... even young boys were crying.

It has been a long time since then, and we don’t see such emotion in davening these days. Children don’t see their parents immersed in davening...they don’t say *Pesukei D’Zimra* properly—what will become of us? What will they see? We need to have *rachmanus* on our generations, so that the *mesorah*, the holy *avodas hatefillah*, which the Ba’al Shem Tov, זי”א, came into this world specifically to teach—the greatness of *tefillah*—should not be forgotten. All our tzaddikim have taught

us that in our generation, Torah learning is even greater than in previous generations, but what about our *tefillah*?

Moreover, if this fundamental *avodah* is, *chas v’shalom*, forgotten, what will happen? I don’t know what can be done.... First of all, every person must work on this for himself.... At least the *Kollel yungeleit* should improve in this area — they should ideally organize designated *minyanim* conducted at a calmer pace.

In one of the *shtiblach* in Eretz Yisrael, I once saw a notice posted from the Eidah HaChareidis, saying, “One may not enter this Beis Medrash, because they daven too quickly here!”

We must come together and rebuild our hearts around the matter of *tefillah*, and surely Hashem will help that it will be a good, blessed year.

May Hashem have *rachmanus* on us and take us out of this bitter *galus*. My rebbe, Rav Michael Ber Weissmandl, זי”א, would say: “Ribbono shel Olam—either You send us another Ba’al Shem Tov, or You send us Mashiach....”

Given 26 Years of Life!

Cont. from page 7.

On Sunday morning, I noticed that Reb Yosef—who was a Vinitzer chassid—went into the Rebbe for a *berachah*. I asked him what his connection was to the Aleksander court, and he explained that many years previously, he had been diagnosed with a devastating illness, and the doctors had given up on him. A brother-in-law, who had a connection to Aleksander, mentioned his name to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe replied with the following words, “**Tell him that if he will be silent during davening, I promise that he will recover!**” And that is exactly what happened. Reb Yosef accepted upon himself the *kabbalah* of not speaking during davening, and he lived for another 26 years!

Anyone who knew the Rebbe and saw the emphasis that he placed on this important matter cannot possibly talk during davening. The Gemara says that a person should always daven for his health *before* illness strikes... how many *cholei Yisrael* need a *yeshua*?! What can we do to help them? How much must we do to prevent such things, Hashem *yerachem*, for ourselves? All that is asked is that we restrain ourselves a little.... The Rebbe would often cite the Zohar HaKadosh which says, הא”י מואן, דמשותעי ב”י מדרשא לית ליה חלק באלקי ישראל, *one who speaks in the Beis Medrash has no portion in the G-d of Yisrael*.

There’s a *sefer* called *Sefer Hagan*, which the Magen Avraham cites in several places. He writes an extremely fearsome thing: For every heavenly accusation, there can be a defense—

but for someone who talks in shul, there is no defense at all!

It is worthwhile, as *Yidden* enter a brand-new Beis HaMedrash, to undertake a positive *kabbalah*. So many *Yidden* exerted themselves tremendously to erect this magnificent edifice; the least we can do is exert ourselves in turn not to talk during davening. As we grow used to it, it becomes second nature.

Baruch Hashem, it is known everywhere that in Aleksander, there’s no talking from the beginning of davening till the end. This will surely be a great *refuah* for everyone who needs it, and for ourselves as well. The Rebbe would always say that this *kabbalah* brings many *hashpa’os*.... May there indeed be a great *shefa* of everything good for ourselves and for all of Klal Yisrael.

Rav Chunah Halberstam of Kolaczyc, Hy"d

Martyred Al Kiddush Hashem 18 Tishrei, 1942

Life and Times

The Kolaczycer Rav was born in the summer of 1894 to his father, Rav Menachem Mendel Halberstam of Pristik, a son of Rav Aryeh Leibish of Dukla, who was the son of Rav Dovid of Czarnow, the son of the Divrei Chaim of Sanz. On his mother's side, he was likewise descended from the Sanzer Rav, being the grandson of Rav Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam, the Shiniver Rav, *zecher tzaddikim livrachah*.

"I Was Jealous of Him"

As a child, Rav Chunah was already renowned for his incredible *avodas hatefillah*. Elder chassidim would look on with awe at the way this young boy poured out his heart in prayer. Not only *chassidim* of his ancestor, the Sanzer Rav, but even chassidim of the Rebbe, Rav Hirsch of Rimanov, would express wonder at the *avodah* of the young lad.

His own grandfather, the Shiniever Rav, would often rise from his place to observe the toil of his grandson, despite the grandson's youth. Rav Itzik'l of Pshevorsk (*Rav Moshe Yitzchak Gevirtzman, zt"l*, founder of the Pshevorsk dynasty in Antwerp, 1882-1976) would relate that he remembered the davening of the Kolaczycer Rav. "He would become transformed into another person altogether... I was envious of him," he said.

Rav Ephraim Dovid Halberstam, ABD Jasliska, a brother-in-law of the Kolaczycer Rav, would relate that when the tzaddik would come to the court of the Gorlicer Rav, the Rav would wait until Rav Chunah had finished *Shemoneh Esrei*. This, despite his youth.

A Flame of Fire: The Tefillos of the Kolaczycer Rebbe

Hundreds of *Yidden* would stream to observe the *tefillas* of the Kolaczycer Rebbe—both from other Chassidic courts as well as from other, non-Chassidic communities. In fact, the Brisker Rav attested that the Kolaczycer Rav was "a *Yid* who was a flame of fire."

During the First World War, the Kolaczycer Rav fled to Kashau, Hungary. There, he encountered his *rebbe*, HaGaon Rav Shmuel Engel of Radomysl, and davened with him that Rosh Hashanah. Rav Engel honored him with davening the *Mussafim* on both days, and remarked to his grandchild, "Look, look at him... it's a *segulah* for *yiras Shamayim*."

A Child's Prayer, A Zeide's Faith

Beginning in his early youth, Rav Chunah basked in the glow of his illustrious grandfather, the Shiniver Rav, who, as noted, appreciated the power of his prayers.

Once, when the Shiniver Rav was unwell, he opened a siddur and showed his young grandson the *Yehi Ratzon* that some people recite during *prayer* to supplicate Hashem for the recovery of a loved one. He asked him to daven for him during *Shemoneh Esrei* and invoke his name for a *refuah sheleimah*.

One Erev Sukkos, the Shiniever Rav asked his young grandson to daven that it shouldn't rain over Sukkos so that *Yidden* should be able to calmly eat in the *sukkah*. Rav Itzik'l of Pshevorsk related that although it usually rained on Sukkos

in Poland, and it was extremely rare for it not to rain for seven consecutive days, that year, it didn't rain during the entire Yom Tov.

Learning Before Davening

The Kolaczycer Rav explained the *pasuk* אודך בישר לבב בלמודי מושפטי צדקך, *I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments (Tehillim 119:7)* as referring to the great emphasis that the tzaddikim placed on learning before davening (*i.e., one should approach praising Hashem with an upright heart through first learning His righteous judgments*).

A Humble Reckoning

The Rebbe once explained why he regularly davened late in the day.

It happened one Chol HaMoed Sukkos, and he was standing in conversation with a group of young men, speaking in matters of Torah and *chassidus*, when suddenly he said, "How can I excuse davening late on Chol HaMoed? The weekdays are one thing, since we're required to have physical cleanliness so we are permitted to put on *tefillin*. On Shabbos, as well, my *zeide*, the Divrei Chaim, taught that we must have a clean body just as when we place *tefillin*. However, on Chol HaMoed—when it is neither Shabbos nor do we don *tefillin*—what will we answer on the day of Judgment why we davened late? Let us daven at once!

And he immediately began davening.

The Power of Public Prayer

The Kolaczycer Rav relied greatly on the power of *תפילת רבים* to effect *yeshuos*.

Once, a very difficult case came before him of a person in need of a great *yeshuah*. The Rebbe walked into his Beis Medrash and gathered ten people. He relayed the name of the person needing salvation and said, "When we mention the name of a person to ten *Yidden*, it is as

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« though we have mentioned it to a great tzaddik.”

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Prayers of the Righteous—Then and Now

Once, a *chassid* showed Rav Chunah an incredible and fearsome teaching in the *Degel Machane Ephraim* (*Haftarah of Parashas Ki Seitzei*) where he writes that tzaddikim of yore secretly did not want their *tefillas* and requests to be granted, because they enjoyed the process of prayer more than they wanted the *yeshuah*—so much did they enjoy the opportunity of convening with Hashem.

When he saw this, the Rebbe became pale for a moment, became lost in thought, and then proclaimed, “This may have been true of the tzaddikim in previous generations. But in our times, the tzaddikim have changed this, and they surely want *yeshuos* to be granted immediately for all Klal Yisrael.

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One Proper Prayer

The Kołaczycer Rav once said: Right after he marries, a *yungerman* is immediately looking for “*tachlis*”.... But he doesn’t know that the ultimate *tachlis* is one good *tefillah*. This is the entire *tachlis*! Sadly, it is true that a person can live his entire life without attaining this ultimate purpose....

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Davening for Every Detail

In Rzeszów (*Reisha*)—where the Kołaczycer Rav later resided—lived a *Yid* by the name of Reb Moshe Goldklang. He was a wealthy *Yid* and had a beautiful apartment for which he paid monthly rent.

But the day came when his fortunes reversed, and he lost his source of livelihood, being left without a penny to his name. Since a beautiful apartment in the hamlet of Rzeszów was a rare thing, he was offered generous compensation to vacate it.

The Rebbe happened not to have been in town that day, and so Reb Moshe made the decision himself to take the people up on their offer. He took the money he had

been given and sank it into a new business venture, moving to a small, rundown home. When the Kołaczycer Rav returned to town—although it was not his *derech* to give *eitzos* to people unasked—he asked Reb Moshe, “Why did you make such a move without asking me? I would have advised you against it, for the following reason:

“When a person loses his money, *R”i*,” the Rebbe explained, “he must not sell his home or any of his belongings. Why? Because if it is *bashert* for a person not to have *parnassah*, it will not help to sell his home and seek to alleviate his suffering this way—because, *min haShamayim*, it has been ordained for him to struggle right now. After the time of his struggle is up, he will get back on his feet, regardless of anything he does.

“But when a person sells his home,” said the Rebbe, “this pushes away the *yeshuah*—because it is a fundamental rule that every detail requires an individual *tefillah*. Until now, you needed to daven for *parnassah*, and now you also need to daven for a home, and even after you will have *parnassah*, you will still need to daven for a home. You should know that by vacating your home, you have distanced the *yeshuah*....”

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Erev Yom Kippur: Gathering Prayers

Rav Yankele Lazer of Pshevorsk (1907–1998) would repeat in the name of the Rebbe that on Erev Yom Kippur, people tend to daven with great concentration—something they tend not to do throughout the year.

This is not right, however, because our davening on Erev Yom Kippur depends on the caliber and the quality of our *tefillas* throughout the year. On that day, each word that a *Yid* davened with *kavannah*, and each section of *tefillah* that a *Yid* invested his heart into—all come together and further inspire this person to have *kavannah* during these *tefillas* once again.

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A Tefillah for Mesirus Nefesh

Once, in the year 1904, a *Yid* named Reb Shmuel Gartenhaus, came to

Lizensk to visit the *tziyun* of the Rebbe Rav Elimelech. Entering the *Ohel*, he noticed a person prostrated on the *tziyun*, with no one else in sight. He was soon stunned to discover that it was none other than his Rebbe, the Kołaczycer Rav, who was davening with deep cries and heaving sobs.

Curious as to what the young man, who was around thirty years old at the time, was supplicating Hashem with such intensity for, he bent his ear closer and heard the Rebbe pleading with his Creator: The Ribbono shel Olam should help me that I will merit to give up my life *al kiddush Hashem*.” He uttered these fearsome words several times.

This was in the heat of World War I, and, unfortunately, his pleas were granted only a few years later, during the Holocaust, as we will relate below.

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Martyred With Nishmas on His Lips

A *Yid* who was with the Rebbe in his final days while in Jasło, immediately before he was martyred by the Nazis, related his superhuman *avodah*—especially his fiery *tefillas*—as he prepared himself to ascend *al kiddush Hashem*.

On that last Shabbos, the Rebbe rose to daven *kabbalas Shabbos* with tremendous joy—as though nothing alarming was transpiring around him—with his trademark fire and fervor. The same repeated itself during the morning and afternoon *tefillas* of Shabbos.

According to testimony from survivors, the Rebbe was shot in the forests outside Wójtowa, near Jasło, on the second day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, 18 Tishrei, 1942. *Hashem yikom damo*.

As the Rebbe was being led to the slaughter, he sang the words of Nishmas—as well as other *pesukim* of praise—in a loud voice, illustrating his true acceptance of his fate with love, which left an everlasting impression on all those around him.

May Hashem avenge the spilled blood of His faithful servants.

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Wonderful Insights and Historical Anecdotes Concerning Avodas HaTefillah and Kedushas Beis HaKnesses

From a derashah given by

**HaGaon Rav
Shraga Feish
Poplionosh**



An Ostrich Egg

An Egg at the Aron Kodesh?!

The Shach (*Parashas Tazria*) relates that in Aleppo, Syria, there was a custom to empty the contents of an ostrich egg and hang the shell from a string near the Aron Kodesh. Interestingly, a shul in Yerushalayim that was founded by Syrian immigrants still maintains this *minhag*.

The Shach explains the reasoning behind this custom: In order for an ostrich to fertilize her eggs, she must not only sit upon them to warm them, she must also gaze at the egg constantly. If she stops looking at her eggs, no offspring will come forth from it. Furthermore, he says, ostriches have been known to ferociously attack humans who interrupted their focus on their eggs.

And this is the message of the Syrian custom: **When you come into shul, know that you're here to remain focused on your tefillah.**

Sometimes, a Yid comes to shul, and his mind is completely scattered. We thus remind him of the ostrich and her egg: If you want something to come out of your tefillah, you must remain focused and concentrated upon it.

Keeping Silent

Fascinatingly, in Yemen, there was also the same *minhag* to hang an ostrich egg in shul—but for a completely different reason. This reason requires a small introduction:

The Gemara (*Bava Basra*) tells us that the day Esav sold the בכורה to Yaakov for lentils was the day Avraham Avinu left This World. Yaakov Avinu was preparing the lentils for his father, Yitzchak, to console him. Why specifically lentils? The Gemara and Rashi explain that the round lentils illustrate that life is a revolving wheel; there are hardships and struggles, and there will be good times once again.

The Magen Avraham relates that the *minhag* in Austria was that on a day

that *Tachanun* is not recited—which is a pseudo-Yom Tov—one should not eat lentils or other round foods, since they allude to *aveilus* and sadness. The Gemara gives another reason: Just as a lentil has no mouth, so too, an *aveil* sits sadly and silently.



« Writes Rav Yichya Din Tzelach—one of the luminaries of Yemenite Jewry—in his *Sefer Pela'os HaTzaddik*, that this is why an egg is hung in the shul; because just as an egg has no mouth, so too must we be silent in shul, not speaking a word.

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Looking into the Siddur

The *Sefer Mekor Chaim*, authored by the Chavos Ya'ir (the *sefer* was first published in the 1960's, many years after the author lived) writes a third reason for this custom, and this is to teach us that just as an ostrich looks constantly at the egg, so too must we not take our gaze out of the *siddur*.

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A Bucket Made of Eggshells

The shell of the ostrich egg is very thick and hard, and people used to decorate these shells and place them in their homes. This brought about an interesting halachic question: May an ostrich egg, which has been made into a *netilas yadayim* bucket, be used when washing one's hands?

Writes the *sefer Orach Ne'eman* (authored by Rav Menachem Natan Nota Auerbach of Yerushalayim), one should actually seek out such a utensil for *netilas yadayim*. Since the custom of the *Yidden* of Syria



and Yemen was to hang an egg in shul to remind us to maintain focus, we must do a similar thing with *netilas yadayim*—for the halachah is that one must keep his mind on the *seudah* from the time that he washes, and surely not interrupt with excessive preparations, etc.

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“Dreams of Inquiry” in History

The Takanah of the Tosfos Yom Tov

It is well known that the Tosfos Yom Tov turned over the world regarding the matter of talking in shul, especially during davening, instituting the famed *Mi SheBeirach* for all those who refrained from talking.

Rav Yaivi of Ostroh was likewise meticulous in this matter, and he writes about the events of Tach v'Tat, in which many thousands of Jews were killed, and how the Tosfos Yom Tov subsequently instituted the *Mi SheBeirach*.

Many horrific stories took place during that time; we cite one here. There was a *shtetl* where they heard that the Cossacks were approaching. Men, women, and children gathered, terrified, in the town's shul. They fasted, blew shofar, and cried out to Hashem. The murderers came into town and lit the entire wooden structure ablaze—sending the pure *neshamos* heavenward in a fiery flame.

Hearing this, the Tosfos Yom Tov was perturbed. Here are *Yidden* crying out to Hashem in the *Beis Medrash*. How can it happen that they should be so brutally murdered amid their heartfelt *tefillos*? He conducted a *hilon*, a dream inquiry, to ask why these cruel *gezeiros* were taking place.

He was told that it was due to the talking during davening, which weakens the holiness of the shuls. Following this, the Tosfos Yom Tov instituted the *Mi SheBeirach*.

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How The שאלת חלום Works

The concept of a dream inquiry isn't simply going to sleep and having your answers revealed in a dream. The way it works is that a person writes his inquiry on a paper, and when he wakes up in the morning, he finds the answer written on the paper. The answers don't come in a dream, but rather *while* the person dreams.

A Rishon by the name of Rav Yaakov of Marvège wrote שאלות ותשובות מן השמים, chronicling close to 100 queries that he sent up to *Shamayim*. Most of them were related to disagreements between the *Poskim*, and Rav Yaakov was seeking the correct answer. He writes that one of his questions was, “When will Mashiach come?” However, “I did not find the answer written before me,” he writes.

It is interesting to note that in most cases, we do not hold like the rulings found in the *sefer*—even though they were revealed directly to Rav Yaakov from *Shamayim*. Perhaps that is in keeping with the principle of תורה לא בשמים היא,



Torah isn't found in the heavens, but this is a question for another day.

The last documented time such a question was posed to the heavens was around the years 1860-1870, when there was an epidemic. The answer came that the cause of the epidemic was that Yidden played music in Yerushalayim. From then on, the *minhag* became that music was not played at weddings in Yerushalayim.

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Selling a Portion in the World to Come

In *Meishiv Davar*, the Netziv relates the story of a very wealthy individual who came to Tzefas and found a man who seemed to be Godly, wrapped in a *tallis* and *tefillin*, immersed in davening. The visitor walked over to this Yid and said, "I want to ask you for a favor. You're obviously a holy man... would you please sell me half of your portion in *Olam Haba*?"

The great tzaddik agreed.

The millionaire went back to his lodgings and retrieved a large sum of money; with this, he purchased half of the tzaddik's portion in the World to Come. He felt very satisfied with himself, since he was now settled in This World and in the Next World.

When he came to Yerushalayim, he encountered a great *mekubal* and asked him to please inquire through a שאלת חכם about just how great his place in *Olam Haba* will be. Will I be seated near the greatest tzaddikim? he wondered. Where exactly will my place be?

The answer he received was astounding and deeply disappointing: While the

transaction remains in force, you are an absolute fool for making this deal, since the "great tzaddik" was nothing more than a charlatan and an impostor.

No reasoning with the seller was to any avail. "If you believed that my *Olam Haba* was worth money, that is *your* problem. I am not giving you a penny in return."

He asked the Netziv what to do about this, and he answered: When you went to this person to request the sale of half his *Olam Haba*, and he agreed, you should have realized immediately that any "tzaddik" who is willing to part with his *Olam Haba* is no tzaddik at all....

From here, we see that a שאלת חלום is real and it works.

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The שאלת חלום in Our Time

Rav Chaim Palagi writes that there are many Yidden who would love to have their burning questions answered. If it is true that the שאלת חלום works, why don't people make more use of it? Why must people constantly go to others who perform *segulos* and the like, when they can go straight to the source?

The simple answer is that not every question is answered from Above. But Rav Chaim answers that it is permitted to ask a question only if it pertains to an entire community. Someone who uses this mechanism for his own personal inquiries does a terrible thing, he writes, and

in *Shamayim* they will answer only questions that regard an entire group of people—just as it worked with the אורים ותומים.

Indeed, because of what he learned through the שאלת חלום, the Tosfos Yom

Tov turned over the world regarding *kedushas hatefillah*.

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Conclusion

All the Blessings Written in the Torah

Returning to what we have been discussing above, it is important to know that it is proper to daven slowly and meticulously, especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Moreover, a long davening isn't meant so people can arrive late and catch up, but rather so that we should be able to daven with peace of mind, focus, and concentration—to come to shul on time and stand in a settled place. The more we work on our *tefillah*, the more it permeates our bones.

As we conclude the ימי הרחמים והרחוק, may the Ribbono shel Olam help that all the *tefillos* we daven should be accepted On High in a manner described by the Tosfos Yom Tov in the *Mi Shebeirach*: **May all the blessings written in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu and in all of the Sifrei Neviim and Kesuvim come upon you.**

This is an incredible *berachah*! The phrase *all the berachos* means every blessing contained in the Torah—according to every understanding of every commentary on Torah—everything will be showered upon those who keep what is said in the *Mi Shebeirach*!

It is an incredible *zechus* for those who have accepted upon themselves not to talk during davening. The earlier in life we become accustomed to being silent during davening, the easier it is.

Tzaddikim explained the *pasuk* ה' ילחם לכם, Hashem will wage our battles, ואתם תהרשון, if we will be silent during davening!

May the Ribbono shel Olam help that all our *tefillos* should be accepted *l'rachamim ul'ratzon* and we should merit all these *berachos*.

Reward for a Good Deed

To the respected *askanim* of Keren Tosfos Yom Tov who inspire and encourage Klal Yisroel to uphold the sanctity of *tefillah*. Your efforts bring much *berachah* to everyone.

My father is the Rebbe of Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok in Yerushalayim. The Rebbe gave me permission to share the following remarkable story.

My sister, who had a son in the *parashah* of *shidduchim* for a while, sought a *berachah* from our father, the Rebbe. In response, the Rebbe told her to encourage the women to stop talking during davening in the *ezras nashim* at shul. She unsure that she would be able to do as the Rebbe asked. She did not want to interrupt her davening to rebuke others. She also felt very intimidated and feared being embarrassed by the other women in shul. The Rebbe directed her to create a sign that stated: As per the request

of the Rebbe, please do not talk during davening. And, the Rebbe instructed her to show the sign to anyone who would speak during davening.

My sister recruited a group of women to serve as a committee that would help the effort. Most of the women were embarrassed to show others the sign but, they committed to do so if my sister started the effort.

My sister realized that she had to be the role model for the others. Although it was incredibly challenging, she prepared a note as instructed. She took it to shul and walked around the two sections of the *ezras nashim* displaying it. She smiled at everyone while she did so, hoping that the gentle rebuke would be accepted by all. Her sign has the desired impact. The women in shul started being very careful not to talk during davening.

At some point during davening, a young boy entered the *shul* and said something to his mother. His grandmother and siblings were nearby and a conversation ensued. Perhaps it would be acceptable for the mother to respond curtly to her son, but a full-fledged discussion in middle of davening was unwarranted.

Therefore, my sister approached the group and displayed her sign.

The grandmother was infuriated. She began to shout loudly. "You're blowing things out of proportion! I am sure that the Rebbe never said such a thing! When a child comes to talk to his mother, the mother is allowed to respond."

My sister was mortified. Everyone had turned to listen to the older woman's tirade. But my sister did not respond. She bit her lip as she continued with her *kabbalah*, while davening that her son merit to find his *zivug*.

As my sister walked away, the woman sent others to follow her and to tell her to stop what she was doing. Even after davening concluded, the woman continued to bother her. But my sister did not lose her composure. She remained calm and did what was right.

When one does what is proper, even when it is difficult, he is rewarded in kind. On the following Sunday, a *shidduch* was suggested. On Thursday night, they drank Lechaim!

Hashem clearly demonstrated that one who helps maintain the sanctity of a *shul* should not fear anyone who mocks him. Do what is right and Hashem will repay you.

It's well worth it!

*

Forty Days Later...

To the esteemed Kevodo publication, I'd like to share my personal story.

During the past few months, I've been busy searching for an apartment for my family of four children. When Keren Tosfos Yom Tov launched the *kabbalah* campaign in the summer, I decided to join. I accepted a *kabbalah* believing that if so many people were involved in this great effort, I wanted to partake as well.

I accepted a *kabbalah* on 6th day of Tammuz. I agreed not to talk during davening for 40 days. I did not have in mind that it should be a *zchus* for anything. However, exactly forty days later, I found a beautiful apartment in the ideal neighborhood. I am confident that »

Q&A:

יעלה ויבוא during Maariv

Question:

If one forgets יעלה ויבוא on Chol HaMoed during Maariv, must he repeat *Shemoneh Esrei*?

Answer:

Chol HaMoed is different from Rosh Chodesh in this regard; if one forgets יעלה ויבוא at Maariv, he must daven Maariv again.

If one realized his omission prior to saying the second יהיו לרצון, he may return to רצה—he need not return to the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei*.

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED HARAV NACHUM TZVI MEIR ROSENFELD, SHLIT" A, AUTHOR OF HALICHOS HACHAYIM
SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION ABOUT TEFILLAH AND KRIAS HATORAH. CALL THE KEREN TOSFOS YOM TOV HOTLINE AND PRESS 2

Readers Write (cont.)

« this happened in the *zechus* of my *kabbalah* even though it wasn't the motivation behind my *kabbalah*.

Thank you for the encouragement and inspiration.

May you experience much continued success.

★

A Consideration for Others

Firstly, thank you for your beautiful pamphlets. Klal Yisroel as a whole has

greatly improved in the area of not talking during *davening* and the *zechus* is yours.

I'd like to mention an additional topic which perhaps can be published in your publication.

At times, immediately after a *minyan* concludes *tefillas ma'ariv*, people begin conversing. However, there may be a few people who are still in the midst of davening Shemonah Esrei, as it takes them a minute or two longer than the others. Their concentration is disturbed by those who are already schmoozing in shul.

Perhaps it is *halachically* allowed, but it would surely be beneficial to remind

people not to disturb those who are still *davening*.

Thank you.

★

Day #41

I committed not to speak during davening for forty days as a *zechus* to find my *zivug*. Today is the forty-first day and I am happy to share that I got engaged today!

As part of my *kabbalah*, I undertook to publicize my story and that I would keep the *kabbalah* for another forty days after I get engaged.

Thank you for all of your invaluable work.

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מי שבדרך שחיבר מנח בעל תוס' יו"ט זי"ע"א

מי שבדרך אבותינו אברהם ויצחק ויעקב משה ואהרן דוד ושלמה, הוא יברך השומר פיו ולשונו מלהפסיק בשום דיובור. מן ברוך שאמר עד גמר התפלה ובשעת קריאת ספר תורה שבציבור: אפילו בדרברי תורה ואף דיובור כל שכן בשחיתת חולין וסיפורי שמועות. וחולו עליו כל הברכות הקטובות בתורת משה רבינו עליו השלום ובכל ספרי הנבואות: יראה וזע כשר היום וקצמם. ויזהר לשני שולחנות שבשני עולמים: שהם העולם הזה שעליו נאמר והנה טוב. והעולם הבא שהוא יום שכלו ארוך גם טוב: ונאמר אמן:

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