

The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of
Mendy Klein
 ר' מנחם משה ז"ל
 בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא
 נפטר ל"ג בעומר
 י"ח אייר תשע"ח
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

Rav Yakov Meir Shechter Unsure of the author

There are some tzaddikim who, although may be renowned, are more hidden than revealed. R' Yakov Meir Shechter was one such tzaddik, whose holy presence graced the city of Yerushalayim for many decades.

Deeply concerned about the deterioration of Torah and purity as the generations progressed, R' Shechter put much effort into bringing Jews closer to the Torah through his writings and lectures.

He wrote many sefarim and booklets to strengthen fear of Heaven. He was a Torah genius and a modest tzaddik who concealed his holy ways.

R' Shechter was born in 1886 in Romania to his father R' Yisrael. His grandfather, R' Yehuda Leib, had been a prominent Rav in Kiev, but fled to Romania due to the frequent pogroms. He stemmed from a long line of Rabbanim. His namesake, R' Yakov Meir of Brisk, was the author of a renowned sefer, "Mekor Chaim" on Shulchan Aruch.

During R' Shechter's youth, Romania changed hands frequently between governments, and therefore no yeshivot were firmly established. He was taught by his relatives, as well as being self-taught, through his own extraordinary efforts and with his remarkable capabilities.

In his youth he mastered the commentary of HaGaon HaMalbim, so much so that he considered himself a student of the Gaon HaMalbim. He would frequent the court of the Bohusher Rebbe, who gave him his warm blessing prior to R' Shechter's ascent to Eretz Yisrael.

At age 17 he filled a notebook, charting his daily behaviors to strengthen his worship of Hashem. He would copy over portions from rare mussar seforim into his notebook, so that he could review them again and again, integrating the lessons into his very being.

R' Shechter arrived in Eretz Yisrael at age 19. He learned in the Yeshiva Ohel Moshe, founded by the great R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt"l. There he learned under R' Yakov Orenstein, a prime disciple of the Maharil Diskin, and under the great R' Zerach Braverman.

R' Shechter constantly sought to attach himself to the greatest Ge'onim and tzaddikim in Yerushalayim. Following his marriage, R' Shechter taught both limudei kodesh and mathematics in Yeshiva Doresh Tzion. This was the beginning of his fruitful association with the Sephardic community.

The financial situation in Eretz Yisrael was terribly strained, especially following the wars. There was no money for food, and there were no jobs to be had. Left with little choice, R' Shechter applied for a job as a bookkeeper in Yaffo, which offered an excellent salary.

The directors of the company were quite surprised to see a job candidate that looked more like a Yerushalmi tzaddik than a bookkeeper. With his long beard and peyot and rabbinical looking attire, R' Shechter was hardly the prototype for a professional bookkeeper.

Hesitantly they began interviewing him and were astounded with his mathematical brilliance and impressed with his holy demeanor. They were ready to offer R' Shechter the position, yet he was first required to undergo a physical examination.

The examining doctor saw before him a thin man, and declared that he was of weak constitution and unfit for the position, as he would not live for many more years. R' Shechter did not get the job, but lived to the ripe old

of 94 – outliving, by far, the doctor who gave the prognosis.

He had to travel by caravan to Syria in order to avoid the draft during WWI. On Friday, R' Shechter asked the leader of the group if they could stop for Shabbat. The leader would not agree. R' Shechter's great love of Shabbat prompted him to offer all of his money and possessions to the leader in exchange for stopping the caravan until after Shabbat.

At first the leader agreed, but then he regretted it. Nevertheless, R' Shechter stated he would not travel and prepared to camp out alone in the dangerous, barren desert. The caravan began traveling, when suddenly a wheel on the wagon broke. The leader sent his son to the nearest village to fetch a replacement wheel. He went and returned empty-handed as there was no wheel to be had in the village.

The leader sent his son again, telling him to make the rounds among the villages and not to return without a wheel. He did not return until Shabbat afternoon, during which time the group was forced to camp out. "For some reason" by the time the wheel was fixed it was already after Shabbat. Indeed, they had rested during the entire Shabbat. This wondrous incident, wrought in the merit of R' Shechter's self-sacrifice and love for Shabbat, was spoken of with awe for many years thereafter.

The Torah giants of Syria recognized R' Shechter's greatness in Torah and piety, and accorded him deep respect. They rejoiced that they merited having such an elevated soul dwelling amongst them. R' Shechter taught and spread much Torah during his stay in Syria.

On his return to Eretz Yisrael from Syria, R' Shechter did not want to derive his income from learning Torah. Instead, he chose to take a position as a teacher in Yeshiva Porat Yosef. In every lesson, R' Shechter would instill in his students deep-seated principles of faith in Hashem and trust in Divine Providence.

Whenever he taught his students, he influenced them to, in turn, impart Torah to others and influence others to come closer to a Torah way of life. A genius in mathematics and other sciences, R' Shechter taught mathematics in Porat Yosef. The Rosh Yeshiva, R' Ezra Attiah, once said that the fear of Heaven that the students learn from R' Shechter during a mathematics lesson is greater than the fear of Heaven they absorb during a Gemara lesson.

It was his daily custom to arise at midnight to recite Tikkun Chatzot. He would then sleep for a brief time, rising with the dawn and then immersing in the mikveh. He never slept during the day, as he was constantly occupied with learning, writing his Torah insights, and teaching his students. His daily schedule was full and remained constant throughout his long life. He zealously guarded every minute, lest even a moment go to waste.

The passing of his wife in 1958 at a relatively young age did not affect his strict adherence to learning Torah and davening. Utterly modest, R' Shechter never spoke about himself. He lived and breathed with the maxim, "I have set Hashem before me at all times." His trust in Hashem was as firm as a rock.

He struggled financially throughout his life, yet he detested money, distributing sums beyond his means to tzedakah. During the 1948 War, the residents of the Battei Nattan neighborhood left their homes as it was dangerously bordering the front line of fighting. Additionally, the homes were constructed of highly flammable wood, posing a great danger in the face of fiery explosions.

R' Shechter, however, would not leave his place, where he had a set schedule for learning Torah and davening. One night, a bomb exploded in Battei Nattan, directly hitting a gas tank. Within moments, a large fire was raging right outside R' Shechter's house. He began praying from deep within his pure heart to save him from the dangerous fire. Before he finished his prayers, another bomb fell, causing a

It Once Happened..

water tank on the roof to explode. The sudden gush of water extinguished the flames, saving R' Shechter's life, as well as the homes of Battei Nattan from destruction.

He would travel to settlements all over Eretz Yisrael to give lectures in an effort to bring Jews closer to the Torah. He once arrived at a place, where it had been announced that a speaker would lecture in the main shul. Only one man showed up! The communal figures wanted to cancel the lecture.

R' Shechter disagreed saying, "One Jew is also very important." He spoke to the man, convincing him that he should establish regular Torah shiurim in the community. The man instituted daily shiurim, which, until today, are strengthening that community's commitment to Torah.

All his life he was accustomed to eat sparingly, minimizing the pleasures of this world. R' Shechter would go out on Friday to buy four challot. Actually, one challah sufficed for the entire Shabbat. The rest he saved to eat during the week.

During the 1967 Six Day War, R' Shechter taught in Yeshiva Porat Yosef. The whizzing sound of bombs and shooting could be clearly heard in the yeshiva. R' Yehuda Tzadkiah, Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, was afraid to walk to his home. When he saw R' Shechter preparing to leave the premises, R' Yehudah asked whether or not he was afraid. R' Shechter replied, "I am only afraid of Hashem, not of bombs." R' Yehuda then said, "In that case, I can rely on you. Let us go together."

R' Shechter was bound heart and soul to the great Sephardic sage, R' Yakov Mutzafi. On every Yom Tov, R' Shechter would visit R' Mutzafi, after which the visit was returned. R' Mutzafi's love for R' Shechter was mutual. He spoke of him with awe and respect, and cried bitterly when he eulogized R' Shechter.

He always conducted himself with extreme modesty, forever cognizant of Hashem's watchful Eye. He constantly encouraged and inspired Sephardim to remain loyal to the traditions of their holy ancestors and not to be swayed by the secular winds that threatened to alienate them from the Torah.

In his later years, when he suffered terrible pains during his final illness, his demeanor remained calm as always. Even then he refused help from others, wanting only to rely on Hashem's help. Even when in his 90's, he would rather walk very slowly than accept a ride from anyone.

An aura of fear of Heaven was plainly evident on his features. He was easily recognizable as a lofty soul. His every act was done for the sake of Heaven. He always insisted on the absolute truth, preferring to learn the simple meaning of the halachot.

R' Shechter was accustomed to saying a lot of Tehillim. He composed a special prayer for his students, beseeching Hashem to be saved from negative influences and from the torments of the era preceding Moshiach. Whenever someone asked of his welfare, R' Shechter invariably replied that he was awaiting the final redemption.

Reprinted from an email of The Weekly Volt.

Editor's Note: R' Yakov Meir ben R' Yisrael Shechter zt"l's 40th Yahrzeit was last Thursday, 13th Iyar – May 7.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times – Behar - Bechukotai

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:54	8:11	8:47
Tel Aviv	7:09	8:13	
Haifa	7:02	8:14	
Be'er Sheva	7:10	8:12	

Slice of Life

Torah Compilations With Yossi Parshat Behar - Bechukotai

Miraculous Shabbat Stew By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Although Rabbi Shlomo Goldman of Zivhil, known as "Reb Shlomke," was acknowledged by all as a genuine Chasidic Rebbe, he still managed to conceal the extent of his greatness. Everyone knew he was learned, and inspired; what they did not realize was what a lofty spiritual level Reb Shlomke was on until the following story happened:

In Zivhil was a drunkard whom we shall call Andrei. He was basically harmless, being content with a bottle or two of vodka. Although Andrei was not Jewish, he liked to frequent the Jewish section of town, because he knew from experience that he wouldn't get beaten up there, as he would in other parts of town, and he was also aware that the Jews were compassionate people, who would give him food when he went begging.

One Saturday morning, after a big drinking binge the previous night, Andrei felt especially hungry. He knocked on several doors, but got no answer, as it was Shabbat and the residents were in shul. The next house he went to also yielded no response, but he noticed the door was not locked properly. The homeowners, in their rush to get to shul had left the door unlocked.

Andrei opened the door, and was greeted by a set table with beautiful golden braided loaves of challah, a decanter filled with red wine, and other delicacies. There was a heavenly aroma coming from the stove; the smell of the challah and kugel was making his mouth water.

Andrei didn't know where to start. The wine attracted him the most, but he thought it would be best to get some food in his empty stomach first. He opened up the pot of cholent and scooped out a big portion for himself, which he shoved down his throat like a man who had never seen food before. A huge piece of kugel followed the cholent.

At this point, he heard people outside, walking home from shul, and he thought it would be best to leave the house right away, before he would be caught red-handed. He was still chewing his food, as he headed for the door, but was stopped in his tracks by the golden challah on the table; it looked so good and he was still so hungry. He ripped out a huge chunk of challah, took a big bite from it and reached for the doorknob.

Andre had so much food in his mouth that he couldn't chew properly. A piece of challah went down the wrong pipe and he couldn't breathe. Andrei gasped for air and his face turned colors, as he began to choke on the challah, and moments later he fell down, dead, in front of the door.

A few minutes later, the couple who lived in this house arrived home. They tried opening the door but there was something preventing the door from opening more than a crack. The husband pushed with all his might and got the door opened. They walked into the house and looked to see what was blocking the door. They were in a state of shock when they saw, Andrei, the town drunkard, lying on the floor of their house.

The husband stated shaking him and yelling at him to get out of his house, but soon realized that Andrei was completely lifeless. He saw the big chunk of challah next to Andrei and surmised what had transpired. They began to panic. Just recently there had been pogroms in the area. If people found out that Andrei was found dead in a Jew's house they will accuse the Jews of killing him. Even though they couldn't care less about Andrei, they would use any opportunity to attack the Jews. The wife told the husband to go run to the Rebbe, Reb Shlomke, and ask for his advice.

The homeowner rushed over to the Rebbe's house and told him what happened. The Rebbe concurred with him that the townspeople might use this as an excuse to make another pogrom. Reb Shlomke took a spoonful of his cholent and told him to take it and put it into the dead drunkard's mouth. Thoughts started going through the man's mind - how could he feed a dead man? - but he did not ask any questions. He was a simple Jew who had complete trust in whatever the Rebbe told him.

He walked home briskly, being careful not to drop the cholent. He tried to put the cholent in Andrei's mouth, but his mouth was sealed shut. So the man said in a panic "Reb Shlomke said I should feed you the cholent".

At the mention of the Rebbe's name, the lifeless drunkard opened his mouth, and the man quickly placed the Rebbe's cholent in as far as he could. He almost fainted from fright due to what he saw next. Andrei got up from the floor and looking straight ahead, walked out the door.

The man followed Andrei, curious to see what would happen. Andrei walked across town, in a zombie-like manner, looking straight ahead. After several minutes, Andrei arrived at his own residence. As soon as he stepped inside, he fell down to the floor, lifeless as before.

The man ran back to his house to tell his wife over what happened. They had just witnessed an open miracle. They had seen a dead man get up and walk across town to his house. They now realized that Reb Shlomke was a lot more than he made himself out to be.

The story spread quickly and everyone now knew that their Rebbe was a very holy man, who had tried to conceal his greatness. It is said that this event is what prompted Reb Shlomke to start thinking about moving to another place, where people wouldn't know him.

Eventually he did move to Jerusalem, where he managed to conceal his identity until one day someone from Zivhil bumped into him in shul and revealed to everyone who he was. After that throngs of people flocked to him for his advice and help until his passing on 26 Iyar 5705/1945. One of the tzadikim at the funeral smelled different fragrant spices coming from Reb Shlomke's body. Later on, he asked Reb Shlomke's son, Reb Gedaliah, what the source of this custom was. Reb Gedaliah replied that they have no such custom. They realized that this beautiful smell was actually from this great tzadik himself. May his memory be a blessing.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor's Note: Reb Shlomo (Shlom'ke) Goodman of Zivhil ז"ל's 75th Yahrzeit is this coming Wednesday, 26th Iyar - May 20



More than one million names of Holocaust victims are not known to us. I find this to be so heart-breaking. Entire families were wiped out and as a result, for so many victims of the Holocaust, no one has ever said a Kaddish and no Yizkor has been recited for them.

We derive some *נחמה*, some consolation for this, from a statement in the Tochecha in Parashat Bechukotai, which we read this week. Hashem gives us some hope. He tells us that the entire Jewish people will never be wiped out and he adds, *וזכרתי את בריתי יעקב*, 'And I will remember my covenant with Yaakov', *ואף את בריתי יצחק*, 'And also my covenant with Yitzchak', *ואף את בריתי אברהם*, 'And I will also remember my covenant with Avraham and I will remember the Land'.

Notice, that with regard to Yaakov, *וזכירה*, 'remembrance', is mentioned - *וזכרתי את בריתי יעקב*, 'I will remember my covenant with Yaakov'. With regards to Yitzchak, the term *זכירה* is not stated - *ואף את בריתי יצחק*, 'And also my covenant with Yitzchak'. *ואף את בריתי אברהם*, but with regard to Avraham, like with Yaakov, *וזכר*, 'remembrance', is stated.

So why is there no remembrance with regard to Yitzchak?

Rashi introduces us to the concept of *אפרו של יצחק*, 'The ashes of Yitzchak', Yitzchak nearly became a martyr at the Akeidah and as a result, Hashem always holds Yitzchak close to him. Yitzchak is always in My presence, says the Almighty, no remembrance is necessary for him.

And if that is the case for Yitzchak, who nearly became a martyr, then how much more so is it the case for those who tragically did become martyrs and who were transformed into ashes?

Of course we recite a collective Kaddish for all victims of the Shoah and yes, we recite prayers at Yizkor time for all those who perished. However, no Kaddish, no Yizkor is said for the specific names - those individuals, their souls exist with the Almighty always. He tells us that He doesn't require that - they are in the highest celestial spheres of heaven. They are certainly amongst the holiest and the pure of our people.

We derive further consolation from the last two words of this Passuk - *והארץ אזכר*, Hashem tells us 'I will remember the Land' and isn't that exactly what happened in the 1940's? We emerged from the greatest darkness that we have ever been plunged into, the Holocaust, and within just 3 years we were blessed to celebrate the establishment of the State of Israel and next week Friday, May 22nd, we will be celebrating Yom Yerushalayim, the 53rd anniversary of the reunification of the city of Jerusalem during the Six Day War.

Through the merit of the 6 million victims of the Holocaust, may Hashem answer our prayer, *ופרוש עלינו סוכת שלומך*, 'To spread the tabernacle of His peace' over the city of Jerusalem and all Israel, *בצתה ועד עולם*, 'Now and forever more.'

With this, let's try to make peace with all those we have issues with, and let's pray with all our hearts for the recovery of all those who are sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers who go out to protect us and those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet, happy Shabbat.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

Parshat Behar	Parshat Bechukotai
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 24	NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 12
MITZVOT ASEH: 7	MITZVOT ASEH: 7
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 17	MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 5
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 57	NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 78
NUMBER OF WORDS: 737	NUMBER OF WORDS: 1013
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 2817	NUMBER OF LETTERS: 3992

HAFTORA: Yirmiyahu 16:19 - 17:14

This Shabbat we study Chapter 5 of Pirkei Avot

תורת הבהר - בחוקותי

Look out for our Halacha and Minhagim Guide for Shavuot coming next week