

When R' Dovid Moshe, the first Chortkover Rebbe, turned seventy, R' Yidel Melamed of Safed (R' Aizik Bronstein's father) was present in Chortkov.

He told the Chortkover that the Rizhiner had once said that if a child of his were to live to be seventy years old, it would be a herald of the Mashiach.

When the Chortkover heard this, he responded: HaShem Yisbarach should have mercy on him!

Y.F.

Aizik Bronstein

Chayale – R' Mayer Premishlaner's daughter lived in Shatz.

Once, R' Yidel Melamed of Safed (R' Aizik Bronstein's father) became ill and Chayale healed him. When he felt better, he asked her if the following story, told over in her father's name, was true or not.

R' Meir once came to Sadigora to the Rizhiner. The Gabbaim acted oblivious to him and left him waiting in line. The Rizhiner sensed this and quickly allowed him to enter his room, where they spent several hours together.

When he came out, R' Mayer called out:

"Mayer does not need the Rizhiner; he is just as great as the Rizhiner! However, I came to see a Torah Scroll, who, from whence he left his mother's womb, has no blemish in him."

Chayale said that she had heard that R. Meir had retold the story three times.

Y.F.

Aizik Bronstein

A woman came to the Besht to ask for a donation, holding a child in her arms. The Besht asked her to sell him the child, to remain his (the Besht's) child. The woman refused, explaining that the child is her livelihood – when she is seen with the child in her arms, [people] they have mercy on her.

The Besht offered her a room in his household as well as clothing to convince her to leave the child with him. She agreed, however, and said that she would have to wash the floors. "No", replied the Besht, "I want you and your child to stay with me only as honored guests".

The Besht raised the child - he grew to become a fastidious student – and was considered a genius (Illuy). Everyone called him the Besht's child.

The 'whole world' came to the child's Bar Mitzvah. The affluent as well as Rabbis fought over him; the finest and wealthiest marriage proposals (shidduchim) were offered to the Besht – but the Besht said that he was not yet looking for a prospective mate (shidduch) for the boy.

When the guests left The Besht called in R' Wolf Kitzis and bade him to go to a village wherein lived a teacher with five very unseemly daughters and to arrange a match (shidduch) with the eldest daughter. He also told him to underwrite expenses for the wedding, wedding clothes for the groom and bride, and also for the whole family.

R. Wolf Kitzis came to the teacher with his mission –

– and the teacher started crying – “It is not enough that I am a pauper with 5 girls to marry off – but you come here to make fun of me.” But when R’ Wolf convinced him that he was serious – he agreed – [when he realized] that the Besht was fully committed – he replied – I’m committed too – and they immediately sealed it with a handshake. But when R. Wolf saw the bride, he became quite distraught (lit: dark before his eyes) – she was so old and unseemly. It made him so unsettled – that he completely forgot to settle upon a wedding date.

When he returned to the Besht, the Besht asked him if he had settled upon a wedding date. R’ Wolf began to weep, saying what a misfortune it would be to go ahead with the shidduch. However, the Besht just told him to go back and settle upon a wedding date – so R’ Wolf obeyed.

To the wedding came a large and respected multitude. The Besht himself went to receive the bride and the in-laws and the joy was immeasurable. However, when the crowd saw the bride, tremendous weeping befell them and in sadness overcame them. He ordered them three times to rejoice before the groom and bride, but the people did not obey. The Besht himself called out “I know you are very distraught but listen to the story I want to tell you about the lineage of the groom and the bride.”

Once upon a time, there was a king – a great oppressor of the Jews who did not allow any Jews to live in his land. The king had an only child. One time the King’s son went out to the woods and noticed a small cabin in the woods from which

shone a great light. He dismissed his retinue and went to the cabin. As he approached, he heard a sweet melody the likes of which he had never heard before in his life. When he opened the door, he saw a soldier sitting bent over a Gemara while singing a melody (this was a Lamed Vavnik) [=one of the 36 hidden tzaddikim].

The king's son asked him to teach him the melody. The soldier did not want to because he was a Gentile. If he insisted on learning it, he would have to be circumcised. The king's son agreed to take eight days off from his father to be circumcised. After this, he settled down to study and made great progress.

After six months, the '36er' stopped, telling the king's son that he could no longer study with him because he was married to a Gentile. He then assured that he would separate from his wife, who was a princess and whose father was also an oppressor of the Jews.

His wife sensed something and refused to leave him alone until he told her the secret and she too converted (lit: became a Jewish child).

Meanwhile, he continued in his studies until the soldier saw that he no longer had ample Torah to teach him – he sent him with a letter to his Rebbe. There, he continued to progress – until he became a great man within Israel.

After a while, the Rebbe also halted him, telling him that he could not progress further because he had been born a Gentile.

What then is to be done? – he must leave this world and

be created from anew. He agreed to it but he wanted an assurance from his Rebbe that in his new incarnation, he should not fall into such hands that would ruin what he had already accomplished until now. His Rebbe promised him that his achievements would not become sullied.

When he took his leave from his wife – she wanted nothing else but to take her leave from this world as well –he had to guarantee (lit: shake hands) – that in his new incarnation, he would take her back.

The Besht concluded: Well, Yidden, do you now wish to tear asunder the agreement this couple shook hands over? - this is the Prince and this is the Princess – Let's rejoice before the groom and bride!

(The story was heard from the Bohusher Rebbe)

Y.F.

Aizik Bronstein

Upon the Apter Rav's passing, the Savraner Rav came to console his son R' Yitzchak Meir. R' Yitzchak Meir recalled that at times no one was admitted to the Apter Rav before mincha. This – R' Yitzchak Meir declared – was the time that the Maggid (sent down from heaven as an angel) studied with his holy father.

Y.F.

Gedalyah Schwartz

R' Aharon Karliner was the son-in-law of R' Mordechai Kreminitzer (the son of the Zlochever Maggid).

Once R' Mordechai Kreminitzer was sitting by a Melaveh Malka and was singing "Amar HaShem L'Ya'akov."

He was holding R' Aharon Karliner's daughter on his lap and said to her: I promise you that when you're engaged, your groom will be a king in Israel.

Later, the match was proposed with the son of the Rizhiner, R' Avraham Ya'akov (the first Sadigerer Rebbe). Although the Rhiziner was in the elder position and R' Aharon was still a young man, R' Aharon claimed that since the match was heavenly ordained because his father-in-law R' Mordechai Kreminitzer had promised that his daughter would become the Sadigerer Rebbe's bride, therefore he was exempt from paying a dowery.

When it came to writing the wedding agreements, R' Mottele Chernobyler ruled that no honorifics be written because this could lead to one writing a more grandiose title than the other.

[marginal note re: R' Aharon was still a young man:] The Rizhiner was born in 1796 and R' Aharon in 1802?"

Y.F.

Gedalyah Schwartz

Of the students of the Baal Shem Tov, one of the few who did not migrate to the Maggid was R' Chaim of Krasna.

His in-law, the Wolitchisker Rav, did relocate.

At that point,¹ all of the Besht's students migrated to the Maggid.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

¹ A bit unclear.

An affluent Russian who came to the first Bohusher Rebbe had a growth of flesh that hung from his eyelids down to his cheek. He had already been to a myriad of doctors and each one told him – this growth was a fistula and if operated on it would cause the eye to rupture.

The Rebbe told him to stand by the window, palpated the tissue, and said to him: this is not a fistula – but a wart. I'll give you a letter to my dermatologist Dr. Toisig in Jassy, Romania asking him to operate on you.

The Jew traveled to Jassy to see Dr. Toisig; the doctor examined him and said "The Rebbe is indeed a great Rebbe Jassy however I am the doctor – the diagnosis is a fistula and there is a danger that the eye may rupture.

The Jew traveled back to Bohush whereupon the Rebbe told him that the doctor was wrong – and that he should return again.

The Jew returned to the doctor – and the doctor said to him – if you indeed have so much confidence in the Rebbe – sign a waiver before the operation stating that you take full responsibility upon yourself.

The Jew then telegraphed Bohush and quickly received the answer that he should perform the operation and may sign the waiver.

In the middle of the operation, the doctor called out

the Rebbe is the doctor – not me – the eye is completely healthy – and the operation was a complete success.

The Jew who retold the story had seen the affluent man – with two healthy eyes.

Y.F.

Aizik Bronstein

(who heard it from his father)

Rabbi Yisroel Chortkover abolished the 'reign' of his Gabayim – they had allowed admittance to the Rebbe to only those Jews who had greased their palms.

He instituted that admittance was in accordance with one's place in the waiting line.

Y.F.

Yosef Wahrman

Husiyatiner Chossid

The 'Malach' (R' Avrohom, the Maggid's son) studied with (taught) the 'Rav' (Rabbi Schneor Zalman of Liozna/Lyady) 'nistar' (hidden facets of the Torah), and the 'Rav' studied with (taught) the 'Malach' 'niglah' (revealed facets of the Torah).

(heard from elder Chassidim)

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

R' Dovid Ortenberg (Rav of Berdychiv) [was old enough to have] traveled to the Rizhiner. At the Rizhiner's death, R' Dovid was about 20 years old.

He used to say that the Rizhiner had a highly unusual appearance – those who gazed upon him were veritably overcome with trepidation. He had a small beard.

The aunt Feige'nu (the first Sadigerer Rebbe's daughter) who had also seen the Rizhiner used to say that R' Yisroel Chortkover shared a close likeness to the Rizhiner – only that the Chortkover had a longer beard.

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

As the Rizhiner fled Russia, he called out at the border:

It is a big deal to be an Apter Rav or a Berdychiver Rav. But to be a 'Rizhiner' is no big deal.

One simply gets in a carriage and rides!

(And other times he was wont to speak very highly of himself)

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

The Rizhiner used to say – that the wintertime Torah readings are wrapped in various garbs – they wear furs (pelts). (This is an intimation of the fact that these readings relate many incomprehensible events – mysteries).

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

The first Sadigerer Rebbe, R' Avrohom Ya'akov, once said: The clock does not stand still – time flies and the One above does not sleep, and that the evil inclination does not grow infirm from old age. (Despite the saying "the evil instinct is an old and foolish king" [ADRN B 16])

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

The Stefaneshter Rebbe once recounted the greatness of his brothers:

The Sadigerer wants to and is capable.

The Leova is capable but does not want to.

The Chortkover does not for even one minute forsake adhering to HaShem Yisborach.

The Husiyatner learns from all the brothers' traits and incorporates all the brothers in himself.

A Chassid asked him – and the Rebbe himself?

Replied the Stefaneshter. “It is not necessary to speak about myself. It's enough for me to have such brothers.”

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe²

² [Translator's note: RS Telingator]

When the first Stefaneshter Rebbe was en route to the therapeutic baths for the last time, he stopped over in Sadigora. While taking his leave, he stood with one foot on the ground and with the other on the carriage and told the following story:

When the Almighty wanted to destroy the Temple, none of the angels were willing to take on such a task. He even approached Satan (S" M) who also refused – he argued that in the future he would be held culpable.

Therefore, the Almighty promised him that he would give him a secret name that no one in the world would know of, and until the name was revealed, the final redemption would not come. Only the Tzaddik of every generation will know that the name exists but they would not know the secret of the name even though they would endeavor with all their might to uncover it.

The knowledge of the name was passed over from Tzaddik to Tzaddik. The Holy R" Y (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the Arizal) passed it over to the Besht, the Besht to the Maggid – the Maggid to the Malach and the Malach to R' Sholem Prohobishter.

The Stefaneshter continued to recount: What did the grandfather (R' Shalom) do – he made up his mind to associate with Satan? He donned "shprankess" [(modern dress?)] and told Satan that his acting as a Rebbe is only a front – in reality, he is one of his colleagues. And so, he dupes the masses. At one point R' Sholem however, asked him what-

will ultimately become of both of us – we will eventually both be judged. Satan (the S”M) replied that he did not need to be afraid as he had an insurance policy – a secret name that could not be vanquished.

Thus Satan (the S”M) and R’ Sholem remained close colleagues until at one point Satan (the S”M) sensed that someone amongst the heavenly plane was conspiring against him. He soon suspected R’ Shalom. But presently he saw R’ Sholem go to the marketplace, buy a chicken and eggs from a non-Jewish woman, bargain with her, and then hand her money – and was soon no longer under suspicion.

In the end, he gave him the name. As he did so, Satan (the S”M) saw that the heavens were glowing with a light of redemption – and he wanted to know where it was coming from and for what reason.

He divided the world into eight parts and concluded that Russia was the source. He in turn divided Russia into eight parts and further narrowed it down to the governorate/province (gubernia) where Prohobisht was located.

The governorate was further divided and so on, time and again – until he settled upon Prohobisht, on the very street R’ Shalom lived, and finally upon R’ Shalom himself - and sought vengeance on him. But R’ Shalom showed him no fear – and answered: I am not afraid of you – my children’s souls will be greater than you – and their bodies I have long since sacrificed until Moshiach’s arrival. And should their bodies will not be able to withstand it, they will travel to the therapeutic baths.

Y.F.

Mattisyahu Spektor

Boyaner Chossid

A certain Jew managed an inn under lease from a landlord and managed certain accounts of his. The landlord also had a property manager to oversee his finances, who wanted greatly to inflict trouble upon the Jew. He asked his men to keep watch over him to find any wrongdoings on the part of the Jew, and if they did find any, he would reward them handsomely.

One man peeked in at night and saw the Jew forging the landlord's signature. The manager seized the opportunity to have revenge on the Jew – he ran to the landlord and informed him of the Jew's crimes. The landlord called the Jew in and threatened him that if he did not return the money, he had defrauded he would be punished with death.

The Jew rushed to R' Pinchas Koritzer and told him the whole story. When the Koritzer heard the story, he turned away from him and faced the window and angrily asked: how can a Jew desecrate HaShem's name so badly – deceiving a Gentile?

The Jew claimed that he was not at fault – this was a matter of Divine Providence. What does Divine Providence mean? It so happened that exactly then he had been spotted forging the landlord's signature. At this point, the Jew retold an adage from the Besht that said that when a Jew goes outside and finds a piece of straw, this is Divine Providence that he should use it to clean his pipe.

The Koritzer asked him: And do you indeed honestly believe-

that this was Divine Providence? The Jew replied: Yes! Nu, says the Koritzer – you really are a true believer – go home and everything will be fine.

Indeed, so it was. The overseer regretted the turmoil he caused and even apologized to the Jew. The landlord also forgot all about his threats and the Jew retained his lease and inn.

Y.F.

R' Dovid Cohen

Once, R' Yisroel Eisenstadt, Rav of Nikolaev (Mykolaiv, Ukraine), the author of "Amudei Aish", and R' Mottel Frankel, Rav of Smila (Smela, Ukraine) were sitting at R' Yochanan Rachmanistrivker's tish.

R' Yisroel Eisenstadt recounted a story about the Besht. R' Yochanan smiled. R' Yisroel noted: this story appears in *Praises of the Besht*. To which R' Yochanan exclaimed: Oy! That such lies are told about one so holy as the Besht!

R' Pinchas Landau heard this story from R' Shlomo Zvinigradka – a Berdychiver.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

Once, the Mezricher Maggid's disciples were sitting and debating in their studies – the Maggid entered the study-house and adjured them not to rule on any halachic questions.

Shortly afterward, a boy came in with a question [regarding the kosher status of an animal]. The students were deliberating about the question, however, and they would have certainly rendered the animal *treyfè*. However, they remembered Maggid's warning and sent the boy to the Dayan (religious judge).

The Dayan returned and ruled that the animal was kosher. This was strange for the disciples – what was the legal rationale upon which the kosher ruling was based? The Dayan replied that while he was pondering upon the question, all he could recall was a very obscure position held by the Bach, which according to this rendered the animal in question kosher.

The Maggid later explained to his disciples why he had told them not to answer any halachic questions at the time. A Jew who had long since died and his soul was waiting for rehabilitation had appeared to him in a dream. He had been reincarnated as an animal and his rectification would come about only when found kosher and eaten by another Jew. However, each time he was reincarnated, a question always arose regarding the kosher validity, and invariably always found invalid – his rehabilitation seemed doomed. Therefore, the Maggid arranged that the Dayan should rule on the case and rule that the animal was kosher, and thereby the Jew would receive his rehabilitation.

Y.F.

R' Dovid Cohen

A young man came to the Ropshitzer – a gem of a Jew – relatively affluent – well-achieved and virtuous.

He arrived in Ropshitz when it was already late. He floundered about town – it was dark everywhere – but in one house it was light – so he went straight inside.

This was indeed the Rospshitzer's house, but the Jew had no idea.

The Ropshitzer sat there – the Jew does not recognize him and the Ropshitzer acts as if unaware of his own identity – and asks him: What brings a Jew here at so late an hour? He replied that he had come to the Rebbe. For what? The Rebbe asks him – he answers that he came because he heard that when an individual who believes he is an achieved virtuous person comes to him (the Rebbe) he dismantles him. The Jew wants to see this and himself achieve such levels that the holy Ropshitzer should do the same to him.

The Ropshitzer called out: look here – I'm a Jew whose beard is already long and gray and would eagerly like to discover that I am worth something, and then act to obliterate my sense of greatness.

You, a young man, are already certain that you are worth something you already travel to a Rebbe to undo this (? !)

Y.F.

Dovid Cohen

One of the Tzemach Tzedek's most distinguished disciples, R' Isaac'l Chozer – was sent by him to the Rizhiner to study leadership and Chasidism.

He later related that at first, he did not see any great thing in him at all – until Friday eve when he began his Shabbos preparations – he then saw his greatness – he virtually traversed from height to height by the minute.

The Rizhiner would smoke his pipe until very late Friday before sundown.

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

Heard from a distinguished

Lubavitcher Chassid

[Note: a fragment. Crossed out in the manuscript]

~~The Tzemach Tzedek's — one of the most important~~

The Rizhiner used to say:

The wintertime Torah readings wear furs (pelts); that's how incomprehensible they are.

(An indication of how much one does not understand; while fundamental Torah concepts and core laws are only implied – the Torah goes to great lengths to recount the patriarchs' deeds – hence the wintertime portions that speak of the patriarch's deeds are referred to as concealed)

Y.F.

Rabbi Azriel Balter once came to the Apter Rav. He noticed that the Apter Rav donned Rabbenu Tam's tefillin before U'va LeTzion.

He asked him: how can it be? - R' Velvel (R' Binyomin Ze'ev) Balter saw the Besht put on Rabbenu Tam's tefillin only after his prayers.

The Apter Rav answered him, what kind of a question is that? The Besht always recited Kedushah (Doxology) together with the angels. When he reached the phrase "they receive one from another" (Mikablim den m'den), the angels received more from the Besht than he did from them.

We – the Apter Rav said further – do not receive anything from the angels and they certainly do not receive anything from us. It would be as logical to don tefillin for Kedushah as it would be to recite kiddush over challah instead of over wine.

The story was related by R' Yitzchak Meir – who himself heard it from his father – the Apter Rav.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R' Azriel Balter used to journey to the Apter Rav together with the Savraner Rav.

It was the Apter Rav's custom to begin his Torah [discourse] by quoting a Midrash.

When R' Azriel and the Savraner Rav left the tisch, R' Azriel commented to the Savraner Rav:

"The 'Elderly one' did not 'hit the nail on the head' with the Midrash today".

"Indeed so," replied the Savraner Rav, "the 'Elderly one' is greater than a midrash. Similar to when one enters a labyrinthine forest, he first ties a rope to a tree so that he can find his way back.

So too is the holy Apter [Rav]. He ascends to the highest realms and risks never returning – thus he picks out a midrash as a path-marker for himself to enable him to return."

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Rizhiner once said: I have several classes of Hasidim.

There are those Jews who come to me seeking the spiritual – their requests are for reverence for God, piety, and so forth.

Others come to me seeking the physical – livelihood, and wealth.

And then I have those Jews who linger [*valger*; roll about] in my company – [*yoshvim*] ‘court-fixtures’ [literally: sitters] – Hasidim.

However, constant motion averts ‘leavening’.³

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

³ This is a double entendre of *valger*: to roll, i.e., rolling out dough prevents its leavening. By virtue of lingering (‘rolling’) in the court, all negative attributes associated with ‘leavening’ (e.g.: egotism, anger, and the threat of secularization etc.) are averted].

Rabbi Isaiah Dinover was a great musician – but was not born with a good voice.

Hasidim relate that he once walked past a house – and he heard someone singing with a magnificent voice.

He exclaimed: Master of the world! What purpose is there for you to be blasphemed with such a voice – Give me that voice and with it, I will sing your praises.

From then on, he began to have a remarkable voice and that blasphemer lost his vocal talents.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R' Pini Azriel's, a grandson of R' Isaiah Dinovitzer, used to travel to R' Rafael Bershever and the Savraner Rav.

Once he came to R' Rafael Bershever – who was very poor – to spend there the Shabbat. When the challah was given out, R' Pini felt it was less than satisfactory.

He asked: "How did it happen that the challah is so bad?"

R' Rafael replied: "They say that the challah's quality is correlated to the guest's".

R' Pini then replied: "Nu - I was last week by the Savraner Rav's – there was the challah excellent –and I was a guest there too?"

R' Rafael answered him: "One can only wonder at what a Jew can make of himself in 8 days".

In the morning, the Kugel was served – which was extraordinarily superb. R' Pini asked – they say that the Kugel's quality is correlated to the guest's – I do not understand. I'm the only guest."

R' Rafael called out - nu – "one can only wonder what repentance can help [accomplish]"

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Maggid once requested of the Tanya – that since the Beit Yosef and the Ari disagree on how to write certain letters – that the Tanya should generate a script that is acceptable to both sides.

The Tanya sat down and created such a script.

On the way home he passed through Hanipol and lodged by a scribe. He saw how the scribe was using the same script he had just recently innovated for the Maggid. He wondered greatly about this and asked the scribe: "Where did you learn to write so – I have only just recently worked out these letters and no one knows about it yet."

The scribe answered him: "Yesterday, R' Zishe heard in the heavens that this is the way to write tefillin, and he taught me the way to write sacred artifacts."

Y.F.

R' Dovid Cohen

The Apter Rav was once in Berdychiv.

There lived an affluent family – to some extent influenced by heresy. As the Apter Rav was accustomed to partaking in large meals, they ridiculed the Apter Rav's unusual habits.

The Apter Rav noticed this and responded so: "Eating gives one strength and might.

'Strength and might [He] gave them, to be rulers amid the world' (from the poem 'E-l Adon'). I will then remove the 'midst' (the middle letter from the word) 'world' (tb"l) – and thus reduce them to a 'mound' (t"l)."

Chasidim recount that this family indeed was reduced to insignificance (a *tehl*).

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Sanzer Rebbe was told that the Apter Rav recited his prayers (lit. the 18 benedictions) very fast. He wondered at this and asked – “how can one pray so fast - one must recite his prayers just as one counts money”.

When this above was recounted to the Apter Rav, he responded: Who told him to count like a Gentile does – let him count like a Jew counts – fast and accurate.

Y.F.

When R' Baruch (of Mezhbuzh) went to Tul'chyn (?), he always lodged by one of his followers – a Jew both a Chassid and affluent.

Once the Berdychiver Rav arrived at this town and since this particular Jew had the most luxurious accommodations, he accepted the invitation to lodge there.

That evening R' Baruch arrived. Upon being told that Berdychiver Rav had already been invited to his usual lodgings, he [R. Baruch] did not want to budge.

(What happened in the end?)

Sabbath morning, R' Baruch said he wanted to hear the Berdychiver Rav recite 'Keser' (the doxology). When he returned, he was asked why he had suddenly gone to the Berdychiver Rav.

"Why should I not go to listen, when even angels and seraphim come down from heaven to hear him recite the doxology 'Keser'?" R' Baruch answered.

Y.F.

Kinever Rebbe

The letter from the Gaon (R' Eliyahu) of Wilno, which Pinchas Landau saw and which mentions the Besh"t was in the possession of a *felsher* [a forger? a medic? A herbalist?] named Herbowsky who settled in Rechovot (Israel) – he died recently and left behind daughters.

He was one of the last of the Palestine Pioneers (Bilu'ists)

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

When the Rizhiner fled Russia, R' Yosef Rashkaver, who lived at the border, ran ahead with a flag and proclaimed: "Make room for the righteous one (Tzadik) of the generation."

Later, the Rashkaver was in Sadagara by the Rizhiner and expressed displeasure at how the court was held there – the grandeur – the luxury.

He thus interpreted the verse (Ps. 34: 20): "Many evils befall the righteous – 'many', 'grandeur' is evil for a Tzadik"; he was going to finish the verse 'and from all of it HaShem will spare him', but the Rizhiner stopped him and told him the following story:

There once lived in a small town, a rabbi and a wealthy man – they both grew up together – studied together, and grew to be very close friends. Upon their deaths, they ascended to heaven, their merits and faults were weighed, and were found to be equals to each other.

Both the rabbi and the wealthy man had each sired a son. They too grew up and studied together – and grew to be quite close friends – the rabbi's son became a rabbi and the wealthy man's son in turn grew to be quite wealthy. When they died, it was revealed that the rabbi's son was equal to his father – however, the wealthy man's son was found lacking. Still an upright fellow, but no longer the same as the father.

It was then asked, "How is this so? Both were raised

together just like their fathers – and their fathers were found to be equals and yet the sons were already quite different. The wealthy man's son explained that his wealth and assets had led him astray.

The Rizhiner concluded – this is the reason why in heaven it was decreed that the righteous should be tested with treasures and luxury.

The story was heard from Sheve'le, a daughter of Gite'le, the daughter of the Rizhiner, who heard it herself from her father.

Y.F.

Boyaner Chassid

R' Azriel Balter was together with the Savraner Rav at the Apter Rav.

They had been talking about the Apter Rav's uncommon dining habits. R' Azriel Balter commented to the Savraner Rav: "We read (R' Abutloria?) [Shimon Ha'amsuni – Bavli Pesachim 22b] would expound upon each instance in the Torah of the seemingly extraneous preposition *es* until he came to the verse (Deut. 10:20) '*es* G-d your Lord, fear' - this instance is seemingly impossible to expound until R' Akiva came and said '*es* G-d your Lord, fear'; includes [fearing] Torah scholars.

If they had seen the "Elder" while he dined, they would not have needed the verse, rather they would have preached *es* = eat, – but [but you shall still] fear God your Lord.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R' Sholem, the first Belzer Rav was extremely scrupulous in honoring his mother, Rivkah.

At the Pesach Seder, he always sat with her at the same table and even ate from one plate.

It once happened that while eating, his mother's matzah, which she had presented to him fell into their soup.

R' Sholem Belzer took it out and ate it.

Chasidim wondered: How is this so? it is still *'gebroks'* (wet matzah).

The Belzer Rav became very upset and said "Honoring one's father and mother is a commandment in the Torah, and *'gebroks'* is no more than a stringency, nu, which takes precedence?"

Y.F.

Komarner Rebbe

R' Ya"yve (R' Yaakov Yosef of Ostrog) once prayed at the Maharsha's Shul – and since the prayers there were conducted according to the Ashkenazi rite, his grandchildren do not say '*Viyatzmah Purkuneh*' (and may his redemption blossom').

Y.F.

Kinever Rebbe

Chasidim recount what the Rizhiner once said while recounting how the Apter Rav used to praise him quite strongly: "Out of respect for the 'Elder', I revealed to him my entire 'external dimension' but only a fragment of my core."

Y.F.

Boyaner Chassid

The Ruzhiner cried profusely when his wife Sarah'le passed away on the last day of Passover. The elder Hasidim questioned him regarding the reason for his intense weeping, as it was disrupting the holiday. The Ruzhiner responded, "The Besht only shed tears three times in his life. 1) When his ship sank on the way to the Holy Land. 2) When his daughter Udel fell in the river during his return journey. 3) When his wife passed away. I had hoped to fulfill my dream of visiting the Holy Land before the end of my life, but now, with the loss of my *plag guf* ("other half"), I fear that dream will never be realized."

Y.F.

Mordechai Shlomo Yosef Friedman

Sadagorer Rebbe

An Ostrovtzer hasid related an incident in which he accompanied the Ostrovtzer Rebbe to solicit contributions on the Fast of Tamuz. They arrived at the residence of a *gevír* (wealthy man) and found him eating a meal. The wealthy man felt ashamed that the Rebbe discovered him eating during the fast. But the Ostrovtzer approached the table, took some liquor, and drank a *l'chayim* (toast) with him. By revealing that he – the rebbe – was also not fasting, he pacified the *gevír*. Subsequently, the wealthy man donated. After they departed, the Ostrovzter informed the hasid, “I continued fasting after drinking the liquor, but seeing how distressed the wealthy man was, I drank a *l'chayim* to save a Jewish soul.”

Y.F.

While in Karlsbad, the Maggid was shown the discovery of new springs. He groaned intensively, and expressed, “It is stated that God sends the remedy before the blow. With the discovery of numerous new springs, it is uncertain how many illnesses are yet to surface in the world, awaiting their cure.”

Y.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

A Jew approached Rabbi Moshe Tzeres, a student of the Besht, requesting to be hosted for the Shabbat. Rabbi Moshe instructed him, "Go see my Shmuelkel (R. Shmuel of Kaminer). He will make accommodations for you for the Sabbath." Upon arriving at Rabbi Shmuel's residence, the individual found him in the midst of reciting the Shema. Displaying his *tzitzit* (fringes), he indicated that he was unable to help him at the present moment. Upon relaying this information to R. Moshe, the latter himself went to R. Shmuel and conveyed his dissatisfaction with his inability to assist the individual. R. Moshe reprimanded him, "While an angel can speak a thousand languages and through them praise God, a human being can also perform good deeds for others. Yet you also praise God," continued R. Moshe, "What distinguishes you from the angel? While the angel is unable to do a favor for a Jew, you *can*. However, when a Jew asks you for a favor, you simply show them your *tzitzit*! R. Shmuel subsequently related, "From then on, if a Jew man asks me for a donation, even if it is just before the *Amida* (standing prayer), I remove my *tefillin* (phylacteries) and give it to him."

Y.F.

R. Dovid Cohen

The late Sadagurer once visited a spa near Vienna and spent the Sabbath in the city, which was known for its assimilation and haskalah. He said, “Since the *kiddush* (Sabbath wine blessing) serves as a testimony to the creation of Heaven and Earth, reciting the kiddush in Vienna is particularly important, as it serves as a testimony to Creation in a place where there is a lot of heresy.”

Y. F.

Boyaner Rebbe

While visiting Vienna, the late Sadagorer Rebbe observed “Our blessings become more meaningful when we recognize the vastness of the world, for when we refer to God as ‘King of the World’, we emphasize the true grandeur of the Divine.”

Y. F.

Boyaner Rebbe

A Torah scholar traveled to the Maggid to become his student, but he was not viewed as a morally upright person. He was also not very intelligent. The Maggid explained, “It can be hard to understand why according to the tradition, the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination), being a spirit, is referred to as a king, elderly man, and fool. The correct interpretation is that the *yetzer hara* ‘is King’ over individuals such as elderly men and fools, though a human king would not associate with them and an army would not require them. However, the *yetzer hara* can use them to achieve his goals by deceiving them.”

An example of this can be seen in the story of the Torah scholar, who, as an elderly man, became very superficial and even informed on the rabbi of Berditchev while in Pinsk.

Y. F.

Boyaner Rebbe

The Malakh, after his marriage, took up residence in his father-in-law R. Feivish of Kremnitz's home. In Kremnitz there lived many *mitnagdim*, albeit great Torah scholars, who generally looked down upon the Malakh's lifestyle. On one occasion, two *mitnagdim* who, despite their scholarliness in the Torah, had a high level of self-importance, visited the Malakh. They observed him standing at a window for an extended period, gazing at the mountains surrounding Kremnitz and were intrigued. They asked him, "Why are you intently studying the mountains? Surely, you are aware that Kremnitz is surrounded by them." The Malakh responded, "I am contemplating how a small piece of land can have the audacity to constantly gaze up at the sky."

Y. F.

Boyaner Rebbe

Once, the Ruzhiner stated, “Before the Spanish Inquisition, Jews were politically and socially powerful, with many religious leaders holding significant influence within the Palace. They had dreams of building the Third Temple but were instead preoccupied with the laws of *tamei met* (impurity due to a corpse). However, what they truly feared was that the Fire from Heaven would not descend.” The Ruzhiner emphasized, “Their lack of trust in God ultimately led to their downfall in the form of punishment from the Spanish Inquisition to the Expulsion. If the Jews would have true faith in God, the Fire from Heaven would have descended.”

Y. F.

Boyaner Rebbe

R. Yaakov of Samila, the son of R. Yeshaya of Dinovitz, married into the family of the Gaon of Vilna. The descendants of the Elyash family in the Holy Land are his descendants.

A *siddur* (prayer book) annotated by R. Yeshaya of Dinovitz is within Pinchas Landau's possession.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Rav [Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi], who was in a state of poverty and weakness, wished to travel to Mezritch to visit the Magid. Due to his condition, he was unable to make the journey on foot and thus asked the local wagon driver whether he could drive him to Mezritch on his horse and buggy. The latter responded, "Leaving my wife and children without any livelihood is fine since I rely on miracles to sustain them. However, the horses lack awareness of grand ideas. They require oats for sustenance. What will become of them?" The Rabbi suggested that the driver sell one horse, which would provide for his family during his absence and also provide for the remaining horse during the journey. The driver agreed and the two set off on their journey.

However, due to only having one horse, they struggled to maintain control of the wagon. Along the way, they stopped at a tavern. Before having a chance to draw the horse, the shaft of the wagon accidentally broke a window. Realizing what occurred, the owner of the tavern, the *paritz* (squire), stormed out and furiously shouted, "Who shattered my window?" Fearfully, the wagon driver pointed to the Rav. Upon seeing the Rav's holy countenance and appearance, the *paritz* was struck with awe and invited him into his home. He gave the Rav an additional horse

to enable him to arrive at Mezritch faster.

While traveling, the rabbi posed a query to the driver, "I am at a loss to comprehend your actions. You displayed faith in me and decided to leave your family without regard for their well-being. However, upon encountering the *paritz*, you shifted the blame onto me, despite it being apparent that you were the one deserving of punishment." The driver replied, "That's why, Rebbe, I pointed to you, as I had faith in you that as a true holy figure, the *paritz* would not be able to cause you any harm. However, if that were not the case, then you obviously deserve *petch* (a beating/punishment)." The Rav would often recall this story and end with the conclusion, "If that were not the case, then you obviously deserve *petch* (punishment)."

Y. F.

Tolner Rebbe

According to R. Pini Landau, R. Binyamin Zev Balter, who was one of the Besht's disciples, was referred to as R. Velvel Balter. He passed away at a young age. (He believes that he later drew close to R. Pinchas of Koretz.) His son, R. Ezriel Balter, was a student of R. Barukh of Mezhbosh and later under the Rabbi of Apta.

R. Pini, the son of R. Ezriel, referred to as "Pini R. Ezriel's", was a major *gevîr* (rich man). He passed away childless. R. Pini knew the Rabbi of Apta very well, was a polite man, and would express himself in an eloquent manner. He held the late Manistritcher in high esteem and would shed copious tears while discussing the Rabbi of Apta or the Rabbi of Savran.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Shpole Zeide said about R. Nakhman of Bratslav that he is precisely like “one who hurls a stone at Merkulis.” He attempted to hold a gathering at the home of the Berditchever Rabbi [Levi Yitzhak] of Berdichev to impose a *herem* (ex-communication) on him, but R. Levi Yitzkhak’s wife, with a broom in her hands, escorted them out forcefully. The Berditchever as well was not willing to take action against R. Nakhman and impose ex-communication.

It is not in the nature of a hasid to say aloud the term *herem*. Instead, he opts to say, “The person was placed in the three letters.”

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

The Rabbi of Savran relentlessly pursued the Bratslaver hasidim. He excommunicated them, declared their ritual slaughter (*shekhita*) unkosher, and prohibited marriage with them.

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

R. Dovid of Tolna stated, “It was fated for me that, while I was residing in Vasilkov, a substantial number of non-Jews would pass through on their pilgrimage to Kiev. However, now that I reside in Tolna, a significant number of “dead” [Bratslav] hasidim en route to Uman pass through Tolna.”

R. Dovid of Tolna as well actively pursued Bratslav hasidim. In Tolna, the works of R. Nakhman were deemed to be prohibited, comparable to heretical books [literally: unkosher books].

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

Before passing away, the Rabbi of Savran said, "I fear that in my disagreement with R. Shlomo Kluger, I may have been wrong." He interpreted the verse in Samuel, "The Victory of Israel does not Lie," to mean that only God can be victorious with complete honesty, while humans cannot overcome their opponents without being deceitful in some small way. He acknowledged that his opposition to R. Shlomo Kluger, even if it led to victory, may have resulted in him compromising on the truth.

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

The Rabbi of Savran and R. Shlomo Kluger had a dispute regarding a ritual slaughterer (*shokhet*) named R. Lebtzu from Berditchev. R. Shlomo Kluger considered the meat from R. Lebtzu's slaughter to be forbidden, but the Rabbi of Savran deemed it permissible. Subsequently, the Rabbi of Savran visited Berditchev and partook of the meat. Upon learning of this, R. Shlomo Kluger stated, "The meat consumed by the Rabbi of Savran is certainly kosher, but the meat being consumed by the general public is not."

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

R. Pinchas of Koretz, despite not being a student of the Besht, made three visits to him. [In the margins: R. Pinchas stated that he did not receive instruction from the Besht]. On his third journey, it is said, that R. Pinchas had difficulty understanding a passage in Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed*. Upon learning that the Besht was in the nearby area, R. Pinchas decided to travel to him to gain clarity on the matter. At the time of R. Pinchas' arrival, the Besht was in a meeting with his close associates, discussing various topics. Suddenly, he announced, "We will soon have a distinguished guest, R. Pinchas," and began discussing elevated matters. As soon as R. Pinchas entered, the Besht stated, "It is difficult to understand the verse in Psalms, 'Within his power are the speculators of the earth.' If God's power indeed encompasses everything, then it is pointless to contemplate and speculate on the wonders of the earth. Everything is happening under the direction of Divine Providence, rendering any speculation unnecessary. Additionally, by speculating, one may, God forbid, potentially question whether everything truly is within God's power." The Besht, in response to his inquiry, stated, "The proper understanding is that 'within his power' implies 'God's authority'. God has the power to grant permission for individuals to engage in speculation." The Besht concluded, "It is permissible for R. Pinchas to engage in speculation,* but for my other students, it is forbidden." The Besht subsequently provided the correct explanation for the *Guide to the Perplexed*.

*R. Pinchas was indeed deemed as the "investigator of the Divine"

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

How R. Nachum of Chernobyl became a student of the Besht.

It is said that on one occasion, while R. Nachum was in a nearby town of Kutno to deliver a *d'rasha* (sermon), he learned that the Besht was present in Kutno. Abruptly, he felt the temptation to journey to Kutno, to the Besht, and interrupted his *derasha*. Upon observing the Besht's approach to divine worship, R. Nachum became deeply drawn to the Besht and became his devoted student.

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

R. Nachum of Chernobyl was the son of R. Moshe Yehoshua,* who was known for his scrupulous religious observance and owned an inn or tavern. He was referred to as a "Litvak." R. Nachum was an only son and had two sisters, the whereabouts of whom are not known and it is reported they married in Poland or Lithuania. R. Nachum had two sons, R. Mordekhai and R. Moshe, of whom the latter did not assume the role of a Hasidic Rebbe. R. Kook is a descendant of R. Moshe.

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

*?? See *Sefer HaHasidut* by Isaac Warfel [Raphael]

It was reported that the soul of R. Yokhanan of Rakhmistrivka was that of R. Yokhanan ben Zakai. Upon hearing this from others, he smiled and said, “What’s the surprise? My name is ‘R. Yokhanan’ and I am indeed ‘pure’ [the Hebrew word ‘zakai’ means ‘pure’ or meritorious]. Given these circumstances, it is logical for me to indeed be referred to as ‘R. Yokhanan ben Zakai.’”

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

Just before his death, R. Refael of Bershiv exclaimed, "Thank you, God, I believe I have overcome pride." However, he quickly corrected himself, saying "Alas! I have spent my entire life striving against pride (*ga'avah*) and dishonesty (*sheker*), and yet what I just uttered was filled with both."

Y.F.

Tolner Rebbe

Once, [Before the holiday of Sukkot], R. Refael of Bershiv* was tasked by R. Pinchas of Koretz to purchase an *etrog* (one of the four species taken on Sukkot). Despite the difficulties in obtaining one, R. Refael was ultimately successful in procuring a single *etrog* for the entire town. Upon his return, R. Refael encountered a Jewish individual who was selling fish, which was also scarce, and R. Refael started to plead with him to sell the fish to Rabbi Pinchas. However, the individual only consented to the sale in exchange for the procured *etrog*. R. Refael ultimately agreed to the exchange and traded the fish for the *etrog*.

When he reached Koretz without the *etrog*, he was questioned, "How could this happen? What did you do, trading an *etrog* for a fish?" The first day of that specific Sukkot occurred on a Sabbath. Hence, the practice of taking an *etrog* was prohibited. – R. Refael explained, "Having fish for *Yom Tov* (a religious festival) is a sure way to have a joyous celebration, and being joyful during *Yom Tov* is, after all, a biblical requirement ("And you shall be joyful in your festival"). In contrast, taking an *etrog* on the second day of Sukkot is purely rabbinical. Therefore, having fish is preferable."

Tolner Rebbe

Y.F.

*He was a student of R. Pinchas Koritzer.

R. Nachum served as a magid or rabbi in Prohobist and lived in a state of constant poverty. He attired himself in unadorned, shabby, and tattered garments. During a trip to Chernobyl, the *balei batim* (laymen) residing there formed a fondness for him. Upon seeing his worn-out attire, they proposed that if he were to assume a position in Chernobyl, they would provide him with a new kaftan and topcoat. Upon his return to Prohobist, the local *balei batim* admitted their inability to bear the financial burden, and that if he came across such good fortune in Chernobyl, they would release him. Thus, he went on to become the rabbi of Chernobyl, and before departing for his new position, he requested that his son-in-law, R. Avraham Asher, be appointed as his successor in Prohobist.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Avraham Asher was the son of R. Hirsch of Korshev and the son-in-law of R. Nachum of Chernobyl. His wife Malka was R. Nachum's daughter. He took over as the rabbi of Prohobist after R. Nachum went on to become rabbi of Chernobyl. He had three sons-in-law, one of whom was the rabbi of Bender, another was the *magid* (preacher) of Bahofel, and the third was R. Sholem of Prohobist. Before his death, he requested that the Jewish community of Prohobist appoint R. Sholem as his successor. He explained to them, "My son-in-law, who was the rabbi of Bender, a large city in Bessarabia, did not require the position of rabbi as he already held it. My second son-in-law, the *magid* of Bahofel, was able to earn a living through his travels. My R. Shalom, however, is an orphan without a rabbinical position. I urge the Prohobister Jews to appoint him as my successor."

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The late R. Yitzhak of Skver stated, “The accounts in Shivkhei HaBesht are false, but the Besht was capable of performing them.”

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The students of the Magid were among the most highly-regarded Torah scholars of their time. As a result, the most important court cases were brought to the Magid's court for resolution. On one occasion, during a complex legal dispute, the students engaged in a heated debate over a difficult passage in Maimonides and were arguing intensively. The noise was so loud that R. Zusya of Anipoli, who was present, found it challenging to focus on his prayers. He asked them to be quiet several times, but they did not listen. After inquiring multiple times, R. Zusya asked the Baal HaTanya about the subject of their discussion. Since they did not consider R. Zusya as particularly learned, they were hesitant to share the details of their conversation with him. But when he asked again, the Tanya told him that they were “struggling” with a complex passage from Maimonides.”

After a brief interval, R. Zusya approached the group and conveyed to them his interpretation, which indeed was the precise explanation. They asked him in astonishment, “How did you arrive at the correct interpretation?” He replied, “I was unable to pray due to the commotion you were creating, so I cried out to God, asking Him to send me the Rambam to reveal the correct understanding of the passage to me.

And God granted my request and the Rambam provided me with the accurate interpretation.”

When the Baal Hatanya was asked why, in a letter to R. Zusya of Anipoli, he described him with many high praises such as “Holy” and “Prince of Torah,” even though R. Zusya was not widely recognized as a particularly learned individual, he recounted this story and concluded, “If one can attain proper understanding through prayer, then that person is truly a ‘Prince of Torah.’”

Y.F.

R. Dovid Cohen

R. Yohanan of Rakhmistrivka inquired of R. Mordekhai from Tzalatopel regarding the significance of a *kvitel* (petitionary note).

Jews hold a belief in a rebbe and think that we pray, study the Torah, and perform good deeds. But when they realize we are not fulfilling these practices, they should really be chiding us. However, they are ashamed, for they are *baishanim* (bashful). As a result, they write *kvitels* as a reminder—they are indirectly referring to the fact that we must perform our duties: to pray, study, and engage in good deeds.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

Students asked the Besht regarding the significance of a *kvitel* (petitionary note). The Besht replied, “If a Jew was spiritually whole, without deficiencies, they would not have *tzarot* (troubles). When one has *tzarot*, it is a sign that they have sinned. Therefore they need to go to the rebbe and confess their sins in their entirety. As the individual may feel embarrassed to speak about their sins, they write them in a *kvitel* so that the rebbe is aware of the sins.”

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

When R. Shmuel Aba was informed that R. David of Tolna had mentioned that the rebbes were smitten to cause them to become rebbes, he replied, “I am uncertain if they struck us to make us rebbes, but I do not doubt that we will indeed be smitten for *becoming* rebbes.”

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Shmuel Abba, (a grandson of R. Pinchas of Koretz), and R. Shimshon of Arigopolya, (the grandfather of Pinchas Landau), were guests at the Old Sadigurer. It goes without saying, they were served coffee in beautiful dishware, as was fashionable in Sadigura. R. Shmuel Abba mentioned, “I was once at R. Zusya of Anipoli and was served coffee in a broken saucer fastened with a wire, but I still remember the coffee!” The Leova, who was present, smilingly asked why the coffee was so special. R. Shmuel Abba replied angrily, “A young Jew should walk *prave* (rightward in Russian), not *leve* (leftward). But this young man—pointing to R. Nachum Ber—knows there is a distinction between different types of *kaves* (coffee in Yiddish), and that whilst drinking *kave*, one could also contemplate *kave el Hashem* (hope to God) [Psalms, 27: 13].

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

During R. Shmuel Abba's visit to Sadagura, he spoke to his hasidim about the Leova, "People say he sharper(?) than the Sadagurer—he does not come to his ankles (the Sdagurer's)!"

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

Pinchas Landau heard from R. Mordekhai of Rakhmistrivk that someone had expressed doubt about whether the matriarch Rachel is actually buried at Rachel's Tomb:

If for generations Jews have sobbed there, pouring out their hearts over their troubles and tragedies at the site—she is already there.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Leib Sarah is buried in Yaltushkov

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

Among the elder hasidim, a tradition existed to present *hitkashrut kvitels* (binding petitionary notes). Through this practice, the hasid would establish a spiritual connection with the rebbe. In the *kvitel*, the hasid beseeched for the rebbe to exert a *hashpa'ah* (spiritual emanation) upon him, that the rebbe holds him in his thoughts, and permits him to become a part of his being.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Ruzhiner was once asked, why is that all the rebbes frequently talk about the Messiah, whereas he hardly discusses him. The Ruzhine replied, “The groom does not speak of himself.”

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Zusya of Anipol was questioned on how one can attain the state of being able to say with all one's heart, "I will bless [God] on the bad just as I bless him on the good." He responded, "I don't know what bad is. I haven't experienced anything that can be called bad."

Y.F.

David Twersky

The Sadigurer's son R. Shlomo was very close with R. Nachum Ber, the Sadigurer's son-in-law. When R. Shlomo passed away in 5681, his *shamash* (beadle) became *shamash* by R. Nachum Ber.

Once at night, R. Nachum Ber went with the *shamash* home. R. Nachum Ber asked him, "If you would like, I will show you R. Shlomo!"

The *shamash* was filled with fear and yelled, "No! I'm scared!"

R. Nachum Ber replied, "It is good that you are scared. If not you would have, God forbid, died."

Y.F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

Boyaner Hasid

Many people would frequent R. Nachum Ber'nu (Sadagur), though he died when the Old Sadagurer was still alive.

One Rosh Hashanah eve, a Jewish man from the area surrounding Sadagora visited R. Ber and gave him a kvitel. a Jew from the vicinity paid him a visit on Rosh Hashana eve, crying heavily, and gave him a *kvitel* (petitionary note).

What's the issue?

He was celebrating with the Sadagurer when the Sadagurer instructed him, suddenly, to return home, still before Rosh Hashanah. He asked Rabbi Nachum Ber for advice and wondered if he could ask the Rebbe to let him stay for the holiday.

R. Nachum Ber examined the *kvitel* and told the hasid, "I don't see anything in the kvitel [to be concerned with], but if the holy Rebbe instructed you to return, you should follow his command." The hasid returned home and learned that his child had suddenly become very ill and died several hours before he arrived.

When Nachum Ber later heard what happened, he became incensed and declared, "If I was capable of making such a significant oversight, I will no longer accept *kvitels*."

Y.F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

(Boyaner Hasid)

R. Meir of Premishlan's father was R. Aron Leib. R. Aron Leib's father was the Great R. Meir, who also lived in Premishlan and was a student and friend of the Besht. On one occasion, the Besht visited his friend, the Great R. Meir, and saw R. Aron Leib still in his crib. The Great R. Meir told the Besht, "I would like to present to you my child." So they moved the crib and the child was shown to the Besht. The Besht asked the child, "Do you know who I am, my child? Even though the child had not spoken before, he suddenly began to speak, replying, "You are R. Isaac Luria, the Holy Ari." The Besht exclaimed, "May you live!" The child then said, "Today you are R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov. Last time, you were the soul of R. Yitzhak Luria." From that point on, R. Aron Leib was able to speak.

Y.F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

(Boyaner Hasid)

After a rich man's fortunes took a great hit, he became destitute and was advised to seek the Maggid's guidance. Although he initially resisted the idea of traveling, he eventually allowed himself to be won over. He arrived at the Maggid's doorstep, weeping and imploring him for advice on how to regain his wealth. The Maggid directed him, to go to the *kloyz* (small synagogue) and consult with R. Zusya of Anipol, who would provide the necessary guidance. The man followed the Maggid's instructions, found R. Zusya in the *kloyz*, and asked for advice. However, R. Zusya replied, "My loving Jew! I am unable to help you because I have never experienced any misfortune. Although I was always destitute, I remained happy as that was God's will. You should seek out someone who is consistently in a bad situation as they would be better equipped to empathize with your pain and provide the necessary assistance."

Y.F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

Boyaner Hasid

R. Meir of Premishlan advised the Maggid of Brod, R. Shlomo Kluger, to accept *kvitels* (petitionary notes). However, R. Shlomo Kluger was reluctant to do so. On one occasion, R. Shlomo Kluger came with his son to R. Meir, and the child accidentally added snuff powder to his soup instead of salt. R. Meir reacted, saying, "Wow, are you a fool!" Indeed, the child did not grow up to be very intelligent.

Y.F.

Nachum Hamburger

Boyaner Hasid

R. Meir of Premishlan was once tardy for Rosh Hashana prayers, and when asked why he was late, he explained, "Meir'l had been in heaven. There, Meir'l overheard a decree being made to end the Jewish people and bring a plague upon them. So Meir'l began screaming, "*Gevald!* How is this allowed to happen? ! Meir'l started yelling, "*Gevald!* [help!] How can this be permitted? ! " So it was decided to impose the plague upon the livestock. prompting Meir'l to object, "This cannot happen! Jews rely on livestock for sustenance. How can their livelihood be destroyed? ! " He made a similar argument when they considered imposing a plague on birds. Ultimately, he prevailed in having the plague inflicted on Capons, and that is what happened. As a result, many capons perished that year.

Y. F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

Boyaner hasid

Rabbi Mikhel of Zlotchov was a very poor man, and he was asked whether he prayed to God for a livelihood. In response, he related a story: "There was a powerful Czar who had only one daughter, whom he married off in a grand and opulent celebration. A great feast was prepared, with designated meals for the poor. After the meals had ended, a destitute man came and begged for something to eat, claiming he was dying of hunger. But the emperor's daughter was soundly asleep, and nobody paid attention to the man's cries for help, even when he demanded to see the Czar, for he was dying from hunger." Rabbi Mikhel concluded, "I am well aware that the *Shekhina* (divine presence) is in exile and lamenting her people, the Jews. How can I come and bother her at such a time with my foolishness—that I need a livelihood?"

Y. F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

Boyaner hasid

A *gadol* (a revered rabbi) took it upon himself to endure seven years of *galut* (exile). During this time, he secluded himself in his home and avoided associating with others, believing himself to be very humble, though he held himself in high esteem. He sought an approbation from the Maggid and explained how he undertook great suffering and how exceedingly humble he was. The Maggid responded by interpreting a verse: ““Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?” declares God.”” If a person endures exile and hides from the world, but regards himself as great and places a high value on the “I”, then ““[I] do not see him,’ declares God.”

Y. F.

Nachum Ber Hamburger

Boyaner hasid

The elder Chortkover repeatedly recounted how the *tzadikim* (saints) and rebbes of the Ruzhiner's era exalted and esteemed him (the Ruzhiner). On one occasion, during the Ruzhiner's *yahrzeit* (death anniversary), the Chortkover shared a story: When the right time came for the Ruzhiner to start donning *tefillin* (phylacteries), his mother, Chave'nu, brought him to the Rabbi of Apta. Upon their arrival, she instructed him to wait until the Apter could put tefillin on him for the first time since the Apter began his morning prayers late. However, on the day of his bar mitzvah, the Ruziner woke up extremely early and put on *tefillin* well in advance. When it was time for the Apter Rabbi to start his prayer, they began waiting for the Ruzhiner, but he was not there. They searched for him but couldn't find him, and eventually, he arrived. Chave'nu, his mother, asked him fearfully, "Where were you? Didn't you know that the rabbi of Apta was supposed to put tefillin on you for the first time?" The Ruzhiner replied, "Yes, however, I had already prayed and put on tefillin." This made Chave'nu even more anxious, [wondering], How could this be? She had brought her child to the Apter herself, and he had put on tefillin without waiting for him!

Nonetheless, she still brought him to the Apter, who then said, "Let's see at least how you prayed!"

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

When they smuggled the Ruzhiner out of jail and he was already free, he suddenly pried himself loose and demanded to be returned to his cell. This prompted them to yell. What does this mean! ? How could he trust himself to run back into the fire? But the Ruzhiner was resolute, and they were required to comply with his wishes and bring him back. He later defended his actions, stating, that it is required to revisit the place where one had previously been, and he wanted to abide by this.

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

During one occurrence on the nineteenth of Kislev, the Elder Chortkover shared a tale. R. Mikhal of Zlotchov once made a journey to see the Maggid and brought with him one of the “Five Books of Moses”, i.e., one of his sons, with him. Upon arriving in Mezritch, R. Mikhal sent his son to the Maggid to inform him of their arrival and ask to be notified of when they could meet. The child opened the Maggid’s door twice, but the Maggid ignored him. The child grew upset and returned to his father, telling him that the Maggid had insulted him by not paying him any attention. R. Mikhal asked his son, “What did you see at the Maggid?” and the child replied, “I saw an old man arguing with the Maggid.” R. Mikhal explained, “You don’t comprehend, my child! This was actually Elijah the Prophet, with whom the Maggid was spending time! And you expect him to devote his attention to your foolishness? !”

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

Later on, R. Mikhal of Zlotchov invited his son to accompany him to see the Maggid. They sat together for a while, and at some point, the Maggid left the room. On the table, there was the Maggid's *pushka* (charity? box), and the child started to play with it. When the Maggid returned, he noticed that the *pushka* was not in the same place as before. He then exclaimed, "When a tzaddik puts something away, he is building Worlds. But if they are moved from their place, then God forbid, we are destroying Worlds."

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

The Rav (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi) passed through Prohobisht and went to visit R. Avraham, who was the older son of R. Shalom, (known as "the second Malakh" (angel)), and the Ruzhiner. R. Avraham was already married, while the Ruzhiner was still a child. During the visit, the Rav asked the Ruzhiner what he was learning in *heder* (informal elementary school). The Ruzhiner responded, "How can a person take on the yoke of Heaven with his whole soul when reciting the Sh'ma, and still have the strength to say the *v'Ahavta* (the first chapter of the Sh'ma)?" The Rav then shared deep ideas and lofty sayings and tried to solve the Ruzhiner's inquiry. Later, the Rav remarked, "The older brother initially understood, but eventually grew weary and did not comprehend, while the younger brother understood everything and comprehended everything."

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

On one occasion, the Elder Chortkover said, “When a tzaddik ‘says *toire*’ (Hasidic sermon), he must *mekasher* (spiritually bind) himself with his generation to be *metaken* (spiritually repair) them. However, if we are so distant that we do not attain a *hitkashrut* (spiritual binding) with the generation, then we do not need to say *toire*.” After that point, he stopped saying *toire*.

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

The Berditchever's father-in-law was an ordinary leaseholder. The Berditchever's father-in-law was a simple leaseholder. After getting married, the Berditchever immediately went to visit the Maggid and stayed there for a long time. When he returned home, his father-in-law was angry and asked why he had been away from his wife for so long. The Berditchever responded by saying, "I have come to realize that there is a creator of heaven and earth." The father-in-law laughed and said, "To learn this you needed to exert yourself?" Even the maid at the court knows there is a creator of the worlds?" The Berditchever replied, "There is a difference. She knows it. I, indeed, *see* it."

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

R. Shmuel of Brod, one of the Sages of Brod, was a disciple of the Berditchever. He was a holy man. On a certain occasion, when R. Shmuel went to visit the Berditchever, he had to wait before he could enter, so he started reading a book. While reading, he came across a manuscript in which the Berditchever had written down all the 'small talk' he had heard from the Maggid. Some of the things written were so incomprehensible to R. Shmuel, and they seemed foolish. When he finally met the Berditchever, he asked why he had bothered to record the "small talk". The Berditchever replied, "During the entire time I spent with the Maggid, I tried to record everything he said, but I only understood half of it. The other half was beyond my comprehension. I could not understand it."

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

Chaven'u, the mother of the Ruzhiner, came to the Rabbi of Apta when the Ruzhiner started wearing *tefillin* (phylacteries). She informed him of the prayer schedule of the Rabbi of Apta and urged him to be punctual. However, on the day that the Ruzhiner was supposed to start wearing tefillin, he woke up very early, put on *tefillin*, and prayed alone. When the Rabbi of Apta set himself up to pray, they searched for the Ruzhiner but absolutely could not find him. Eventually, he returned home and his mother asked, "Where have you been?" When he explained that he had already prayed and worn tefillin, his mother became fearful that the Rabbi of Apta would be upset. However, when she recounted that her son already put on [*tefillin*], he simply said, "Let's see how you prayed," and he touched his forehead, saying, "Yes, yes, you have donned *tefillin* well."

Y.F.

Mekhele Shokhet

The custom in Belz during Sukkot was to *prave* (conduct) a *tish* (ritual meal) for *gebetene* (invited guests), and the Rabbi of Belz spoke about great platters(?) of food. This custom originated from the fact that when the Belzer first arrived in Belz, he found a city that was exceedingly boorish, heavily influenced by Gentiles, to the extent that many *balei batim* (laymen) did not eat in a sukkah. The Rabbi of Belz was greatly distressed, and therefore, he directed that an announcement be made daily during the *ushpizin* that all those named Avraham or Moshe, etc., are invited to his Sukkah. This led to the *balei batim* eating at least one time in a sukkah. Eventually, it became customary for the sons and grandsons of the invited guests, to be guests of the Rabbi of Belz, and these dinners became known as the *gebetener tish* (the table of the invitees).

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The father-in-law of the Sanzer also related an incident where, after a study session with the Hidushei HaRim, the latter spoke about Hasidism and shared the following story: R. Yaakov of Lisa, who authored *Chavat Da'at*, used to visit Warsaw and give public lectures to *gedolim* (revered rabbis) and great *talmidei hakhamim* (Torah scholars). The Hidushei HaRim also used to sit somewhere by the edge of the table, listening to the lecture. During one such lecture, the Hidushei HaRim posed a complicated question, prompting the Rabbi of Lisa to inquire about the identity of the person who asked the question. Upon being told, R. Yaakov summoned the Hidushei HaRim (who was then an eighteen-year-old unmarried man) to the front and engaged him in a learning discussion. Afterward, R. Yaakov remarked to the Hidushei HaRim: I suspect that you are a member of the Hasidim. The Hidushei HaRim was not embarrassed and confirmed that he had indeed traveled to see R. Bunim of Peshiskha. "Is that so?" responded R. Yaakov. "I would like to share a story with you that happened to me." On one occasion, he had witnessed two hasidim (Streliker?) eating a half-roasted goose before praying, which had left him feeling very uneasy. It was only after R. Yaakov saw

that these Jews were not unruly youngsters so he decided to wait and observe their conduct in the future. He had seen how they prayed and thought to himself, "If I prayed like that, I too would eat a half-roasted goose before praying."

(The Sanzer commented that this incident showed the great *gaon's* [brilliant scholar] respect for Hasidim. He further notes that the author, in the *siddur* (prayer book), *Derekh Hayim*, had written that one is not allowed to drink even a single glass of water before praying.)

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Sanzer's father-in-law, the rabbi of Vidaslov, was raised by the Hidushei HaRim - the brother of his father. The Sanzer heard this story directly from him. R. Berish Meisels, initially rabbi of Kracow, was later chosen to become the rabbi of Warsaw. Though he was considered a *mitnaged* (opponent of hasidism), the hasidim themselves crowned him as their rabbi. (they had initially intended to appoint the Hidushei HaRim as the rabbi of Warsaw, but he declined the offer, citing his limited availability for communal matters, as he would pray *shakharit* [morning prayers] for possibly four hours and what more did he require, given that he was already extremely wealthy?) During one visit by R. Berish Meisels to the Hidushei HaRim, the two discussed hasidism, and the Hidushei HaRim, while shouting, asked R. Meisels, "Do you know what I heard from my teacher, R. Bunim of Peshuskha about the Yid HaKadosh (the Holy Jew)? He was as great as the prophets, if not greater." The Hidushei HaRim then exclaimed again, "While smoking, the Yid HaKadosh had *kavanot* (mystical intentions) similar to the high priest or in the innermost sanctum during the offering of incense."

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

A Jew came to the Radoshitzer Rebbe, crying heavily and complaining that his *paritz* (squire), a big Jew-hater, was causing him a lot of trouble. He's endangering his life and seeks to remove him from his *parnasah* (livelihood). The Radoshitzer Rebbe blessed the man that the *paritz* should never do any harm. However, the problems persisted, and the man repeatedly came and complained about the *paritz's* behavior. He simply can't cope with it. For the last time, the Radoshitzer Rebbe took a cane in his hand, opened the window, aimed with the cane as if he would be shooting someone, and then shouted, "Pow (a gunshot sound) Ivan!" Later, it was discovered that the *paritz* had been shot and killed at the exact moment when the Rebbe had aimed his cane.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Sanzer Rebbe possesses numerous letters and manuscripts, including correspondences from notable figures such as the Trisker Maggid and R. Hayim Sanzer, alongside a transcription of a manuscript originally authored by the Besht.

Y.F.

During a *tish* (spiritual meal), R. David of Lelov suddenly exclaimed to his hasidim, “I want to tell you the *toira* (a Hasidic sermon) that the Rebbe of Lublin is currently saying .” R. David then proceeded to recite the same sermon the Lubliner was saying. Despite this, R. David was very humble and did not wish to be credited with performing *moftim* (miracles). He expressed, “The entire world should be hasidim of the holy Rebbe. But if that were the case, the table where the Hasidim gather would have to stretch across the entire world. When so many *gedolim* (revered rabbis) and *zaddikim* (saints) would have been present at the Rebbe’s *tish*, I would surely be seated at the very end of the table. But I remind you,” exclaimed R. David to his hasidim, “David’l will not hear what the holy Lubliner’s *toira* (Hasidic sermon).”

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Following the *ein keilokeinu* (concluding prayer of the morning prayer services), the Lubliner Rebbe would summon his students. Opening the curtains of the window, he would tell them, “You see? Look outside. Here, thousands of miles away this is taking place... This is happening there... This is occurring to so and so.” The Rebbe even instilled the ability in his students to “see”. Indeed, several weeks later it was confirmed that exactly what the Lubliner had foretold, came to pass.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Divrei Hayim (Sanzer Rebbe) laughed at those who journeyed to the burial site of R. Elimelekh of Lizensk. He said, “Fools! What do you think? That such a great *zaddik* (saint) remains interred in the very same location? Surely he has already found his resting place elsewhere.”

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When they inquired from the Hidushei HaRim whether they should construct an *ohel* (a structure erected over a grave – a mausoleum) for him, he replied, "There is no need for an *ohel*. For if one is not a great individual, they are not deserving of an *ohel*. However, if one is indeed a *zaddik* (saint), they will be taken to the Holy Land, so there is no purpose in having an *ohel*."

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The practice of celebrating *yahrzeits* [=death anniversaries] or *helulas* [=death anniversaries of revered rabbis or saints] and visiting the graves of rebbes started only after the Lubliner's death. Before this, such practices were not known. (This is according to the opinion of the Sanzer rebbe.)

In Kotzk and Vorka, it was forbidden to discuss *yahrzeits* or travel to gravesites, and as a result, they did not hold the Breslover hasidim in high regard—"dead" hasidim who did not have a living rebbe but only travel to a gravesite.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi David of Lelov tried to defend himself to the Lubliner—after the denunciation by two Lubliner hasidim, Berel and K'sil—however, when he realized that his defense was not successful, he shouted, "If that's the case, then David'l will go home and take off his frock!" Subsequently, he returned home and died a few months later. His *yahrzeit* (death anniversary) is the seventh of Shevat.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When Rabbi David of Lelov arranged a marriage for one of his children with a member of the family of the Yid HaKadosh (the Holy Jew), the Lubliner remarked: Until now, he had only half the world, but from now on, he will have the entire world.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When the Elder Tchortkover, R. Dovid Moshe conversed with R. Alter Valberamer regarding the dispute between the Lubliner and his three students⁴ – the Khoze, the “Holy Jew” and R. Dovid Lelover – he asked him: was the Lubliner unable to “turn their keys above in the reverse direction” [i.e. unscrew their sockets; undo the spiritual source of their energies] and thus weaken their stature?

R. Alter responded – evidently, he was unable to do so.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁴ Unclear? The dispute was between the Khoze and his students. The Khoze could thus not be one of the three students. Perhaps the three people include the Khoze as well and not just his opponents.

The Khozeh (*seer*), Yid HaKadosh, and R. David of Lelov, who were three disciples of the Lubliner Rebbe⁵ and led the conflict in opposition to him, passed away in the same year. Hasidim claimed that this was in retribution for taking away the Lubliner's finest followers while he was still alive.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁵ Unclear. The Lubliner IS the Khozeh. Perhaps there is confusion between the Noam Elimelekh and the Khozeh of Lublin.

R. Mikhel of Zlotchov (?)⁶ had three sons:

- 1) R. Yitzhak of Neshkhiz
- 2) R. Yosef, the Rabbi of Ostile
- 3) R. Leib, the Rabbi of Kavl

Once, a [Ne]shkhizer hasid visited R. Hayim of Sanz who inquired in detail how R. Yitzhak of Neshkhiz conducts himself—his *derekh haHasidut* (Hasidic approach) and behavior. The visitor shared various details with R. Hayim, but he did not seem impressed, even when the visitor recounted R. Yitzhak's daily schedule in its entirety. However, the visitor then remembered, "Every day before prayers, including on the eve of Passover and Yom Kippur, R. Yitzhak would take [apart?] a clock and set it [back] correctly." R. Hayim, it seems, considered this act to be a significant form of worship, and he was deeply impressed by it. He immediately instructed his close associate Moshe Yehoshua to harness the coach and prepare to travel to Neshkhiz. However, due to a series of reasons, he was unable to travel, and just as he was prepared to go, news arrived that R. Yitzhak had passed away.

Y. F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁶ The question mark appears in the original manuscript. Indeed, name of the three sons correspond to the sons of R. Mordekhai Shapira of Nezhkhiz (Ca. 1748-1800). R. Mordekhai was a disciple of the Mikhel of Zlotshov.

R. Yisrael Yitzhak, the Alexander Rebbe, did not grow a beard. (He died without any children.) There was no great love between Alexander and Ger. Gerer hasidim would mock R. Yisrael Yitzhak by referring to him as "the beardless Rebbe," to which Alexander hasidim would retort, "This is preferable to a beard with no rebbe."

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Yitzhak of Drobbitch, who was the oldest disciple of the Besht, was originally a *mitnaged* (opponent of hasidism), but later he adopted the Besht's approach. His son, R. Mikhal of Zlotchov, was not a hasid, but he was still considered a *talmid-haver* (disciple and colleague) of the Maggid. R. Mikhal was viewed as a student of his father, R. Yitzhak of Drobbitch. (The Sanzer Rebbe stated that R. Hayim introduced a new approach to hasidism, but did not provide any specifics about what this approach entailed.)

Y. F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Alter of Dzhikov bore witness about the Sanzer Rebbe, saying, "No one can match R. Hayim!
He worships God with ferocity [literally: with murder]!"

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

During the Divrei Hayim's (Sanzer Rebbe) lifetime, his daughter, who was married to R. Eliezer of Krakow (a descendant of the Radoshitzer), passed away. Over her as well, he observed *aveilut* [the bereavement rituals] for only an hour before concluding the *shiva* [seven-day mourning period] and resumed his leadership as rebbe, as if nothing occurred.

During the Friday night *tish* [spiritual meal] (during the *shiva*), he turned to his son-in-law who was seated behind him. (The custom observed at the Sanzer was that the sons-in-law were not seated together with the rebbe's children during the *tish*, but rather separately at their own table. This was commonly known as the "sons-in-law's bench"). The Sanzer inquired, "Eliezer, have they proposed any favorable *shiddukhim* (matches) for you?"

(This anecdote was recounted by the Sanzer Rebbe to illustrate the inexplicable aloof behavior of the Sanzer [the Divrei Hayim] during a period of great anguish.)

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Sanzer rebbe, the *Divrei Hayim*, bestowed the title of rebbe upon R. Alter Wolberemer⁷ and presented him with a *kvitel* [=petitionary note] with ten gulden, which was a significant amount for a *pidyon* [=redemption money]. R. Eliezer hesitated to read the *kvitel*, but the Sanzer instructed him to do so and imparted a blessing, [saying,] “You shall become a *poel yeshuot* [=miracle worker].”

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁷ Rabbi Alter Meir David Rothenberg, the Rebbe of Wolbrom. See <https://www.geni.com/people/Grand-Rabbi-Alter-Meir-David-Rotenberg-Admur-Wolbrom/6000000011283915273>.

The Sanzer Rebbe was informed by his father-in-law,⁸ R. Alter, the Wolberemer Rebbe (a descendant of R. David of Lelov), that when R. Hayim of Sanz's third wife passed away, he personally escorted her to the grave and called out to her, "Do not fear anyone. Declare you were my wife. Go in peace! Go in peace!" He returned home, where he observed *shiva* [= seven-day mourning period] by engaging in *aveilut* [=bereavement rituals] for one hour. After this period, he resumed his duties as rebbe and carried on as if nothing had happened.

Y. F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁸ R. Menakhem Binyomin Benzion Rothenberg-Halberstam, the Sanzer Rebbe (who is the informant mentioned here several times) was a grandson (not a son-in-law) of Rabbi Alter Meir David Rothenberg, the Rebbe of Wolbrom. See <https://www.ivelt.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=8056> and <https://www.geni.com/people/Grand-Rabbi-Alter-Meir-David-Rotenberg-Admur-Wolbrom/6000000011283915273>. (Perhaps the Sanzer Renne mentioned here is R. Menakhem Binyomin Benzion Rothenberg-Halberstam's father R. Aron Halberstam. Maybe he was the one who heard this story from his father-in-law Rabbi Alter Meir David Rothenberg. However, this distinction does not appear in the manuscript.

[Note: a fragment. Crossed out in the manuscript]

~~The fact [is] that although the Yid ha-Kadosh traveled to the Lubliner as a student — and was afraid to take Kvitchach in Lublin itself — he was literally surrounded by thousands of Hasidim who did not leave him alone.~~

Another reason why the Lubliner's life ended prematurely⁹ was because although the Yid HaKadosh initially travelled to the Lubliner as a student and was reluctant to receive *kvitels* [=petitionary notes] in Lublin itself, nevertheless, he was besieged by thousands of Hasidim.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁹ Is he referring to R. Ya'akov Yitzhak Horowitz, the Khoze of Lublin (1745-1815) (who passed away around the age of 70) or his student (and later rival) R. Ya'akov Yitzhak Rabinowitz, the "Holy Jew" of Peshischa (1766-1813) who passed away around the age of 47? The latter seems more likely (particularly in light of the story, which seems to imply that the "Holy Jew" was punished for taking away Hasidim from the Khoze. See also above p. 115.

R. David Moshe of Chortkov asked R. Alter of Wolbrum, who was a descendant of R. David of Lelov, to explain why the Lubliner held a *k'peida* (grudge) against R. David of Lelov. R. Alter recounted that he heard from older hasidim that the Lubliner's spirits were weakened when he saw that people were beginning to travel to his own students. He once remarked, "In our old age we are not used to the fact that we are required to travel to teach our students." Besides this, they conveyed to the Lubliner the slanderous report about his students. They came mostly from two Lubliner hasidim, K'sil, and Berel.¹⁰ They were called such because, about them, the revered Rebbe¹¹ cited [a verse in Psalms 92: 7], "A brutish man [*bar*] cannot know, and a fool [*k'sil*] cannot understand this." *Zaddikim* (saints)¹² said about them that they toiled for forty years to eliminate sinful thoughts from themselves before prevailing upon the Lubliner to accept their slanderous report regarding his students.

Y.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

¹⁰ A Reb Yekusiel (Ksil) and Reb Berel. See Yitzhak Alfasi, *Ha-Choze me-Lublin* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 2006), p. 93.

¹¹ R. Ya'akov Yitzhak Rabinowitz, the "Holy Jew" of Peshischa made these remarks the Berel and Yekutiel were a brutish man [*bar*] and a fool [*k'sil*] who could not understand his relationship to his rebbe, the Khoze. See Ibid.

¹² The "Holy Jew. See Ibid.

The Toldot arranged a marriage with one of his kids with a grandchild of R. Hayim Sanzer. The latter specifically did not want the Besht to be present at the wedding, and they were obliged to comply with his request. Following the marriage ceremony, the bride and groom sought out the Besht in Brod, and he blessed them with the biblical verse, "Among these shall the land be apportioned [Numbers 26:53]." Subsequently, the Toldot's son desired to journey to the Holy Land, but his wife was unwilling, and they divorced as a result.

[Note: A son of the Toldot married the granddaughter of R. Chaim.

Y.F.

Gedalya Schwartz

During the episode with the Liover, R. Meir of Premishlan wrote to the Rizhiner, "You have a bear.¹³ I'm afraid it might come into contact with *moyl* [moths that will eat away at the clothing]." The Rizhiner replied, "The bear has a healthy hide. *moyl* will not be able to remain attached inside of it."

[Note:] *Moyl* is a rot that sticks to a fur coat.

Y.F.

Isaac Braunstein

(Israel)

¹³ His name was DovBer.

At the Maggid, It was customary for the students to discuss and repeat his sermon to each other after the *tish* (spiritual meal). On one occasion, there was a debate about a particular saying, and the students decided to consult the Maggid for clarification. Usually, R. Shlomo of Lutzk, the Maggid's gabbai, was the one who would ask the Maggid for clarification in such situations, as no one else was allowed to enter without permission. However, it was already late at night, and R. Shlomo of Lutzk had returned home. Therefore, the students decided that the Tanya should be the one to enter and ask the Maggid. The Tanya knocked on the door, and when the Maggid asked who was there, the Tanya replied, "I." The Maggid asked again, and the Tanya repeated, "I." This continued for several times until the Tanya finally answered with "Zalmenu," (the Maggid's nickname for the Tanya). Upon hearing the response, the Maggid personally opened the door and let him in. Another frequent custom at the Maggid was for him to unexpectedly tell one of his students, "You should go there"—or to a different location—and he would give directions. After the Tanya entered the Maggid's room, the Maggid instructed him, "Zalmenu, tomorrow you should travel to this specific village, dressed in simple clothing so as not to be recognized." Naturally following the Maggid's directive, the Tanya arrived at the village just as

they needed a tenth man to complete a *minyan* (quorum) for a marriage ceremony. The rich man of the village was marrying off a child and a *minyan* was lacking. The Tanya participated in the minyan, and his presence was greatly appreciated. After the ceremony, he was invited to a lavish feast and seated at the edge of the table, which was set with expensive silver tableware. After the soup course, the servant approached him and whispered a secret into his ear "Dear uncle, a spoon is missing. Please return it." The Tanya was deeply affected [by this accusation] and asserted, "Not I!" This back-and-forth was repeated ten times. The servant instructed him to return the spoon and the Tanya yelled, "Not I." The rich man observed the situation and remarked, "He is fiercely holding his own! They ought to examine the servant himself." Indeed they found that the servant had stolen the object. They appeased the Tanya and he returned home. It was customary for those who went on such missions to report back to the Maggid upon their return. Therefore, the Tanya went directly to the Maggid's residence and, before he could even knock on the door, the Maggid opened it, stretched out his hand, and welcomed him, saying, "Zalmenu, now you already understand that for once saying 'I', you must suffer ten times by saying, "Not I."

Y.F.

Mordechai Shalom Yosef Friedman-Sadagorer Rebbe

Heard on the 19th of Kislev at a *tish* of his father, R. Aharon

R. Avraham of Sokhatchov asked a Boyaner Hasid, Rabbi Leibele Bendiner, to share a teaching from the Boyaner. The Boyaner hasid was reluctant to comply, stating, "The teachings of the Boyaner Rebbe are not easily repeatable." But the Sokhatchover pressed him and argued, "How is it possible for a Jew to travel so many years to Boyan and not be able to repeat a teaching from his rebbe?" Thus, he repeated to him this teaching: "From where is it proven that *teshuva* (repentance) was created before the world? Because nothing stands in the way of (literally: before) repentance."

Y.F.

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The Bohusher recounted the saying of the Ruzhiner: “A rebbish family is compared to an apple tree. The rebbe is the tree, the children are the branches, and the grandchildren are the apples. In the event that the apple is not good, ‘the world’ will assert that the tree is no good. Therefore, I implore you, children! Behave yourselves so that they won’t declare that the apple tree is unsatisfactory.”

Y.F.

Gedalya Schwartz

The Besht once informed R. Ber, the Magid of Mezritch, that a soul would descend who would become a great advocate for Jews. “I will no longer have the privilege of knowing him, but you will. How will you recognize him? When he will come to lead the afternoon prayer service (*minkha*) and a Jew would stand at the *amud* (lectern) to prevent him from approaching it [you will know it’s him].” Many years later, a young man who would later become the Rabbi of Berditchev came to the Maggid and requested to lead the afternoon prayer service, but was denied. At that moment, the Maggid exclaimed, “This is indeed the young man the Besht referred to.”

Y.F.

Gedalya Schwartz

On one occasion, R. Zusha, the son of R. Yitzhak Meir and the grandson of the Rabbi of Apta, slept in the same room as his grandfather. In the middle of the night, the Rabbi of Apta woke up and began sighing and screaming: "Woe is to me! I am a sinner, I commit transgressions", etc. The boy Zusha, who was 12 years old at the time, also woke up and heard his grandfather persistently accusing himself. Zusha then said, "Grandfather, I can attest that you are not a sinner." The Rabbi of Apta asked him, "But doesn't the verse state, 'One witness shall not rise against a man for any iniquity'?" Zusha replied, "Yes, that is true, but only "for any iniquity" are two witnesses required. However, on no iniquity, one witness is also believed."

Y.F.

Elazar Zohn

Near the river Bug that flowed in Mezritch, there was a dam that created a large, calm river where boys would bathe in the summer. R. Yitzhak Meir noted, “The boys were swimming without even considering the mitzvah of *toiveling* (immersing themselves) with the intention of fulfilling a *mitzvah* (religious deed). However, the river *is* fulfilling its obligation and is purifying them.

Y.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Stoliner hasid, who was a great *lamdan* (Talmudic expert) was on his way to Stolin and stopped in Kobrin, where there was a rabbi who was a great *mitnaged* (opponent of Hasidism) but also a great *lamdan* and Torah scholar. They conversed in Torah and the rabbi recognized the hasid was a great *lamdan*. However, when the rabbi learned that the hasid was traveling to Stolin, he at once “tore his hair” and exclaimed, “What do you mean? What will you accomplish? *Bitul toire* (Neglect of Torah study)! ” The hasid responded, “Traveling to a rebbe is a form of being *olah regel* (holiday pilgrimage to Jerusalem). As we travel, we engage in Torah study, and upon arrival to the rebbe, we learn *musar* (ethics) and how to acquire *midot tovot* (good character traits).” However, the rabbi was dissatisfied with the answer, prompting the hasid to tell him, “I am a bit of a mind reader. With your consent, I will attempt to determine your thoughts.” With the rabbi’s agreement, the hasid tells him, “Oh yes! You are now contemplating the verse, “I have set God before me always” (*sheviti*)”. The rabbi admitted that he had not even started thinking about this topic, provoking the hasid to respond, “Well, for this reason, I *indeed* travel to my rebbe, the Stoliner. I am aware that he constantly meditates on the verse ‘I have set God before me always’.”

Y.F.

Pesakh Leltchik

(Stoliner hasid)

Rabbi Asher of Stolin visited a *shtetl* (town) where there was a *maggid* (preacher) who came to give a sermon on the Sabbath. The entire town donated to the Stoliner, but the *maggid* was barely successful. Later, the *shtadt magid* (town magid) and R. Asher met, and the *maggid* asked, “Can you help me understand? Why did you receive so much money despite speaking very little, while I received so little despite my long sermon?” The Stoliner replied, “Comprehend! I despise money. When I speak, I impart these feelings to my listeners, which is why they give me their money. On the other hand, you continue to intently bear in mind the money. As a result, when you preach, you instill in the listeners the same feeling, causing them to develop an attachment to their own money and do not give it away.”

Y.F.

Pesakh Leltchik

(Stoliner hasid)

A woman was married to a carpenter who frequently left her to search for employment. At one point, he vanished and she was left with no clue regarding his whereabouts. On a particular occasion, R. Asher'l Stoliner* passed through the village where the wife lived. As he was departing, the *aguna* (abandoned wife) was overcome with emotion and shared her hardships with him, her heart heavy with bitterness. He listened to her story while standing next to the coach. Upon noticing the coach's wheel, he remarked that a carpenter needs to be summoned to fix it. With the arrival of the carpenter from the village, the rebbe initiated a conversation about the carpenter who had gone missing, until he eventually shouted at him, "Confess!" The rebbe then convinced him to confess to killing and burying the missing man under his own courtyard during an altercation.

* Although not 100% certain that this is R. Asher, he definitely belongs to the Stoliner dynasty.

Y.F.

Pesakh Leltchik

(Stoliner hasid)

The Ruzhiner hasidim had a saying that the more the diamond is polished, it becomes more exquisite and we move closer to the arrival of the Messiah.

It was said that even the grandchildren of the children of the Great Ruzhiner are also sacred.

See also the tale about the declaration made by the Sadagorer Rabbi when they voiced their complaints about R. Yisrael'nu of Sadagora who said, "I desire to become a superior rebbe than my father."

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

When they were still very young children, the Rebbetzin Gitele, R. Yisrael'nu (later the Sadagorer), and R. Yitzhak (later the Boyaner) were playing together. They were playing “rebbe and hasid”, passing *kvitels* (petitionary notes) to each other. When the young Gitel gave R. Yisrael'nu a *kvitel*, he exclaimed, I am a greater rebbe than Father (the Elder Sadagorer). This angered Gitele, and she slapped him. In response, Yisrael'nu shoved her and she started bleeding. Gitele then ran to Father, the Elder Sadagorer (R. David Ertenberg, the rabbi of Berditchev, was also present during this incident), and complained about R. Yisrael'nu. However, the Sadagorer commented, “But he is right! The more gold is refined, the greater it becomes.”

Y.F.

Matityahu Spector

(Boyaner hasid)

The Elder Husyatiner led the *na'anuim* (waving of the four species) ceremony of *Hoshana Rabba* (final day of Sukkot) for four consecutive hours. During one instance, a young man had the nerve to peek beneath his *talit* (prayer shawl), and he observed that his nose was bleeding profusely like water, without him even being aware of it.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

During the *shiva* (seven day mourning period) following the Elder Husyatiner's death, his widow shared a story. One Yom Kippur night, she heard a soul knocking on the window, pleading for a *tikun* (rectification). She was frightened, but the Husyatiner assured the soul that it would no longer be subject to harm. He then instructed his wife not to share the story with anyone, for keeping it secret would be a *segula* (miraculous aid) for *arikhat yamim* (longevity).

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

(heard from his father)

Even during the festive holidays of Purim and Simkhat Torah, at the *tish* (spiritual meal) of the Elder Husyatiner, the latter did not exhibit any movements associated with being alive. They feared his experiences of *hitpashtut haNefesh* (ascent of the soul). Apprehensively, the hasidim began singing and clapping with spoons and forks. On one occasion, there was so much fear that they even summoned the rebbetzin to push him and revive him.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

During one *tish* (spiritual meal), the Elder Husyatiner noticed that his silver snuff box was missing. He then commented to his *gabbai* (sexton), R. David, who also happened to be his teacher, “You should know that you literally put me at risk(?).”

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Buczacz¹⁴ told a story about R. Yaakov of Rimaliv, the renowned author of the book *Kokhav MiYaakov*, who was brought to Husyatyn to make a ritual bath kosher. While there, he had a discussion with the elder Husyatner about a complex issue regarding *mikvaot* (plural for *mikva*). The Rabbi of Rimalov recounted that the Husyatiner had uncovered the *svara* (reasoning) of the Ra'avad and discovered the Ra'avad's ideas.

(Hasidim considered the Husyatiner as a great Torah scholar, despite never hearing a word of Torah from him, neither at the *tishen* (spiritual meals) nor elsewhere.)

Y.F.

Yaaakov Teitelbaum

¹⁴ A reference either to 1) Rabbi Meir Arik (1855–1925) 2) or Rabbi Sholom Mordechai Schwadron (1835-1911) author of the responsa *Maharsham*, both of whom served for a time as Rabbi in Buczacz and were both close to the Chortkov dynasties.

The *gaon olam* (world-renowned scholar), the Rabbi of Buczacz, who journeyed to Chortkov, bore witness regarding the Elder Chortkover, that during Hanukkah, when he recited the *vihi noam* (a passage from Psalms), he was literally transformed.

Y.F.

Yaaakov Teitelbaum

The Elder Husyatiner was a *kapdan* (stickler). On a particular occasion, the *gabai* (sexton) R. David handed him a cup, which overturned. This caused the Husyatiner to glare at him with a frightening look, which filled him with fear. Immediately, R. David developed a skin rash and was not allowed to enter the Rebbe's presence for some time, until he was able to ask for forgiveness.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Buczacz shared the following story about the Elder Chortkover:

During a *tish* (spiritual meal), a Jew approached the Rebbe while they were raising the toast, *l'hayim* (to life!), he broke a bottle of wine, causing it to spill onto the Chortkover. The Jew almost fell into a faint on the spot. How was it possible to spill wine on the Rebbe? The Chortkover immediately understood how the person felt and reassured him, saying that breaking a bottle of wine is actually a cause for happiness and a sign of blessing. The Jew was literally delighted with this reaction. Later on, the Rebbe sent him, through the *gabai* (sexton), a *kapote* (caftan) as a gift to show that his spirits were not weakened as a result.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

R. Yaakov'l Teitelbaum's father had known a Jew who served as a *shamash* (beadle) for the Rabbi of Apta. The Jew was an ordinary and unsophisticated person. As a beadle, it turned out for him to sleep in the same room as the Rabbi of Apta.

On one occasion, the Rabbi of Apta was engaging in certain customs that prevented him from sleeping, causing the beadle to scream to the Rabbi of Apta, "Let me sleep!" the Rabbi of Apta then reassured him, "Sleep! Sleep! Nothing will happen."

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

The Rabbi from Torna shared a story that a Jew, who was once in Sanz, recounted to him: The Divre Hayim was weak and therefore prayed in a separate room. During the *sefira* (counting of the Omer) period, the hasidim shouted the *I'shem yikhud* (unification prayer) with great elevation. (It is explicitly stated in the Noda BiYehuda's responsa that one should not recite the *I'sheim yikhud*.) Upon hearing this, the Rabbi of Sanz emerged from his room and began yelling at his hasidim, "Haskel (the Noda BiYehuda), opines that we must refrain from uttering the *I'sheim yikhud*, yet you are *also* shouting it."

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

When the Elder Sadagurer passed away on the 11th of Elul, the two brothers, R. Yitzhak (Boyaner) and R. Yisrael'nu (later becoming the Sadagorer), continued to sit together at all of the *yomtev* (religious holiday) *tishes* (spiritual meals). On Simkhat Torah, before *ata-hareita* (the prayer cited before removing the Torah scrolls from the ark), the hasidim initiated a commotion and engaged in a dispute regarding who should approach [the *amud* (prayer lectern) to lead the congregation in the] *ata-hareita*. Eventually, the regular *bal-tefila* (prayer leader) stepped forward. However, for the Sabbath of Bereishit, following Sukkot, the two brothers already held separate *tishen*. R. Yitzhak, (being the eldest) held a *tisch* where R. David Artenberg and R. Yosef Yisraels, two esteemed Sadagorer Hasidim who were still in the presence of the Ruzhiner, joined him. When R. Yitzhak began saying *toyre* (a Hasidic sermon)—i.e. for the first time as rebbe—he commenced with the words, "Bereishit—I say Sha-bbat—Shabbat." (The same is stated in the Zohar.) At this moment, R. Yosef Yisraels began trembling from such *hitpa'alut* (intense emotional excitement), that he scratched the skin and grasped onto the foot of the individual sitting beside him. The Hasidim were taken aback. What is so remarkable about this statement? Why did it cause such excitement? After all, it is already mentioned in the Zohar! So R. Yosef Yisraels and R. David Artenberg (the Rabbi of Berditchev) shared a story about R. Yitzhak when he was only one year old.

He was brought to the Ruzhiner, and there he was taught to utter his first word, *gut-shabbes* (Have a good Sabbath). However, he didn't pronounce it correctly and instead said, "Sha-bbat." Upon hearing this, the Ruzhiner exclaimed, "Listen! He says, 'Sha-bbat'—Shabbat." This is why the elder Ruzhiner hasidim were so excited about R. Yitzhak's first *toyre* as rebbe.

Y.F.

Mattityahu Spektor

(Boyaner hasid)

When the Elder Trisker arranged a match with the Husyatiner, all the children of Ruzhiner attended the wedding. The Trisker had a custom of blessing the bride and groom before the *hupa* (marriage ceremony) and desired to bless the Husyatiner. The Husyatiner requested that the Trisker ask his older brother, the Sadagorer. When the Trisker asked the Sadagorer, he responded, "Yes, but without using hands. When blessing with hands, one is required to bow, and my father did not bow to anyone—neither do we nor do our children."

Y.F.

Alexander Bistritski

The Rabbi of Torna¹⁵ shared a story about the Ruzhiner. At one point, the Ruzhiner visited Skala Podolska. In that place, lived the author of the responsa Bet Shlomo, a world-renowned *gaon* (eminent Torah scholar). Just before the Friday night candle lighting, the Ruzhiner, while smoking his lulke-zibik (stem pipe), suddenly called for the presence of the Bet Shlomo. He urgently sought a ruling on whether a monetary threat should be considered coercion or not. Without delay, the Bet Shlomo promptly flipped through the pages of the Talmudic tractate, Ketubot 18b, specifically the Mishna that states, “The witnesses who said this is our handwriting.” Drawing from Rashba’s commentary on that *sugya* (Talmudic section), he ruled that a monetary threat indeed constitutes coercion.

Upon hearing this, the Ruzhiner swiftly discarded his pipe just in time as the moment had arrived to light the candles. Subsequently, the Ruzhiner related the following story: there was once a Jewish individual who owned a brewery producing *bronfen* (liquor). To sustain his *parnassah* (livelihood) and avoid excessive taxation, he implemented the use of a tube on the side this way he exempted himself from taxes. However, when he reached the Other World and faced the bet din (court), the Jew argued that throughout his entire life, he had never desecrated the Sabbath, except on one occasion. On one occasion, the tax collectors arrived to inspect his brewery during Shabbat, and the Jew became apprehensive that they would discover

¹⁵ Rabbi Meir Arik (1855–1925).

the tube, leading to financial ruin. Therefore, he had to remove the tube, thereby necessitating the violation of Shabbat. The Jew argued that it was a situation of monetary coercion and thus claimed exemption. The Jew now argues that he faced monetary coercion and should be exempt. In the celestial realm, it was decided that the Ruzhiner should approach the *posek hador* (foremost halakhic authority) to determine whether a monetary threat constitutes coercion. As a result, even though it was quite late for candle lighting, the Ruzhiner sought the Bet Shlomo's final ruling.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

(The story was heard from the Rabbi of Torna, himself)

(Yaakov Teitelbaum, a student of the Rabbi of Torna)

R. Nachum Bern'nu recounted the following story to the Old Sadagorer: A village Jew approached the Rabbi of Apta, seeking advice on whether he should lease an *arende* (an inn/estate) from a squire. The Rabbi of Apta instructed him to include six points in the contract. After the Jew departed from the Rabbi of Apta, the Rabbi of Savran pursued him and inquired about the matter. The Rabbi of Savran comprehended five of the methods, but the sixth eluded him. (The Rabbi of Savran definitely assumed that the Rabbi of Apta had listed six methods of divine worship.) The Jew, on the other hand, did not understand since he could not distinguish between "points" and "methods". When R. Nachum Ber finished recounting the tale, the Elder Sadagorer exclaimed, "I can comprehend that a great person conveys a message that is not in line with their intended meaning. However, I cannot comprehend a situation where two listeners understand a speaker's words differently."

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Buczacz¹⁶ was informed by Rabbi David Artenberg, the Rabbi of Berditchev, about a book *Beit Rebbi* or *Vikuakh Rabbah* that describes the dispute between the Rabbi of Shpitovke and the Noda BiYehuda.¹⁷ R. David refused to keep the book in his possession and threw it away, believing it was authored by a *letz* (mockers). While it is true that the Rabbi of Shpitovke visited Noda BiYehuda in Prague regarding a matter of the Toldot, the rest of the content in the book is fabricated nonsense.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum heard this from the Rabbi of Buczacz. Yaakov Teitelbaum is also a student of the Rabbi of Buczacz

¹⁶ A possible reference either to

¹⁷ This indeed refers to *Sefer Vikuakh Rabbah*, see <https://tinyurl.com/mv76s5sm>.

After returning from visiting the Noda BiYehuda, the Rabbi of Shpitovka started to write *hasagot* (critiques) on the book *Noda BiYehuda*. He showed these *hasagot* to the Maggid of Mezritch, who did not instruct him to publish them and commented, “*Hassagot* could be made on any author. The Ra’avad wrote *hasagot* on Maimonides, but a heavenly announcement declared the *halakha* (Jewish law) to be like Moshe.” I say, the *halakha* is like the Noda BiYehuda.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Torna¹⁸ recounted that it is well-known that the Besht remarked, “A third of the world stands on the slim Hazkel (the Noda BiYehuda was tall and slender).”

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

(A student of the Rabbi of Torna; he heard the story from him)

¹⁸ Rabbi Meir Arik (1855–1925).

The Rabbi of Torna¹⁹ shared the following account: The wife of the Noda BiYehuda was related to the Besht. On one occasion, they were all present at a *brit* (circumcision gathering). Without her husband's knowledge, she brought her son Yaakovske to the Besht and allowed him to bless her son. Later, during the festivities, the Noda BiYehuda asked the Besht to "say *toire*" (deliver a sermon), but the Besht refused, stating that the Noda BiYehuda would not appreciate it. But the Noda BiYehuda pleaded persistently and the Besht eventually did say the *toire*. Ultimately, the Noda BiYehuda indeed did not value the *toire* given by the Besht.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

(a student of the Rabbi of Torna; he heard this from him)

¹⁹ Rabbi Meir Arik (1855–1925).

The Ruzhiner held the Bet Shlomo in high esteem to the point where, when he married off the Chortkover, he requested that the Bet Shlomo bless him. He said about the Bet Shlomo that he possessed the *zelem elokim* (divine image of God).

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

R. Asher of Stolin (R. Yisrael's father) (died in 5733) once arrived in a village. A hasid who, God save us! was childless implored him to come to his home. The hasid was very poor and had no porcelain utensils to honor the rebbe. So the matron borrowed a porcelain plate and bowl from a neighbor and set a poor table near the water. During the meal, the Rebbe's plate fell and shattered, and the matron was angry but too respectful to dare say to the rebbe, "Oh! The plate broke!" At a later time, she witnessed the Rebbe taking hold of the bowl and hurling it into the water, and it seemed he did so intentionally. She was afraid to tell the Rebbe, but the wife thought to herself, what excuse will she give her neighbor? It was later revealed that the Stoliner Rebbe had intentionally broken the bowl, knowing that it would anger the woman, which would ultimately serve as a remedy. The rebbe knew the anger would affect the woman's blood, which was causing her to be unable to conceive.

Y.F.

Avraham Cohen

Stoliner hasid

R. Pinchas from Koretz refused to receive R. Mikhel of Zlotchov because he had gone to the Magid instead of the Toldot. R. Pinchas believed that the fact that the Magid succeeded the Besht was *hasagat gevul* (territorial encroachment), since as a *talmid muvhak* (close disciple), the *rebbistive* (rebbe'ship) should remain with the Toldot. R. Pinchas of Koretz did not express doubts about the Magid, but he felt that the succession belonged to the Toldot.

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

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The custom of the Rabbi of Apta was to have different caftans for various occasions, and he attached great importance to it. On a particular occasion, for the Sabbath of the Shekels, he realized that he needed a caftan for the Sabbath. Despite it being Thursday already, he contacted a tailor and directed him to create a caftan immediately for the upcoming Sabbath. The tailor protested, stating that it was impossible to sew a caftan so quickly. However, the Rabbi of Apta insisted. Well, the tailor was a hasid. He put aside all of his other obligations and put himself to work. He worked every minute of the day and night and succeeded in completing the caftan precisely before the start of candle lighting. The Rabbi of Apta was impressed with the tailor's excellent work and praised him highly: that he sacrificed himself to such a degree; that he is jealous of him; and if only he could dedicate himself to the same extent in the service of God. Due to all the praises, the tailor began to see himself as very great and suggested to the Rabbi of Apta, "If so, I have a daughter and you have a son. Maybe we should arrange a match between them?" The Rabbi of Apta remained silent and asked the tailor a question, "What did you do before you became a tailor?" The tailor replied, "I was an apprentice tailor," and he admitted that during his training years, he was caught stealing leftover materials.

The Rabbi of Apta exclaimed, "This ruined the *shiddukh* (match). If it wasn't for this, perhaps something could have resulted from it."

Y.F.

Neustadt

Rabbi Moshe of Slavita²⁰ objected to publishing the book Or HaMeir by Rabbi Velelevel of Zhitomir, arguing, “I know he received more [teachings] from my father than the Magid, but in his book, he consistently cites the Magid.”

Y.F.

Pinchas Landau

²⁰ The son of R. Pinchos of Koretz.

The narrator of this anecdote heard it from his grandmother, Rebbetzin Reiza'le, who was the daughter of Rabbi Yosef David Arliker.—She was the wife of R. Mordekhai Warshilivker.—Rebbetzin Reiza'le heard the story from her mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Dina'le, who was the eldest daughter of the Rabbi of Apta and the wife of Rabbi Yisrael of Litchnitz.

The Rabbi of Apta once remarked to her daughter, "My dear daughter, I fear that if it is not enough that my descendants will not become rebbes themselves, they will also become *apikorsim* (heretics). They will think that as they are nothing [/good-for-nothing], we were also nothing [/good-for-nothing]"

Y.F.

Neustadt

R. Nachum of Chernobyl used to make a journey to the grave of the Besht in Mezhbish. Naturally, he would also visit R. Barukh. Once, he was expected to reach Mezhbish, but the travel duration was prolonged. Upon his arrival, R. Barukh asked him why it had taken so long. R. Nachum explained that a soul from the Other World had approached him on the way and prevented him from continuing until he promised to offer him a *tikun* (rectification). R. Nachum asked the soul which sins it required a tikun for. The soul revealed that it had lived in the same city as R. Nachum and had relentlessly pursued him. R. Nachum forgave this sin. The soul then confessed to having thrown a stone at R. Nachum on one occasion, and this sin was also forgiven. The soul continued to recount its sins, and R. Nachum forgave them all. Afterward, the soul mentioned that it had convinced a Cossack to associate with R. Nachum's daughter. R. Nachum concluded, "I will not forgive him for this sin. I hurled him into the abyss for a thousand times."

R. Barukh responded, "They say that I am an angry rabbi, and they say that you are a kind rabbi. Can one's heart bear to see a

Jewish soul wandering in filth for so long?" R. Barukh put on his coat and he and R. Nachum went outside and lingered for some time. When they returned, they announced that they had provided the soul with an appropriate *tikun*.

The elder of Husiatyn told this story on Hanukkah, after the candle-lighting.

Y.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

A couple who had an only daughter approached the Bohusher. The Jew complained that his only daughter turned out very well. He happily married her off, but after her wedding, she became ill. They had taken her to many places around the world, and the doctors confirmed that she was completely healthy, yet she suffered from heart pains that were making her ill. Though the family never traveled to a rebbe, the girl promised that she would never disclose the secret in her heart, only to the rebbe. So she went to the Bohusher who told her, "It is okay to reveal everything." She then related the following account: Before marrying her present husband, she was already engaged to another man who went missing. She subsequently married her current husband, who is favorable both in the eyes of God and man. However, at the time of the wedding, the previous groom appeared to her in a dream and ever since then, she has been unwell. The Rebbe then responded, "Nu, he (the first groom) is right after all!" Upon hearing this, the parents and the girl were overwhelmed with fear and became weak. Once they had regained their composure, the Rebbe explained, "It is a Jewish custom that the groom goes to the bride. Since you did not cut your hair, he did not realize that you were already married to someone else."

I promise you that if you cut off your hair, the previous groom would no longer appear in your dreams.” She agreed to the promise, cut off her hair, and during the night, the previous groom no longer appeared in her dreams. Following this, the Bohusher summoned her husband. The couple resided in Bohush for seven months and seven days, after which she gave birth to a child.

Y.F.

Isaac Braunstein (Heard from his father)

In 1917, while the War was ongoing, a destitute colonel approached the Bohusher. It was the Sabbath and the Bohusher was in the midst of his prayers. The colonel desired an audience, but the Bohusher was hesitant to receive him since it was the Sabbath. Despite this, the colonel persisted and argued that his audience was related to the War and that he must see the Rebbe. Eventually, the Bohusher consented, but only on the condition that the entire *oylam* (public) should come along. The colonel agreed and went into the Rebbe's room. He told the Rebbe that he came regarding a matter that was troubling him, and he had no peace of mind as a result. He was originally born as a Christian, he first went to the Metropolis but was not given a satisfactory answer. Therefore, he decided to approach the head of the Jewish religion – the Bohusher. But before he reveals his problem, he will introduce himself. He is a high-ranking officer in the army, holding multiple doctorates in Philosophy, Chemistry, Engineering, and Law. He is also a journalist and a freethinker. As a lawyer, he is responsible for having soldiers swear loyalty to their country, as he is a great patriot. But simultaneously, as a freethinker, he wants to know whether the oath the soldiers take according to his formulation is correct or not. The Rebbe instructed the officer to repeat his titles,

and he did so. The Rebbe asked the officer to repeat his titles, and he did so. Then, the Bohusher asked him, "What are the different hair colors that humans have?" The officer responds with "brown, black, blond, and grey."

"And birds?"

The officer listed off a variety of colors, including almost all the colors of the rainbow. The Rebbe then questioned him, "Why do humans only have a limited range of colors, while birds have such a vast array?" The officer was unsure how to respond. The Rebbe then asked him, "Maybe you can provide an answer based on the teachings of chemistry?" "No," replies the officer. The Rebbe proceeded to list all the domains in which the officer held a doctorate, but still, the officer was at a loss for an answer. Finally, the Bohusher declared, "Do you know why birds are so colorful? It's because God made them that way. This is proof that there is a God in the world! So, there is no need for you to be concerned because the soldiers are taking an oath to God, not to you." Upon hearing this, the officer prostrated himself at the feet of the rebbe and kissed them. Then, he directed himself towards the *oylam* and shouted out to them, "You should be proud to have such a leader of your religion. I wish for all of you to be healthy and all the best."

Y.F.

Isaac Braunstein

(Israel)

Was present during the story

Upon the arrival of the *rebbetzin* (wife of a rabbi) of R. Mordekhai Shalom Yosef of Sadagora-Pshemeshil in the Holy Land, he shared a story about the Ruzhiner. In the year of his passing, the Ruzhiner repeated the passage *v'hi she'amda* (a passage in the Haggadah of Pesakh) 62 times. When asked about the reason for the repetition, he replied, "If you desire to reveal something, you must ask about it. Therefore, I repeated the verse [passage] many times so that you would inquire. I wish to provide you with a sign of the Redemption of Israel. There will come a time when Jews will be forced to leave all corners of the Earth and be barred from entering the Holy Land. You should then be aware then that this moment in time will be *geulat yisrael* (Redemption of Israel)."

(At that time, the British did not permit Jews entry into the Holy Land)

Y.F.

Isaac Braunstein

(Israel)

R. Zusya of Zikiv was provided with accommodations [after his marriage] at the home of the Rabbi of Savran, who was the grandfather of his *rebbetzin* (wife of a rabbi). On the night of Yom Kippur, the Rabbi of Savran noticed R. Zusya studying Hoshen Mishpat (the fourth section of the Jewish Code of Law) in the synagogue. The Rabbi of Savran inquired, "What do you say about studying Hoshen Mishpat on Yom Kippur night?" R. Zusya replied, "If there is judgment down here, there is no judgment up there" (Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim: 4). The Rabbi of Savran chuckled and remarked, "Truly, you are wise."

Y.F.

Gedalya Schwartz

R. Aharon of Chernobyl provided room and board to the Rabbi of Belz [after his marriage]. On one occasion, thereafter, during a *toire* (Hasidic sermon), the Rabbi of Belz repeated the words, "The *zeide* [grandfather], the MeOr Enayim, said... The *zeide*, the MeOr Enayim, said..." multiple times. Afterward, he emphasized, "The most important thing is that one's thoughts, speech, and actions should be dedicated solely to God - *bilti laShem livado* (only to God alone)."

Y.F.

Gedalya Schwartz

- 1) The Ruzhiner inquired as to what the Lubliner said when R. Shalom Prohobishter passed away.
- 2) What happened to the Ruzhiner when he was in a tavern together with a merchant from Brody.
- 3) A saying of the Ruzhiner about entering heaven.
- 4) The Ruzhiner interpretation of the dispute between Jacob and Laban.
- 5) A saying of the Ruzhiner that his children will [create?] the bullet (*koyh*) [[“the voice [*ko*h] of Jacob” (Gen. 27:22)]] that will “take” [i.e. kill] the Kaiser (Czar?).
- 6) Three versions of a saying of the Ruzhiner – when a follower complained that his father was tormenting him because he visits the Rebbe.
- 7) What the Ruzhiner said to a follower when he complained about his children.
- 8) The Leover Rebbe’s interpretation of the verse “and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents” [Deut. 16:7].

- 9) Why the Ruzhiner inquired about an old Jew who had visited him but who could later not be found.
- 10) The Elder Sadagerer's saying about the war between Nikolai and the Turks (Crimean War?).
- 11) A tale that the Ruzhiner used to tell on Purim how things do not go as a person wishes but as the Master of the World wishes it to go (about a marriage match between a doctor's son and the daughter of a rabbi).
- 12) A tale that the Ruzhiner himself related about how he managed to turn a wealthy miser into a hospitable man.
- 13) Another tale that the Ruzhiner (?) related about a wealthy man who became a hospitable man.
- 15) A tale about a Jew who became a follower of the Ruzhiner after a friend of his relayed him regards from the World of Truth [=the world of the souls of the deceased] [saying] that there they show great honor those who traveled or even gave money to R. Abraham Prohobishter or his children.

- 16) A tale that the Ruzhiner related about a heretic who came to him and asked why earlier *tsadikim* would admonish sinners but now the *tsadikim* bring them close – and what the Ruzhiner replied to this.
- 17) How the Ruzhiner interpreted the statement “If only Israel would keep two Shabbats then they would immediately be redeemed” [*Shabbat* 118b] when a heretic asked him a question about it.

- 18) How after the death of the Malach [R. Avraham, the son of the Magid of Mezerich], R. Shalom of Karlin and R. Mordechai (Nahum?) of Chornobyl split the orphans R. Shalom Shakhna and R. Israel Hayim between them, and a tale about what happened with R. Shalom Shakhna involving a miracle.
- 19) A tale that the Elder Chortkover told about how the Magid of Koznitz wanted to bring the final redemption – and what the Chortkover himself concluded (also mentions the Besht and the Magid).
- 20) An interpretation by the Elder Sadagerer of the verse “Can a woman forget [her baby...] I never could forget you” [Isa. 49: 15] and what the Ruzhiner said about this verse.
- 21) The writer of the manuscript relates how the Elder Sadagerer received 3 old men, one a Bohusher *hasid* and the other a Savraner *hasid* – and what the Bohusher *hasid* later recounted what the Bohusher related about R. Moses Leib of Sasov.
- 22) Customs of the Ruzhiner and what he said to hasidim who came to complain about the new decrees in Russia.

- 23) + 24) Statements of the Ruzhiner about old saints who in the world of truth forgot to benefit the world.
- 25) A statement of the (Ruzhiner or Sadagerer) at the ritual of checking for leavened bread
- 26) A tale [about] what happened when the Ruzhiner was in Berditchev (?) with a merchant who was involved with demons and how the Ruzhiner saved him.
- 27) The Ruzhiner related a long story about a Savraner *hasid* who although the Savraner Rav was unable to save him, and the Ruzhiner did help him – that he still traveled to his own rebbe – this is true faith.
- 28) What the Sadagerer Rebbe said during the dancing of Hasidim during the year when his brother the Boyaner moved to Boyan.
- 29) How the Elder Sadagerer healed a very ill *hasid* and what he said about doctors in general.

- 30) The Ruzhiner told a tale that shows that the true faith of a follower in his *tsadik* consists in the fact that he has faith in the *tsadik* even if things seem different to him than what the *tsadik* told him.
- 31) What the Sadagerer ____ (?) replied to the Elder Sadagerer (?) when he became *Bar Mitzvah*.
- 32) What the Ruzhiner replied to a rich man who was a *mitnaged* and who complained that his son – a young man – had settled in Ruzhin and become a *hasid*.
- 33) How a Jew was saved from a dangerous illness by the Elder Sadagerer even though he had only greeted him once – and from then on, he became Sadagerer *hasid*.
- 34) How the Sadagerer Rebbe lengthened his table until it reached Novoselitsa where there were Jews who were sad that they were unable to come to the rebbe for the Sabbath.

- 35) A tale about how the Sadagerer saved a very ill *hasid* on whom they had already given up.
- 36) The Sadagerer's blessing for a full recovery helped.
- 37) The Bolochover recounted what happened with a Jew who had an ill son and traveled to his rebbe in Neshkhiz.

Also, a teaching of the Rebbe (?) on the verse "Abel became a keeper of sheep"

[Gen. 4:2].

- 38) A tale about how the Besht did a favor for a God-fearing young man in the "other world" and how R. Wolf Kitzes who was at first an opponent of the Besht became one of the Besht's *Hasidim* (heard from the Bolochover).
- 39) The Bolochover related a story about how the [author of the] *Meir netivim* in Brody wanted to whip the Besht (whom they called "Yisrael the midwife's [son]") because he had begun to pray according to the Sephardic rite but the Besht performed a miracle and the [author of the] *Meir netivim* has forced to appease him and admit that the Besht was a miracle worker.

40) Although there was a dispute between R. Meir of Premishlan and the Stretener when the daughter of the Stretener was ill they came to R. Meir to request [a blessing for] a full recovery.

R. Meir gave the Jew who had come with the request two rags and accompanied it with a tale about a rich man who was a miser and R. Meir turned him into a hospitable man. (Also heard from the Bolochover).

41) A tale [about] when as very young children the Sadagerer and his brother the Boyaner were playing and the Sadagerer said that he was greater than the Magid and what the Elder Sadagerer said about this.

42) The followers of the Elder Chortkover once begged him to give over a teaching – so he told a story about how the Magid saved one of his followers from being captured by a band of demons.

43) How the Ruzhiner responded when he was asked why he is not seen to perform miracles like other rebbes and a tale that he told (about a miracle) that he himself performed when he was a child (he maintained that only as a child did he perform miracles – later he attained a higher level[])

- 44) Another miracle that the Ruzhiner performed when he was a child – (recounted by him himself).
- 45) Rebetzin Gitele – the Sadagerer’s sister related how her brother would divine even a thought.
- 46) Rebetzin Gitele also related how pure her brother kept himself while still a child in the cradle.
- 47) A tale about how the Kopishnitzer Rebbe dealt with a *bahur* [=young unmarried man] who had fallen in love with a *shiksa* [=gentile woman].
- 48) The Boyaner Rebbe relates what he heard from the Elder Sadagerer about how R. Shalom Shakhna chose a name for the Ruzhiner and why the Ruzhiner did not wish to be called R. Faivush after R. Faivush Kreminitzer, the father-in-law of *The Malach* [lit. “the Angel” a reference to R. Avraham son of the Maggid of Mezritch]. The Boyaner also relates a tale about how the Magid sent R. Shmelke and [the author of] *Hafla’ah* to R. Faivush regarding the marriage match with *The Malach*.
- 49) An old *hasid* of the Ruzhiner relates that the Ruzhiner told [a story] about what happened to him when he was still a small child – and why he complained: “What concern have I with this lowly world.”
- 50) How the Ruzhiner divined what a Vienna professor who came to him was thinking.

- 51) How R. Aaron (?) Sadagerer interpreted the statement “One whose deceased is laid out before him” [Berakhot 3: 1].
- 52) How R. Israel Sadagerer healed a mute *bahur*.
- 53) What the Shtefeneshter related about how the saints from [the time of] Rashbi [?] wished to bring the redemption but only the Master of the World and Satan knew who the individual who could bring the redemption was. The power was transmitted from *tsadik* to *tsadik* and the last one, the Ruzhiner, transmitted to his children who sacrificed their lives for the Jewish people.
- 54) A tale that the Riminover told about his father R. Hirsh the Servant who had many children who died in his lifetime and who wrote to R. Shalom of Kaminka, who had lost a child [too], that he learned the trait of accepting suffering with love from a *yedene* [=old-fashioned Jewish woman] and he recounted a tale about this woman.
- 55) A lengthy tale that the Ruzhiner told about the Besht, how one of his followers who had lost his wealth accepted a mission from the Besht, and through this he was later able to help the Besht discover a *Mikvah* [=ritual bath] that was not kosher and also about demons and so on (The Ruzhiner subsequently traveled to Lublin for a wedding ?).

- 56) How the Chortkover, when he was a child of six, interpreted Rashi's statement "But Korah who was a clever" [Rashi on Num. 16: 7].
- 57) How the Chortkover helped a Jew who was a *mitnaged* whose enemies fabricated a libel about him.
- 58) The Sadagerer (which?) explained why he loves one of his children (?) more than the others.
- 59) A lengthy tale about a Jewish merchant who became poor and destitute and the Sadagerer – R. Israel – helped him become wealthy again. (Interesting due to the description of the economic methods of the Arrendators [land leasers] and businesses).
- 60) How the Elder Sadagerer interpreted the statement in the Talmud "Hezekiah concealed the Book of Remedies" [Pesahim 4a] – when he helped an ill person recover.
- 61) How the Ruzhiner advised the great agent of the Czar, Jacob Joseph Halpern how to extricate himself from a criminal investigation (interesting as it portrays the business "morals" of Jews in Russia).

- 62) A tale about how the Ruzhiner, when he was in a village between Kutý and Kosov – where the Besht resided before he was revealed – conversed with a gentile – a very old man who had been tasked by the Besht to give over an object from fur/leather to R. Israel (the Ruzhiner).
- 63) When the Ruzhiner was in prison, a wealthy follower succeeded in gaining admittance, and how he conveyed regards between the Ruzhiner and his mother and the signs that were passed between the Ruzhiner and his mother.
- 64) What the Chortkover told the Rimanover about not performing *tikkun hatzot* [=the midnight vigil ritual] and related a tale about how the Besht served the Master of the World “in thought alone.”
- 65) How the Chortkover interpreted the statement in the Zohar about “One who loves the Holy One...” [see Zohar II: 162a; III: 263b].
- 66) The Elder Sadagerer’s interpretation of the verse “the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage” [Ex. 2:23].
- 67) Another interpretation by the Elder Sadagerer of the same verse.

68) How a Lubliner *hasid* chose the Ruzhiner as his rebbe – because the Ruzhiner was the only *tsadik* who recognized with whom this Lubliner *hasid* studied Torah.

In Rizhin there lived a Jew by the name of Moshke. He was a big Torah scholar. Initially, he traveled to [the rebbe] of Apt, but later he attached himself to the Rizhinner Rebbe.

Reb Moshke found out that the Apter Rav knows that he no longer travels to Apt and travels to the Rizhiner instead. He was afraid that on account of him slighting the honor [of the Apter] it might harm the Rizhiner.

He wanted to prevail upon the Rizhiner to travel to Apt to ask forgiveness for taking away from him such a distinguished person. However, he was embarrassed to speak with the Rizhiner directly about this matter. So he went to the Rizhiner's mother and she went to the Rizhiner to persuade him. Initially, he did not want to travel, but when she ordered him [to go] based on the imperative of *kibud em* [the commandment to honor one's mother] the Rizhiner traveled to Apt. Moshke went along.

When they arrived in Apt, the Rizhiner went to the Apter and wanted to ask forgiveness. The Apter did not allow him [he said,] "you are great in this [heavenly] chamber and that chamber (he enumerated several chambers), you don't need to obtain my forgiveness. But I don't forgive Moshke – he will not live out the year. ["]

The Rizhiner and his entourage traveled back to Rizhin. On the way, they stayed at an inn. They prayed *mincha* and drank *l'chaim*. Afterward, the Rizhiner instructed to bring a *tahara*

board¹ [= a body stretcher] and ordered Reb Moshke to lie down and stretch out his body on it. They covered him, and afterward, the Rizhiner ordered them to make *hakafot* [= walk around the body in circles]. The Rizhiner then went home. R. Moshke remained alive.

Approximately two years later, a wedding took place in Apt. The Rizhiner traveled to Apt for the wedding and R. Moshke accompanied him. Upon seeing R. Moshe there was a big commotion – how is this possible? After all, the Apter said that he would not live out the year. [Whereupon] the Apter remarked: “I did not know that the Rizhiner could pull this one on me.”

I.F.

Aizik Bronstein

¹ Literally: the “cleansing board” upon which the deceased is placed during the washing and cleansing ritual in preparation for burial.

When the Rizhiner still resided in Rizhin, a Jew by the name of Moshke lived there. This Moshke was a great Jew – he conducted a fervent *tikkun chatzot* [= midnight prayer vigil]. Once he conducted the midnight [prayer service] with such fervor that he reached the point of the expiration of the soul [= his soul almost left his body].²

By chance, the Rizhiner passed by his house while he was conducting the midnight prayers. The Rizhiner called out to him: “Calm down – not so hasty!” and the Jew returned to his senses.

I.F.

Aizik Bronstein

² figuratively: he prayed with such deep concentration that he completely lost touch with reality and was in a trance-like state.

The Rizhiner's second wife was the widow of R. Hersh of Rimanov.

After the wedding, the Rizhiner asked her, "What did the Rimanover say about me?" and she answered: "my first husband said that all the money and honor in the world is not enough for the Rizhiner, but he did not enjoy any of it."

The Rizhiner replied: "Certainly – certainly! I did not expect him to know so much."

I.F.

Chaim Barad heard from the Pashkener Rebbe

During a meal, the Apter Rav felt that a Jew was sitting at the table who was bothered that the Apter Rav was eating so much. The Apter Rav called out to the Jew: “Put some food in your mouth. Have a bite.” The Jew answered: “I can’t. I just finished eating. I cannot eat again.” The Apter said: “How can a Jew eat so much that he has no more room left for food? One must always leave over a little [room for food]. According to the world [= the general public] a voracious eater is someone who eats a lot. I say that a person who cannot eat anymore because he has no room for more food – that person is a glutton.”

I.F.

Ya’akov Teitelbaum

The Apter Rav was sitting during the meal on Friday and was drinking and eating according to his habit. Another Jew was sitting there and crying about his misfortunes. The Apter Rav said: "Jews suffer so many hardships, and I sit here with so many luxuries and good things. I must be among those people who receive their reward in this world, as it says, 'And He repays those who hate Him, to their face.' [Deuteronomy 7:10].

Perhaps I once did something for which God is paying me my entire reward in this world. I [therefore] ask you Master of the Universe! It is no *olam hazeh* [Literally: this world. Colloquially: I cannot enjoy life] when I am eating, and the Jew is crying in my face. I thus ask you, Master of the Universe, give this Jew what he wants so that he should not disturb my *olam hazeh*."

I.F.

Ya'akov Teitelbaum [who] heard [this] from his father

Before the Magid [of Mezritch?] became famous, he was a *melamed* in a village and he hired out his services as a teacher of children.

The landlady of the house where he taught dressed very immodestly. This bothered him greatly – so he pleaded: “Master of the Universe! I can no longer withstand the pain and distress.” Afterward, he became a famous person.

I.F.

Ya’akov Teitelbaum

A Jew came to the Apter Rav and related to him that he was an *Arendar*³ of a local *poritz* [=estate owner] and the landowner was threatening him that if he did not pay all his debts, he would be evicted from the inn. Fearing for his life, he came to the Apter Rav to plead for mercy.

The Apter Rav related to him the following story: he once attended the wedding of a wealthy man. [At the wedding] there were *badchanim* [jesters] – the *badchanim* disguised themselves as a *Poritz* and a Jew. They put on a performance of a *din Torah* [= a dispute adjudicated in a court of Jewish law] concerning a Jew who cannot pay up his debts and the *poritz* demands his money. They ruled that since the *poritz* had enough money to cover his expenses, he should escape, and since the Jew is a pauper and cannot cover his expenses, he should remain on the estate. Naturally, the audience laughed heartily.

The Apter Rav continued: “I was in great distress. My entire life I was careful to avoid idle talk, thus how is it possible that my ears should hear such foolishness? Perhaps [despite my greatest efforts] I stumbled and transgressed. I was greatly aggrieved by this. Afterward, I calmed down. I understood that maybe this incident would be useful in the service of the Creator. Now, it finally comes to use. I rule like the *badchan*: the *poritz* should escape and you should remain on the estate.” The Jew returned home, although he did not believe the rebbe’s assurances.

At that time, a revolution broke out among the Polish Gentiles. Since many of the landowners were also Polish

³ An *Arendar* is a leaseholder, someone who leases an inn or other property (such as a mill or pond) from an estate owner and makes a livelihood by renting out rooms in the inn or charging for the usage of the leased properties.

the Russian police incarcerated many of them. That Poritz was also Polish – and he was afraid that he too would be jailed. Hence, he called for the Jew and told him: “I must escape immediately. Since I regard you as a trustworthy person, I appoint you as the manager of my estate. You take 50 percent of the profit and send me the remaining 50 percent to Paris.” This is indeed what transpired. The *Poritz* escaped and the Jew remained.

I.F.

Ya’akov Teitelbaum

Once R. Mottel of Chernobyl was traveling and he had to make an unexpected stop in a small shtetl. They prepared a meal for him, but no fish was served. R. Mottele exclaimed: “What is the reason for eating fish at a meal? Because just as the fish are kosher, the entire meal is kosher. But when there is no fish, there is in fact no sign [that the food is kosher, therefore] I need to examine the *shochet* [=ritual slaughterer].” So the *Schochet* came with his ritual slaughtering knife. The Chernobyler would also examine the side of the knife that wasn’t sharp. Eventually, he praised the *Schochet* very highly.

The Jews who traveled along with R. Mottele publicized the story about the *shochet*. And when a larger city in the region heard that the *shochet* was so highly praised by R. Mottele, they appointed him as their *shochet*.

Not long thereafter, a very disgusting story transpired with the *shochet* and the householders ran to R. Mottele to ask him what to do with him. They could not reach R. Mottelle, so they met R. Dovidl of Talne and they related this story to him.

R. Dovidl said: “I was also with the Mottele in the Shtetl where the *shochet* was highly praised. In truth,

I was not so impressed with the *Schochet*, but I could not oppose him.”

Afterward, R. Mottele responded to the complaints of the householders. [He said to them:] “The shochet had children to support – and although I was not overly fond of him – in a small shtetl, the threat of the *yetzer hara* [= the evil inclination] is not so great, [therefore], I was afraid to take it upon myself to rid him of his job. [Therefore,] I praised him highly so that he should arrive in a big city. [I reasoned that] the merit of the big city would protect it and result in showing his true colors.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

R. Yitzchak Meir used to visit Mezhibuzh. One of the Jewish residents of Mezhibuzh was a very simple Jew – an uncouth individual, lacking in intelligence – who used to collect donations. R. Yitzchak Meir would also give him a donation.

Near Mezhibuzh there were deep clay pits where bricks were manufactured. Once R. Yitzchak Meir asked this fellow: “What would you do if you were to fall into one of these deep pits?” The Jew answered: “What do you mean? I will go to my wife Tsharne and get the ladder and crawl out of the pit.”

Hasidim wondered why R. Yitzchak Meir was spending so much time with this simpleton. R. Yitzchak Meir responded to them: “It says, that when Mashiach will come, all the kings will present gifts to King Mashiach. Let’s understand this: what kind of gifts will they bring? Gold and silver? Why would King Mashiach need this? What is precious in the eyes of King Mashiach? A Jew. But what kind of Jew will wait until he is brought before Mashiach? Certainly, every Jew will run hurriedly as soon as he hears that Mashiach has arrived. Who will remain? Only such an individual. And it states that Mashiach will be pleased with the gift. Nu, if King Mashiach will enjoy [the company of] such a Jew, it is worthwhile to exchange some words with him.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

The old Shtefaneshter Rebbe once arrived [somewhere] and he saw Jews playing checkers on Chanukah. He said: “One can learn *midot* [character traits] from playing checkers. First of all, one must walk straight, and one may not jump. If you want to attack, you can only attack from the side. However, once somebody reaches the top [of the board] they may move in all directions.” [note on the side margin: ?]

I.F.

Aizik Bronstein

Several people saw the Berdichever Rav using a lot of pepper, so they asked him whether he liked pepper. He answered: “I love pepper [*fèfer*]? I love the *der shefèr*[=the Creator].”⁴

Therefore, people call pepper – the *shefèr*.⁵

I.F.

Kopishnitzer Rebbe

⁴ *fèfer* rhymes with *shefèr*.

⁵ Some hasidim when they mention *fèfer* (pepper in Yiddish) will also mention the rhymed association of *fèfer* with *(ba)shefèr*.

R. Naftali Chaim Horowitz, the son-in-law of the Sanzer Rav went into exile; he traveled around the world in rags and tatters.

Once he arrived in Sadigora to the old Sadigora Rebbe. He came into the Sadigora Rebbe and handed him a *kvitl* [A note of petition.]. However, he did not write his real name on the kvitl. He just wrote Noach the son of Sara. On several occasions when he presented his entreaties, he [the Sadigora Rebbe] asked him: “Is this your name?” When R. Naftali Chaim realized that the Sadigora Rebbe recognized him, he ran out of the house and disappeared.

The Sadigora Rebbe went looking for him because he [R. Naftali Chaim Horowitz] was distinguished in his [The Sadigora Rebbe’s] eyes.

I.F.

Galician Rav

The Alexander Rebbe once explained why it is forbidden to play cards. Cards contain artificially reproduced [images of] people and artificial imitations are forbidden.

I.F.

R. Yitzchak Meir Heschel

Mezihbuzher Rebbe

R. Asher Yehoshua Elazar Chodoroff was the son of the great R. Lieber's sister and was raised in the court of R. Lieber. He was a very wealthy person and lived in Berdichev. He was famous for his great hospitality. (He was so wealthy that when he died, he left over 13000 Kerbels. In those years this was considered an enormous sum.)

Once he hosted a large crowd for a meal. They served many delicacies and good food; only schnapps was missing. They asked him: "The meal costs so much, what difference does a little schnapps make? It will only cost an additional ruble or two." R. Asher answered: "I fought hard enough against my *yetzer hara* that it should not bother me to give a Jew food when he wants it. Schnapps is an appetizer. To add schnapps to a meal to stimulate the appetite, this I'm not required to provide."

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The following story was also related about R. Asher Yehoshua Elazar Chodoroff.⁶

Once a Jew apologized for not coming to his [R. Asher's] meal. R. Asher replied: "I fought the *yetzer hara* [the evil inclination] hard enough that it should not bother me when a Jew eats at my table, but that it should bother me that a Jew doesn't eat together with me, this not!" [= he did not wage war with the *yetzer hara* to such an extent].

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

⁶ See the following story.

R. Nachum Chernobyler had a son [by the name of] R. Moshe who predeceased R. Nachum. During the *levaya* [=funeral] R. Nachum walked and waved his staff back and forth. His son, R. Mottele, asked him why he was waving his cane back and forth. R. Nachum replied: “That same day R. Asher Yehoshua Elazar Chodoroff (the son of the sister of the great R. Lieber) passed away. He was a very wealthy man and performed acts of great hospitality and since the times of Avraham Avinu [the Patriarch Abraham], there was no one as hospitable [as R. Chodoroff].

Hence, Avraham Avinu is coming to greet him, therefore I am clearing a path for him.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Rav [=R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi] once traveled to Mezhibuzh to visit the gravesite of the Ba'al Shem Tov.

R. Baruch [of Mezhibuzh] was upset about this. How come he came to Mezhibuzh without asking him permission? ! So the Rav answered him: “You are indeed his biological grandson, but I am a spiritual grandson. And because one’s student is like his child, I have the right to come to Mezhibuzh to visit the gravesite.”

When R. Baruch continued to speak harshly about the Rav, the Rav said: “The *Tefillin* that you are wearing is disqualified for use!” When this matter was investigated, it was indeed discovered that the *Tefillin* are disqualified due to a missing [letter] yud.” R. Baruch became very angry and called out: “You removed a Yud⁷ from me, I will also remove a Yid from you.” As is known, a grandson of the Rav converted to Christianity (or became an atheist?).

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohobishter Rav

⁷ Note the pun/wordplay. In Polish Yiddish dialects the letter Yud is pronounced Yid, the same word used for Jew. Hence, R. Baruch was saying: you caused that the letter Yid shall go missing from my tefillin, I will cause that a Yid/Jew from your descendants will be lost.

R. Shalom once saw the Shpoler Zeide dancing at a wedding. He was very impressed and said: “Your dancing is superb!” [literally: above and beyond].

It is said that the dancing of the Shpoler Zeide in general was out of this world and that Elijah the Prophet himself taught him how to dance.

I.F.

Rabbi V. Katz

A hasid of R. Mendele of Rimanov was once in Vienna. That year there were no *etrogin* in Galicia. When the hasid saw a very nice *etrog*, he bought it for R. Mendele. Later, he saw an even nicer *etrog*, so he thought to himself since he would have to travel through Sadigora, he would give the first *etrog* he purchased for R. Mendele to the Rizhiner, and the second *etrog* he would hide for the Rimanover.

When he came to the Rizhiner and gave him the *etrog*, he saw how the Rizhiner became deeply disconcerted. After a while, the Rizhiner asked him: “is this indeed my *etrog*?” [At this point] the hasid had to tell the whole truth and he told him the entire story and showed him the *etrog* that he purchased for R. Mendele. [Upon seeing it] the Rizhiner called out, “This is my *etrog*!” And the Rizhiner explained: on 15 Shvat the Tzaddik is shown the *etrog* he will have on Sukkot. When I saw the *etrog* [that you originally showed me] I did not recognize it. I was very scared because it is known that if the Tzaddik’s behavior is faulty, he does not merit to receive the *etrog* that was shown to him on 15 Shvat. When I saw the other *etrog*, I was afraid that I did something wrong that I don’t remember, but now that I see that the last *etrog* that you bought was designated for me, I am happy and reassured.”

I.F.

R. Velvel Katz

Once the Rizhiner visited the Apter Rav. The assembled crowd noticed that in addition to the enormous respect that the Apter accorded the Rizhiner, as was his custom, he also refused to eat as he normally did.

The Apter Rav explained: “What don’t you understand? Shabbat is the boss during the entire year, but when a distinguished guest arrives like Rosh Chodesh, Shabbat gives away the guest the *shemonah esrei* [*amida* prayer] of Mussaf. If an even more distinguished guest arrives, for example, Yom Tov, Shabbat gives up the entire prayer service for the guest. And certainly, if the most important guest arrives, [namely,] Yom Kippur, just as the guest doesn’t eat, the host also doesn’t eat.”

Nevertheless, the Savraner Rav asked the Apter Rav: “Is this possible? How is the great Apter Rav so deferential toward such a young man who is not learned and does not have the reputation of a *gaon* [genius]?”

The Apter answered him: “It is stated in the midrash: in the future *temimim* [=people of simple and wholesome faith] will sit together in Paradise with the Patriarchs [literally: fathers of the world]. This refers to someone who did not study Torah or Mishna.” And holding his beard, the Apter Rav screamed out: “I swear that the Midrash is referring to the holy Rizhiner!”

I.F.

Aizik Bronstein

R. Dovid Artenberg, Rav in Berdichev, one of the most distinguished hasidim of Sadigora and Boyan related that the Boyaner Rebbe, R. Yitzchak maintained that the stories to the effect that the Rizhiner had said or indicated that he is the *Mashiach* [Messiah] are false. He said that the groom does not talk about himself.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

In [the book] *Shem Hegedolim ha-Chadash* it is written that the Shpitivker Rav was residing in Israel when he sensed that R. Pinchas Koritzer passed away.

R. Pinchas Landau demonstrates that this is historically inaccurate. R. Pinchas passed away in 5550 and the Shpitivker Rav arrived in Israel in 5558. [Marginal note:] (is this correct?)

It is also said that the Shpitivker Rav and R. Chaim Krasner composed the inscription on the tombstone [apparently of R. Pinchas].

Another indication [that this is inaccurate] is the story about the *kvitl* (petition) on the Holy Sabbath [see page 29 below]. Even if the detail regarding writing on the Sabbath is false, [this story] can still be an indication that the Shpitkover and R. Chaim Krasner were present when R. Pinchas was ill [i.e. on his deathbed].

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

When the Tchortkover was in Lemberg, they asked him to pray at the synagogue of the *Tur Hazahav*.⁸ He did not want to go, and related the following story:

The Berdichever Rav was also once in Lemberg, and they invited him to the *Tur Hazahav*'s synagogue. So, he went and davened [nusach] Sefarad. The *Tur Hazahav* got wind of this, and he was very surprised and asked: "How is this possible? I prayed Nusach Ashkenaz for fifty years, what right did the Berdichever have to change the Nusach?"

The Chortkover concluded: "One is not allowed to change the *Tur Hazahav*'s Nusach, and we cannot change our Nusach, therefore I don't want to go to that synagogue."

I.F.

A Polish Jew

⁸ It is unclear who this *Tur Hazahav* is. The obvious referent, Rabbi David HaLevi Segal, author of the commentary *Turei Zahav* on *Shulchan Aruch* lived circa 1586-1667. Thus, the events described here with the Berdichever Rav etc. could not have taken place during the latter's lifetime (unless the story is referring to a spiritual visitation in a dream or vision etc.)

The Rebbe the *Tzemach Tzedek* used to refer to the Rizhiner as “the holy one, the Rizhiner”.

I heard from his holiness... the rebbe... of righteous memory, [= a reference to Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, the sixth Lubavitcher rebbe] that the *Tzemach Tzedek* sent R. Isaac Homler, of righteous memory (who was a *gaon* and *tzaddik* and ranked among the most distinguished hasidim of the Alter Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe, and the *Tzemach Tzedek*) on a mission to the *tzaddik* of Rizhin... and he arrived on Friday. The Rizhiner Rebbe would constantly smoke a Turkish pipe, and every Friday before candle lighting his assistant would come to his courtyard to tell him that the Sabbath was approaching and then he would extinguish his pipe. R. Isaac related that when the assistant came to the room to notify him that the Sabbath was approaching, he saw that the holy R. Israel... remained above [in the higher spiritual realms] and he [R. Isaac] remained below. R. Isaac added that he never felt so ashamed and humiliated.

I.F.

Copied from a letter by R. Shmarya Gourarie to the Agudas Ha-admorim on the occasion of the *melave malka* in honor of the [yartzeit of the] Rizhiner, 3 Cheshvan 5711

When the Shpitivker Rav was in *Eretz Israel* he looked after a girl, a grandchild [the daughter] of his son who predeceased him.

Later he dreamt that a grandchild was born to R. Pinchas Koritzer, and was named after him. So the Shpitivker sent his grandchild, the girl, back to Russia to marry R. Pinchas' grandson, because he believed that R. Pinchas' grandson would be a diamond [=an adornment] for her.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

People relate that when R. Pinchas Koritzer was about to pass away, he screamed out that he needed living water. His students understood that he was referring to R. Chaim Krasner. This occurred on Sabbath. The Shpitivker wrote a *kvitl* to R. Chaim Krasner and on the Kvitl he wrote, "Today is the holy Sabbath."

R. Yaakov Shimshon, the Bahabeler Rav – Rav Pinchas Landau's grandfather asserted that this story is false.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Mezhbizher Rav related [a story] that a Jew who was in Boyan when this story took place related to him:

Once during the ceremony of kindling the Chanukah lights, the Boyaner Rebbe requested that they relate a story about the Berdichever Rav that was not yet published; something new that they had not heard yet. Several Jews tried to tell stories, but as soon as they began to tell their stories the Boyaner Rebbe interrupted them with a slight of the hand – either because he already heard the story, or it was already printed. Eventually, a Jew related the following story about the Berdichever Rav:

The Berdichever Rav used to engage in long preparations before kindling the Chanukah lights. One year, when this occurred [i.e. the long preparations], everything was ready, and the entire crowd waited impatiently. Whereupon the Rav turned around to the crowd and pointed to an *arender* (a leaseholder) – a very coarse fellow – and asked him: “How is your *poritz* [squire] doing?” The *arender* replied: “Very good – if only this were true about all Jews.” Afterward, Berdichever inquired precise details about the wealth of the *poritz* – how many fields, how many assets, how many slaves and servants he owned, etc. The assembled were very puzzled about this, but the *arender* did not mince words and he answered the rebbe in his coarse language – that the *poritz* has all the good things in life and does not lack anything!

Finally, the Berdichever asked him: “Tell me *arender* – do you indeed believe that your *poritz*

enjoys all the good things in life?” The *arend* responded somewhat impatiently –
“Certainly, certainly, may this be true for all of us.”

The Berdichever continued to inquire: “Indeed – it is going so well for him, but does he kindle the Chanukah lights?” The *arend* laughed: “What do you mean does he light the Chanukah candles – he’s a Gentile!!! But what does that have to do with it going well [for the poritz]?” “Nu, if so” – the Berdichever called out, “for us life goes well because we can kindle the Chanukah lights – things are good for us because we can say *Baruch atoh* [=Blessed art thou] ...” and with that, he began to kindle the Chanukah lights.

I.F.

Rabbi Chaim Bick

The Mezhibuzher Rav

The Avrutcher Rav was in *Eretz Israel* during the great earthquake. It is well-known that during the earthquake, almost no house was left undamaged. The earthquake occurred while the Avrutcher was in the middle of praying. All the houses around the Synagogue where the Avrutcher was praying were damaged – but all the Jews who were in the Synagogue were not hurt even by a hair's breadth.

One Jew was standing on the threshold of the Synagogue – half outside. A stone hit the Jew exactly on the half of his body that was outside the Synagogue.

This story is related by old hasidim in *Eretz Israel*.

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

R. Hirsh Leib Orliker once visited Mezhibuzh – [and] it was related to him that R. Baruch Mezhibuzher was sick. He wanted to [perform the commandment of] visit[ing] the sick. Since he knew that R. Baruch was an angry man and denigrated all the *tzadikim* of his generation, he instructed his attendant to bring along a chair, because he understood that R. Baruch would definitely not invite him to sit down.

As soon as the Orliker entered the house and R. Baruch recognized him, R. Baruch, with an expression of disdain, turned around to face the wall. In the meantime, the Orliker took the chair that his attendant brought along and sat down. R. Baruch sensed that the Orliker sat down, and he called out – while still facing the wall – “Where does a Jew get the nerve to meet the greatest person of the generation⁹ and sit down without permission?!” The Orliker replied: “How does a Jew have the nerve that [when] the greatest person of the generation comes to visit him, he doesn’t invite him to sit?!” R. Baruch asked him: “How can there be two people who qualify as one in a generation?” The Orliker responded: “You are one in a generation in awe [of God], I am one in a generation in wisdom, and R. Shalom of Prohobisht is one in a generation in matchmaking.” Then R. Baruch asked: “If you are indeed one in a generation in wisdom – nu, tell me what kind of accusation was leveled this High Holy Days in Heaven [against the Jews] and what did you answer?”

⁹ Lit: חר בררא – one in a generation (the most outstanding person of the generation).

The Orliker answered: “In heaven they raised the accusation that the Jews do indeed repent and lament [their wrongdoings] but [have in mind] only themselves, and don’t have in mind the *Shechina* in exile.”¹⁰ “Nu – how did you respond to this?” R. Baruch asked. “I said” – related the Orliker – “If the Jews only care about themselves – nu, Master of the Universe, do the same, care only about yourself – ‘Do for Your sake if not for ours!’¹¹” R. Baruch remarked: “This is indeed a clever response.”

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

¹⁰ In other words, their prayers and penitence are self-centered and is not focused on redeeming the *Shechina* from exile.

¹¹ A quote from the Prayers.

When the Avrutcher Rav started to plan to travel to *Eretz Israel*, he met a Jew from *Eretz Israel* in his shtetl and inquired about *Eretz Israel*. The Jew told him that the stones in Israel are truly diamonds. The Avrutcher Rav related this news to his Rebbetzin and told her to prepare for the journey right away. When he arrived in Israel and saw that the stones were stones and not what the Jew described, he thought that the Jew had tricked him.

Several weeks later, the Avrutcher met the same Jew in Tzfat and criticized him for not telling him the truth. The Jew answered him that “the reason you don’t see it [that the stones are diamonds] is because your eyes are smeared [clouded].” The Avrutcher wanted to ascertain whether this was true – so he started fasting for 40 days. On the 40th day, he made a great meal and related to the Hasidim the entire story. Afterward, he said to them: “Believe me that my eyes are now refined and now I can see that the Jew told me the truth and he did not fool me. In Israel, the stones are indeed diamonds.”

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

The Rizhiner once visited the Apter Rav at the age of 16. The Apter Rav accorded him great honor. Many distinguished rabbis and rebbes were present at the same venue. They asked the Apter Rav, how is this possible? How is it conceivable that the Apter Rav, the elder of the group, should be so deferential toward such a young man?

The Apter Rav replied: “King Solomon authored *Mishlei* (*Proverbs*), *Kohelet* (*Ecclesiastes*), and *Shir Hashirim* (*Song of Songs*). They are all holy books. Mishlei and Koheles are holy, but we know that Shir Hashirim is the holy of holies. Jews, I swear! All the assembled here are indeed holy, but the Rizhiner is holy of holies.”

I.F.

Aizik Bronstein

The father of R. Yaakov Teitelbaum, R. Yisrael Mordechai, still remembered the Jewess Tcharne about whom the following story is told:

Tcharna lived to a very old age – she even held the Old Kapishnetzer Rebbe in her arms [literally: she carried him in her hands]. The father of Tcharna was a very wealthy man and an Apter hasid. He brought down the Apter Rav to Jasi and paid all his expenses. Tcharna was his only daughter.

Once she became very ill and the father came to the Apter for a cure. The Apter Rav promised that Hashem would help. But her illness intensified, and she was on the verge of death. They continued to run to the Apter to seek his help. The Apter said that only one thing can help: that they should give to the charity of R. Meir Ba'al Hanes as many Rendlach as the numerical value of Tcharne – because Tzedaka saves from death. The wealthy man did not have much money at this point – so his wife pawned an expensive head covering bedecked with diamonds and placed the entire sum of money on the rebbe's table. But it didn't help – Tcharne died. The Jewess came to the Apter screaming: "What's going on! You guaranteed that charity will prevent death!" The Apter Rav became very agitated and said: "I can forgive the affront to my dignity, but I cannot allow the Torah to become a fraud!"

So the Apter Rav took his staff and went to the house where Tcharne was lying. He walked in circles and locked himself in the room together with Tcharna. Nu – it goes without saying that in the end, Tcharna came back to life.

That year the Apter Rav passed away. Before his soul expired, he said: “I know that this is happening because one is not allowed to shake heaven and earth too much [literally: tear down the world].”

I.F.

Yaakov Teitelbaum

The Shpoler Zeide said: “If I had the power, I would line the streets with barrels of spirits thereby enabling groups of Jews to drink and at least partially forget the sorrows of this long exile.”

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohibitsher Rav

Czar Nicholas was born several hours before the Rizhiner. The Rizhiner used to say: “Had I been born before him I would have surely subdued him – now that the reverse is true, I could not completely restrain him.”

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohobishter Rav

Heard from the Torner Rav:

The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* – Rav in Chernowitz – became dangerously ill when he was 33. They called the burial society and even lit candles. Suddenly, he awoke and asked them to bring him water to wash his hands. He then related the following story:

The Heavenly Tribunal already sentenced him to death. However, the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* hesitated to leave this world. R. Mechele of Zlotchev, the rebbe of the *Be'er Mayim Chaim*, was sitting at the Heavenly Tribunal, but R. Mechele told him that he cannot do anything for him – [he said] “I will show you a way to the Ba'al Shem Tov.”

When he came to the Besht to ask for mercy, the Besht asked him: “What is your connection to me?” The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* related to the Besht that R. Mechele used to sit at the third meal of Sabbath until late at night in a state of *devekut* [=intense mystical devotion] and deep contemplation. Once he was so engrossed in his thoughts that he sat until dawn. Suddenly R. Mechele came to [his senses] and seeing that it had already reached daybreak, he called out to the assembled: “Let's say grace [after meals].” However, the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* reminded R. Mechele that he did not perform his custom of

repeating a teaching of the Besht during the third meal. R. Mechele agreed and went on to mention a saying of the Besht.

The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* turned to the Besht [and said]: being that I caused R. Mechele to repeat one of your teachings, I already have a connection with you and hence to effect salvation for me.¹² Whereupon the Besht said: “The decree had already been issued but bow your head and I will bless you. Perhaps my blessing will help.” At that very moment that the Besht blessed him he awoke. He said: “I am ready to get out of bed at this very moment, but due to the evil eye, I will remain in bed for a while.”

I.F.

Ya'akov Teitelbaum

¹² This sentence is a bit unclear in the original Yiddish.

R. Baruch Mezhibuzher once visited R. Shalom Prohobishter.

The Rizhiner was still a child and he played with a “ritshkele”¹³

He [the Rizhiner] hit R. Baruch with the Ritshkele twice on his caftan. When he wanted to do so a third time, R. Shalom forbade him [from doing so] and grabbed him by the hand.

Afterward, R. Shalom asked him why he hit R. Baruch. The Ruzhiner answered:

- 1) The first time [I hit him] he shouldn't be higher than the other person [i.e. me].
- 2) [The] second time, I wanted to be equal with him.
- 3) The third time, I wanted him to stand lower than the other person [i.e. me].

R. Shalom remarked – that's why I restrained [you] the third time – for the honor of the Besht – after all he is still a grandchild of the Besht.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohobishter Rav

¹³ The exact meaning of this word and the object it refers to is unclear. Whatever its precise meaning, in the contexts of this story it refers to an object that was used to hit someone.

A Jew who is currently an old man living in New York related the following story about himself:

When he was 55 years old, he began to suffer from cancer, Heaven forefend, and they gave up on him. He was skin and bones. On Pesach his children gathered around him – they expected that at any moment [he would die]! They hired a watchman from the *hevra kadisha* [=burial society] because they saw that these were his final hours.

In the middle of the night, the watchman awoke and told the son of the sick Jew: “I dreamt that the Bluzhever Rebbe came to me in the dream and ordered me to give the sick person a drink from the Cup of Elijah.” Initially, the son did not want to hear of it, for how could you give a sick person wine to drink?! But afterward, he reconsidered – what difference does it make, they anyway gave up on their father – so he granted his permission.

Thus, they gave the Jew to drink from the Cup of Elijah and he had a speedy recovery. He is now in his eighties and lives in New York. (Both the Jew and the watchman were Bluzhever hasidim).

I.F.

Ya’akov Teitelbaum

The Shpoler Zeide visited R. Shalom of Prohobisht twice.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohobishter Rav

R. Yechiel Luniker one of the most distinguished Sadigora hasidim (who back in the day visited the Rizhiner) related:

R. Avraham, the Rizhiner's brother, once traveled with a group of hasidim and he stopped off at an inn to pray the *mincha* service. After the prayers, he announced – “I am going to make a thanksgiving feast. Why?” [He explained that] he was once traveling and ended up touching a book from the Bratslaver. “It is well-known,” R. Avraham continued, “that a decree was issued that the prayers of one who touches a Bratslaver book are not accepted [on high] for forty days.” That day marked the end of the forty days – that's why he made a thanksgiving feast.

[Note:] a similar story is told about the Berdichever – but according to that version [of the story] people say that he touched Dessaur's [=Moses Mendelssohn from Dessau] translation of the Tanach.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohobishter Rav

R. Yisrael Mordechai Teitelbaum related that he heard the following story from R.

Nachum Ber Sadigerer:

The Apter Rav had a brother who was killed by Gentiles. It was Friday when they brought the corpse to the Apter Rav in his *beis midrash* [=study house]. They laid down the corpse in the women's section of the synagogue. When the Apter Rav recited the Kiddush on Friday night, the deceased stood up to his full height, and after Kiddush, he returned to his lying position.

This story was related to the old Sadigora Rebbe. He asked: "It would be interesting to know what exactly happened, elder *hasidim* should be asked whether the deceased laid back down or he fell down." They asked the Sadigerer: "What's the difference?" He answered: "To me, it is a big difference."

I.F.

Ya'akov Teitelbaum

R. Yosef Moshe (_____) remained in Mezhibuzh – he was not a Rebbe. After his passing, they opened his will. They found written in the will that they should bury him next to the Apter Rav. At that time, the government shuttered the gravesite, and they did not allow him to be buried. [Consequently] the heads of the city [= the heads of the Jewish community] went to the mayor of the city and requested his permission, he hesitated [to permit them] and the corpse remained unburied overnight. That night the mayor died an unnatural death and the next day he [R. Yosef Moshe] was buried near the Apter Rav.

I.F.

?

R. Dovid Artenberg – Berdichever Rav – related in Boyan that the Rizhiner once spoke about the Redemption and remarked: “The Redemption can take place in this generation, but the Jews are not worthy.”

[Whereupon] R. Yitzchak, the Boyaner Rebbe commented: “I don’t believe that my grandfather would say such words (about Jews being unworthy of redemption). But if he did say it, I’m afraid that for this reason, he left this world so young.”

I.F.

R. Mordechai Shlomo Friedman

Boyaner Rav

R. Avraham Asher was R. Nachum Chernobyler's son-in-law (R. Nachum's daughter Malka was his wife).

R. Nachum was involved in arranging a match for R. Avraham Asher's daughter. He visited R. Shalom Shlomo, [correction: R. Shimon Shlomo], the Savraner Magid because he wanted to arrange a match with him [i.e. with his family]. The Savraner Magid had two sons – the one who would later become the Benderer Rav, who was two years old at the time, and [the one who would later become] the next Savraner Rav, who was younger – one year old.¹⁴

R. Nachum wanted the Savraner for a son-in-law because he said [quoting the biblical verse] that “his younger brother shall be greater than he.” [Genesis 48: 19].

When they arranged the match, R. Nachum wanted to list their *yichus* [pedigree]. The Savraner Magid descended from Constantinople. He prided himself that his pedigree stems from R. Daniel Rofe – being his descendent. R. Nauchum said: “More than this I don't need.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

¹⁴ The transcriber of this story added a question mark [?] to the margin of this paragraph.

R. Pinchas Koritzer passed away on Friday. Friday night R. Chaim Krasner told R. Pinchas' children: "Your father is being honored on high with [leading] the *kabbalat Shabbat* prayers. Therefore, you should don your *shtreimls* to show respect." But R. Yaakov Shimshon didn't want to don his *shtreiml*, because he maintained: "I don't know what is going on in heaven, but here we need to observe the laws of mourning."

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Nachum Chernobyler was a pauper. He was a *magid* [preacher] in Prohobisht. His weekly salary was 5 gulden – which equaled 75 kopeks.

Once he traveled to Chernobyl and he duly impressed the *balebatim* [householders] of the city. They gave him a caftan and overcoat and promised him [a salary of] two rubles per week. When R. Nachum returned to Prohobisht, he requested the *balebatim* to allow him to accept the new position in Chernobyl. The *balebatim* agreed. He also asked that they consider his children.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The *Toldos* once came to visit the Besht. Before he went in to see the Besht, he saw a handsome young man hanging out in the Synagogue – with an extraordinarily majestic appearance. This impressed him greatly. [Thereupon,] he went over to him, and gave him *shalom* [i.e. he shook his hand and greeted him with the traditional *shalom aleichem* greeting] and asked: “Young man, where are you from?” The young man answered: “If you will tell me where you surmise I am from, I will tell you.” The *Toldos* asked him again, and he repeated the same answer.

Eventually, the *Toldos* told him: “When a *shochet* [ritual slaughterer] is appointed, they ask him: ‘What is your salary?’ The same question is raised with a rabbi – ‘what is your salary?’ [literally: for how much does the Rav/*shochet* sit]? On what kind of *parnassa* [livelihood] does God ‘sit’ [i.e. what sustains Him]? There is a verse that addresses this: “But You are the Holy One, enthroned, the Praise of Israel,” [Psalms 22:4].¹⁵

What does this verse mean? When two Jews come together – one Jew asks the other: ‘How do you do?’ The Jew answers: ‘Praised is God!’ This is what the verse means, God sits on [i.e. is sustained by] the praises of the Nation of Israel.”

Later, when the *Toldos* went into the Besht, he related what had happened to him.

¹⁵ The original Hebrew reads ואתה קדוש יושב תהילות ישראל. This interpretation is based on a wordplay. The Yiddish translation of the word יושב (to sit) is זיץ (*zits*). In addition to sitting, *zits* is also mentioned in reference to earning a salary. The Yiddish expression, “איין וויפל זיצט איר?” means how “much money do you earn (for a specific job)?” Thus, this dual meaning of *zits* (sitting) in Yiddish is transferred back to the Hebrew. Accordingly, ואתה קדוש יושב תהילות ישראל means that You [God] sits upon/is sustained by the praises of Israel.

[Thereupon] the Besht requested – ask the young man to join us. But when he went looking for him, he did not find anyone. [Whereupon] the Besht remarked: “This was certainly Elijah the Prophet. Therefore, he did not want to tell you where he is from until you told him your Torah.”

I.F.

Aizik Bronstein

1.

The [author of the] *Divrei Hayim* [1793–1876] once asked how his books are valued by the public and whether they are as valued as the *Ohev Yisrael*. When they replied that they were, he was glad.

2.

He used to look into the *Ohev Yisrael* every Shabbat.

3.

R. Hayim Sanzer's (the *Divrei hayim*'s) grandfather, R. Isaiah Lisker (the author of *Ve-herev pefiyot*) was a son-in-law of the great R. Hayim Sanzer of Brody [d.1783]. People say that R. Hayim had to return to this world to become a Hasid.

4.

After the story with the horse, R. Meir of Ostrog [d.1790] (the author of *Meir netivim*), who was a student of the Besht despite being older than him (and was once an opponent), came to Brody to R. Hayim, who was his friend.

Once R. Meir told him an interpretation of [a passage in] *Ez Hayim* according to the teachings of the Besht and R. Hayim did not comprehend it. R. Meir said to him: “This is something that I received from my teacher the Besht”. R. Hayim replied that he wanted nothing to do with a teacher who smacks horses.

5.

[Missing]

The Sanzer Rebbe heard via direct transmission that the old Belzer Rebbe, R. Shalom [d.1855], of blessed memory, recounted this from someone who was there.

1.

When R. Hayim of Sanz lay on his deathbed he called in all his disciples, foremost among them R. Zundel, the grandfather of the Belzer Rebbe. He blessed R. Zundel: “You shall yet have a son like myself.” R. Zundel was surprised, “Rebbe, at my age?” His daughter the Rebbezin Rebecca Hena cried out just then, “Father, I accept the blessing upon myself.”

2.

Since R. Hayim Sanz was a great scholar and saint, the Besht made great efforts to make him his disciple. He saw by his holy spirit that if he made him a *Hasid* the messiah would come. So, he came to Brody with ten of his choicest disciples to meet R. Hayim. He found him struggling over a difficult [passage in] *Ez Hayim*. R. Hayim showed him the difficulty and the Besht said to him: “You are studying the outer [dimension] – one must look for the inner [dimension]” and he explained to him the meaning of the Holy Ari. “And the entire house filled with light.” When R. Hayim beheld this, he cried out: “Long live my master, teacher, and rabbi!”

and he became his *hasid*. He then led him and his entourage out of the house.

However, contemplating the great deed he had accomplished, to make such a great scholar his disciple, he feared that this would lead him to pride, and he and all his disciples would be lost, heaven forbid. So, he sought out a way to turn R. Hayim Sanzer into an opponent.

In the market there were horses. The Besht went over to the horses and stroked and smacked them. When R. Hayim, of blessed memory, saw this he called out: “I don’t understand – this is not for me.” And he ceased being his *hasid*.

3.

The Belzer also recounted that the Besht came to Brody often. There is even to this day in Brody a wine cellar where the Besht used to regularly drink mead with his disciples. Whenever the Besht would come he would do something to please R. Hayim. He knew that R. Hayim enjoyed it when he heard something he could make fun of about the Besht so the Besht would always do something so that R. Hayim would have something to laugh at.

R. Mechele Zlotchover once ordered one of his Chasidim to travel to R. Pinchas Koritzer and ask him why he doesn't see his prayers (those of R. Pinchas Koritzer) ascending to Heaven.

R. Pinchas asked the Chasid: how can R. Mechele know where my prayers go? My prayers ascend even higher, to a place that is loftier than angels and Seraphs.

When the Chasid returned with the answer, R. Mechele remained confused. The book *Asarah Ma'amarot* ("The Ten Utterances")¹ was lying on the table. He opened up the book to the exact page where the author comments on the verse "Pinchas stepped forth and intervened (prayed)," (Psalms 106:30) that "he hid and concealed his prayers higher than angels and Seraphs."² R. Mechele calmed down and said – if it is possible for one person to accomplish this feat, it is possible for another [person to do the same].

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

¹ The book *Asarah Ma'amarot* was authored by Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano (1548-1620), an Italian rabbi, Talmudist, and Kabbalist.

² Note: I did find this exact quote in *Sefer Asarah Ma'amarot*. However, the storyteller may be referring to the following quote:

http://www.hebrew.grimoar.cz/azarja_de_fano/asara_maamarot.htm

מאמר אם כל חי - חלק א סימן לד

ויש תפלות שאינן צריכות סיוע למעלה בעליהן כגון פנחס בשטים כי אמנם עלה בתפלתו לחיה ויחידה שלא נמסרו פניהם לשליח כמו שבארנו במאמר הנפש לפיכך כתיב ויעמוד ויפלל ולא נאמר ויתפלל. וכל הפסוק חמש תיבות שבכל אחת מהן חמש אותיות שנתיחדו בתפלתו חמשה פרצופי הנפש כלולין זה מזה ואל תתמה אם במשה נאמר ויתפלל כי נפשו של משה היא לבדה לפי גדלה וחשיבותה תעורר בעליונים מה שלא יעוררהו פנחס בחיה ויחידה כוליה האי ואולי עוד משה רבינו ע"ה השלים הדיוקן האנושי כל האפשר במדת מקומו ושעתו ולא שנא זיו יקרא דאפוהי מאדם למלאך כי היה גרעון בחקו עצום ורב לא למעט בכבודן של מלאכי השרת חלילה כי כבר המלצנו במאמר חקור דין מה שאמרו רבותינו גדולים צדיקים שלא יובן בשלוח כמו שחשב הגאון רב סעדיה ורבים אשר אתו אף על פי שאין ממש בדעת החולקים עליו וסותרים את דבריו אשר המה טובים ונכוחים מדבריהם בלי ספק אלא להרבות בכבודו של משה שהיה כל ימיו מתפלל ומוסיף דבקות נפלא הגבה למעלה מכל זולתו בעליונים ותחתונים אבל פנחס כי מלאך ה' צבאות הוא כתיב ביה ויפלל פועל יוצא שהוא קושר כתרים לרבו מדבוקן ותפלתן של שאר העם:

The Apter Rav was particular that there should be a mirror hanging [in his house] so that he could check the exact placement of his Tefilin (phylacteries) on his head.

The opposite was the case with R. Motele Chernobler, there was no mirror hanging [in his house].

The Apter remarked: this is understandable – [for] there is only one R. Motele, hence he doesn't want to see more than one R. Motele.³

We know that there are many Apters,⁴ hence it doesn't bother us that we see another one.

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

³ I.e. the mirror reflects the image thus “multiplying” the person whose gestalt it reflects.

⁴ i.e. many individuals like the Apter. He is not unique in that he has no double.

During the Avoda⁵ the Apter said⁶ this is what I used to say. It is said that he actually verbalized the ineffable name of God.

He related that he remembers the exact spot in the Holy Temple where he performed the service.

I.F.

R. Chaim Bick

⁵ I.e. the recounting of the sacrificial rites and purification rituals that were performed in the Temple by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement that is recited in the Musaf prayer on Yom Kippur. This section of the prayer is known as the “Avoda.”

⁶ In the section that recounts the confession of the High Priest: וְכִכָּהֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר. אֲנִי הָשֵׁם “and this was what he said: I beg of You Hashem etc.” Instead of the referring to the High priest in the third person as is the standard practice, the Apter spoke in the first person, “this was **what I said**” etc. Thereby affirming that he was that in a previous incarnation he **was** the High Priest who performed the atonement rites in the temple.

Only after the Degel⁷ passed away did R. Baruch⁸ arrive in Medzhybizh.

I.F.

(Heard) by the Medzhybizher Rebbe.

⁷ R. Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov (1748-1800), son of Udl, daughter of the Baal Shem Tov. Author of the Chasidic work *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*.

⁸ R. Baruch of Medzhybizh (1753-1811), brother of R. Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov.

Udl, the daughter of the Baal Shem Tov lies buried outside of Medzhybizh at an intersection – but we don't know the exact spot.

I.F.

(Heard) by the Medzhybizher Rebbe

During the last years, the Magid⁹ and the Malach¹⁰ had a falling out. The reason for this was that he [the Malach] did not want to live with his Rebbetzin and did not want any children. The Magid did not speak with the Malach for several years.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

⁹ R. Dov Ber of Mezeritch, known as the Maggid of Mezeritch (died 1772).

¹⁰ R. Avraham HaMalach (the Angel) (1741-1776), son of the Maggid of Mezeritch.

R. Nochum Ber¹¹ once said that there are four levels of Jews 1) yes and yes 2) yes and no 3) no and no 4) no and yes.

1) Yes and yes is a person that has fine character traits, a “complete and perfected individual” [i.e. a well-rounded person who is great in many areas], but knows that he is a Jew who worked on perfecting his character traits and he lets the world know it.

2) Yes and no – a Jew with the same fine character traits but who is humble and doesn’t think highly of himself.

3) No and no – a person who is an idler, a nothing, but at least knows that he is a nothing and does not put on any airs.

4) No and yes – a person who is a nothing and who nevertheless makes a big deal of himself.

He [R. Nochum Ber] asked Chasidim, what do you consider the worst character trait? They all answered unanimously someone who holds highly of himself but is a person of low stature [#4 above]. R. Nochum Ber responded to them: no, I don’t agree. In my opinion, the yes and yes [#1 above] is the worst. Someone with a fine character and a person of stature – is not allowed to be haughty. He needs to know that one is not allowed to hold himself in high regard.

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

¹¹ R’ Nachum DovBer Friedman of Sadagora (1843-1883), son of R’ Shalom Yosef Friedman of Ruzhin-Sadagora.

Being that the Magid had sick feet (he was lame) and walked with crutches, he drew him [i.e. the Magid] very close.¹² A special room was designated for the Magid in Medzhybiz near the Beis Medrash of the Besht.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

¹² I.e. displayed affection towards him. Showered him with gestures of favoritism.

¹⁶ I.e. Fear on Heaven is something that one must work on achieving through one's own efforts. It is not predetermined from Above or something that can be granted through Divine intervention.

The Skverer [Rebbe] never allowed anyone to look at the Tzoref¹⁷ before immersing themselves in a Mikva. One had to go to the Mikva Lishma [for its own sake] – for the purpose of looking at the Tzoref.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

¹⁷ Apparently, a reference to Sefer Ha-Zoref by Joshua Heschel Zoref (1633–1700). The Sefer Ha-soref was apparently held by the Skverer, See this collection of stories transcribed by Israel Freidman, file 294.9, pages 40-44. See also <https://yiddish.forward.com/articles/184048/new-square-rich-warehouse-of-spirituality/index.html@p=all.html>. For more information, see Gershom Scholem, “Joshua Heschel Zoref,” in Encyclopedia ha-Ivrit, vol. 28 (1976), cols. 579-580 (Hebrew), https://www.academia.edu/44508852/Gershom_Scholem_Joshua_Heschel_Zoref_in_Encyclopedia_ha_Ivrit_vol_28_1976_cols_579_580_Hebrew_; <https://www.kotzkblog.com/2020/12/307-sefer-hatzoref-and-story-of-lost.html?m=1>; <https://www.kotzkblog.com/2017/06/sefer-hatzoref-were-these-secret.html>.

The [manuscript of the] *Tzoref* from Warsaw was compiled by a goldsmith from Warsaw and there [In the Sefer Ha-Zoref] it describes the design of the Menorah.

However, the Besht said that although the Tzoref had the soul of Bezalel¹⁸ and Bezalel was shown [the design of the Menora]¹⁹ from heaven, nevertheless, we say: Torah is not in heaven. We know that the design of the Menora was different.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

¹⁸ The biblical builder/architect of the Tabernacle.

¹⁹ See Shemot 25:40 in reference to Moshe.

~~The Magid asked R' Yeivi why he calls the local rabbis Yerava'am son of Nevat~~

People came from Yampil²⁰ to R' Yeivi²¹ that he should give them [recommend] a Magid.²² He recommended R. Mechele Zlotchover. They appointed him but they stipulated that he cannot make his own minyan.

Later on, he did make his own minyan and the householders came to complain to R. Yeivi.

R. Yeivi summoned him and R. Mechele told him that he he could only pray with “guardians of the covenant.”²³ Whereupon R. Yeivi and R. Mechele returned to Yampil and entered the synagogue.

The cantor of the synagogue had – Heaven save us – a seminal discharge. Whereupon R. Yeivi told R. Mechele: I only see up until the Mikva, you see even after the Mikva.²⁴

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yampil,_Vinnytsia_Oblast:

Yampil (Ukrainian: Ямпіль; Russian: Ямполь, Yampol; Romanian: Iampol) is a city located in Vinnytsia Oblast (province of central Ukraine). The city is the administrative center of the Yampil Raion (district).

²¹ R' Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef of Ostroh (Polish: Ostróg), also known as Rav Yeivi, acronym for Ya'akov Yosef Ben Yehuda (1738-1791). See <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jacob-joseph-ostrog>.

²² A religious preacher.

²³ A reference/euphemism for people who guard their sexual purity.

²⁴ I.e. R. Yeivi was able to sense that someone had a seminal discharge only before they immersed in the Mikva to purify themselves, whereas R. Mechele was able to sense that someone had a seminal discharge even after they immersed in the Mikva.

R. Yeivi once became very ill. His daughter Yente ran to R. Pinchas Koritzer asking that he should make a Pidyon Nefesh²⁵ of Names.²⁶

R. Pinchas responded: R' Yeivi's soul is higher than all these souls – thus he does need such Segulos.²⁷

He did however advise that he should eat a dish made of buckwheat and he will become healthy.

R. Yeivi did not like buckwheat, so they leveled an accusation against him in Heaven that he didn't eat it.

So they cooked a dish from buckwheat for R. Yeivi and he recovered.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

²⁵ Literally: ransom of the soul. A Pidyon Nefesh is usually a sum of money one donates to charity as a way of securing Divine favor and mitigating misfortune.

²⁶ For more information about this practice, see, for example, <https://ravbenayahu.co.il/%D7%9E%D7%94%D7%95-%D7%A4%D7%93%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%A0%D7%A4%D7%A9/>, <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1126461> <https://kingdavidkabbalah.com/product/pidyon-nefesh/>.

²⁷ Supernatural cure, folk remedy, good luck charm.

When R. Yeivi was in Ostroh he was the Magid of the city. R. Pinchas Koritzer was the rebbe, and the author of the *Sefer Ma'ayan Hachochma*, R. Asher Tzvi son of R. Dovid²⁸ was the rabbi.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

²⁸ See https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A9%D7%A8_%D7%A6%D7%91%D7%99_%D7%9E%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A1%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%94.

After R. Yeivi's passing, his son R. Pinchas became rebbe and traveled around the world. When he returned he said that he could not tolerate the falsehood of the world and shortly thereafter he passed away.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Yeivi had 3 sons.²⁹ 1) R. Getzl, lived in Ostroh, [he] did not have any children³⁰ [sic] but he had a daughter.

2) R. Leib – he was a wealthy man (in Berdichev?).

3) R. Pinchas [who] passed away at the very young age of 37 years old.

R. Pinchas had two sons 1) R. Ya'akov Yosef of Ostroh.

And 2) R. Moshe Rozitschiver – he was a student of the Shpoler Zeide.

Ya'akov Yosef son of R. Pinchas ordained R. Baruch Mezybyzher and drew him near.³¹

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

²⁹ See

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A2%D7%A7%D7%91_%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A1%D7%A3_%D7%9E%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A1%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%94.

³⁰ Should read: sons.

³¹ took him under his wing, showered him with affection.

Being that the Magid was a sickly man and laid in bed a lot, many of the students were afraid to enter his room lest they raise his ire.

When R. Yeivi came to the Magid, he said that he was not afraid, and he entered the room and gave him Shalom.³²

He introduced himself to the Magid as a poor man, and [he related] that he conducts the midnight service. Before midnight he goes to the Mikva. One time it was so cold that the Mikva froze over. He took an axe and wanted to chip away at the ice so he could immerse himself.

The Samach Mem³³ came along and tried to dissuade him from immersing himself. In such cold weather – he said – immersion would be tantamount to committing suicide. R. Yeivi however did not obey – he vanquished the Samach mem and jumped in the Mikva.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

³² Greeted him with the traditional Shalom Aleichem greeting.

³³ Samael, the the accuser or adversary. Force of impurity and opposition.

R. Yeivi was a student of the Magid. His father was called R. Leib. He was also a Magid in Ostroh.

[Note: in the Sefer R. Yeivi it is written that his name is an acronym for Ya'akov Yosef Ben Yehuda].

Once the Magid met R. Leib. He told him³⁴ to send him his son R. Ya'akov Yosef. R. Leib responded that he is my youngest child and an only son to his mother. Thus, he doesn't want to let him go.

The Magid said: in the end, he will come to me.

Later R. Yeivi strongly opposed the local rabbis. He preached against them and called them Jeroboam son of Nebat. Therefore, they pursued him and he was forced to flee. At that point, he came to the Magid. Thus, the Magid's prophecy was fulfilled.

(By the way, R. Yeivi wrote a book against the locally appointed rabbis. Name?).³⁵

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe (a grandson of R. Yeivi)

³⁴ The Magid told R. Leib.

³⁵ See ספר עין משפט https://www.nli.org.il/he/books/NNL_ALEPH001126097/NLI. See also <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jacob-joseph-ostrog>. "Jacob Joseph attacked perversions of justice, informing, and bribery, and took to task community leaders and rabbis who gained their appointments through their relations with the authorities instead of through Torah learning."

[The city] of Ostroh consisted of an old city and a new one. R. Yeivi lived in the old city. In the new city, there lived a wealthy man, a Chasid of R. Pinchas Koritzer. He did not have any children. Both he and his wife pestered R. Pinchas Koritzer that he should pray that they have a child. However, R. Pinchas told them: that it is not good for you to have children.

When R. Pinchas left for Koritz, they followed him and continued to wail: how long do we need to wait, we are already old – it is high time that we are blessed with children. But R. Pinchas stuck to his position – it is not good for you to have children.

The wealthy man had already given up and started to donate large sums of money – more than he could afford.

R. Yeivi was deeply involved in [the mitzvah of] Pidyon Shvuyim³⁶. When he heard that the wealthy man was distributing such large sums, he decided to visit him and ask for a sizeable sum. He required a large sum, and he was missing 300 rendlach.

R. Yeivi arrived in the new city where the philanthropist lived. Just then, the wealthy man was sleeping, and the servant who did not recognize R. Yeivi did not want to let him in. He believed that the Jew was an average person and he wanted to make do with a ruble or two because the philanthropist already told him to give beggars a sum of 1-5 rubles.

³⁶ Ransoming captives. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidyon_Shvuyim

Pidyon Shvuyim (Hebrew: פְּדִיּוֹן שְׁבוּיִים, literally: Redemption of Captives) is a religious duty in Judaism to bring about the release of a fellow Jew captured by slave dealers or robbers, or imprisoned unjustly by the authorities. The release of the prisoner is typically secured by a ransom paid by the Jewish community. It is considered an important commandment in Jewish law.

But R. Yeivi insisted on seeing the wealthy person. The servant was ready to give him 5 rubles, as long as he would get rid of him – but R. Yeivi refused. The servant got angry and “honored” R. Yeivi with a heavy blow. R. Yeivi suffered the insult and returned to his residence in the old city.

On the following day, the rich man became gravely ill and the doctors did not have any cure. The servant remembered that he hit a Jew, and when he started describing the Jew, they realized that this must be R. Yeivi. They quickly ran to him to appease him, R. Yeivi forgave him, and the rich man recovered. In gratitude, the philanthropist gave him all the 300 rendlach that he lacked to ransom the captives.

R. Yeivi was overjoyed that he received such an enormous donation, and he asked the philanthropist if he had any requests. So he told him that he didn't have any children. R. Yeivi promised him that in a year he would have a son. He just stipulated that when she gives birth he should be notified.

Time passed – the woman became pregnant and she started going into labor. But they forgot to notify R. Yeivi, perhaps because he did not officiate as a rebbe.

She became severely ill, and her labor pains lasted for 2-3 days. She was almost dead – so they

remembered R. Yeivi and quickly ran to him pleading for mercy. He said: Mazal Tov, a boy was born.

When the woman was revived she related that she was already in the “world of truth” and she met R. Pinchas Koritzer and pleaded for mercy. He told her: I told you that it is not suitable for you to have children.

So she saw R. Yeivi – he told her: what are you doing here – back! And he gave her back her soul.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

How the Toldos³⁷ became a Chasid.

When the Toldos lived in Sharigrod, the custom was that as soon as they saw the rabbi go to the synagogue, all the householders immediately stopped talking and they all followed him to the synagogue. Everyone obeyed him because they knew that he was very fastidious about his honor.

Once the Besht visited Sharigrod and he stood in the marketplace between Mincha and Ma'ariv. He drew a large and began to tell stories. The [telling of the] stories lasted for a long time. The Toldos passed by, but no one followed him – this is how engrossed they were in listening to the Besht's tales.

The Toldos saw that no one was in the Synagogue. He became very angry and he summoned the Besht and asked him angrily: how does a Jew allow himself to hold up a minyan of Jews thereby canceling the time of prayer?

The Besht answered: "What about hospitality? I will tell you a short story." Afterward, he told him another story. After the third story, the Toldos already greeted him with [the greeting of] "peace upon you my teacher and master," and began to be his Chasid.

He later related that in these stories the Besht alluded to everything that transpired in his life from the day he was born until the present day.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

³⁷ Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Pollonye (1710–1784). One of the first and best known of the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov.

Rav Yeivi was very poor and barely eked out a livelihood. Once before Purim, on Ta'anis Esther, he did not have [enough money even] for one meal.

His only daughter, Yente tried to persuade R. Yeivi that he should prepare something for the Purim feast, but he ignored her.³⁸ He joyously went to the Synagogue, full of confidence [and trust in God].

A poor person walked into the house [of R. Yeivi] and asked to join the Purim feast. Yente began to cry, as she did not have enough [food] on Purim for herself, let alone for a guest. The pauper took out a Gulden and said: here, take this Gulden and buy all kinds of good things for Purim. Yente's heart filled with joy and she bought food and drink – fish, meat, wine, etc.

R. Yeivi returned from Synagogue. They ate the meal and R. Yeivi was very happy. He sang and danced with the poor man. When the poor man went home, R. Yeivi said: do you know who that person was? This was Mordechai the Jew from the Megila who came to rejoice with us.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

³⁸ Literally: he made him self unaware.

R. Wolf Kitizes³⁹ raised an orphan boy, and the Besht [raised an] orphan girl. The Besht promised a dowry of 200-300 Rubles. The time for the wedding approached and the Besht did not have money to pay the dowry. R. Wolf wrote a letter to the Besht stating that they would not be able to go to the Chuppa until the dowry was set aside. But it didn't help – there was no money.

In the meantime, an episode relating to the redeeming of captives took place, and the Besht pledged the sum of 200 Rubles, and the Parnes⁴⁰ borrowed the money from the Poritz.

Once the Poritz demanded that the money be returned [and threatened] that if he didn't receive the money within two weeks he would place both the Besht and the Parnes in chains.

The Besht told the Parnes: here is money for expenses and travel to the Poritz and see if you can obtain from the Poritz money for the dowry.

The Parnes looked at him [the Besht] as if he were crazy – the Poritz is demanding that the debt be repaid, while the Besht wants a refund for a dowry.

³⁹ R. Ze'ev Wolf Kitizes (c.1685 - 1764), student of the Baal Shem Tov.

⁴⁰ The trustee of the community.

But it was the Besht after all and he obeyed him.

Thus, the Parnes came to the Poritz – he arrived while the Poritz was eating and naturally, they did not admit him [to see the Poritz].

While he was waiting, he came up with an ingenious idea – to ask the Poritz to see his records to ascertain whether he really owed the money.

After the Poritz finished eating and came out, they added up the figures and discovered that it was indeed the Poritz who owed 200 Rubles. The Poritz paid the debt.

The Besht thus obtained the money for the dowry and the wedding took place in an auspicious hour.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

The Rav [R. Schnuer Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad] did not come to the Magid [of Mezritsh] to study Torah, but he sought [to acquire] refined character traits. He wanted to see how he [the Magid] ties his shoes.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

During his entire lifetime, R. Akiva Eger never combed his beard. He was afraid that he would, God Forbid, pluck out a hair from his beard. He therefore wore a silver wig (? Shield?)⁴¹ on his beard.

The Kotzker also did not comb his beard.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

⁴¹ Unclear.

The Chozes of Lublin and R. Mordechai of Neshchiz traveled to Rabbi Feivel Lubenker, a student of the Besht to “take shalom.” [to greet him, i.e. the custom of greeting a holy Jew].

R. Feivel ran a fabric business. When they met R. Feivel they saw that he was fitting a dress on an old non-Jewish woman (grandmother). This appeared strange to the Chozes and he began to laugh. The Neshchizer also asked who the old non-Jewish woman was. It turned out that right then and there they experienced the revelation of Elijah the Prophet.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

It is told about R. Mendel Kosover that he was asked: what is the source [of the custom] that Chasidim drink spirits and wish one another [that they be blessed with] healing or personal salvation, and they are indeed often helped.

R. Mender answered: it says in the Tractate Sotah that, “Just as the water checks her, so too, the water checks him.”⁴² Thus we see that when she drinks it is possible to harm him. Certainly, this pertains to a positive effect, for the degree of reward for good deeds is much greater than the degree of punishment for evil deeds. One drinks and the other merits personal salvation and healing.

I.F.

⁴² Tractate Sotah 27b

<https://www.sefaria.org.il/Sotah.27b.3?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>

Just as the water evaluates her fidelity, so too, the water evaluates his, i.e., her alleged paramour's, involvement in the sin, as it is stated: “And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her” (Numbers 5: 24), and it is stated again: “And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter” (Numbers 5: 27).

The Rizhiner was once sitting at a Rosh Chodesh feast with the Apter Rav. It was Rosh Chodesh Tammuz.

They discussed how much Mashkeh [bottles of spirits/whiskey] to serve [literally: place on the table]. The Rizhiner had the custom of serving Mashkeh based on a numerical pattern of 72, 36, etc.

The Rizhiner said that he would put down 6 or 7 bottles of spirits. The Apter asked him why this specific number.

He answered that Tammuz [in Hebrew] – means Tam 6 or 7 (תם ו' או ז'), i.e. the number 6 or 7 was completed.

[The explanation of this idea] is that Moshe did not ascend from the mountain [i.e. from Mount Sinai right away, as it is written] “When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain,”⁴³ Rashi writes that it depends whether Moshe ascended [the mountain] on the 6th or 7th day of Sivan.

Since he descended from the mountain on the 16th of Tammuz, it was then determined whether he ascended on the 6th or 7th day of Sivan.

Therefore, Rosh Chodesh is the rectification of 6 or 7 [i.e. the 6th or 7th day of Sivan].⁴⁴

I.F.

⁴³ *Shemot* 32: 1.

⁴⁴ Note: this does not seem to accord with Rashi. Research whether there are other versions of this story. רש"י שמות (פרשת כי תשא) פרק לב פסוק א (א) כי בשש משה - כתרגומו, לשון איחור, וכן בשש רכבו, (שופטים ה כח), ויחילו עד בוש (שם ג כה) כי כשעלה משה להר אמר להם לסוף ארבעים יום אני בא בתוך שש שעות. כסבורים הם, שאותו יום שעלה מן המנין הוא, והוא אמר להם שלימים, ארבעים יום ולילו עמו, ויום עלייתו אין לילו עמו, שהרי בשבעה בסיון עלה, נמצא יום ארבעים בשבעה עשר בתמוז. בששה עשר בא השטן וערבב את העולם והראה דמות חשך ואפילה וערבוביא לומר ודאי מת משה, לכך בא ערבוביא לעולם. אמר להם מת משה, שכבר באופ שש שעות ולא בא וכו', כדאיתא במסכת שבת (דף פט). ואי אפשר לומר שלא טעו אלא ביום המעונן בין קודם חצות בין לאחר חצות, שהרי לא ירד משה עד יום המחרת, שנאמר וישכימו ממחרת ויעלו עולות: אשר ילכו לפנינו - אלהות הרבה איזו להם

While the grandsons of R. Pinchas Koritzer, R. Shmuel Aba, and R. Pinchas were punished by flogging, they were led through a row of Cossacks and each one of the Gentiles beat them.

The governor also stood there to ensure that his order was carried out.

Suddenly the governor was frightened. He conjured in his mind the image of a Jew with a long beard and sidelocks and he cannot rid his mind of this image.

He was stricken with great fear. He described the appearance of the Jew, and they told him that that is R. Pinchas the grandfather of Jews that are being flogged. He soon ordered them to stop the beating.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

While the Besht lay on his deathbed people bent down and heard that he was murmuring.
His last words were:

Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me (Psalms 36: 12).

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

A very wealthy man traveled to the Besht. He had an only son and he asked the Besht to take him under his wing for three years [during which] he should study Chasidus and fine character traits.

The Besht once saddled his wagon suddenly and traveled somewhere along with the young man. They stayed at an inn. The Besht was given a separate room, but the young man had to sleep in the inn [together with everyone else]. Before he went to sleep he began to sing a very beautiful melody. There was a Gentile present who was so enchanted by the melody that he asked the innkeeper [to instruct] the young man to sing and he will buy Schnapps for the entire crowd.

So the innkeeper asked that the young man sing. But he wanted to receive permission from the Besht. The Besht permitted him to sing.

The gentile was enchanted by the melody – he asked what his name was and he replied that his name was Moshke. The gentile drank and danced all night and Moshe'le sang for him.

Afterward, the Besht instructed [his entourage] to travel home, and he took along the young man.

[Eventually] Moshe returned to his father. He grew up and became a big merchant. Once he was traveling on the road. He was seized by bandits who wanted to kill him. He was barely able to request to bring him

to the chief bandit. And they brought him before the head of the bandits. He [the bandit] soon recognized him and he returned the money that the bandits robbed from him and he even gave him a gift and sent him on his way.

The “world” says that the Besht prophetically foresaw these events and therefore he suddenly traveled with the young man to the inn.

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

A very wealthy man – A Chasid – did not have any children, God forbid. He came to the Shpoler Zeide to ask for mercy. By nature, the Shpoler Zeide was very sharp and he blurted out: I swear that you will never have any children.

The wealthy man did not rest [on his laurels]. He came to R. Pinchas Koritzer to “make an appeal.” He arrived at R. Pinchas’ house before Pesach and R. Pinchas was in the Beis Medrash. He observed the frightful poverty [in the house of R. Pinchas]. They virtually had nothing for Pesach – no Matzah, wine, or food. The Rebbetzin lamented the fact that the Rebbe has no practical sense – he earns money, but it doesn’t dawn on him that purchases need to be made for Pesach.

The wealthy man soon bought everything needed for Pesach – all the good things. Food, utensils, and silk for a caftan. He even instructed to whiten [the walls of] the house.

R. Pinchas came home and didn’t even notice the new clothes, he did not ask where the new utensils and all the good things came from. He received it with love.

He made Kiddush with fervor and he⁴⁵ by the Seder. Until the middle of the Seder he

⁴⁵ These two words are unclear in the original Yiddish.

didn't ask where all this came from and did not even look at the guest, the philanthropist.

In the middle of the Seder, he noticed the guest and greeted him. The Rebbetzin told him what the philanthropist did for them and explained his request.

He promised him: I swear that you will have a child. Tzadikim said that they never heard R. Pinchas swear [i.e. make a promise in the form of an oath].

In the end, the Jew returned and by the end of the year, a child was born.

When the Shpuler Zeide heard that a child was born, he called out: you will see that by the age of 13, the boy will pay him [meaning R. Pinchas] back.

And this indeed came to pass. At the age of 13, the son converted to Christianity, and he tattled on R. Pinchas' children to the government that they converted a Gentile to Judaism, and they incarcerated them and closed their printing press.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Mendel Kosover had three friends, one was R. Eliezer Wolf, and another two friends. He said about them that one would become very wealthy, the second would become a drunkard, and the third would become a rebbe. And that is indeed what happened.

R. Eliezer Wolf was a big Kabbalist and he became a rebbe in Betshetsu⁴⁶ (near Beitashan⁴⁷ in Romania) and he was famous throughout Romania.

R. Meir Premishlaner said to Chasidim who came from R. Eliezer Wolf's region: why do you need to come to me when you have such a Tzadik and Kabbalist amongst you? And he chased them out.

I.F.

Rabbi Gold

⁴⁶ Buzescu?

⁴⁷ Botoşani?

A student of the Besht asked the Besht: if I am traveling in the forest and I meet a Jew who is a cripple should I give him a ride in my wagon.

No, the Besht answered: you should hit the horses with your whip and quickly run away.

Once, the student traveled in the middle of the forest and he suddenly bumped into someone who appeared to be lame, and he screamed: Jews have mercy I am half frozen, save me, let me ride in your wagon. The student almost invited him to travel along, but at the last minute he recalled the words of the Besht and he quickly ran away – as he sped away he heard the cripple fire a bullet from his revolver.

When he returned he related what happened to the Besht.

The Besht responded: don't you understand – how does a cripple end up in the middle of the forest, how was he able to walk so far. This is a sign that he is a robber, and one must beware of him.

[Heschel added: this story is also told about the Rishiner]

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

Why was he called Malach [Angel]?

1. He lived like an angel. He fasted from Sabbath to Sabbath and his entire meal consisted of the skin of a dove. That's how he broke his fasts. Tzadikim therefore said that this surpasses human capacity.
2. He did not live with his wife.
3. On Tisha B'av when the Chazan started to recite Barchu, the Malach placed his head between his knees and did not move from his spot for the entire fast. During the entire day, tears flowed from him without interruption.

Tzadikim said that such a way of conduct is beyond the limits of human strength.

I.F.

Rabbi Gold

After the passing of the Malach, Rebbetzin Freyda traveled to the Land of Israel and settled in Tiberias.

Unfortunately, she did not have enough money to support herself, so she washed other people's laundry to support herself.

At the time, R. Mendel Vitebsker lived in Tiberias. When he heard this story about the Malach's widow he was very surprised and he went to visit her to determine whether this story is indeed true. He found her at work. He asked her: "do you need to wash laundry?" He thought that she had to wash her own laundry because she was too poor to hire a Gentile woman to wash her laundry. She answered: no Rebbe! This is not my laundry – it is other people's laundry.

[Note: Heschel added the following comment: "To wash her own laundry would be undignified, would there be any difference [if she washed other people's laundry] for the sake of making a livelihood?"⁴⁸

I.F.

Rabbi Gold

⁴⁸ I am uncertain whether these words were deciphered accurately.

When the Risziner's first wife died (she was the daughter of Moshele, the Rosh Yeshiva of Bertichev) he married Rachel Leah the widow of R. Hirsh of Rymanov.

There was incredible pushing at the Chuppa.

Everyone wanted to attend the Chuppa.

So the Rizhiner screamed: whoever wants to witness my disgrace should step forward.

Hearing this, no one dared to approach, and they did not even have a minyan.

Only R. Avraham Shlomo remained. The Rizhiner winked at him: Shlomole come here, and he honored him by appointing him [R. Avraham Shlomo] to escort him [the Ruzhiner] under the Chuppa.

I.F.

Rabbi Gold

Great-grandson of R. Avraham Shlomo

When the Rizhiner was still very young, his mother the Rebbetzin Chavele asked him to travel to the Apter Rav to receive Rabbinic Ordination.

He agreed and took along R. Avraham Shlomo. On the way, R. Avraham Shlomo constantly mocked “Rebbeism.”⁴⁹

At night, they stayed at the same station [lodging area] and they both stood up to pray.

R. Avraham Shlomo prayed the Eighteen Benedictions for a long time. The Rizhiner gave him such a forceful push nudging him to stop and he moved his feet backward [i.e. he took three steps back thereby concluding the prayer].

And then he asked him these three questions:

- 1) Why did he move his feet back?
- 2) Why did he pray for so long?
- 3) He asked him to explain the verse [statement about God] “Who is patient, and overlooks the rebellious.”⁵⁰ If He is patient, he does not overlook [sin]?⁵¹

R. Avraham Shlomo answered the three questions:

1. It says “Even if the king greets him, he should not respond to him; and even if a snake is wrapped on his heel, he should not interrupt his prayer.”⁵² However, if a scorpion approaches him, he stops.”⁵³
It is stated, “Beware of the burning coals of Torah scholars, for their bite is the bite of a scorpion.”⁵⁴
Therefore, I moved my feet back [and stopped my prayer] when you pushed me.

⁴⁹ i.e. the institution and conduct of Chassidic rebbes.

⁵⁰ Mussaf prayers of the High Holy Days.

⁵¹ Possible explanation: overlooking sin implies that God ignores sin or turns a blind eye to it, whereas patience implies that God notices the but tolerates it without ignoring it.

⁵² Mishna, Berachot 5: 1.

⁵³ See Talmud Berachot 33a, **Rav Sheshet said: They only taught this mishna with regard to a snake**, as if one does not attack the snake it will not bite him. **But if a scorpion** approaches an individual while he is praying, **he stops**, as the scorpion is liable to sting him even if he does not disturb it.

⁵⁴ See Pirkei Avot 2: 10 “Rabbi Eliezer said... warm yourself before the fire of the wise, but beware of being singed by their glowing coals, for their bite is the bite of a fox, and their sting is the sting of a scorpion, and their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like coals of fire.”

2. You are an experienced soldier; therefore you can render your service quickly.
I must take my time. It takes me much longer to load my gunpowder.
3. He overlooks the rebellious refers to me – he is patient refers you, because it states that the Holy One, Blessed Be He decrees, and a Tzadik annuls [the decree].

I.F.

Rabbi gold

A grandson of the Malach

The Malach's second son, R. Yisrael Chaim was R. Shlomo Karliner's son-in-law. He had a son R. Avraham Shlomo whom the "world" regarded as a wise person of great caliber [literally: of global stature].

However, he did not want to be a rebbe.

The Rizhiner, however, desired strongly that R. Shlomo Chaim should become a rebbe. He told him: Don a white caftan and half the world will run after you. R. Shlomo Chaim answered: why not the whole world? If not the entire world, I don't want [to become a rebbe].

I.F.

Rabbi Gold

A great-grandson of R. Shlomo Chaim

And a grandson of the Malach

The father of R. Pinchas Koritzer – R. Avraham was a big *Misnaged* [opponent of Hasidism].

When R. Pinchas became a student of the Besht this greatly distressed his father R. Avraham. So he followed him [i.e. R. Avraham followed R. Pinchas] and he wanted to save him from the influence of the Besht.

~~R. Avraham met the Besht in Kaminka.~~

When R. Avraham arrived in Miropol [Mariupol], he was told that the Besht had just traveled to Kaminka, so he remained in Miropol. R. Avraham was a very learned man, and his Shabbos sermon greatly impressed the crowd.

In the meantime, the Besht spent the Shabbos in Kaminka. He sat at the third meal until late into the night. It was already late in the night and dark and the crowd was standing on top of each other, and the Besht spoke words of Torah.

He sat so late that R. Avraham still managed to arrive from Miropol and meet him [the Besht] at the third meal.

When R. Avraham entered, he said that he had a question about a certain Tosafos and he could not find an answer.

The Besht called out: you are running after your son to save him, yet you don't know the pshat [meaning] of the Tosafos.

R. Avraham told him: if you will

answer [my question in] the Tosafos I will give you away my child – my son R. Pinchas.

The Besht explained the meaning [of the Tosafos] and R. Pinchas remained with the Besht as his student.

I.F.

Liaver Rebbe

The Shpoler Zeide once blessed a Jew and smacked him and said: you should live until 120.

The Liaver Rebbe saw this Jew when he was 103 years old, and he lived for another 17 years.

I.F.

Liaver Rebbe

The Rizhiner once visited the gravesite of the Magid of Mezritch.

He said: the world says that a bear⁵⁵ can dance – I have never seen it.

But now I see that a bear can indeed dance!

Oh, can he dance! ! !

I.F.

Liaver Rebbe

He heard it himself from a Jew who was present when this took place.

⁵⁵ This alludes to the Magid whose name was DovBer (a bear in Hebrew and Yiddish).

People used to travel to collect Ma'amad [money to support the household and interests of] R. Aharon Tchernobeler. They would send distinguished householders, Chassidim with Kvitlach [lists]. The lists contained an assessment of how much each person was expected to give.

Once a Chasid came to Liove and one of the Ma'amad Kvitlech [lists] contained the following information: the Nagid [donor] R. Meir son of R. Gavriel [is assessed for] 4 times Chai [18]. There was the largest sum that they taxed in the shtetl.

No one knows however who this R. Meir Son of R. Gavriel was. No such name was known in Liove.

People reminded themselves that there was someone by the name of Meir who served as an assistant to the butcher. But no one knows his father's name because he was never called up [to the Torah]. But when he was asked how he is called to the Torah he answered Meir son of Gavriel. He was told that there was a letter from R. Aharon Chernoybeler demanding Ma'amad [support] for 72 Rubles. He says with great confidence: I assume that if the Rebbe determined this amount, I will find the money to pay.

But in the same week, he did not have what to eat. So he visited a Gentile in a village to find some business. On the way, he found a wallet with money and when the money was counted it amounted to exactly 72 Rubles. After this story he became a person of great Bitachon [trust in God] – people would loan him money and he became

a merchant of animals and he became a very wealthy person and philanthropist.

I.F.

Liaver Rebbe

One time the Chafetz Chaim sat with Bochorim and they schmoozed about [the concept of] Cheshbon haNefesh.⁵⁶ So he told them about the first time that he conducted a Cheshbon haNefesh.

When he was an orphan of twelve years of age he traveled to another city and studied there in a kloyz [small synagogue]. His study partner was a tall and handsome lad who impressed everyone.

Once a Jew came to the Shtetl to look for a groom and he naturally chose the friend of the Chafetz Chaim, and he took him along with him back to Warsaw.

Afterward, a widower wrote to the Chafetz Chaim that he heard that he [i.e. the Chafetz Chaim] has a mother a widow, and he [i.e. the widower] wants to marry her – but only on condition that – he, the Chafetz Chaim will marry his daughter. What doesn't one do for a mother? So he agreed and he traveled back home where they wrote double Tnoyim.⁵⁷

The Chafetz Chaim returned exactly how he left with the same tattered caftan and torn boots – because sadly the prospective father-in-law was a very poor person.

A half a year later his friend returned from Warsaw outfitted in a new silk caftan and nice boot. But the main thing he bragged about was his heavy gold watch.

⁵⁶ A soul reckoning. Taking stock of one's moral character.

⁵⁷ i.e. both for the Chafetz Chaim and his mother. Tnoyim is a written document that the representatives of the bride and groom sign wherein the bride and groom enter into a contractual obligation to marry each other. Various financial arrangements are also outlined in the contract.

The Chafetz Chaim admitted that the golden watch greatly impressed him – although at that time when he was still a child.

The friend tried to convince him: “You need to demand what you deserve. The prospective father-in-law will need to give in. Take my advice! Go to your [prospective] father-in-law and state clearly: either you give me a golden watch or I’m going to break the engagement.”

The Chafetz Chaim allowed himself to be persuaded [by his friend]. He had a few groschen – so he hired a droshky⁵⁸ and traveled to Radin.

On the way, he encountered a magnificent Fiacre⁵⁹ that belonged to a very wealthy man. Right then, as they met each other, the carriage slipped, and the wealthy man fell into thick mud – and his heavy golden watch fell out of his pocket and fell into the mud.

The Chafetz Chaim remarked: “That was a moment of true Cheshbon Hanefesh – the watch that I’m chasing after can also fall into the mud, so what do I need it for?”

I.F.

Avraham Perlov

[who] heard it directly from the Chafetz Chaim

⁵⁸ A horse-drawn coach.

⁵⁹ four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage.

When Poznański,⁶⁰ the great Polish magnate, died, they told the Chafetz Chaim how much money he left behind.

The Chafetz Chaim remarked: “Why are you talking about the money he left behind, better ask about what he took along [with him].”

I.F.

Avraham Perlov

⁶⁰ Izrael Poznański (1833-1900).

The following is related in the name of the Kotzker:

Rashi states that when Eliezer came to see Rivka, “he saw that the waters rose in the well when she approached it.”⁶¹

The Kotzker asked, if Eliezer saw such a miracle in Rivka’s merit, why did he need to inquire about her?

The Kotzker answered: one cannot bring proof from a miracle, one must see a good *midah* [a fine character trait/a noble deed]. Therefore, he requested “Please, let me sip a little water from your jar.”

I.F.

Avraham Perlov

⁶¹ Rashi on Bereshit 24:17.

When the Degel Machane Ephraim arrived in Mezibozh to settle there, the dispute between the Chasidim and Misnagdim was very intense. [Marginal note: the Misnagdic Rav was a great-grandfather of R. Chaim Bick].

The Chasidim tried to convince the Degel that since he is Tzadik with *midos*⁶² he should take the initiative and reach out to the Rav. He agreed and they decided to go to the Rav on Shabbos for Kiddush.

As soon as the Degel crossed the threshold of the Rav's house he heard the Rav reciting the preparatory verses of Kiddush [starting with Isaiah 58: 13 "If you refrain from trampling the sabbath"] and "He will let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

As soon as the Degel heard this, he did not proceed to enter into the house. He remarked "Just listen, just listen that he admits that the Rabbinate belongs to us and not to him.

He just mentioned the heritage of Jacob - and who is the heritage of Jacob if not the descendants of R. Israel Baal Shem Tov."

I.F.

Mezhibozher Rebbe

⁶² Fine character traits.

When the Besht was in Mezhibozh he suffered from great persecutions, but his name constantly grew stronger and mightier.

The daughter of a Misnaged who lived in a Shtetl far away from Mezhibozh became very ill. The doctors had already given up on her – so several Jews advised him to meet the Besht.

Not having any other options, he accepted the advice and he set out on his journey. Not far from Mezhibozh a terrible blizzard and snowstorm started to fall.

He barely managed to find shelter in the house of a Jew who sat and learned.

He was almost completely frozen. The Jew greeted him with great hospitality and gave him food, drink, and dry clothes.

Afterward the Jew – who was a big Misnaged, but also a great Torah scholar – asked him: “Where is a Jew traveling in such weather?” The Jew whose daughter was very ill replied: “To the Besht. To save my sick daughter.”

As soon as the host heard this, he became furious and

wanted to throw him outside in the stormy weather.

The Jew pleaded for mercy, and he had to promise his host that he would return home without traveling to the Besht.

This story was related to the Besht. Whereupon he said: “The host is a great man. He is on the level of Rav, and Rav has the status of a Tanna who can disagree [with other Tana’aim].”⁶³

I.F.

Mezhibozher Rebbe

⁶³ See Eruvin 50b רב תנא הוא ופליג <https://www.sefaria.org.il/Eruvin.50b.15?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>. Rav himself had tanna status and therefore, unlike later amora'im, could disagree with the views of tanna'im.

When the Rav [R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the Ba'al Hatanya] was in Mezhibozh, R. Baruch strongly quarreled with him, and he didn't let him go to the Besht's gravesite.

I.F.

Mezhibozher Rebbe

R. Yitzchak Meir Heschel

The Rav [R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the Ba'al Hatanya] once said about R. Baruch [of Mezhibozh]: "You are indeed a grandson of the Besht, but you are only a biological grandson, whereas I am a spiritual grandson [of the Besht]."

I.F.

Mezhibozher Rebbe

Once R. Baruch pestered the Rav [R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi] so much that the Rav got very angry at him and screamed: “You have no respect for my Torah! !”

R. Baruch replied: “Where does it say that a Jew must know how to learn?” And he answered his own question: “Yes, this is stated somewhere: [in Isaiah 1: 17] ‘learn well’ but Rashi explains the meaning of the verse as ‘learn to do good.’”

I.F.

Mezhibozher Rebbe

Once someone came before R. Baruch and bragged that he recites the entire Psalms every day.

R. Baruch replied: “Given what I know about you, you only need to recite half [the book of] Psalms, [to reach] the verse: ‘they deceived Him with their speech, lied to Him with their words,’ [Ps. 78:36].”⁶⁴

[The verse appears midway through the Book of Psalms].

I.F.

Mezhibozher Rebbe

⁶⁴ R. Baruch believed that this person was a liar and charlatan. Hence, in response to this individual’s self-aggrandizing claim, R. Baruch outwitted this individual and stated that he only needs to recite half the book of Psalms in order to reveal his true colors.

R. Beirush was considered the Misnagdic Rav in Mezhibozh.

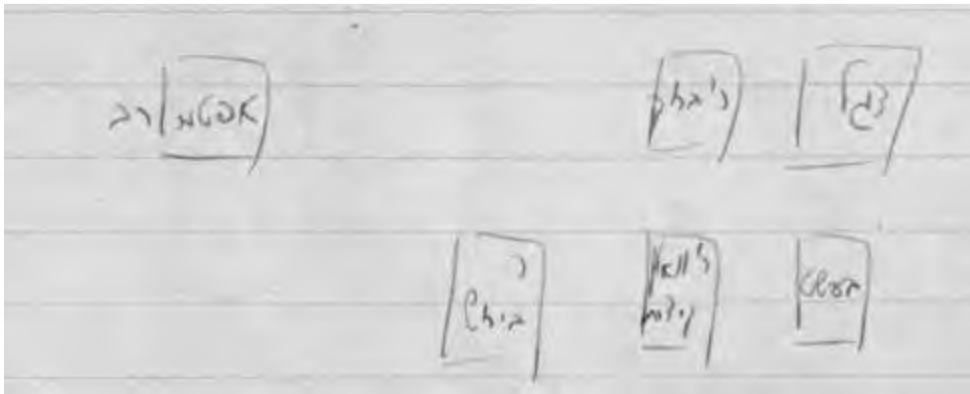
When R. Beirush passed away, the *Chevre Kadisha* [burial society] wanted to bury him next to R. Wolf Kitzis who was buried next to the Besht.

In the meantime, the Degel Machane Ephraim was already in Mezhibozh and the Chasidim wanted to leave the plot near R. Wolf Kitzis empty for the Degel.

At the funeral, all the Chasidim stood on the plot near R. Wolf Kitzis and did not allow R. Beirush to be buried there.

As they were standing there, a stranger approached and began to stand there as well. At nightfall, the Chasidim left the scene, and the Jew remained standing there alone. He quickly got a shovel and dug a grave for R. Beirush.

This is the layout of the graves:



The Besht used to travel to Old Constantin. When he traveled once a year they gave him 5 Rubles. If it turned out that he was there twice, they gave him [up to] 3 Rubles each time – i.e. 6 Rubles a year.

I.F.

R. Elazar Zohn

R. Meir Emden the son of R. Ya'akov Emden was the Rav in Old Constantin. When the Besht used to visit the city, he made Kiddush at R. Meir Emden's residence. R. Meir used to make Kiddush on Shabbos morning on dairy.

Once when the Besht was served a glass of milk he refused to drink it.

R. Meir wondered about this. When they investigated the matter, they found out that the woman who milked the cow 'was in her time.' [i.e. during her menstrual cycle].

I.F.

R. Elazar Zohn

R. Meir Emden was the son-in-law of a wealthy man and did not receive a salary as a rabbi. He also wasn't a businessman – the Rebbetzin conducted the business.

His son-in-law was the son of R. Chaim Rapoport from Lemberg. He was called R. Beirush.

R. Beirush saw that from all the rabbis that come to his father-in-law – he accords the most honor to the Besht.

He once asked him the reason for this.

So he answered that he goes around the world and is “*va-tigzor*” (meaning that a Tzadik decrees and God fulfills his decree).

The Besht once saw R. Beirush – he said about him that he has the image of God.

Afterward, Beirush became Rav in Mezhibozh. The Bick family are his descendants.

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

Once when the Apter traveled to Lublin to see the Chozeh he took along his son R. Yitzchak Meir. When they were sitting in the Sukkah, R. Yitzchak Meir saw that the name of Y-H-V-H was engraved on the Schach. The Apter remarked that this sign is only granted to the Tzadik of the generation.

When the Chozeh passed away, the Apter and R. Yitzchak Meir were once again sitting in the Sukkah and the name of Y-H-V-H appeared on the Schach.

The Apter Rav said: "We asked the Master of the Universe that He should give this to us."

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

The Apter Rav liked to exaggerate.

He once had a coat with a fur collar made for his son R. Yitzchak Meir.

He once said that a Cossack riding on a horse and holding a big spear in his hand could get stuck in the hair of the collar.

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

[Marginal note: R. Baruch?⁶⁵]

When the Apter Rav lived in Tultshin, he did not get along with the Balebatim [householders; laymen].

Before he left the city he went over to the Holy Ark and explicated the following verse:

.בזאת ידעתי כי חפצת בי כי לא יריע אויבי עלי. (Psalms 41:12).

When will I know that I am important in your eyes – if you will not harm my enemies.

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

⁶⁵ Note: these words appear on the top of the page.

The Degel Machane Ephraim, R. Baruch, and the Apter Rav all lived in Mezhiboze [until/at?] the age of 12.⁶⁶

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

⁶⁶ A bit unclear.

The house where the Besht resided was a small, poor home.

R. Baruch had a big, nice apartment.

Hershele Ostropoler once asked him – “how is this possible? Your pedigree stems from the Besht and he lived in such poverty, and you live as a rich man.”

R. Baruch told him: “You definitely have an answer to your question – get it off your chest.”

Hershele Ostropoler answered: “Beggars come to the marketplace, and they bang on drums and solicit donations. How much do they get – a few kopecks? In the city at the theater when an actor imitates the beggars he receives hundreds of rubles for his mimicry.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn (A Jew from Mezhibozh)

R. Pichas Landoy knew Jews who still remembered the Apter Rav.

One of them related that when he was 18 years old the Apter Rav was in Berdichev and he went to visit the Rebbetzin of the Berdichever Rav.

When he crossed over the threshold of the house he called out: this is sacred ground since the Berdichever Rav walked here. He removed his shoes before he entered.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

In the possession of the Sanzer⁶⁷ [Rebbe] there is a copy of a copy of a letter written by the Besht in his own handwriting to R. Gershon Kitiver.

The letter states: On my way to Apt I passed by a Shtetl where I met two young men studying in the Synagogue. They were arguing regarding a Halachic matter. One of the young men is called R. Yechezkel and I am sure that he will be a Halachic authority in Israel (this is the *Noda be-Yehuda*).

This letter is a copy of a letter that belonged to a grandchild of the Besht.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

⁶⁷ The same story was recorded twice in this collection, see below p. 85.

The Ropshitzer once visited the Kozhnitzer Magid.

The Kozhnitzer used to explain even the deepest and loftiest concepts in Kabbalah and Chassidus in such an easy and simple fashion that even a simple Jew was able to comprehend it.

The Ropshitzer had a question regarding a Kabbalistic topic, and he discussed it with the Kozhnitzer.

The Kozhnitzer explained the concept in his style through the use of metaphors that even a child could understand; however, they contained deep thoughts and ideas.

While they were conversing the Ropshitzer's wagon driver, a simpleton and coarse individual, entered.

He listened to the conversation and broke out in laughter. [As if] even he understood the conversation.

The Ropshitzer got very angry, and he said to the wagon driver: "You insolent person, get out of here. Fool, you believe that you understand what we are talking about – it is too deep for you."

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

Once R. Chaim Sanzer [of Brody] had difficulty understanding a complex Kabbalistic text in *Etz Chaim*.

The Meir Nesivim was present, and R. Chaim asked him to elucidate the text. He explained it and his eyes lit up. He asked him: “Where did you learn such a luminous explanation?”

He answered him – “this is the approach to Kabbalah that the Besht studies with his students.”

R. Chaim Sanzer got angry and said: “This [interpretation] from a rebbe that caresses and beats horses, I do not want to hear.”

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

R. Shlomo Lutzker was one of the students of the Magid of Mezritch. He was his assistant and the Magid asked him to transcribe his talks and words of Torah. See the introduction to Likkutei Amarim.

The book also describes how the Besht and the Magid studied with their students.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

One of the leaders of the Misnagdim from Mezhibuzh had an only daughter. She became very ill. So he hired two Jews to watch over her during the night and administer her medication. But everything the doctors tried did not help.

The wives started to convince the mother – that they should try to go to the Besht.

She started to pester her husband until he agreed and promised that he would go to the Besht.

However, since he was the head of the Misnagdim he was ashamed to travel during the day, and he quietly went by night to visit the Besht.

The Besht promised him that his daughter would be helped and would receive a cure from the Garden of Eden.

At night, there was a knock on the door and a Jew entered. He was dressed like a wagon driver with his whip in hand. One of the Jews-watchmen locked himself up, and the second was afraid to do anything. The wagon driver approached the sick girl and gave her something to smell under her nose and said: “I am bringing a remedy from the Garden of Eden. Tomorrow I will come again.”

In the morning, they immediately noticed that the sick girl’s appearance changed drastically – she was so much better.

They swiftly ran to the Besht and

Told him what happened.

The Besht instructed that when the Jew dressed as a wagon driver comes again, they should send him to him.

At night, he came again and once again brought a remedy. So they sent him to the Besht.

The Besht asked him: “Who are you?” He answered: “I have already been dead for hundreds of years. I was a wagon driver and once traveled in the forest. I heard a heart-rending cry: oy vey – Help! Help!” He saw that a man was hanging from a very high place on a tree, and he was leaning on a weak branch to prevent his weight from [bearing down with the rope tied around his neck, thereby] choking [and killing] him. But the branch was breaking, and it was only a matter of time before he would choke [to death].

The wagon driver saw that if he simply cut the rope, the Jew would fall and could break his head. So he figured out a way to place the wagon beneath the Jew. Thus, when he cuts the rope, he will fall into the wagon. This is indeed what happened, and the Jew was saved.

When the wagon driver died and appeared before the Heavenly Tribunal, they weighed his Mitzvos and Aveiros [good deeds and transgressions], and the Mitzva of saving a life so drastically outweighed all his transgressions, that they admitted him to the Garden of Eden (Paradise) among the Jews of great spiritual rank. He, the wagon driver, did not feel

comfortable amongst the great scholars and Tzadikim – he was after all a simple wagon driver. So they had mercy on him and appointed him as an emissary to do good deeds. And when a “cure from the Garden of Eden” is required, he is sent.

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

The Apter Rav once wanted to travel to R. Baruch. Being that R. Baruch was harsh and the Apter Rav liked to exaggerate – the Gaboim [his assistants] were afraid that they would quarrel, and they did not let him travel. He stubbornly insisted that he wanted to go, so his distinguished[?] ⁶⁸ associates told him the truth about why they were scared of him meeting R. Baruch. So he promised them that he would be careful not to speak in an exaggerated manner.

On Friday night, R. Baruch, knowing that the Apter liked to eat a lot, served him a large portion – as was his custom, the Apter ate straight out of the bowl.

They thought that this would bother R. Baruch. He said however that he saw how they [i.e. the Apter Rav] was bringing sacrifices.

When the Apter Rav started to recount hyperbolic tales, R. Baruch called out: “there is a golden weight in his mouth.” ⁶⁹

Friday night and Shabbos morning they requested that the Apter honor them by reciting words of Torah. But at the third meal, he did not want to [recite words of Torah].

So R. Baruch repeated a simple section of the Zohar.

When he [the Apter] left the meal, he told his assistant: “Quickly make my bed because I want to rest. With his Torah, he completely broke me.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

⁶⁸ Word is unclear in manuscript.

⁶⁹ I.e. his words are worth their weight in gold.

Once, the Apter and Ruzhiner met and they spoke about the Zohar.

The Apter remarked: we think that I say [i.e. expound upon] the Zohar, and you say Zohar [i.e. we both think that we are both proficient in explicating the Zohar]. I once visited R. Baruch (and he related the story of the third meal by R. Baruch), now, that's called really saying Zohar [i.e. he really does it well, the way it should be done].

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

The Rishiner visited the Apter. The Apter devoted a lot of time to show him the screws, tools, and parts of his carriage.

Chasidim related that at the time it was said that he taught him Ma'ase Merkava [the workings of the Heavenly Chariot].⁷⁰

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

⁷⁰ I.e. the esoteric secrets and mysteries of the Torah.

The Vishnitzer [Rebbe] is a descendent of R. Kopel Chasid⁷¹ – one of the students of the Besht. He led the prayers in the presence of the Besht.

They would call him the “Shivisnik”⁷² because he constantly screamed: I am ever mindful of God’s presence.⁷³

I.F.

Vishnitzer Rebbe

Rabbi Hager

⁷¹ Rabbi Yacov-Kopel, see <https://www.geni.com/people/Rabbi-Yacov-Kopel-Hager/6000000002861189260>; <https://www.facebook.com/JewishGenealogyPortal/posts/among-the-inner-circle-of-the-baal-shem-tovs-disciples-rabbi-yaakov-koppel-chass/681503625261435/>

⁷² “Mr. Shivisi”

⁷³ Psalms 16: 8.

It is said that in Kitev there is a Mikva where the Besht immersed himself. This is between the mountains on the way from Kitev to Kosov.

I.F.

Vishnitzer Rebbe

Rabbi Hager

People relate in the name of R. Raphael Hamburger that for a while he drew close to the ways of Chassidism and he spent some time at the Magid. But he did not influence him.

Later he went to Vilna and met the Gaon [of Vilna]. The Gaon asked him whether the Magid was a Torah scholar. R. Raphael answered him: “No.” And when he asked him whether he evinces [intellectual] prowess in the mystical realm [i.e. Kabbalah]. He answered him: “I don’t know – because I am no maven in these matters.”

I.F.

~~A Misnaged~~

The Sanzer Rebbe⁷⁴ has a letter from the Besht in his possession which he copied from a copy around 30-40 years ago. The letter was addressed to R. Gershon Kitever.

The letter mentions that “when I was traveling through Apt (the Noda be-Yehudah was born in Apt), I met in the Beis Medrash R. Yechezkel and his friend, who argued regarding the laws that render the lungs of an animal *treyf* and I settled the argument between them. [”]

In the letter, it is written that the Besht said about the young man R. Yechezkel that he is sure that he will grow up to be a Halachic authority.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

⁷⁴ The same story was recorded twice in this collection, see above p. 72.

The Besht once came to Siton. He did not have money for lodgings – so he stayed with a poor but honest tailor.

It was before Sukkos, and there was no Esrog in the city. The Besht went to the Parnes [a communal leader and philanthropist] of the city and told him that he wanted to travel to a bigger city and he – the Besht – would cover half of the expenses.

But also in that city, it was not possible to obtain an Estrog. So the Besht returned in great pain.

In the middle of the night – Erev Sukkos – a rider knocked on the window and awakened the tailor: “Nimatu (Russian) is Yisroel’ki here?”

When the tailor answered in the affirmative, the rider placed an Esrog in his hand and disappeared.

The “world” says that it was Elijah the Prophet who brought him an Esrog.

I.F.

Boyaner Rav

212 East Broadway

Before the Besht revealed himself, he was a Melamed in a village near Tchartkov. In those days they did not make a Minyan in a village. An innkeeper however wanted a Minyan, and the Besht led the prayers.

When the Meir Nesivim heard about this, he summoned the Besht to the synagogue and asked him: “You really know how to pray? Nu, start reciting the Kol Nidrei.”

So the Besht commenced [the prayer] and as soon as he mentioned the word kol, the lecterns began to [physically] rise as a result of his fervor.

The Meir Nesivim said: “nu, you can continue praying.”

The Besht replied: had I also uttered the word Nidrei, no one would have survived.

I.F.

Boyaner Rav

212 East Broadway

The Besht had a Gentile [worker] by the name of Alexi who used to heat the furnace. The Besht saw with the Holy Spirit that he is a very evil person – he can even destroy the world. He therefore used to caress him and sometimes gave him an extra Rubel.

Once he traveled with him and he engaged in *kefitzas haderech*.⁷⁵ Suddenly the Gentile stopped in the middle of the forest and shouted to the Besht that he wanted to kill him. The Besht believed that the Gentile was joking and began to laugh. “No,” shouted the Gentile, “I am going to kill you right now.”

The Besht thought: from where does the Gentile derive such strength? He sensed with [the aid of] the Holy Spirit that he was standing in the place where Cain killed Abel. The location combined with the murderous soul of the Gentile caused the Gentile to display such strength and murderousness.

The Besht asked him: nu, allow me just one request – I want to wash myself before my death. He moved away a few steps – and distanced himself from the spot of danger and the strength of the Gentile vanished. He fell to his feet and asked him for forgiveness.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

⁷⁵ Kefitzas Haderech is the supernatural ability to transport oneself instantly to a distant place.

How the Besht was born

R. Eliezer the father of the Besht was famous for his hospitality.

When R. Eliezer's wife became pregnant, there was a great commotion in Heaven [about the fact] that a lofty soul was going to be born. The *samach mem*⁷⁶ had a personal agenda to prevent it. At first, he wanted to know why R. Eliezer deserved such an honor. The Tzadikim in Heaven told him: because he is such a hospitable person. The *samach mem* argued that this is not true – he must be tested.

So Elijah the Prophet disguised himself as a pauper and came in the middle of Shabbos to R. Eliezer's house with a knapsack.

R. Eliezer received him with great honor – he gave him a bed and Shabbos meals.

On Motzei Shabbos, when Elijah the Prophet took leave of his host, R. Eliezer whispered in his ear – that no one should hear – “Dear Jew you should not do this again – do not travel on Shabbos with a knapsack.”

When they saw how highly R. Eliezer regarded the Mitzva of hosting guests, that he even hosted a violator of the Shabbos, no one in Heaven was able to become [?],⁷⁷ and a child was born to R. Eliezer. This was R. Israel Besht.

I.F.

Boyaner Rav

The Besht interpreted the verse (Kohelet 3: 19) “the advantage of Man over the animals is nothing since everything is futile,” that the greatness of a Man consists in him knowing that he is nothing.

R. Mendel Vitepsker said [regarding the verse in Psalms 85: 12] “Truth shall spring out of the earth” but I who am even lower than the ground, from me it will certainly sprout.

⁷⁶ The destructive angel Samael. Satan.

⁷⁷ A word or two are apparently missing (or a word is unclear). The general intent is that no one in Heaven was able to challenge R. Eliezer's righteousness and object to the Besht's birth.

I.F.

Dovid Twersky

Where the Besht is mentioned in old Seforim (sacred books)

In the book *Sod Yachin u-Boaz* from R. Meir Margulies (the author of *Meir Nesivim*), in the middle of the book he mentions “my teacher and friend, the rabbi and Chasid R. Israel Besht, the holy man who studies the secrets of Torah.”

In *Mayim Chaim* from R. Chaim Rapoport, he mentions the testimony given by the Besht.

The Sefer *Luchos Ha-Eidus* mentions what the Besht said about amulets.

Incidentally, the Besht distributed amulets. This was one of the three things that the Besht dispensed: blessings, amulets, and segulos.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

R. Ya'akov Emden's son, R. Meir Constantiner had a suspicion that the Besht is part of the Shabetai Zevi sect, God forbid. However, he wanted to be fully convinced of this. So he traveled to the Besht. He was so impressed with the Besht's conduct, that he became one of his first Chasidim.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

The Besht once said that Achiya HaShiloni⁷⁸ was his teacher and that he was sent from Heaven to study with him.

The Toldos mentions in his Sefer that R. Achiya HaShiloni was the Besht's teacher.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

The revelation of the Besht

He was revealed in 5480 [1720]. But he only began to make a big impression in 5500 [1740].

⁷⁸ Ahijah the Shilonite.

He was revealed in Okup.⁷⁹

The first time his greatness was recognized was when he was a *Belfer*.⁸⁰ His children were the only ones who were spared from certain obscene deeds.

Before the Besht was revealed he wrote letters to the elite figures of that generation. The text of the letter is contained in a book that was published by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. { ? }

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

⁷⁹ Okopy.

⁸⁰ A teacher's assistant in a traditional cheder.

The *Kol Aryeh* from R. Aryeh Leib the preacher of Polnoye is considered the first [published] Chassidic work. The book cites the teachings of the Besht.

(Marginal note: Otzar Hasefarim: 5558. Toldos Ya'akov Yosef 5740).

The preacher from Polnoye traveled around the world because the Besht ordered him to disseminate his teachings from the pulpit.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

The Magid's rebbetzin had to immerse herself in the Mikva, but she did not have any money. When she went to the bathhouse attendant [at the Mikva] he did not want to heat the Mikva for her.

She sat outside and cried her heart out.

Suddenly a carriage with four women rode past. When they saw her sitting and crying, they asked her: "Why are you crying?" So she related her misery.

They quickly invited her on the carriage and took her with them to the bathhouse.

When the Magid found out about this, he said: "These were the Four Matriarchs." Afterwards, the Malach was born.

I.F.

Israel Wallach

247 East Broadway

The “world” [people] relate:

Just as R. Chaim Vital was two years older than the Holy Ari, likewise the Magid was two years older than the Besht.

The Ethical Will of the Magid states that he divided his Chasidim among his students. Since the Galicians were a bit simple-minded, R. Elimelech inherited them [i.e. was appointed to be their rebbe]. He assigned the Rav [R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi] to Belorussia because they needed a scholar.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

After the Magid's passing, the Rav [R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi] bid the Malach farewell. The Malach escorted him along the way and traveled with him for part of the journey. In the middle of the trip, the Malach exclaimed: "The horses are being driven too fast."

The Rav responded to this: "True, I did not study enough Kabbalah." They both returned and the Rav stayed with the Malach for another two years. That is when he⁸¹ wrote his book on Kabbalah.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

⁸¹ Unclear who. It is possibly referring to Sefer Chesed L'Avraham written by the Malach. On the influence of the Malach on the Rav (the Ba'al Hatanya), see הרב יצחק קפלן, החסידות שנתחדש ונתגלה מלמעלה ע"י המלחמה, אור וחיות גליון 25, כסלו תשפב, עמ' 24 - 30

The Malach lived with his wife a total of four times.

When she became pregnant for the first time, he said: "This is not what I meant." And she miscarried.

The second time, he said the same thing, and she miscarried again.

When she became pregnant for a third time, they were afraid to tell the Malach and R. Yisrael Chaim⁸² was born. When they told him the news, the Malach said yet again: this is not what I meant, but once it is already here, let it be.

When the Rebbetzin became pregnant for a fourth time, the Malach said: this is what I had in mind, and R. Sholom was born.⁸³

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

⁸² R. Yisrael Chaim of Ludmir (c.1768 - 1810).

⁸³ R. Shalom Shachna of Prohovitch was the father of the Ruzhiner.

R. Shalom Prohovitcher passed away Erev Sukkos around midnight. Before his passing, he got out of bed. He got ready. He put on a nice new caftan and fastened a *gartel* around himself. When they brought him water to wash, he did not wash himself. Later on, they found out that this was water that was prepared for *negel vaser*.⁸⁴

He instructed that he should be moved away from the wall, and asked: “What time is it?” They told him it was a quarter to 12.

Suddenly he began to laugh. Once, twice, a third time. He said to the people that were standing around him: a great stir erupted in Heaven. The angels ran around [saying] – prepare a reception for R. Shalom. The Samach Mem approached and asked, for whom are they preparing themselves in such a way. So they threw him out. He asked a second time and was dismissed again. What do you mean you don’t know who R. Shalom was? He reminded himself: “This is Sholomke? Oh, how he fooled me! Oy, I did not know What he is.”

[Whereupon] there was an outburst of laughter in Heaven. R. Shalom concluded: since the ministering angels in Heaven are laughing, I am also laughing.

Afterward, at exactly 12 o’clock he turned around to the wall and passed away.

The Rebbetzin Chavele was very anxious and sad after his passing. But R. Avraham, the eldest son, calmed her down, and when they entered the

⁸⁴ The ritual washing of the hands upon waking from sleep. It seems that the water had already been used for the ritual washing of the hands. But this is not evident from the text itself.

Sukkah, he told her: we need to rejoice⁸⁵ with the guest – the Master of the Universe has a very distinguished guest for Yom Tov.

On the same day, a simple Jew also died. While the Rizhiner, R. Yisrael was in the middle of reciting Kaddish, he suddenly stopped and ran away. (Marginal note: at that time he was eleven years old. He was born in 5557. R. Shalom passed away in 5568). R. Avraham Prohovitcher went over to him later and asked him: why did you escape in the middle of Kaddish? R. Yisrael'nu replied: the soul of the Jew came to him and said: "Your father's soul does not require [the rectification achieved through] Kaddish – my soul however does. Let my son recite the Kaddish."

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

⁸⁵ In Yiddish there are two words און שיקן whose meaning is unclear.

When the Shpitivker Rav, R. Ya'akov Shimshon heard that the Noda be-Yehuda threw the [Sefer] *Toldos Ya'akov Yosef* on the floor, he decided to travel all the way to Prague to visit the Noda be-Yehuda. He was afraid that if the great man of his age had a negative attitude toward Chasidus, a tragedy would occur, God forbid, and the Chasidic movement would not be able to endure it.

So he traveled to Prague and stayed with the Noda be-Yehuda. On Shabbos, he held such a deep and learned sermon in the synagogue that the Noda be-Yehuda was astounded at the genius of a Chasidic Rav. At that point, he raised the [sefer of the] *Toldos* that he threw into a corner. Although he never became a Chasid, in his later years he did not evince a hatred toward Chasidus.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

R. Meir Halevi, the author of *Sefer Or la-Shamayim*, was hired by the Apter Rav to teach lessons to his son R. Yitzchak Meir. At that point, the Ohev Yisrael lived in Apt where he was Rav.

Once the Apter Rav suddenly woke up from his sleep during the night and said to his Rebbetzin: "Time has come for us to move away from here." R. Meir already merited to become his [i.e. the Apter Rav's] successor.

In the morning he summoned together all the householders of the city and relayed the news that he wanted to leave Apt. The distinguished members of the city began to scream and cry, but the Ohev Yisrael remained resolute: the situation was hopeless. However, he promised them: "For your effort, they will always refer to me by the name of your city – The Apter."

Afterward, R. Meir, author of *Or la-Shamayim* became Rav in Apt.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

The "world" relates that on the day that the Apter passed away, Jews in Israel saw how he [i.e. his bier] was carried and escorted to his grave.

Before his passing, the Apter indeed said that a place [of burial] was already designated for him in the Land of Israel.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

Rabbi Rotenberg

It is related in the name of the Ten Idlers⁸⁶: they debated what is better: a Bris (circumcision) or a death. Both at a Bris and a death (on a yahrzeit) it is customary to drink liquor.

They understood that a Bris is more worthwhile since a Bris will eventually result in a death.⁸⁷

I.F.

Israel Wallach

247 East Broadway

⁸⁶ The concept of Ten Idlers appears in the Talmud and refers to a quorum of scholars who dedicate themselves completely to the study of Torah, to the exclusion of engaging in work. Here it is used in jest as comedy from the “loafers gallery.”

⁸⁷ I.e. a birth will always result in an eventual death.

R. Mendel Michel Zlotchover did not have [the necessities] for Shabbos.

(Marginal note: Dr. Heschel says that this isn't true).

He went to the synagogue and asked that they put together something to give him for Shabbos. And they did.

When R. Mendel reached the prayer of sustenance [in the Amida] he realized that if he is dependent upon people, what is his prayer accomplishing? So he prayed to God to make the people forget that they arranged provisions for him for Shabbos.

I.F.

Dovid Twersky

Once the Besht suddenly ordered R. Wolf Kitzes to travel to Brody. R. Wolf did not ask any questions and set out on his journey.

The journey was difficult, and when night fell R. Wolf went into a tavern and asked for a bed.

The tavern keeper told him that he would allow him to sleep over but only on the condition that if more guests arrive, he will have to give up his bed, and R. Wolf agreed.

In the middle of the night, a nice calash [open carriage] approached and the Noda be-Yehuda with a group of his students alighted. The tavern keeper awakened R. Wolf and ordered him to give his room to the great guest. R. Wolf obeyed and he lay down with the other students on the floor. The Noda be-Yehuda began to study a difficult Talmudic topic. He studied out loud and he deviated from the straightforward meaning [of the text]. When R. Wolf Kitzes heard this, he reminded him of the correct meaning. This occurred once, twice, and even a third time. The third time, Noda be-Yehuda realized that the interpretation that was suggested was a stroke of genius. He looked around and saw that it had not come from one of his students, but from a Jew lying on the floor dressed as a pauper. He conversed with him in learning [Talmudic subjects] and he did leave him alone until he agreed to sleep in his bed.

In the morning, the Noda be-Yehuda asked him: “where are you going?” and when he answered that he was also traveling to Brody, he ordered him to join him in his carriage.

When they arrived in Brody, R. Wolf bid him farewell, searched for a Mikva, and disappeared.

Why did the Noda be-Yehuda come to Brody? The sages of the kloyz heard that the Besht was distributing emulates containing the ineffable name of God. So they convened a meeting and invited the Noda be-Yehuda to attend.

When the Noda be-Yehuda came to the meeting, he declared: that he did not want to go to the meeting until they summoned the great scholar whom he met on the way. They searched the entire city of Brody until they found R. Wolf behind an oven in a small synagogue. When he came to the great synagogue where the meeting was convened the Noda be-Yehuda called him up to sit next to him and he gave him a seat next to him on the Bimah.

The ~~rabbinic trial~~ meeting commenced, and the Sages of Brody claimed that the Besht distributed amulets in which he inscribed the ineffable name of God.

R. Wolf called out with great pathos: “Who says that the holy Besht has to write the ineffable name of God? It is sufficient for him to write R. Yisrael ben Sarah [Israel son of Saraj].

To prove this, search for these amulets and you will see for yourselves.”

When the Noda be-Yehuda heard what R. Wolf Kitzes said, he ordered that they search for the amulets that were circulating in Brody and when they opened them they saw that R. Wolf told the truth.

I.F.

Dovid Fishman

A Prohovitcher Chasid once traveled to R. Baruch in Mezhibozh. Before he left, he made up with his friend to pay close attention to what would occur on Saturday night during the Melava Malka both by R. Baruch and by R. Shalom Prohovitcher, and when he returned from Mezhibozh, they should compare notes with each other.

When the Jew from Prohovitch arrived in Mezhibozh and attended the Melava Malka, R. Baruch saw him and asked him: “How is Sholomke doing? (People relate that when R. Baruch spoke about R. Shalom he never referred to him as **Reb** Sholom). We must stop him, he is walking on a knife’s edge that is teetering over a deep pit.”

When the Jew returned to Prohovitch he discussed [the events of Saturday night] with his friend, and he told him that at the very minute that R. Baruch spoke about R. Sholom, R. Sholom asked that they sing “the Tishbite⁸⁸ should save us from the mouth of lions.”

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

⁸⁸ I.e. Elijah the Prophet.

The Malach was a Magid in Posov. After a while, the balebatim began to speak. “What use do we have from the Magid – he continuously prays and studies and we don’t hear a word from him.”

These words reached the Rebbetzin and she – in a state of fright – went into the Malach and reported that people were unhappy and they could God forbid lose their livelihood.

The Malach responded: “Am I to blame – they never call me – let them call me and I will come.”

Shortly thereafter there was a Bris and they invited the Malach.

He came, as was his manner, with his Talis draped over his head. When they began to circumcise the child, he lifted his Talis for a minute – this cast such fear upon the celebrants that the entire crowd ran away.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

R. Michel Zlotchover, the son of R. Yitzchak of Radivil⁸⁹ (one of the sages of Brody) heard about the Malach and insisted that he wanted to visit him. Before he traveled, R. Yitzchak told him that he should only meet the Malach during the High Holy Days.

On the way, he experienced one setback after another, and he arrived in Postov on Erev Tisha B'av. He quickly ran to the house of the Malach, but the Malach was already in the synagogue. He saw the Malach sit the entire Tisha B'av with his head buried between his knees.⁹⁰

After Tisha B'av, he traveled back home because R. Yitzchak instructed him to meet with the Malach only during the High Holy Days.

When he returned, he told his father R. Yitzchak that he wanted to emulate the Malach – [by] not eating, not drinking, and spending his entire day in the service of God.

He started following in the footsteps of the Malach.

Yom Kippur night arrived, and R. Michel dozed off in the synagogue. He dreamt that he was in the supernal worlds. On one [wing of] Heaven he saw people seated on majestic chairs being fed the best delicacies. They told him that this was reserved for people who did not derive any pleasure from this [physical] world.

He came to another [wing of] Heaven – and he sees people seated at tables laden with delicious foods, but the food is only heard about.⁹¹

They told him that these foods are for those who imitate others.

⁸⁹ Apparently the writer got confused between R. Yitzchak of Drohbitsh, the father of R. Michel of Zlotchov and R. Yitzhak Yungerlieb of Radwil, the son of R. Michel of Zlotchov.

⁹⁰ See Babylonian Talmud *Brachot* 34b; *Avoda Zara* 17a.

⁹¹ Meaning is a bit unclear. Apparently he did not see them eat but only heard them eating. The meaning is still unclear.

At that very moment, R. Yitzchak awakened him and told him you nearly burnt yourself.
Don't continue to behave this way.

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

The Revelation of the Besht

Once the Besht traveled through a village. A gentile threw a stone at him. He began to sink in the ground, and the more they wanted to rescue him, the more he sank.

The Gentiles ran after the Besht and asked for mercy that he should save the Gentile. He said that if the lad promised never to do it again, he would be rescued. And that is indeed what happened.

Afterward, the Besht said: “The “world” did not at all feel that this was a miracle.”

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

The Sadegerer, R. Avraham Ya'akov once said: as a true story it is not written in Shivchei Habesht. But if it is written we may believe it – then what can we not believe about the Besht.⁹²

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Prohovitcher Rav

⁹² Meaning unclear. Perhaps the gist of it is that the stories in Shivchei Habesht are not to be believed as literal fact. Nevertheless, one should believe that the Besht was capable of performing such wonders.

When the Besht was traveling en route to Israel, he stopped in Constantinople and stayed at the residence of a distinguished community leader.

[The Behst's stopover] happened to coincide with Pesach, and for the four cups of wine, they served the Besht an old vintage wine. Experts said that drinking only a small glass of this wine can cause someone to become inebriated. The Besht however drank four cups of this wine, and it had no noticeable effect on him.

This story was once related to the Boyaner Rebbe R. Yitzchak Friedman. He remarked: "what's the wonder – he was after all on the level of 'fire consuming fire.'"

I.F.

When the boat upon which the Besht was traveling to Israel began to sink, the fear was so great that the Besht forgot everything he knew.

Later on, he was saved together with one of his students R. Hersh the scribe.⁹³ The Besht asked R. Hersh: “You are a scribe, recite the letters [of the alphabet] for me.” As he started to recite the letters, the Besht’s memory returned to him, and he began to remember everything as before.

The “world” says that had the Besht met the Ohr Hachaim⁹⁴ in the Land of Israel, the Messiah would have come.

I.F.

⁹³ Tzvi Hersch Sofer - scribe of the Baal ShemTov

<https://www.geni.com/people/Tzvi-Sofer-scribe-of-the-Baal-ShemTov/6000000148644331015>

⁹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaim_ibn_Attar

R. Chaim ibn Attar (1696-1743) also known as the Or ha-Hayyim after his popular commentary on the Torah, was a Talmudist and Kabbalist. He is considered to be one of the most prominent Rabbis of Morocco, and is highly regarded in Hassidic Judaism.

The [exact] day of the Besht's passing is unknown. Some say it is the first day of Shavuos – some say it is the second.

the Boyaner Rebbe, R. Yitzchak Friedman commented on this: “It says that ‘the foundation of the Tzadik is concealed in the seventh.’⁹⁵ Thus it appears that the Yahrzeit is on the second day of Shavuos (7 Sivan).”

The world says the Besht was like Moshe Rabeinu. Just as the burial place of Moshe Rabeinu is unknown, so too the day of the Besht's passing is unknown.

I.F.

⁹⁵ קל מססתר יסור צדיק בשביעה נעלם From the Poem
See: <http://old.piyut.org.il/textual/34.html>

The Noda be-Yehuda in one of his responsa⁹⁶ rails against those who recite the prayer “L’shem Yichud”⁹⁷ before a blessing, as he regards this as an interruption.⁹⁸ And since Chasidim do engage in this practice, he interprets the verse, “for the paths of God are righteous; the righteous walk on them, while sinners stumble on them,” [with a wordplay] that “the righteous walk on them, while Chassidim stumble on them.”⁹⁹

Once a descendent of the Noda be-Yehuda came to Ruzhiner and told him that he wanted to reprint the responsa of the Noda be-Yehuda, and he mentioned that he wanted to excise the aforementioned wordplay and restore the original [words of the verse] that “sinners stumble on them.”

The Rizhiner responded: leave it alone. My grandfather converted sinners into Chasidim and you want to transform Chasidim into sinners[?!].

I.F.

The Besht arrived in a village for Shabbos. He witnessed an ordinary Jew celebrating the third meal with a Minyan of [ten] Jews and delicious food. The Besht asked him: “Why do you observe the third meal with such joyous fanfare?”

The Jew answered him: there is a saying – let my soul not expire among Gentiles. During the third meal when the additional soul¹⁰⁰ departs from me, I want it to expire among Jews.

I.F.

⁹⁶ See: https://www.sefaria.org.il/Noda_BiYhudah_I%2C_Yoreh_Deah.93.4?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

שו"ת נודע ביהודה, מהדורא קמא, יורה דעה צג

ועל הרביעית אשר שאל בנוסח לשם יחוד אשר חדשים מקרוב נתפשט ונדפס בסידורים. הנה בזה אני משיב עד שאתה שואלני נוסח אמירתו יותר ראוי לשאול אם נאמר כי טוב באמירתו. ולדעתי זה רעה חולה בדורנו ועל הדורות שלפני זמננו שלא ידעו מנוסח זה ולא אמרוהו והיו עמלים כל ימיהם בתורה ובמצוות הכל ע"פ התורה וע"פ הפוסקים אשר דבריהם נובעים ממקור מים חיים ים התלמוד עליהם נאמר תומת ישרים תנחם והם הם אשר עשו פרי למעלה וגדול מעל שמים חסדם. אבל בדורנו הזה כי עזבו את תורת ה' ומקור מים חיים שני התלמודים בבלי וירושלמי לחצוב להם בורות נשברים ומתנשאים ברום לבבם כל אחד אומר אנכי הרואה ולי נפתחו שערי שמים ובעבורי העולם מתקיים אלו הם מחריבי הדור. ועל הדור היתום הזה אני אומר ישרים דרכי ה' וצדיקים ילכו בם וחסידיהם יכשלו בם. והרבה היה לי לדבר מזה אבל כשם שמצוה לומר דבר הנשמע כך מצוה שלא לומר דבר שאינו נשמע וה' ירחם עלינו:

Regarding your fourth question, about the proper version of L'Shem Yichud, which has newly spread and been printed in siddurim: I reply that before you ask me about the version, it would be more appropriate to ask whether saying it is appropriate at all. In my opinion, it is an evil sickness for our generation. Previous generations did not know of this prayer, and did not say it at all. These people toiled their whole lives in Torah and in mitzvot, all according to the Torah and according to the halachic authorities, whose words flow from the source of living waters, the vast sea of the Talmud, regarding which it is said, “the integrity of the upright shall guide them.” They bore excellent fruit and their kindness exceeded the heavens. However, in our generation people have left G-d’s Torah and the source of living waters, the two Talmuds, Bavli and Yerushalmi, to dig for themselves broken cisterns. Each one raises himself in the arrogance of his own heart, saying, “I am the one who sees, the gates to heaven are open for me, and for me the world exists.” These people are the destroyers of the generation. For this orphaned generation I say that G-d’s paths are just, and the righteous walk in them, and the Chasidim stumble in them [This is an alteration of Hoshea 14: 14, in which the prophet says that sinners will stumble in them.] I have much more to say on this matter, but just as it is a mitzvah to say what will be heard, so too is it a mitzvah not to say something that will be ignored. (Yevamot 65b) G-d should have mercy upon us ...

⁹⁷ “For the sake of the unification of the Holy One, Blessed Be He and His Shechinah.” A prayer said prior to the performance of certain rituals.

⁹⁸ I did not see this latter point addressed in the Noda be-Yehuda.

⁹⁹ Hosea 14: 10.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/neshamah-yeterah>

Neshamah Yeterah, a popular belief that every Jew is given an additional soul from the entrance of each Sabbath until its termination.

When the Besht was on his deathbed, Satan came and asked him: “Do you wish for the Messiah to come?” The Besht requested that he give him two hours to think it over. After two hours had passed Satan returned and the Besht gave him his answer: “I wish for the Messiah to come in sixty years from now. If for some reason he will be unable to come, I will have to be born again.”

Sixty years later, a son was born to the Ruzhiner. The Ruzhiner said, “I would have liked to name you Israel after the holy Besht but since my own name is Yisrael I will name you Yaakov—Yaakov is also [=another name for] Yisrael.” This was R. Abraham Yaakov, the elder Sadagurer Rebbe.

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

(Boyaner Hasid)

After the Besht passed away his other disciples did not want to recognize the Magid as his successor.

They agreed among themselves that whoever would tell a tale about or teaching from the Besht that none of them had heard – would be chosen as successor.

Only the Magid was able to tell a story that nobody had seen or heard before.

He recounted that he himself had seen that when the Besht took a spoonful of food in his mouth a pillar of fire consumed the food before it reached his mouth.

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

(Boyaner Hasid)

Before the Magid became a disciple of the Besht he was once returning from the water [i.e. the *mikvah*] when he encountered the Besht and his disciples. The Besht said to his disciples: “See – this is what Adam looked like before he sinned.” The disciples went over to him and wished to ask him to become a disciple of the Besht but he refused. He imagined that the Besht would actually become one of his disciples. In the end, however, he realized the truth and joined the Besht’s company.

[Side comment:] R. Yirmiyah has a tale about the Magid – that he was at first a critic of the Besht. He forgot it [the story] however.

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

R. Pinchas of Koretz [d.1791] visited the Besht for the final days of his last Passover, but he arrived very late and did not have enough time to go to the *mikvah*. The Besht said: “Woe, woe, had he gone to the *mikvah* he would have done me a great favor.” (He indeed passed away that very Shavuot.)

When R. Pinchas was on his deathbed R. Hayim of Krasna [d.1793], one of the disciples of the Besht, visited him. He arrived on Friday, and they informed him of the sad news that it was already too late [i.e. that R. Pinchas had passed] so he went to the *mikvah*. While he was there they informed him that R. Pinchas was still alive but they could not recall R. Pinchas’s mother’s name when they mentioned him. The Koretzer then said, “This is punishment for when the Besht needed me, and I did not have enough time to go to the *mikvah*.”

I.F.

Pini Landau

Before the Besht passed away he said: before I go to the other world I would like for all his attainments to be taken away for he would like to arrive there like a fool – as in [the verse] “The fool believes everything” [Proverbs 14: 15].”

I.F.

R. Mordechai Solomon Friedman

Boyaner Rebbe

When R. Israel, the Husyatiner, began to put on phylacteries, his father, the elder Husyatiner, R. Mordechai Faivush, of blessed memory, told him the following story as he helped him put on the phylacteries for the first time.

Hasidim from Russia once came to the Magid and bemoaned the fact that because of the great distance, it is difficult to come more often but at the same time it is also difficult to be for such a long period without a rebbe to guide them.

The Magid took off an item of clothing, [and took] a girdle and a stick and gave them to the oldest of the company and said to him: “Take these items and travel to Vitebsk. There you will find a young man by the name of Mendel and to him you shall give all these things.”

When they arrived in Vitebsk, they began to inquire about R. Mendel. The people said to them, “There are many Mendels – which one do you need?” At last, they encountered a woman and she replied: “My son-in-law is also named Mendel – perhaps it is he.” When they met him at home and gave him the items he immediately put on the clothing and the girdle. At that very moment, his face changed completely, and they no longer recognized him, and a great terror fell upon them.

The elder Husyatiner finished [the tale]: “You see, my child, one moment like this – and now already different. I bless you that you be such a light and fire for your generation as R. Mendel Vitebsker was for his.

I.F.

R. Yaacov Shimshon, the Bohopoler Rabbi, said that in Slavuta it was well accepted that [the story that] the Rabbi [Jacob Samson] of Shepetuvka [d.1801] visited [Ezekiel Landau (d.1793), author of] the *Noda be-yehudah* was utterly false.¹

(R. Yaacov Shimshon is Pini Landau's grandfather)

Pini Landau

¹ See folder 293.8 p. 155.

[Rabbi Avraham] *haMalakh* married the daughter of R. Faivush Kremenetz. R. Faivush did not want to travel to the wedding because it would hinder his Torah study. When Hasidim related this to the Magid they also told him that R. Faivush was so saintly that he *recalls* that there is a master of the world every minute. The Magid replied: “With us, we do not *forget* about God and his Torah for even a minute.”

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

(Boyaner Hasid)

[Rabbi Avraham] *haMalakh* used to bake matzahs the day before Passover and sent them to his father the holy Magid. They asked the Magid: “Usually, the custom is that the father sends his son matzahs not the other way around.” The Magid replied: “To be so careful of even a minuscule amount of leaven can only be accomplished by an angel [alluding to *haMalakh*] – that is why I take from him matzah on the day before Passover.”

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

(Boyaner Hasid)

Before the Magid passed away he spoke with *haMalakh* about his disciples: “If you wish to know about a *pilpul* [learned discourse] turn to [Jacob Joseph of Polnoye (d.c.1873), the author of] the *Toldot* [*ya’akov yosef*] of Polnoye. But if you wish to know a matter of *davar halakhah* [law] or to decide a halakhic question go to the Rav [i.e. R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi (d.1812)] – as he decides so is it also decided in heaven.”

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

(Boyaner Hasid)

The custom in the court of Chernobyl was that a couple had two separate bedrooms. When R. Shalom of Prohobisht [d.1802] made a match and became a son-in-law of the Chernobyler, he instituted the innovation that he and his wife slept in the same room. This bothered the Chernobyler very much and he was determined to see how the couple behaved. During the first day of *selihot* [the period leading up to the High Holidays] he entered the room and as soon as he opened the door he fainted. (What he saw there is connected with another tale about R. Shalom that has not yet been able to recorded.) When they revived him he screamed: “Woe, woe! If so then I must move someplace else. So he left ____? ____ and went to Chernobyl and founded a court there.

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

[Side comment:] R. Katz related that he heard from a Jew whose father was present at the event himself.

When the *Malakh* was accepted [as preacher] in Fastov, he was paid ten gulden a week and he lived in great poverty. He sat all day in seclusion and prayed and studied. During the day he covered his face with his tallit and when he was not wearing the tallit his face was covered with a curtain. He did not perform the functions of a preacher – he never spoke a word with anybody. He just sat in his room. Once a day they brought him in a dove for his meal and that was enough for him.

However, the townspeople and the householders became angry – why is it that we have no benefit from the town's preacher? So the *gabbai* (sexton) once dared to go to the *Malakh*'s room and told him about the townspeople's complaint. "So what do they want?" the *Malakh* asked. The sexton replied that as next week there will be a circumcision, the Angel should show up. He promised to do so.

When *HaMalakh* arrived on the day of the circumcision a terror fell upon the townspeople so that most people fainted and there was barely a quorum left for the circumcision. the *Malakh* named the child Leib. It is said that this Leib was unusually strong and mighty like ten lions.

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

The first of the Hasidic rebbes to strongly oppose the *mitnagedim* [opponents of Hasidism] and *Ashkenazim* was [the author of] the *No'am elimelekh*, R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk [d.1787]. He decreed that they should separate from the opponents and Germans – that they should make their own separate synagogues and quorums and hire their own ritual slaughterers.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When R. Baruch of Medzhybizh [d.1811] was still a child he once visited R. Pinchas of Koretz. When he went to sleep R. Pinchas called his family together and said: “Do you wish to see a true Jew who is bound [*davuk*] with all his limbs to the Master of the World? Have a look!” R. Pinchas placed his hand over the *mezuzah* of the house and covered it over. As soon as he placed his hand on it, they saw R. Baruch begin to thrash in his sleep – he was restless. This R. Pinchas repeated several times and each time R. Baruch thrashed.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When the Rav [R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi] began to write his *Shulhan Aruch HaRav*, the Magid warned him not to decide a law before the two brilliant scholars of the generation, the brothers R. Shmelke of Nikolsburg [d.1778] and [Pinchas of Frankfurt (d.1805), the author of] the *Hafla'ah* would consent to it. And so it was. Every law passed through R. Shmelke and the *Hafla'ah*. This is believed by Hasidim and this is why the Hasidic world esteemed so the *Shulhan arukh HaRav*.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When R. Abraham of Sochatchov [d.1910] was a boy he studied with a *shochet* [ritual slaughterer] who was close to the Sanzer – the [author of the] *Divrei hayim*. He once told of the greatness of the Sochotchover when he was but a boy of eight.

The Sochotchover's father [R. Ze'ev Nahman (d.1885)] was a great man – the author of the book – *Agudat Ezov*. He was a rabbi in his town and gave lectures to his students. Once Abraham listened in during the lecture and afterward he called out: "Father, your question is no question nor is your answer." At first, his father ignored him but when he began to think it over, he realized that his son was correct. This went on for several days. His father was afraid that he would be embarrassed before his town and berated Abraham to stop driving him crazy. But from then on, he did not allow Abraham into his lecture.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Preacher of Sokal, R. Solomon Lutzker [d.1813] experienced a miracle with the Magid of Mezritsh.

R. Motele [side comment:] (Yechiel Mikhel?) Zlotchover [d.c.1785], the son of R. Isaac of Drohobycz, led a court of his own and was not of the disciples of the Magid. Once he was in Mezritsh but not as a *hasid* [=follower]. The Rabbi [Mordechai] of Neshkhiz [d.1800], one of R. Motele's people, accompanied him. The rabbi needed R. Motele but could not find him. He encountered R. Solomon Lutzker and asked him: "Where is my rebbe?" R. Solomon thought that he meant the Magid since, for him, simply "rebbe" meant the Magid, and he led him to the Magid. When R. Motele heard about this it bothered him greatly and he yelled at R. Solomon: "You will not be a rebbe now!"

The Magid, in his special room, sensed by his holy spirit what R. Motele decreed. He called R. Solomon and said to him: "Listen. You were worthy of being a rebbe of sixty thousand hasidim [=followers], but R. Motele forestalled that. I promise you [however] that you will have a disciple who will be equal to sixty thousand." This was R. Shalom Belzer [d.1855].

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Seer [Jacob Isaac] of Lublin [d.1815] sensed that a great soul was growing in Sokol. Since there were several lofty Lubliner Hasidim – among them R. Joseph Elazar one of the finest of the Lubliner Hasidim – he instructed through his followers that R. Shalom finds great favor in his eyes and he would like him to be among his own. The Belzer was distraught. He did not want to part from his master and teacher R. Solomon Lutzker nor did he want to tell him about it since he did not wish to shame him.

The Lubliner, however, did not leave him be and told him several times to come. R. Shalom then became afraid that the Seer would take affront and he finally talked it over with R. Solomon Lutzker. When R. Shalom told his master what was going on R. Solomon began to weep: “He has the whole world after all – what does he want from me? I have one mule and he wishes to take it from me!” But he did not consent, and R. Shalom remained in Sokol.

Once R. Solomon Lutzker called R. Shalom and said to him: “Listen! You are a young man with a wife and small children. One needs to fear the great Seer of Lublin. Go in health.” When R. Shalom arrived in Lublin he found there world-class *tsadikim*, great and brilliant scholars – but the Seer showed him great honor and on the Sabbath, he gave him the sixth *Aliyah* [=the sixth person to be called up to the Torah].

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The Rabbi of Sokol, the Ramraz, was the elder Belzer Rebbe's father-in-law. He was a *mitnaged* [=an opponent] and a great man and the Belzer attended his lessons. The Belzer was fifteen when he got married. The preacher of the town was R. Solomon Lutzker who was not only a disciple of the Magid but his personal assistant – his scribe and secretary.

The Belzer once passed the house of R. Solomon Lutzker and he called him in: "Young man, I like you and would like to teach you Hasidism and Kabbalah" and the Belzer agreed. However, since his father-in-law, the Ramraz was a *mitnaged* [an opponent] it had to be in secret and it ended up that R. Solomon taught him his lessons in Hasidism at twelve o'clock at night. His father-in-law's lesson began at five in the morning and since the Belzer got home from R. Solomon's lesson at three or four at night he hardly slept, and it happened that he fell asleep during his father-in-law's lesson. This bothered Ramraz very much and he was very ashamed of his son-in-law. It went so far that he told his daughter that his son-in-law was embarrassing him and that it would be proper to divorce him. The Belzer's wife knew about his

midnight lessons but she did not wish to tell her father about them.

This went on for a while. The Belzer studied at night with R. Solomon Lutzker and would often fall asleep in exhaustion at his father-in-law's lessons. The Ramraz was terribly embarrassed before the other students. He therefore began to strongly pester his daughter to divorce her husband. She was therefore forced to tell her father about her husband's lessons and she also told him about his great righteousness and his worship. From then on, Ramraz let him be and allowed him to follow the path of Hasidism.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Shmelke of Nikolsburg once gave a pauper a ring since he had greatly lamented to him. When his wife learned of this, she became furious, and she reproached her husband that the ring was worth a lot of money. So R. Shmelke called the pauper and told him for God's sake not to sell the ring for less than what his wife had estimated its worth.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Hayim Sanzer earned his living through a white linen business. That is, his wife did business with R. Ephraim Zalman Margolios of Brody [d.1828]. His wife was once involved in a dispute with R. Ephraim Zalman's firm. She believed that she was owed eighty gulden. She kept insisting but to no avail. So she insisted that she would like for R. Hayim himself to travel to Brody to discuss it with R. Ephraim Zalman or else to take him to court. At first, R. Hayim did not want to go because it would disrupt his studies, but she pestered him until he agreed.

When he arrived in Brody and went to see R. Ephraim Zalman he immediately began to discuss matters of learning and this went on for hours. Afterward, R. Ephraim Zalman asked him – “What brings you to Brody?” R. Hayim told him about the dispute that his wife had with the firm. R. Ephraim Zalman replied that it has been several years since he was at the shop but “for your sake, I will go and resolve the dispute. In any event, I believe you”. And he went to the shop and told them to pay the wife the eighty gulden.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Moses Leib of Sasov (d. 1807) once came to Tarnogród. The mother of the [author of the] *Divrei Hayim* – R. Hayim Sanzer – came to R. Moses Leib's home with her child in her arms. When he entered, R. Moses Leib stood up. She became very afraid. "Don't be afraid," R. Moses Leib said to her. "I am not standing up for you but for the future leader of the diaspora which you hold in your arms."

When R. Hayim was thirteen the [author of the] *Yam ha-talmud* (R. Joshua Heschel Orenstein [d. 1824]) ordained him with [the formula] "May he decide? He may decide! May he judge? He may judge!"

At fifteen the [author of the] *Yeshu'ot Yaakov* (R. Jacob Meshulem Orenstein [d. 1839]) included him in a court convened to release an *agunah* [chained woman].

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Zalman Orenstein told the Kinever Rebbe:

The Rav [i.e. Shneur Zalman of Liadi] was a disciple of R. Michel of Zelochoy. When R. Michel traveled, he took along his disciples and the Rav went along with them. When R. Michel visited the Magid, it was arranged so that both of them would lead separate *tishen* during the third Shabbat meal. When the Zelochover would give his teaching the Magid would keep silent but when the Magid began to preach R. Michel would not pay him any attention but would mind his own concerns.

This was difficult for the Rav to understand – R. Michel travels to the Magid but then he shows him no respect. At the Magid's there was a close follower (*mekurav*) – a great mind who had previously been [a disciple of] the Ga'on of Vilna but became a Hasid. The Rav asked the advice of this follower as to what he should do. He replied: "I will show you how the Magid performs [the midnight ritual of] *Hazot*." He showed him how during *Hazot* the Magid, despite being lame and needing

crutches threw them away and ran about like a flaming fire. This impressed the Rav deeply. The Magid opened the door and said to the Rav: “Regarding Torah, R. Michel is greater but regarding rectifying souls (*tikun nefashot*) I stand higher than him.” So, the Rav remained as a *hasid* of the Magid because he also felt that rectifying souls stands higher and is more important.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Jacob Emden [d. 1776] once said: “Since I am already old, I am unable to compete with the Besht.”

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

When R. Baruch of Medzibuz was a child of about seven-eight he studied tractate *Bava kama*. They asked him why he was studying *Bava kama* and he replied: "The letters that spell out *Bava kama* stand for 'Baruch son of Odel, [is] holy from his mother's womb'."

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Motele Chernobyler's second wife – with whom he had five sons – was the daughter of R. David Leikes [d.c. 1800]. The Kinever Rebbe thinks that Leikes is the name of a town. The Komarno Rebbe says that it is Leahkeh's – his mother's name was Leah.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Yevi [Jacob Joseph of Ostrog (d. 1791)] became a *magid* [preacher] in Ostrog when he was eighteen. The Bardichever testified that he sensed an illumination – a holy light, [shining from him].

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Nahman of Breslav [d. 1810] once said: “It doesn’t bother me that the Grandfather [Aryeh Leib] of Shpolo [d. 1811] speaks against me. He only speaks about things that people say I do – but I do not do them.”

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Moses Hayim Ephraim of Sadilkov [d. 1800], a grandson of the Besht, was wealthy. He was once leaving Satinov and encountered R. Aaron Klivaner who was a very poor man. After they greeted each other, R. Aaron asked him "From where are you coming?" When the Sadilkover replied that had just left Satinov, R. Aaron said: "Woe unto me – it will now be like deep waters without any fish." The Sadilkover said to him: "Fear not! I opened their eyes so they will now give money."

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

It is said about R. Aaron Klivaner, a disciple of the Magid, that he would only study alone. They asked him why he studied alone and he replied: "I do not begin to study until I see the Tanaitic sage before my eyes."

I.F.

Kivever Rebbe

R. Arele (?) Tetiver [d.c. 1800] a grandson (?) of the Besht (?) was a *magid* [preacher] in Slopkovitz. R. Aaron Klivaner, a disciple of the Magid, also lived there. R. Aaron was a tremendous scholar who knew eighteen Talmudic tractates by heart. The old house of study was damaged and they wished to fix it – and the entire town burned down. R. Aaron Klivaner had a wooden table in the house of study and it was not burned.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

The Rebbe [Moses Zevi] of Savran [d. 1837] quarreled with the Ruzhener. The Rabbi [Abraham Joshua Heschel] of Apta [d. 1825] asked him not to bother him. The Savraner replied, “I will do anything you say Rabbi of Apta but not this.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The verse “but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings” [Exodus 10:23] was expounded as follows: If a precious stone gets dirty or is placed in an ugly ring – it does not look good – it doesn’t shine. But place it in a golden or platinum ring or something fashionable then it shines and becomes more luminescent. In other words, the “light” of Israel will shine according to their “dwelling.” Israel will shine according to the kind of place they make for themselves.

I.F.

Rabbi Kelemer

The *tsadikim* gave the following reason for why he was called the Ba'al Shem:

“Ba'al” means a lord or ruler. Every ruler has his weapons through which he rules. The Ba'al Shem's weapons were the souls that he drew to him as *hasidim* [=followers]. Soul means name [*shem*] as evidenced by the verse “[and whatsoever the man would call] every living creature [= *nefesh*], that was to be the name thereof [= *shemo*]” [Genesis 2: 19]. So he is called Ba'al Shem because he is the lord and in charge of the souls of his men.

I.F.

Rabbi Kelemer

When the [book] *Toldot* [*ya'akov yosef*] was printed and [the author] R. Jacob Joseph wished to sell it in Berditchev no one wanted to buy it. So the Berditchever Rabbi purchased a large number of [copies of the book] *Toldot* himself because he was afraid that the [author of the] *Toldot* would take offense against the city and even harm it, heaven forbid.

I.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

R. Baruch of Medzibuz once said the following saying (*vort*) [based on two Talmudic phrases]:
“This is that; what need is there to teach this (*haynu hakh; lamah li lemitnei*)?” He interpreted it as follows: “Thus to strike” (*hainu hakh*) – if they strike us so – “What need is there to kill me” (*lamah lei le-miteni*) – why do they kill us as well?

I.F.

Rabbi Kelemer

At the Sadagurer's table (*tish*) there was a large crowd, including lofty hasidim and important rabbis. The *gabayim* [=aides] did not know how to still seat everyone at the table so they asked the elder Sadagurer how to seat them.

“It is written: ‘and no man said to his fellow: the place is too congested for me to lodge overnight in Jerusalem’ [M. Avot 5: 5]. We know that ‘the air of the Land of Israel makes one wise’ [B.T. Bava Batra 158b] – ‘Who is wise? One who knows his place [cf. M. Avot 6: 6] – this is why every Jew knew their place in Jerusalem and no one found it crowded. It is so here as well – if everyone would know where their place is, they will then already find their proper place and it won't be crowded at the table either.”

I.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

Before Shevu'ot it was a bad year. There was no income and there were many soldiers who were persecuting the Jews. R. Nahum Chernobyler said: "It is no wonder that at the giving of the Torah there was such a revelation and the Jews cried 'we will do and we will obey' [Exodus 24: 7]. There were such miracles at the Red Sea – 'A maid-servant beheld [at the sea what was not beheld by Ezekiel and the other prophets]' [*Mekhilta de-rabbi Yishmael* 15: 2: 2] and then later at Mount Sinai [God] 'overturned the mountain above them [like a tub]' [B.T. Shabbat 88a]. With such miracles, it is no wonder that there was such a revelation and the receiving of the Torah with love. Master of the World!," he called out, "Show us today such a revelation and such miracles and you shall see how your Jews will receive the Torah with love."

I.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

Pinchas Landau saw one of the marginal notes of the Besht to the *Zorefat Faygele*'s: "Not to be published and not to be copied since he is one and there is no second. One and there is no second? How is this; is he not a man [*Adam*]?² Rather in the mystery of 'And there was evening and there was morning, one day' [Genesis 1:5]. And five are added to it and Shabbat is equivalent to two."

R. Aaron Chernobyler (d. 1871) asked R. Isaac of Skvira to allow him to copy it but he refused since the Besht did not allow it. R. Aaron answered him: "The Besht says though, 'Rather in the mystery of *And there was evening...*' If you count one and you add to it five you have six. Then... 'equal to two' – we now have eight. This hints at the eight sons of R. Motel Chernobyler and therefore it is our right to be allowed a copy."

The Skverer replied: "I do not agree but you did say a good word (*vort*) so I will allow you to make a copy, but no more than this [i.e. no one else may copy it]."

The copy was passed in inheritance from R. Aaron to his son R. Nahum, from him to R. Mordechai Liyever, and from him to R. Joshua Heschel Chidnover.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

² Perhaps an allusion to R. Adam Ba'al Shem.

Hasidim say that since the Besht says: “Is he, not a man (*Adam*)...?” they think these are the writings of R. Adam Besht. An indication of this is that R. Adam was also from Warsaw and the [author of the] *Zoref* was called “the smith (*zoref*) from Warsaw.”

Old hasidim knew that R. Adam came from Warsaw [side comment:] (?). The *Zoref* was passed in inheritance from the Besht to [his son] R. Hirsh Besht [d. 1779], from him to R. Arele Titever and then to R. Abraham Skverer and later to R. Isaac Skverer. To R. Israel [side comment:] (?).

R. Pinchas Landau once saw the *Zoref* and the marginal notes were written in the Besht’s own handwriting in red ink. The last person to possess the *Zoref* was Faygele, a daughter of the Trisker and the widow of R. Israel.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

Why was it called Zoref? The Besht called it so because the author of the collection of writings was a smith (zoref), a goldsmith, from Warsaw.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Besht did not want to show the [manuscript of the] *Zoref* to anyone because he did not want anyone to read it before he completed his annotations. He only showed it to the Koretzer three times.

Hasidim say that he [the Besht] wrote the final marginal note the last week before Shevu'ot the year he passed away.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The last year before he passed away, while traveling the baths, the Shtefeneshter stopped in Sadagura. When he took leave from the Sadagurer he stood with one foot on the coach and the other on the ground and told the following story:

When the Master of the World wanted to destroy the Holy Temple Satan came and did not want to allow Him to do this since it seemed to him that he would gain nothing from it – they would blame and judge him for the destruction of the Holy Temple anyway. But the Master of the World nevertheless did what he wished, and the Holy Temple was destroyed.

One [divine] name remained from the Holy Temple – A holy incomprehensible name, which the Master of the World said no man or creature will ever know about the name except the [greatest] saint of the generation will know that it exists. After the destruction, one saint of the generation gave over to the next saint of the generation the information that there is such a name but no one could reveal it. The information about the name was given over to the Besht and from him to the Magid.

R. Shalom Prohobishter greatly desired to discover the secret of this name. So he began to befriend Satan (the *ba'al davar*) and became so close to him that he

revealed to him the secret of the name. And R. Shalom performed miracles through the name. In heaven they persecuted [Satan] greatly for having revealed the secret. However, Satan (*s[amach] m[em]*) did not remember to whom he had revealed the secret – that is how cleverly R. Shalom tricked him.

So Satan cast lots. First, he divided up the world into portions, portions by portion, until he arrived at Russia, then at Prohobisht, then at the street where R. Shalom resided, and then at R. Shalom himself. When Satan confronted him as to why he had tricked him, R. Shalom replied “I am not afraid of you and if you wish to harm the souls of my children, their *shtetls* will protect them. As for their bodies, there are hot baths for that.” However, R. Shalom nevertheless passed away that year.

The Shtefeneshter told this story and sat down in the coach and went off to the baths. He passed away that same year.

I.F.

Mates Heller

Boyaner Hasid

At the Strelisker's [d. 1826] There was a great scarcity and poverty so there were times when there was simply nothing to eat on Shabbat. The Rebbetzin once got angry with the Rebbe as to why his followers were such paupers and that if he were such a servant of God why couldn't he pray to the Master of the World that his followers would obtain money and have a better income? So he promised her that he would pray on behalf of his followers. The following day he became very enflamed during prayer (Strelisker hasidim would pray very heatedly) and before the *Barukh she-amar* [prayer] he turned to his followers [and addressed them]: "Yes? Do you wish for more money?" and they all replied as one: "No, we are satisfied and happy with our lot."

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

R. Meir of Premishlan [d. 1850] feared that other Rebbes were trying to take from him his lofty [spiritual] levels and wished to do something about it. He considered that it was primarily three rabbis who opposed him: The Kosover (the author of the book *Ahavat Shalom*) [d. 1825], the Zidichover [d.1831], and the Strelisker, whom hasidim called the Seraph because of his fiery worship in prayer.

When he visited R. Mordechai Kremenitzer [d.1820] he told him as follows: “You do not need to fear the Kosover – he is a good man and means no harm to anyone – nor the Zidichover – he is not yet wearing a golden collar (i.e. he is still a young man and not very important []) but from the Seraph you should be afraid. However, I will give you some advice: At the Strelisker there is great poverty. Send someone to him with foodstuff for Shabbat but this person should not disclose who sent this gift. He should be warned not to say from whence the gift came until after Shabbat. So R. Meir Premishlayner did so. The Jew [he sent] came

to Strelisk with all manner of food and royal dainties. He spent a lot in the court and the hasidim couldn't recall a day when they had it so good. They honored the Jew, but he did not disclose from whence he was or who had sent him here with all of these gifts.

After Shabbat, he revealed that he was sent by R. Meir Premishlaner. The Strelisker said: "If R. Meir has such power that I ate from his [food] all Shabbat and did not sense from whence it came he does not need to fear that his lofty levels will be taken away from him."

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

Even though the Besht himself told people to speak ill of him to R. Hayim Sanzer (from Brody) because he knew that R. Hayim enjoyed it very much, it once bothered him that R. Hayim was so opposed to him. So he had someone ask R. Hayim: “Why do you think of yourself?” And he replied, “I am nothing.” “And what do you think of the Besht?” “He is also a nothing.” So the Besht asked: “How can a nothing speak and how can one speak [ill] of a nothing?”

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

The Ga'on of Vilna wished to meet the Magid. Although the *mitnagdim* strove to influence his mother not to allow him to travel, he took to the road. Near Mezritsh he had to spend the night at an inn where the leaseholder was a disciple of the Magid.

The leaseholder gave the Ga'on a bed. The Ga'on noticed books on the rafter and found several Kabbalistic works. He began to turn the pages quickly. The leaseholder wondered greatly – does one turn the pages of a Kabbalistic work as one would a book of Psalms? Later he again came to his room and saw that he was not turning the pages anymore but reading inside carefully. The leaseholder noticed that it was a very difficult Kabbalistic topic so he offered his interpretation of the passage. The Ga'on was impressed that a simple Hasid could give such an interpretation – what will it be like when he draws from the well itself – and he could hardly wait for the morning so that he could leave for Mezritsh.

Soon, however, Hasidim returning from Mezritsh arrived – full of joy and life. The Ga'on made an effort to listen to what they were saying (he was of course incognito) – he wished to hear a discourse, a nice teaching (*vort*) – but all he heard was the Hasidim having one feast after another, how much alcohol they were drinking, and their eating, singing, and dancing. The Ga'on lost his desire to travel to the Magid – so disappointed was he by the Hasidim – and he returned to Vilna. People say that this was the doing of Satan (*ba'al davar*) for if that would not have happened and the Magid and the Ga'on would have met this would have brought the Messiah.

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

Once, on the day before Yom Kippur during the *tish* the Ruzhiner addressed the Hasidim sitting at the table: “Children! Calves! What are you doing at my table?!” The Hasidim were terrified, but no one moved from their place.

Then the Ruzhiner continued: “It is written ‘Shun evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it’ [Psalms 34: 15] – if you wish to be guarded from evil then do good. Seek peace and pursue it – you should seek the saint (who is one the level of peace) and pursue it – you should pursue him – even if he hounds you and yells at you ‘Children! Calves!’”

After the *tish* the Hasidim related to each other what they were thinking when the Ruzhiner yelled at them. They all felt that at the time they all thought and said to themselves “Hear O Israel!”

Ruzhiner Hasidim say that all who were sitting then at the *tish* lived a long life.

I.F.

Matis Heller

A Boyaner Hasid

R. Benzil Strier did in fact esteem the Sanzer – despite being a *mitnaged*. He related a parable: Two merchants came to a factory selling merchandise. They showed one some merchandise and told him a particular price. The merchant offered 50% and the rest in installments. They immediately sealed the deal.

The other merchant saw how deals were made and thought he would be clever. When they showed him the merchandise he offered no cash and demanded to be trusted with the full amount. No deal was made as they said: “The first merchant was at least willing to give 50% so we saw that he was serious. You, however, do not wish to give anything – you must be a swindler.”

“The same is with the Sanzer,” R. Benzil said. “To be a scholar is at least 50% of the value of a person. [I] know that he has the 50% – regarding the other 50% I trust him.”

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

A Rabbinical inquiry regarding an *agunah* (“chained” woman) came before the Sanzer Rebbe. One of the signatories was the Strier Rabbi, R. Benzil.

In the inquiry, the matter of whether “an idiot in one matter” is considered an idiot in all else came up. The question was whether “an idiot in one matter” could divorce a woman. R. Benzil concluded that he could – that “an idiot in one matter” is not considered an idiot regarding the entire Torah. He brought support [for his position] from the fact that Hasidim are certainly “idiots in one matter” – and there is no question that they may divorce their wives.

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

R. Pinchas Kamenetzer and the Rabbi of Savran were friends. The Rabbi of Savran became a Rebbe.³ R. Pinchas asked him “Why did you suddenly become a Rebbe?” He replied, “If there is a pile of wheat and Jews put aside some, their tithe becomes holy. Jews chose me so I became holy.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

³ Note: in the original Yiddish it is written “the Savraner Rav became Hasidim.” From the context it is clear that this is an error and it should state “became [a] Rebbe.”

The Rabbi of Strier, R. Benzil, was a *mitnaged* (he wrote glosses to the work *Avnei milu'im*, and was a disciple of the [author of the] *Kezot ha-hoshen*). He asked what is this practice that Jews choose a rebbe and make him so holy? A Hasid replied to him – the tsadikim say that it is like tithing. Anyone may benefit from a store of wheat but as soon as a Jew set aside tithe the tithe becomes holy. So too a rebbe – if hasidim set him aside from the congregation [of Israel] he becomes holy.

R. Benzil allowed himself a bit of humor: “It is written, however, that a deaf man, an idiot, or a minor who sets aside tithe, it does not become tithe. Hasidim are idiots so their tithes are not holy and neither are their rebbes.”

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

R. Elimelekh of Lizensk and R. Zusha of Anipoli went into self-imposed exile and traveled all over the world. They once came to R. Jacob Linsker and although they were incognito he recognized that they were in a self-imposed exile. He told them: "If I were to go in a self-imposed exile for as long as you have, I would look better." So they spent another year wandering.

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

R. Jacob Linsker spent the entire day studying Torah and his wife ran a fabric shop. Once she had to leave and left R. Jacob in the shop. A pauper entered and requested a donation. R. Jacob was very unworldly and could not recognize the value of a coin. He saw on the counter several gold rendlach. So he asked the beggar, "Are these enough?" Of course, the beggar said yes and R. Jacob gave him a rendl. The beggar spread the news that R. Jacob was handing out large donations and a crowd of beggars came running to R. Jacob's counter and he gave each one a rendl.

When he ran out of the rendlach he apologized and asked if he could give them fabric instead of money. Of course, the beggars did not mind being given several meters of cloth. Soon the shop was empty – no ducats and no merchandise. When his wife returned she was appalled. She began to scream: How could he do this? He has ruined her! R. Jacob Linsker said to her: "I don't understand you. I see you every day giving merchandise to Gentiles, and you don't make a fuss. So, I am allowed to do the same for Jews."

I.F.

Moses Cohen

R. Mendel Linsker (d. 1803) was the son-in-law of R. Izikel of Hamburg (d. 1767) and they promised 5000 rendlach as a dowry. When it came time for the wedding he came to Hamburg with his father _____. But when his mother saw the bride she was appalled – she was thin and ugly. She ran to her husband to tell him the sad news. “What can I do” he said to her. “Ask the groom.” The groom was engaged in studying and replied that he didn’t mind if the bride was not “such a beauty.”

As regards the dowry, it turned out that R. Izikel Hamburger did not have any dowry to give. His mother was now truly angry – “no bride and no dowry?” she argued. The Rebbe again sent her to their son R. Mendel and again he agreed – he didn’t mind and they should proceed with the wedding.

After the *hupa* ceremony, R. Izikel Hamburger took out his purse and gave the groom a double dowry. He said: “It is written ‘one who married a woman for money or for *na* [beauty] {? }’⁴ When I saw that he was serious about the marriage and was not looking for beauty or money he pleased me and that is why I am giving him a double dowry.

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

⁴ See *Kiddushin* 70a and *Derekh Eretz Zuta* 10: 6.

R. Hirsh Rimanover conducted himself quietly and in a hidden manner [?] – he did not undertake voluntary fasts – ate and prayed at the proper time. He did not behave differently than an ordinary pious Jew.

They recounted his behavior to the Rabbi of Ropshitz and he requested that the Rimanover come to him. When he arrived and opened the door, R. Hirsh stood in the doorway for several minutes. R. Hirsh looked at the Ropshitzer and the Ropshitzer did not take his eyes off him.

Afterward, the Ropshitzer ran over to him and asked him to sit, and showed him great honor. He said: “I had no idea of what a perfect man (*komah shelemah*) R. Hirsh is. It is truly a shame to ruin such a vessel.”

I.F.

R. Moses Cohen

R. Joseph Koidanover (d. 1915) once asked why when a rebbe visits a town you do not recite the *tahnun* prayer. { ? } He answered: “Just as at a circumcision you do not recite *tahnun* because there is a monetary loss (*hisaron kis*) – a piece is removed – so too when I arrive in a town there is also a monetary loss – nobody has any money.”

I.F.

M. Ivenski

R. Joseph Koidanover once joked about the Zionists when they began to spread at the end of the [18]90s. When they told him about the Zionists he sighed “The Messiah is about to arrive. How do we know this? When a bride and groom are led under the wedding canopy, who runs before them? The lowlives (*shkotzim*) and scoundrels. So, too, is it with the Zionists.”

I.F.

M. Ivenski

R. Baruch Koidanover (d. 1871) was once in Lida where there were many *mitnagdim*. While he was there, they reported him [to the government]. During the reading of the Torah in the synagogue a tailor walked over to him and slapped him. Even the mitnagdim recounted afterward that the tailor's daughter later died.

I.F.

M. Ivenski

Koidanover Genealogy

R. Solomon Hayim (d. 1862) had a son and a daughter:

1) R. Baruch

2) R. Noah (d. 1904) – he was a Rebbe in Haradzishcha near Navahrudak {He was his son-in-law}.

R. Baruch's sons were R. Aaron Koidanover (d. 1887) and R. Shalom (d. 1925).

R. Aaron's sons were:

1) R. Nehemiah (d. 1927)

2) R. Joseph, who was his successor

3) R. Berele

4) R. Solomon Hayim (d. 1897), the youngest, died at a very young age from tuberculosis.

I.F.

[M.] Ivenski

It was once reported to the Russian government that R. Aaron Koidanover was taking money designated for the Land of Israel. The matter reached the courts.

However, he was acquitted and the reporter later became mute. The day he was acquitted was 27 Shevat. This day, which was called Zakh Shevat, they celebrated in Koidanov as a holiday.

I.F.

Ivenski

Peretz Viernik's brother, R. Meir Smorganer and R. Michel Friedman were the most important Koidanover hasidim. They were truly the "power behind the scenes." When R. Aaron passed away, many hasidim wished to crown R. Nehemiah as rebbe but R. Meir and R. Mechel had enough influence to put an end to the plan. They made sure that R. Joseph would be the successor.

I.F.

M. Ivenski

R. Aaron Koidanover's darling son, R. Solomon Hayim died very young. He passed away on the Sabbath. They informed him of the sad news on the Sabbath while he was sitting at the *tish*. He replied angrily: Akh, the Sabbath! ! He was very upset that they disturbed him during the Sabbath.

I.F.

Ivenski

R. Aaron Koidanover once had a bad fistula on his cheek and they had to operate on him. He did not allow them to give him any sedative but during the entire operation, he did not groan even once.

The doctor was amazed at this display of strength and asked him how he could withstand such pain.

He replied: "I was engrossed in thinking about the Master of the World so the pain did not bother me. I was preoccupied so I did not think of the pain at all.

I.F.

Ivesnki

R. Motel of Chernobyl once came to Slavuta. So they came to R. Moses (?) the Rabbi of Slavuta to tell him that the Chernobyler was in town and Chlavna, the Chernobyler's assistant also ran to the Rabbi of Slavuta and said to him: "Householder, the Rebbe is here already."

The Rabbi of Slavuta replied: "Go tell your rebbe that I am not his householder and he is no rebbe."

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Yohanan of Rakhmastrivka (d. 1895) once traveled to Zwinogródka. There he had a fervent follower Piater Brodski. He had a brother-in-law named R. Shpiegel who was a consummate Lithuanian (*litvak*) from Vilna – a *mitnaged*.

When R. Yohanan came to the town the whole town came out to greet him. Brodski wanted his brother-in-law Shpiegel to also go and greet the rebbe. However, Shpiegel refused to understand why a man of flesh and blood should be shown such honor. On the contrary, he was very angry that such a commotion was being made over a Jew and indeed he did not go.

During the week he noticed that there was no one with the rebbe (he lived just across the residence where the rebbe was staying) so he decided to visit the rebbe and present his arguments before him. So it was. He did not find anyone with the rebbe and the attendant (*gabañ*) immediately let him in. R. Yohanan received him and Shpiegel started to argue. What, rebbe, makes you deserving of such honor? Why should so many Jews come to you, give you money to redeem their souls (*pidyonot*), and fear you so?

And at each question, R. Yohanan nodded his head and said to him: “Indeed, you are right. This is indeed so. But, you know why? Because this is what God wants – and if this is what God

wants then I tell you should indeed fear me. This Shpiegel later became a follower and recounted this story himself to Pinchas Landau.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Elazar Lechshower (?), one of the lofty Hasidim, had yet seen the Besht and also knew the Ruzhiner. He died when he was around in his early 90s.

He said: “When the Besht was in this world it was all one – the Besht was rebbe, rabbi, and preacher (*magid*).

After he passed away they were separated – simply rebbe was the Koretzer, simply rabbi was the [author of the] *Toldot* [*ya’akov yosef*], and simply preacher was the Magid of Mezritsh. It was simply wonderful.

After this, simply rebbe was R. Baruch, simply rabbi was the Barditchever, and simply preacher was the Koznitzer – it was still tolerable.

But now, simply rebbe is the Ruzhiner, simply rabbi is the Savraner, and simply preacher is the Chernobyler – it is now intolerable.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Aaron Koidanover was a great jokester. He was once traveling and passed through Lida, a place with many *maskilim* [freethinkers]. One of the *maskilim* asked him, “What is it with you? You are also but a human being, what makes you deserving of so much honor?”

R. Aaron replied to him: “Young man, there are three ways in which you and I differ:

- 1) You seek women, but women seek me.
- 2) You give women money, but women give money to me.
- 3) You promise women that they will not have children and in the end they do but I promise them [that they will] and they do.”

Abraham Perlov – a Koidanover grandchild – R. Aaron’s grandchild – does not believe that R. Aaron made such a “base joke” even though he knows that he was a great jokester.

I.F.

M. Ivenski

Abraham Reisen, the renowned Yiddish poet,⁵ was also a Koidanover [from the city of Koidanov] and he once related a miracle performed by R. Aaron Koidanover.

There were always many residents at R. Aaron's and so there were many expenses. Since the income was meager people were drawn into great debt. One creditor [*ba'al hov*— sic!] became so angry over his loans not being paid back that he yelled at the rebbe, "If you will not give me any money I will tear out your beard!"

R. Aaron became very angry and replied: "He who wishes to tear out my beard, the hair of his beard will fall out on its own." And so it was.

I.F.

M. Ivenski

A Koidanover

Well-known writer (*Zukunft*)⁶

⁵ Avrom Reyzen (1876–1953), was a Yiddish writer and poet. For more information about him, see https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Reyzen_Avrom; <https://congressforjewishculture.org/lexicon/t/546>.

⁶ Ivenski, Mikhl (1880–June 30, 1954). For more information about him, see <https://congressforjewishculture.org/lexicon/t/5324>.

The [author of the] *Hidushei ha-rim* had a neighbor who was very poor and who used to constantly moan all day long –

The *Hidushei ha-rim* was no wealthy man either and his wife asked him – “look your neighbor keeps on moaning but you never utter a negative word”.

The *Hidushei ha-rim* replied: “I have such a great mind that with one moan I can achieve what my neighbor does by moaning all day”.

I.F.

Rabbi Hirshberg

Of Chicago

At the Shtefeneshter's court a young follower began to act very piously – yelling during prayers, swaying vigorously – entirely unlike the Ruzhiner custom.

Once the young man came in to the Shtefeneshter and he saw him standing by the stove. When the Shtefeneshter saw him – he said:

We maintain that fire should be kept inside.

It is written [Morning prayers, blessings of the Shema] “and proclaim with fear, in unison aloud [*be-kol*]” – it should be so that the “loudness” [*kol*] should not be greater than the “fear” – your yelling is greater than your fear.

I.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

The Angel had another son, in addition to R. Shalom Shakhna of Prohobisht, R. Israel Hayim. In the book *Or penei Moshe* by R. Moses of Przeworsk (d. 1806) there are approbations by the Berditchever Rabbi and also by R. Israel Hayim.

He was a son-in-law of R. Solomon of Karlin. He had two sons:

- 1) R. Abraham Solomon
- 2) R. Liber

R. Abraham Solomon resided in Proskurov. His son was R. Shalom who was the son-in-law of R. Eliezer Wolf, a disciple of R. Mendel of Kosov.

R. Shalom was supported (*gegesen kest*) by R. Eliezer Wolf and after the Ruzhiner passed away he left for the Land of Israel.

R. Shalom did not wish to be a rebbe, so the Sadagurer told him to travel to the Land of Israel and supported him – he put him in charge of the Russian *kollel*.

He died in [5]658 (1897-8).

I.F.

Rabbi Hayim Aaron Gold

(A descendant of R. Shalom)

R. Isaac Skverer had four sons:

I. R. Abraham Joshua Heschel

- 1) Moses Dan
- 2) R. Joseph Meir
- 3) R. Jacob – a son-in-law of R. Moses Beishover – settled in Beishov

II. R. Nahum Skikiver [Skverer?] (Einu Twersky's grandfather)

III. R. Israel. His wife's name was Golda

IV. R. David. His first wife was R. Moses Savraner's daughter.

- 1) R. Motele Skverer
- 2) R. Moses, son-in-law of R. Jacob Leibenu Trisker
- 3) R. Aaron, son-in-law of R. Isaac Bohusher
- 4) R. Solomon son-in-law of R. Leib Bagrober (?) ?
- 5) R. Nahum, Son in law of R. Joseph Meir Skverer (son of R. Abraham Joshua Heschel)
- 6) A daughter who died young (regarding her R. Isaac said "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" [Eccles. 1:18])

With his second wife, Zipporah, a descendant of R. Yeivi:

- 1) R. Isaac, son-in-law of R. Solomon Samuel of Chernobyl
- 2) R. Jacob Joseph, son-in-law of Pinchas Rakhmastrivka
- 3) R. Judah LEib son-in-law of R. Moses Kaliver
- 4) Pinchas

} Did not marry

- 5) Hannah Sima

I.F.

David Twersky

When R. Isaac Skverer's wife Malkah, the daughter of the Ruzhiner, passed away, the Ruzhiner said: "It doesn't pain me as much over the queen (*Malkah*) as over the king (*melekh*)." The Ruzhiner loved the Skverer very much.

I.F.

David Twersky

Descendent of the Skverer

When the [author of the] *Hayei Adam* [R. Abraham Danzig (d. 1820)] ruled that potatoes were beans [pertaining to the laws of Passover] the Apter Rav observed: “Potatoes are man’s sustenance (*hayei adam*) but the [author of the] *Hayei adam* is beans.”

I.F.

R. Mordechai Solomon Joseph Friedman

Sadagurer Rebbe

The Bicks were the *mitnagdic* rabbis in Medzibuz.

Despite being *mitnagdim* they lived in peace with the Apter Rav.

Before R. Zusha became a rebbe they did not live so peacefully together but with R., Heschel and with the Medzibuzer, R. Israel Shalom Joseph they were on very good terms.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Apter Rav lived in high style and resided in a three-storied house. The Apter Rav lived on the lower floor, R. Isaac Meir on the middle floor and his children on the top floor.

The house also contained the Apter Rav's small prayer house (*shulekheh*) -- it was later called R. Joseph Moses's synagogue.

The Medzibuzer Rebbe, R. Israel Shalom Joseph Heschel later lived in the house.

R. Israel Shalom's brother R. Zusha – who was a mute – lived in the room of the Apter. It still had his bed, his table, and his cane.

There was a custom that when a child was ill, they put him in the Apter's bed.

The table had a board underneath to rest one's feet. The footrest was entirely worn out as they said that the Apter was heavyset, and he rested so heavily on it.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

Aaron Zeitlin (1898-1973) in his article in the *Tog* (1950) recounts that the Apter Rav lived in poverty. Pinchas Landau thinks that this is incorrect – and in part, he derives it from the following story.

When the Apter Rav came to Medzebuz there were many *mitnagdim*. He said: “I am of greater pedigree than you, I have more money than you and I am a greater scholar than you.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Jacob, one of the three sons of R. Abraham Joshua Heschel Skverer, was the son-in-law of R. Motel Karshover and he lived in Karshov.

His wife was a shrew and made his life miserable.

This was one of the reasons he constantly traveled – alas, a great wanderer.

In Vasylivka they called him the Purim Rebbe because he was always there for Purim. His humility and piety were renowned.

It was said that even when he went to the Mikvah, before immersing he would still wear his yarmulke and only took it off when he immersed.

I.F.

Abraham Manuta

Skverer Hasid

R. Joseph Meir Skverer, one of the three sons of R. Abraham Joshua Heschel Skverer, was very highly esteemed in the Hasidic world. He fasted a lot and was incredibly dedicated to divine worship.

Hasidim say that the reasons that he found such favor among the Hasidim were:

1) R. Isaac Skverer had the custom that he sat everyone at his table according to age but the youngest next to him. Since R. Joseph was the youngest he sat closest to him. And Hasidim relate that during the table (*tish*) R. Isaac Skverer would constantly gaze at his face and speak to him slowly (*gezeilt zayner verter*) and directly.

2) R. Joseph Meir was the last to enter R. Isaac Skverer's room before he passed away.

I.F.

Abraham Manuta

Skverer Hasid

The Ruzhiner, when he was already in Sadagura, once asked the Rabbi of Prohobisht's grandfather: "Who is now receiving petitions (*kvitlakh*) in Russia?"

He replied "The Chernobyler Magid's children."

The Ruzhiner then said: "If I would have known how much I would be needed in Russia then I would not have left."

I.F.

Rabbi Reiter

Rabbi of Prohobisht

R. Joshua Tomoshover used to visit the Dinover [Zevi Elimelekh Shapira (d. 1841)], the [author of the] *Benei yesaskhar*.

Once he visited the Dinover for Simhat Torah. In the middle of the circumambulations (*hakafoṭ*) – in the middle of dancing – the Dinover kissed R. Joshua. “Young man,” he said to him. “Pray for me and I will turn you into a person of substance (*klī*)!”

Indeed, that year, on the eighteenth of Tevet, [5]600 (1840), the Dinover passed away.

R. Joshua also visited the Mogielnicer [Hayim Meir Jehiel Shapira (d. 1849)] – a grandson of the Magid of Koznitz.

He then also visited R. Eliezer of Koznitz and later the elder Belzer and he also visited the [author of the] *Divrei Hayim* in Sanz.

I.F.

Tomoshover Rebbe

Rabbi M. Frisherman

At midnight R. Joshua Tomoshover would awaken himself. How? He yelled out from his sleep
“Joshua get up!”

The ritual slaughterer of Dej – R. Aaron Zelig Green – wanted to see if this was true so he stayed
up at night and saw that this was indeed true.

I.F.

Tomoshover Rebbe

Rabbi M. Frisberman

The [author of the] *Divrei yehezkel* [Ezekiel Shraga Halberstam (d. 1898)], the Rabbi of Sieniawa related about R. Joseph Tomoshover that he forbade laying poison for mice – they are still God's creatures.

R. Joseph once woke up in the morning and noticed that a fringe from his tallit was missing and he realized that this was done by mice.

He became angry and said that if the mice did not convene a trial amongst themselves then he would obliterate them from the world.

They immediately saw the mice come together and rip apart one mouse among themselves.

I.F.

Rabbi of Tomoshov

Rabbi M. Frisberman

The following miracle is related about R. Joseph Tomoshover.

Tomoshov was near the border between Austria and Russia, so Cossacks were stationed there.

One of the high-ranking officers desired to use the Mikvah together with his wife and to take a bath in it. So the public and the women could not use the Mikvah.

They related this to R. Joseph and immediately afterward the officer's son was hit by a stone and was killed.

The officer took all his troops and wanted to accost the Tomoshover and cause a pogrom in response to the death of his son.

As soon as the officer entered R. Joseph Tomoshover's room, R. Joseph took the four fringes of his tallit in his hand and the Cossack was left standing [there] like a stone – he could not move.

It is further recounted that later, during a subsequent war, the officer returned from battle and was also killed by a stone.

I.F.

Tomoshover Rebbe

Rabbi M. Frisberman

R. Joseph Tomoshover, the founder of the Tomoshover dynasty, visited the Lubliner who told him to accept petitions (*kvitlakh*) and settle in Tomoshov.

He visited R. Mendel of Riminov, the Lubliner, and the Apter Rav.

(He initially resided in Yartshov) ?

He passed away on Rosh Hodesh Nisan [5]599 (1839) and he is buried in Tomoshov.

He was a son-in-law of the Zikover.

He had two sons:

1) R. Joshua Tomoshover

2) R. Abraham Abish (Sadigurer Hasid)

R. Joshua Tomoshover passed away on the 19th of Tamuz [5]666 (1906) at the age of 82.

He had three children?

1) R. Joseph Aryeh Leibush, the eldest – he took over the leadership in Tomoshov.

He passed away Rosh Hodesh Adar II [5]676.

R. Joshua Tomoshover's first wife was the daughter of R. Hershel Rinimover.

His second wife (the mother of R. Joseph Aryeh Leibush) was a descendant of R. Isaac of Hamburg.

R. Joseph Aryeh Leibush's wife was the daughter of the Kartshiner Rabbi – a descendant of the Ropshitzer.

I.F.

Tomoshover Rabbi

Rabbi M. Frisberman

R. Hayim Yidel, a teacher – a Tolner Hasid – was a great pauper with 8 grown daughters and they had to be married off, but he had no dowry.

Usually, when the Tolner Hasidim traveled to their rebbe they took him along in their carriage out of pity.

Once, when the Hasidim were traveling R. Hayim Yidel was ill and could not go along and stayed behind.

He had one goat from which he derived his sustenance. He sold the goat to pay for the expense and he traveled to Tolna for the holiday.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah after the meal, he went for a short walk in the garden and saw R. David Tolner looking out his window. When he saw him, the Tolner asked him: “Hayim Yidel what are you thinking?”

Hayim Yidel replied: “I am thinking how my eight girls will find good husbands.”

The Tolner then handed him a cooked plumb and said: “God will help you.”

R. Hayim Yidel merited to have eight sons-in-law who were learned scholars.

I.F.

Hirsh Lederman

A madman once came to R. David Tolner. When the assistant asked him what name to write in the petition (*kviteh*) he refused to tell him.

When he came into the Tolner he asked the madman: “What is your name and where are you from?” He replied: “I have a name taken from the Haggadah.” He asked: “But in the Haggadah there are four.”

The madman answered: “I am all four.”

1) The [people of the] city[?] says I am wise – for the verse “Bread is not to the wise” (Eccle. 9: 11) has already been fulfilled.

2) A wicked man as well – “The wicked borroweth, and payeth not” (Ps. 37: 21) – what I borrow I cannot pay back.

3) I am a simpleton (*tam*) because I am never allowed to become a serial offender (*mu’ad*) [this is a pun on the Talmudic categories of an ox who has gored once or twice (*tam*) and an ox who has gored three or more times (*mu’ad*)] – I am not loaned to more than twice.

4) And one who does not know how to ask – I no longer know how to borrow.

I.F.

Hirsh Lederman

The Ruzhiner once said that just as a corpse has no pride when he lies on the hearse so too he, the Ruzhiner, has no pride when he rides his coach.

This Hirsh Lederman himself heard from his father-in-law who heard it from his father-in-law who was there.

I.F.

Hirsh Lederman

Before the Magid decided to visit the Besht he was very ambivalent about going because he was concerned about disrupting his studies but in the end he went.

When he arrived, the Besht asked him: “Are you a scholar?” The Magid replied: “So they say.”

The Besht took a copy of the Zohar and showed him a passage and asked him to explain it. The Magid explained it.

The Besht, however, was not pleased with it. “This is not the correct interpretation,” he said. The Magid tried another approach.

“No – this is not the way one learns Zohar. Stand up and I will teach you the correct interpretation.”

The Magid stood up and the Besht began to interpret the passage of the Zohar and a flaming fire descended so that the Magid was seized with terror.

The Besht said: “The interpretation is indeed as you said but the spirit and soul are as I interpret it – in this way all the names of the angels are expressed – and a heavenly fire burns.

When the Magid saw that, he no longer regretted that he came to the Besht and he remained there.

I.F.

(Hayim Aaron)

Rabbi Gold

(A descendant of the Angel)

The entire work [i.e. the divine service and life mission] of R. Raphael Bersheter, a disciple of R. Pinchas of Koretz, was to work on being truthful.

Once in the middle of the winter, in a great frost, a Jew knocked on his door to ask a favor.

R. Raphael asked “Who is at the door?” the Jew replied: “I, Velvel!”

R. Raphael dismissed him: “If you still consider yourself an ‘I’ you cannot enter my home.”

I.F.

Hirsh Lederman

Boyaner Hasid

The Rav and the Vilner Ga'on studied together. [Marginal note: ?].

They once came to discuss that there is a certain "Berele", a preacher in Mezritsh who is reputed to be a scholar and many Jews travel to him. So they decided to travel to him and examine him to see if he was a scholar.

When the Rav arrived at the Magid's, the Magid himself came to the door and greeted him, and told him to sit down.

The Rav examined him on the well-known Tosefot in tractate Beitzah that has six questions and six answers.

Just then the Angel, who was five years old, came in. The Magid said to the Rav: "Why do you need to examine me, here is R. Abraham – examine him!"

Indeed, the Angel answered the six questions. The {Magid} [Rav] was speechless with wonder.

"Do not wonder, Rav," the Magid said to him. "With us, if we do not know something Abaye and Rava themselves come along and tell us how to say [i.e. understand] it."

I.F.

Hirsh Lederman

Boyaner Hasid

When the Ruzhiner and R. Aaron Karliner were together they blessed each other that they should be pious Jews and could perform miracles (*po'el yeshu'ot*) for the Jewish people.

Sometime later, a Ruzhiner Hasid passed through Karlin in the middle of the week. He wrote a petition (*kviteh*) and was received (*gepraveh*) by R. Aaron.

R. Aaron asked, "Will you celebrate the Sabbath here as well?" The Hasid replied: "No, I am traveling to my rebbe for the Sabbath."

Upon departing R. Aaron told him to greet the Ruzhiner and tell him that he, R. Aaron is a greater rebbe than the Ruzhiner. His blessing that the Ruzhiner should be a pious Jew and perform miracles was fulfilled but the Ruzhiner's blessing has not been fulfilled yet.

This story is also told about the Sadagurer and R. Aaron Chernobyler (Boyaner Rebbe).

I.F.

Hirsh Lederman

Boyaner Hasid

The relationship between the Hasidim and Mitnagdim in Lida can be characterized by this story.

In [5]691 (1931) Lida was destroyed by a fire.

The Hasidic shtibel was also burned down. The only shtibel that remained was the tailor's synagogue and the Hasidim, alas, also had to pray there.

[Once] during Sukkot the prayers were led by a Hasid who was required to do so (*hiyuv*) and during the Kaddish prayer he said: "And may His salvation blossom" [a Hasidic custom adopted from the Sephardic version].

A mitnagdic tailor jumped up in great fury!

"Blood shall run," he yelled, "but 'And may His salvation blossom' will not be recited in a sacred place."

I.F.

M. Ivenski

When the recently deceased Lubavitcher Rebbe was in Vienna he led a “table” (*tish*) for the [Habad holiday of] 19th of Kislev.

At this event, he related the following story about his grandfather the [author of the] *Zemah Zedek*.

He began the talk as follows:

When one admonishes a Jew one must do so with the whole truth – and one may not approach it with deceit – direct – harsh – but with the whole truth.

The *Zemah Zedek* was once in Paris – he went to the finest hotel – and he took a fine room. At night he went down to the ballroom where they were eating and dancing and it was very lively.

The *Zemah zedek* sat down at a table where a Jew was sitting and drinking “poured [i.e. gentile] wine” (*yayin neseekh*). The *Zemah Zedek* said to the Jew – do you know that it is forbidden to drink “poured wine?” The Jew ignored him and kept on drinking. The *Zemah Zedek* again said to him – do you know that “poured wine” defiles the soul? – And with that, he got up and returned to his room – leaving the Jew there.

However, the Jew couldn’t help wondering who is this Jew – with such an impressive visage who is sitting in Paris in a ballroom and

admonishing him. So he asked around about it [him] and found out where his room was. He went up to visit him and spend perhaps a few hours secluded in the room – and he left a new man. The Lubavitcher Rebbe concluded the story: I do not wish to tell you who that Jew was – because his grandchildren are of the finest Lubavitcher Hasidim.

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

R. Hershele Chortkover had another son in addition to the [author of the] *Hafla'ah* and R. Shmelke – a child who at 10 years old was already a prodigy and great Torah scholar.

One Friday, R. Hershele took him along to the Mikvah – when he returned he asked his wife: The heavenly court needs him (referring to his son). If you agree then I do too.

He then prepared a bed for the child and the child died. In the cemetery in Chortkov, there is a tombstone on which is written: [A] child of ten who died by the kiss [of God].

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

When his son (a young man – a great prodigy – about whom they say that he wrote many subsections of the *Mishnah Berurah*) died, the [author of the] *Hafetz Hayim* said:

I loved my son dearly and he had a large place in my heart. Now that the place has unfortunately become free – I give it over in total love to the Master of the World.

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Apta once gave over a teaching and R. Isaac Meir his son was present and listened in.

He recalled that he remembered that he had seen this teaching in a book. When the Rabbi of Apta left the house R. Isaac Meir checked that book and noticed that his father's teaching was written word for word in the book.

R. Isaac Meir took the book, bent the page where he had found the teaching, and placed it on the table.

When the Rabbi of Apta returned, he saw the book with the bent pages and he understood what his son meant to say, and that R. Isaac Meir himself had recognized the teaching.

So, he said to R. Isaac Meir: "Believe me that when I gave over this teaching, I sensed that this teaching had already been written somewhere. Why? Usually, when I give over a teaching I experience birth pangs – but with this teaching I did not feel any birth pangs. But believe me my son – this teaching I had never seen before."

J.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

When the Ruzhiner was released from the ordeal of the informants the governor still argued that since the Ruzhiner was so eminent he feared that they would crown him king of Israel – so they needed to send him to Siberia and not allow him to take with him more than the Jews for a quorum.

But before the governor's degree was publicized – the Ruzhiner, soon after being released from prison, was sitting at the table [*tish*]. He told the attendant to put out wine for someone and he mentioned a name. The attendant, knowing that that Jew was no longer alive, did not call out the name. The Ruzhiner repeated – “Well, put out wine!” The attendant said to the Ruzhiner “But why? Rebbe, the Jew no longer lives.” The Ruzhiner replied: “Do you think that I don't know? But see how a true follower [hasid], even in the next world risks his life for his Rebbe” – and he told the following story:

When they found out about the decree of the governor it was announced that whoever would reveal the decree to the Ruzhiner would lose their portion in the Garden of Eden. One follower called/said – that it is worth it to him to lose his heaven as long as he will save the Ruzhiner. So he came to the Ruzhiner and told him of the whole danger he was in.

The Ruzhiner replied to him “Although the heavenly court decided so I do not consent to it – I do not agree that they should send me away to Siberia – I do not wish as they wish.”

The Ruzhiner concluded – “This Jew visited me first – this is why I am putting out wine for him.”

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

Boyaner Hasid

The name of the Jewess who informed on the Ruzhiner was called Kishne. When they arrested him, she struck him on the shoulder – and said: – “You are [quite] a pious child – that you [would] tell them to throw the informers into the river.”

The governor told him in Russian: -“vidne podglozore tsharte raboinik” [?] – which means: “I can tell from your eyes that you had the informers killed.”

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

Boyaner Hasid

R. Hayim of Chernovitz had a very bad son who fell into wicked ways.

On Yom Kippur night he took him with him to the synagogue and said that if anyone said any bad word about him he would knock out his teeth.

Afterward, he prayed: “Master of the world – how much more so – your children ‘My son, My first-born’ [Ex. 4: 22] – your people Israel you must do the same if someone says about them something bad.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

I. Genealogy of the Kinever Rebbe¹

The current Kinever Rebbe R. Abraham is the son of R. Jacob Joseph who first settled in Kineve and thereby founded the Kinever-Ostroher dynasty.

R. Jacob Joseph led a following from when he was thirty years old. He was raised by the elder Skverer – R. Isaac. R. Jacob Joseph's wife's name was Sarah Sosia and she was the daughter of a wealthy man, R. Hirsh Leib Shapira – a nice respectable Jew to whom both the Ruzhiner and the Chernobyler wrote nice letters. She passed away on the forty-eighth day of *sefirah* counting and was forty-eight years old. They said about her forty-eight praises. They called her mother Sarah – they considered her such a saint.

The Skverer said about R. Jacob Joseph – “Have a look – Hasidim – how a child grows up without a father.” When he was thirty years old a group of Jews came from Kineve and asked him to settle in their town. They even said that Kineve ascribes itself to the Rebbe and the Rebbe ascribes himself to

¹ Re: the following, see <https://www.ivelt.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=3927&sid=34cf8b724d49fcfe69cc30daf0fd0ec>

Ostroh from whence he originates.

R. Jacob Joseph passed away in Warsaw at the age of seventy-two – eighteenth of Shvat [5]682.

The Kinever says that his father R. Jacob Joseph had followers almost all of whom were God-fearing and perfect, of good character and scholars. R. Jacob Joseph put in great effort to impart unity in the world and he only wished that among his followers there should be unity – not to make any differentiation between the rich and poor.

R. Alter – the Konstantiner Rabbi – a world-renowned scholar – was one of his followers.

R. Jacob Joseph had a brother, R. Isaac Isack who was a rebbe in Ostroh. He was forty when he passed away. His children were householders.

The Kinever's grandfather, R. Abraham was a rebbe in Ostroh. He passed away on Simhat Torah [5]626 at the age of forty-seven. He is buried in Ostroh. His wife Odel was R. Isack's daughter. R. Isack Was R. Nahman Breslaver's son-in-law.

II. The Kinever's genealogy.

R. Abraham has a younger brother R. Getsel.

He served as a rebbe together with his brother in Ostroh. He passed away on the twenty-first of Tevet [5]633. [Marginal note:] or [5]634.

He left behind an only son – R. Mordecai – whom people called R. "Alteruni" and when R. Getsel passed away he became a rebbe in Ostroh in his stead.

R. Mordecai had two sons, R. Jacob Joseph and R. Velvel. Both were killed for the sanctification of God's name under Hitler's [regime]. An only daughter, Hinde Perel, married someone from Brezna. Her son is Aaron Petshenik.

The father of R. Jacob Joseph[? Avraham] and R. Getsel was R. Jacob Joseph, the founder of the Ostroh Hasidic dynasty. He was a close disciple of R. Baruch of Medzebuz. He was the first rebbe in Ostroh. R. Jacob Joseph had a brother R. Moses who was a rebbe in Rozitshov. He had an only son R. Jacob Joseph. R. Jacob Joseph had two sons – one R. Abraham remained as a rebbe in Rozitshov and the second

R. Getsel chose for himself a small town Kozin. He authored a book *Imrei Emet*.

He passed away at the second Seder ____ {? }

R. Moses was a disciple of the Shpoler Grandfather.

The father of R. Moses and R. Jacob was the youngest son of R. Yeyvi, R. Pinchas. The other sons of R. Yayvi were R. Getsel – the eldest – and R. Leib. R. Pinchas passed away at the age of thirty-three. R. Getsel was a preacher in Ostroh. R. Leib was a wealthy man who resided in Berditshev.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Jacob Joseph of Ostroh once said: “What is the difference between myself and the rebbe ____
[marginal note:] the Kinever knows who it is but did not wish to relate it.

That rebbe breaks his followers but they are all strong.

I strengthen my followers and that is why they feel themselves broken.

I.F.

Kinever

His father-in-law, R. Hayim Ber showed hasidim how R. Jacob Joseph slept. He never slept on the length of the bed but always on the width. He kept soaking his feet in a pot of cold water. Doctors could not understand how he could stand it.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

R. Jacob Joseph's (of Ostroh) way was to elevate the smallest level of a Jew and to raise it up.

He once said: "When a Jew throws the tallit over his shoulder and separates the fringes of the *tzitzit* he is like a musician when he begins to play. The musician tries out the strings of the violin before he begins to play the music – and when he does this the audience begins to yell: 'Now, now! they're about to begin to play.'

We need to consider: that the strings of a violin are [made of] sinews of an ox and *the bow of the violin is* made of the tail of a horse. But when you rub one against the other it creates [such] joy that even monarchs begin to dance.

How much more so when a Jew begins to arrange on the tallit and the strings of the *tzitzit* which are comparable to the strings of a violin – there is a rush and tumult in heaven from the seraphs and holy creatures and they yell: 'Look, look! A Jew is about to recite the blessing "to enwrap with tzitzit.'

I.F.Kinever Rebbe

R. Jacob Joseph, the first Ostroh Rebbe was the son-in-law of R. Hayim Ber of Satinow – a wealthy man and a follower of R. Baruch of Medzibuz.

About how he became R. Hayim Ber's son-in-law they relate the following story.

Once R. Hayim Ber traveled to a fair with a lot of merchandise but business went very badly and he lost a lot of money. He said: "Master of the World! You grab (my money) I also want to grab (good deeds [*mitzvoth*]).

It happened that a nobleman went bankrupt and they sold off his fortune. They also sold off an expensive silver chandelier for seventy-two candles. R. Hayim Ber bought the chandelier as a gift for R. Baruch of Medzibuz.

When R. Hayim Ber came to Medzibuz, R. Baruch was in the *mikveh*. So R. Hayim Ber entered his house and discarded the old chandelier and hung up the new silver one and he bought the finest candles and lit them.

When R. Baruch returned home from the *mikveh* and saw the new chandelier he said: "This was certainly something perpetrated by R. Hayim Ber."

He called him and said: "Since you brightened my eyes may God also brighten your days with a son-in-law who will brighten the world.

I.F.

Kinever Rebbe

They related to R. David Moses, the Chortkover, great miracles from the Lubliner. He said: “This is not the main thing – his greatest attainment was his fear of heaven.”

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The son of the Sanzer, R. Solomon the grandfather of the Bobover Rebbe – suddenly one Friday night fell terribly ill – and they immediately saw that the situation was dire. He was still a very young man – so the fear and pain were double. People began to weep and wail but the Sanzer exhibited no noticeable change – they wanted to go to him, to ask him to pray for mercy but he replied: “Today is the Sabbath!”

He shortened the third meal somewhat – he performed the Havdalah and the community waited impatiently for him to go into his son who was lying on his deathbed. He did not hurry, however – he smoked his pipe and the room became so filled with smoke that a terror fell upon everyone.

Then he went into the room where R. was lying. He stood there for several minutes – tears pouring from his eyes and he said: “Do not be afraid – when you arrive in the supernal world, my friends and holy rebbes will protect you – you will not lack anything.”

I.F.

Jacob Flanzgraben

(Plonshever Hasid)

When R. Samuel Engel used to be in Sanz he would study with the Badieverb Rabbi – the Gorlitzer Rabbi's son – a great man –

R. Samuel Engel related that once, late at night, he was discussing his studies with the Badieverb. The Sanzer Rabbi was sitting in his room and it seems he overheard their discussion. He suddenly said: "What are you discussing? – and when they told him R. Engel felt such a new ability for study that he literally became a new man.

J.F.

R. Jacob Flanzgraben

A student of R. Samuel Engel A Plonshever Hasid

(This story was told to R. Jacob Flanzgraben by R. Samuel Engel)

R. Samuel Engel, the Radomishler Rabbi (a close relative of R. Joseph Engel) was orphaned at a young age. His mother was a poor widow.

The child showed amazing abilities but he was very wild. He could sometimes spend all night studying diligently and at other times entire days would go by without him even looking at the shape of an aleph.

His mother traveled to the Sanzer Rabbi – the [author of the] *Divrei Hayim*, and she took him along. She cried profusely at the Sanzer's and bemoaned the fact that she had such a precious boy with great talents – but who was very wild.

The Sanzer called him over and told him: "Listen, child – you should obey your mother – and if you will listen to your mother then you will grow up to be a king in Israel."

And commanded him to heed the following:

- 1) Do not learn to write until you are thirteen
- 2) Always pray from a prayer-book
- 3) You should look after your mother.

When R. Samuel Engel told this story he said "I obeyed the Sanzer and never regretted it."

I.F.

R. Jacob Flanzgraben

A student of R. Samuel Engel

When the Sanzer Rabbi's wife, the mother of the Chechoiver, passed away he said to his son – the Chechoiver: "I envy you that you can recite 'May your great name be greatened and sanctified!'"

I.F.

Jacob Flanzgraben

Once the Sanzer, the [author of the] *Divrei Hayim* stood up and positioned himself to study in the evening – he stood at a lectern, one foot on the ground and the other – the sick foot on the lectern.

He stood like that until morning and did not move.

When they arrived for prayer in the morning he awoke up from his studies and said: “What? What? I thought not even an hour had passed since I stood to study.”

I.F.

Jacob Flanzgraben

The Sanzer Rabbi suffered from an ill foot his whole life. They say that when he was a boy he once didn't want to go to school and a teacher's assistant hit him on his foot with a stick and from then on he suffered from it. He bled from the wound and was constantly bandaged.

But when he had to go to the *mikveh* he did not mind it and tore off the bandage.

I.F.

Jacob Flanzgraben

R. Baruch of Medzibuz maintained that it is forbidden to make use of the Master of the World's creatures and that is why he did not use any wood to heat for his benefit.

Once there was such a frost that the windows filled with frost and at the windows, trees were growing.

He said then: "Master of the World when I nevertheless see that the trees push to hear me learning this is a sign that they wish to be used – well, so take in wood for heating the oven."

I.F.

Rabbi Teomim

R. Nahumnu, the Boyaner Rebbe (from Chernovitz) once related: The Ruzhiner asked a follower: “What is the meaning of ‘He makes the wind blow and rain fall’” [Amidah Prayer]? The follower did not know the meaning.

The Ruzhiner said: “‘makes blow’ [*mashiv*] has the meaning of exalted as in ‘maketh the solitary to dwell [*moshiv yehidim*] in a house’ [Ps. 68: 7]. ‘He makes the wind blow’ – “when can one become exalted in spirituality?”– “when ‘rain [*geshem*] falls’ – when one makes the material [*gashmiyusdigkait*] lowly.” Rabbi Teomim heard this from the Boyaner.

I.F.

Rabbi Teomim

Once, in Sukkot evening, when R. Haim of Sanz, one of the wise men of Brody, was sitting alone with his son in his Sukkah – he spoke against the Besht – As one shouldn't speak! Afterward, they went to sleep. Very early in the morning he woke up and went to the Mikveh. On the way, he met the Besht.

The Besht asked him: “What? You sit with the holy guests (*ushpizin*) in the Sukkah and you speak such slander?”

R. Hayim wondered how the Besht knew about the whole story. No one else was with them in the Sukkah and he knew that his son was still asleep. He asked him: “Who told you this?”

The Besht replied that an angel told him. R. Hayim Sanzer asked further: “How is an angel allowed to speak slander?”

The Besht said to him: “Yes! If you do good deeds, then a good angel is created and it certainly does only good deeds and such an angel will not speak slander. But if you do bad deeds – a bad angel is created, and it did indeed relate to me the slander.

I.F.

Rabbi Teomim

R. Mekhele Zlochover was the son-in-law of a rich man.² After the wedding, R. Mekhele persuaded his father-in-law to give him a special room where he could be the whole day – so that no person would be able to visit him – the food had to be brought in through a hole in the door. And a special door was built for the lavatory.

This was his conduct for a year or two. This did not please the father-in-law and when all his words did not help – he traveled to R. Isaac Drohobitcher – R. Mekhele's father to complain about R. Mekhele.

R. Isaac advised him that he should allow him to practice his seclusion for a year. Indeed, that is how it was – but after a year R. Mekhele went away to Brody and left his wife at his in-laws.

He became a school teacher (*melamed*) in Brody. The wise men of Brody sensed that the schoolteacher was a “beautiful vessel” and they gave him great honor.

Once the wise men of Brody wanted to excommunicate the Besht. They were about to declare the excommunication when someone said that it was not proper to do something like this without consulting the school teacher R. Mekhele who they so greatly esteemed. When they called R. Mekhele he

² Note: in the original Yiddish it states that R. Mekhele took a rich man as a son-in-law. However, the rest of the story indicates strongly that the rich man is the father-in-law – rather than the son-in-law – of R. Mekhele.

told them that he could not be involved in this matter and he advised them not to harass the Besht. When they heard these words from R. Mekhele they were sorry and abandoned the whole thing.

When R. Mekhele later visited the Besht – the Besht said to him: “The three years of seclusion helped you save my honor.”

I.F.

David Gelbtukh

Kopitchnitzer Hasid

R. Nahman Skoliter – a descendant of R. Pinchas Koretzer and R. Mekhele Zlochover.

He was once in Ruzhin for the Sabbath and it was already late at night and time to recite the Kiddush. The Ruzhiner was ready already to recite the Kiddush but R. Nahman had not yet arrived. So the Ruzhiner sent a messenger to him [to tell him] to come to Kiddush and that the Ruzhiner was waiting for him. The messenger found him praying the Eighteen Benediction. This happened twice. Twice the Ruzhiner sent messengers and they had to return and relate that R. Nahman was still praying the Eighteen Benedictions.

At the third time, the Ruzhiner said: “What is this? The beggar is still standing and begging.” R. Nahman sensed that the Ruzhiner was waiting for him and he concluded the Eighteen Benedictions. When he came to the room where the Ruzhiner was standing, waiting for him – the Ruzhiner asked him “Pleading for so long! Why?”

{ The reply? }

R. Nahman had a son, R. Mekhele – he did not lead a following. He used to travel to Sadigura.

I.F.

David Gelbtukh

Kopitchiner Hasid

When R. Samuel Abba returned from Moscow, he stayed for the first Sabbath at his son-in-law R. Gedaliah Aaron. During the meal, R. Samuel Abba said – “Hand me an egg with some sugar powder and some vinegar and I will make a dish” – and then recounted the following story.

When he was in prison together with the Ruzhiner they would bring both him and the Ruzhiner food from the outside. There once occurred a [halakhic] problem [with the food] – and in the end, he did not have anything to eat – so he sent a request to R. Samuel Abba whether he could give him something to eat. R. Samuel Abba wanted to fulfill [the commandment of] welcoming guests with all that he possessed. So he made him a dish out of the things he then had with him – an egg some sugar powder and a cup of vinegar. Afterward, he asked the Ruzhiner’s servant whether the Ruzhiner enjoyed his dish. The servant replied – “Yes, yes, he enjoyed it very much.”

R. Samuel Abba concluded: “Since the Ruzhiner enjoyed it I wish to eat this dish during the first Shabbat I am free.”

{ Pinchas Landau says “R. Samuel Abba related this even though we know that he did not hold of the Ruzhiner” }

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

They told R. Samuel Abba that R. David Tolner said: that they beat R. Samuel Abba and R. Pinchas so that they would become rebbes. R. Samuel Abba said: “That they beat us so that we will become rebbes, I do not believe but that they will beat them {other rebbes} for having become rebbes I have no doubt.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Ruzhiner Rebbe was visiting the Rabbi of Slavuta. The Ruzhiner smoked his pipe and it went out several times.

The Ruzhiner asked the Rabbi of Slavuta if he may smoke – perhaps he cannot stand the smoke.

The Rabbi of Slavuta replied: “Indeed not, indeed not! A young man should burn with his heart – not with his mouth.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Shpoler Grandfather came with R. Rafael {Bershtader? } to R. Pinchas Koretzer – but the Shpoler Grandfather only stayed there for two weeks and then fled. He said: “I fear his fire – he will burn me yet.”

R. Rafael nevertheless remained forever. This is a tradition in R. Pinchas Landau’s family – contrary to that which is written in Yitzhak Werfel’s *Sefer ha-Hasidim*, page 13. There Werfel says that the Shpoler Grandfather was raised there.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Samuel Varkhivker complained to the Besht that his son R. Lipa Chmelniker refused to travel with him to the Besht.

He replied: “It is indeed not important – he should better look after {(study)} the *Sema* [*Sefer me’irat einayim*] (the book of R. Falk Cohen).

R. Lipa was the son-in-law of R. Falk Cohen.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Ruzhiner was released from prison on Shushan Purim (Boyaner Rebbe).

A Jew found out that the Ruzhiner was being released from prison – and he greatly desired to be the first to greet him.

So he got up very early in the morning and went to the mikveh, took along a bottle of brandy and a morsel, and waited until the Ruzhiner emerged.

And indeed that is what happened – he was the first person there. He greeted the Ruzhiner and drank *le-hayim*. The hasid then said to him: “May God help that the suffering that the rebbe underwent will serve as an atonement for the future – but nevertheless rebbe – you should take care from now on – not to steal horses.

{[This is apparently an allusion to the fact that the Ruzhiner was not incarcerated for nothing]}

I.F.

Elijah Neigarten

(Heard from an old Boyaner hasid who yet knew the old Sadagurer)

R. Shalom Prohobishter was sitting at the Seder on the first day of Passover – he said to the gathered – “See, see everyone how over a small matter decreed by the sages one may earn the world to come.”

And he related the following story: There was a Jew who was an absolute gentile (*goy gomur*) –but he never broke the commandment regarding washing one’s hand for bread.

He was once traveling to the fair – and was overcome [with hunger] with only a piece of bread to eat – but he was in the middle of a forest and did not have a place to wash.

He recalled that a little further there was a river but the area was full of thieves and there was therefore a great risk of being killed.

He debated with himself over this for at the same time the evil inclination provoked him: “You idiot! You anyhow commit every sin mentioned in the Torah – so for such a small sin you would risk your life!”

But he overcame the evil inclination and indeed he went into the forest to wash

himself for the blessing over bread. It was a real case of allowing oneself to be killed rather than commit a sin so a heavenly voice declared that this Jew merited the world to come.

R. Shalom concluded – “See, Jews, how a Jew can, with a small matter decreed by the sages, merit the world to come.”

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

Boyaner hasid

When the Ruzhiner was still young – perhaps six or seven years old, he was returning from school and when he passed by a garden he suddenly took off his hat – wiped it with his sleeve, and began to laugh heartily. When the Ruzhiner began to laugh R. Shalom who witnessed the whole event also burst out laughing.

Hasidim asked the Ruzhiner why he was laughing – but he kept silent – so R. Shalom asked him: “Shushkini! (That is how R. Shalom used to refer to R. Israel Ruzhiner) What is this? Jews are asking you something and you do not reply?” The Ruzhiner told the following story: There was once a very poor man. When Passover arrived he alas had nothing for the holiday – so his wife told him to take the silver cup that he had for Kiddush – and he should pawn it with a gentile. He went to the gentile, pawned the cup, and received three rubbles.

He took the three rubles to town to buy things for Passover. On the way, there was a great snowstorm and he struggled through each meter of road. On the road, he met a gentile with a dead horse. The gentile called him over – and asked him if he would like to buy the hide of the horse and he offered to skin the hide for him

as well. The snow was getting worse and he would surely have frozen had not a large carriage passed by and taken him and the hide, which was very heavy and full of ice.

When he arrived in town, he sold the hide for six rubles. So he bought all kinds of food for Passover and took along the three rubles that remained as profit. When he came home, his wife was overjoyed and when he told her that he still had with him three rubles profit she advised him to exchange it for the cup he had pawned with the gentile – so that he would be able to recite the Kiddush at the Seder. So he listened to her and did so.

When the Jew died and came to the other world it turned out that the Jew did not have any merits – he had never in his life fulfilled any commandments. They were about to lead him to Gehenna – when an advocate ran over and related the story of the pawned cup. But when they placed it on the scale his sins still outweighed [his merits]. The advocate said – “Well, throw the hide on the scale as well” – and when they threw the hide [on it] the collected water spilled over and fell to the ground. And the Ruzhiner felt it on his hat and that is why he laughed.

I.F.

Yirmiyahu Katz

R. Yohanan Rachmanstrivker listed the qualities of his children.

1) R. David is a very pious Jew

2) R. Mordechai is thoroughly a “good Jew” (*gutter yid*) – a Jew who never eats and on Passover he eats a measure more of bitter herbs than anyone else

3) R. Nahum is a wise man

4) And my Velvel – well, R. Isaac Elhanan says that he is a great scholar

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

Neither R. Yohanan Rachmanstrivker nor his brother R. Isaac Skverer gave over teachings.

R. Yohanan once said: “The whole world knows that I and my brother R. Isaac know more than everybody (than the other rebbes who do give over teachings) but we do not give over teachings and we know why we do not do so.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Yohanan Rachmanstrivker always used citrons (*etrogim*) from the Land of Israel.

R. Mordechai Ber Horonsteipler, his nephew, who was renowned as a great scholar once asked him why he uses citrons) from the Land of Israel – Why? Corfu citrons beautify the commandment more.

He replied: “You’re a scholar! I am a simple man – I know nothing, I only know that it is stated in the Torah “And ye shall take you...the fruit of goodly trees” [Lev. 23:40]. The Torah was certainly not referring to Corfu citrons but rather from the Land of Israel.

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

When the First World War began the [author of the] *Tiferet shemuel* was in Germany and remained stuck there.

While he was there, he heard that the Russians had hung his son Faivel. Afterward, A Jew asked him whether it was true that he had said “Because they took away my crown, they will take away his (the sir) crown in turn. He said fearfully: “What? They are repeating this already in my name in the streets?”

I.F.

Sadover Rebbe

Rabbi Sekula

R. Yehiel of Aleksander used to travel to the Trisker Maggid. He once took along his son the later-to-be [author of the] *Yismah Yisrael*.

While they were sitting in the Trisker Maggid's house, the Trisker Maggid's daughter Malkah passed by – who was renowned as a very learned woman and whom Hasidim greatly esteemed.

When she passed through the room the *Yismah Yisrael* looked away.

R. Yehiel said: “No – this is the Rebbe's daughter.”

The *Yismah Yisrael* replied: “The Rebbe's daughter is also a female.”

I.F.

Bilitzer Rabbi

Rabbi Stern

R. Hayim, the son of the *Tiferet Shemuel*, told the following story. The *Yismah Yisrael* once traveled to Germany. On the train, a Jew came over to him and greeted him.

The *Yismah yisrael* said to him: “Hayim! What are you doing here?”

The Jew was stunned – how did the Rebbe know his name?

The *Yismah Yisrael* reminded him that he knew him because 20 years [ago] he had greeted his grandfather. The Jew still wondered: “But then I sported a beard and side-locks while now I dress German – clean shaven.”

The *Yismah Yisrael* replied: “Believe me you looked the same to me then as now – even though then you sported a beard and side-locks and now you are shaven.”

I.F.

Sadover Rebbe

Rabbi Sekula

R. Yehiel, the Aleksander Rebbe, was once in Sadagura.

When he returned, they asked him whether it was true that when the Sadagurer recites the Kiddush the cup literally boils.

He replied: “Whether or not the cup boils I did not see! But that the Sadagurer himself boils this I saw myself.”

I.F.

Sadover Rebbe

Rabbi Sekula

When R. Yehiel Aleksanderer performed the Hakafot he sobbed so heavily that one could literally see the floor getting wet.

I.F.

Sadover Rebbe

Rabbi Sekula

R. Yehiel was the first Aleksander Rebbe – he traveled to Vorka and then later to the Bialer Rebbe R. Berish (the son of R. Abraham Chekhenover).

After the Biala Rebbe's passing in [5]637 [1876-7], he became a rebbe, and already the Bialer's children traveled to Aleksander.

R. Yehiel passed away in [5]657 [1896-7].

R. Yehiel had 3 sons.

1) R. Yerahmiel Israel Isaac – the [author of the] *Yismah Yisrael*.

2) R. Samuel Zevi – the [author of the] *Tiferet shemuel* who passed away in [5]684 [1923-4] The *Yismah yisrael* became a rebbe in [5]654 [1893-4] and passed away in [5]670 [1909-10]. After his passing the *Tiferet shemuel* became a rebbe.

3) R. Bezalel Yair – the youngest son, lived in Lodz and led a community there. After [5]684 [1923-4], when the Tiferet Shemuel passed away, his son R. Isaac Menahem Mendel became a rebbe. The Germans murdered him during World War II. Another son of the Tiferet Shemuel was called rabbi Haim.

R. Isaac Menahem Mendel had 3 sons

1) The eldest – R. Faivel Danziger – the Russians captured him during the First World War.

2) R. Jacob Simhah Bunim

3) R. Abraham Hayim.

I.F.

Sadover Rebbe

Rabbi Sekula

After the passing of the elder Sadagurer, there was a bit of a controversy among the followers of R. Isaac, the firstborn who later moved to Boyan, and the followers of his brother R. Israel who remained in Sadagura.

Sadagurer Hasidim used to yell out in their synagogues [*shtibelekh*] during Simhat Torah the verse “Happy art thou, O Israel” [Deut. 33: 29]. Conversely, the Boyaner Hasidim used to yell out during the Torah reading “[In] Isaac shall seed be called to thee” [Gen. 21: 12].

I.F.

Boyaner Hasid

R. Yohanan Rakhmansrivker once visited R. Isaac Skverer. They placed on the table old wine from the Land of Israel. R. Isaac poured him a cup for Kiddush. When R. Isaac looked away for a moment, R. Yohanan poured another cup of regular wine.

R. Isaac nevertheless noticed and asked R. Yohanan why he had done that. R. Yohanan replied: “I am hardly a connoisseur of wine. [However,] the power of the evil inclination is unfathomable. It can convince me precisely that I don’t like the Land of Israel wine so I don’t want to, heaven forbid, utter something negative about the fruits of the Land of Israel – so I don’t want to subject myself to such a temptation. R. Isaac replied: “I knew you to be a pious Jew – but to such a degree, this I didn’t know.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

Heard from R. Nahum Rakhmansrivker, R. Yohanan’s son

When the Angel once came to Kremnitz to his father-in-law, the opponents [*mitnagdim*] in the town – wealthy people, people who thought highly of themselves – came to the house to see him.

They saw the Angel standing at the window looking out at the mountains - (Kremnitz had many mountains).

The opponents constantly heard about the holy ways of the Angel and they wondered – just to stand at the window and look?

The Angel said to them: “I look and see how a mere piece of earth has lifted itself so high.”

I.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

They asked R. Yohanan Rakhmanstrivker why one goes to a rebbe to submit a note [*kviteh*].

He replied: “A rebbe is like Issachar and the Jews are like Zebulon.

When Issachar is doing well spiritually then Zebulon does well materially. But when Zebulon is not doing well materially – who is at fault – Issachar is not active enough spiritually. It would be proper for the Jews to poke out the rebbe’s eyes.

But the Jews are merciful people the children of merciful people – so they come to the rebbe and give him a note – and it is understood that they are quietly saying – see Rebbe! This is what you were supposed to have achieved.”

I.F.

R. Isaac Meir Heschel

Mezebuzer Rabbi

R. David Tolner once said: “I am envious of my Isaac (Skverer) – he has so many pious followers that he is becoming a pious Jew himself.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

R. Gedaliah Linitzer always prayed for poverty. The Barditchover Rabbi asked him: “Why? It is written: ‘Poverty causes [a person to] transgress [*ma’avirah al*, lit. “pass over”] the will [*da’at*, lit. “knowledge”] of his Maker’ [b.T. Eruvin, 41b].”

R. Gedaliah replied: “If it was to be interpreted as you do, then it should have said “‘ Poverty causes [a person] to pass from the will [*me-da’at*] of his Maker.’ But since it says ‘over the will of his Maker’ – I interpret it as follows: ‘causes [a person to] pass over [*al*] the will of his Maker,’ poverty elevates [a person’s] knowledge of his Maker.”

I.F.

Pinchas Landau

The Strelisker has a son-in-law R. Isaac who was very poor and had to marry off a daughter and very much needed [money] for a dowry. So he came to R. Shalom Belzer to see perhaps there he'll manage to gather [funds] for a dowry.

He arrived in Belz for the Sabbath. After the evening prayers, when he came into the Belzer, R. Shalom told him to lie down on the divan in the meantime and take a nap because he was not finished and there would still be time before Kiddush.

R. Isaac listened to him – he took a short nap – and then afterward they recited Kiddush and enjoyed a happy Sabbath.

After the Sabbath, R. Shalom told him to travel to Jassy. R. Isaac didn't have a penny of his own – but the Belzer gave him some money. The money, however, barely covered the cost of the wagon driver.

The wagon driver took him to the Jewish street in Jassy and left him there.

As he was standing there, a Jew came over to him – a wild stranger who said “Greetings, R. Isaac!” and invited him to his home – and gave him all good things and invited him to stay for the Sabbath. All Sabbath he wondered how this Jew knew him – perhaps he saw him at his father-in-law, the Strelisker. After the Sabbath, he asked him “How do you actually know me?” The Jew told him the following story.

The Jew had an insane daughter and he Led R. Isaac into the room where she sat until a few

{ See the book *Dover Shalom* pg. 58, paragraph 125 where there is a similar story }

days ago she at least feared her father. Last Friday, when R. Isaac was in Belz she got very angry and slapped her father and shut herself in her room.

The father was very pained by this – Friday night he was unable to even recite the Kiddush that is how pained he was. So he lay down – and took a nap. His father came to him in a dream and he wept bitterly to him – his father, who had been a disciple of the Seer [of Lublin], promised him that he would pray for mercy for his daughter in the palace of the Seer.

But the Seer refused – he claimed – that he was unable to help – it has been too long since he has passed away from the world but he advised that they should go to his disciple the Strelisker “and I will go along” – When they came to the palace of the Strelisker he said the same thing and told them to go to the Belzer who had been his disciple. So they both went to the Belzer to achieve salvation for the insane daughter.

The Belzer said – that he was prepared [to do so] – “but for this, I want a daughter for a daughter – your daughter to be healed and another daughter to marry off.” In his dream, the Jews asked “How will I recognize [the person]?” The Belzer showed him R. Isaac, the Strelisker’s son-in-law napping on the divan, and when he came to Jassy he recognized him.

They both later traveled to the Belzer – the daughter was healed – and the Jew married off R. Isaac’s daughter.

I.F.

Alexander Bistritzky

It once happened that the Magid didn't have wheat that was watched [*shemurah*] for Passover. So he sent R. Zusha Anipoler to find watched wheat.

He traveled through several cities but could not find [any] – until he came to a village and found a Jew who had fine wheat – watched. He was very pleased with this and headed home, filled with joy.

On the way back – passing through a village he heard weeping. After asking around he found out that a widow with several orphans were simply dying of hunger. Without even thinking for a minute he took the hard-won – watched wheat and had food prepared for the family.

Instead of the wheat he bought regular wheat – not watched and he went home. Naturally, he did not mention that it was not watched.

At the Seder, immediately after eating the required measure of matzah, the Magid called over R. Zusha.

R. Zusha became very afraid. He understood that the Magid must have sensed that this was not watched.

When R. Zusha came over – the Magid said: “There is a great light shining from this mitzvah. What is the cause of this?”

At this, R. Zusha dared to tell the story.

I.F.

Biliter Rabbi

Rabbi Stern

R. Shmelke and the [author of the] *Hafla'ah* went to the Magid to see if he was indeed great. They were there for several days and were not very impressed. So they decided to leave.

When they went to take leave of the Magid he told them – they should take leave of R. Zusha Anipoler. He advised them that he was sitting in the study house [*kloyz*] and it would be worth asking him to interpret the Mishnah [that states] “One is obligated to recite a blessing for the bad just as he recites a blessing for the good” [M. Berakhot 9: 5] – So they went to the synagogue [*shul*] – and they saw a Jew dressed in rags sitting somewhere behind a bench – and it was pointed out to them that this person was R. Zusha.

So they told him that the Magid had told them to ask him to interpret the Mishnah. R. Zusha looked at them and said: “I don’t know what he means. Only someone who ever felt bad can tell you that – I have never experienced anything bad.”

I.F.

Bilitzer Rabbi

Rabbi Stern

R. Isaac Skverer greatly esteemed his wife Malkah – the daughter of the Ruzhiner. When she passed away he said: “I maintained a high level together with her. She would have preferred to sell bagels at the market just so that I would not be a rebbe.”

I.F.

David Twersky

Skverer descendant

The Sanzer Rabbi visited R. Meir Premishlaner a year before he passed away.

R. Meir asked him: “I feel restricted [*eng*] in this house – I wish to move – what do you think about this?”

The Sanzer replied: “Why not?!” Only later did the Sanzer understand that R. Meir meant the World of Truth, to where he wishes to move – so he wanted to excuse himself and argued – “No – the world still needs you!”

But R. Meir said: “Too late! You are of the great court – you already pronounced it – so it is too late.”

R. Meir passed away the next year.

I.F.

Alexander Bistritzky

Heard from the Ridniker Rebbe

A local Jew heard this from a Jew who yet knew R. Meir Premishlaner (R. Meir Premishlaner passed away in [5]610 [1850]).

R. Meir told the Jew to go to war and promised him that he would survive. The Jew lived very long and lived to be 108 years old.

The Jew related that in the last years of R. Meir Premishlaner's life, they did not allow anyone to approach him. And he received only very special people and even this only through a hole in the door. The Jew remembered the thin hand he stuck out through the door.

Hasidim said that the reason he didn't allow anyone into him was because if he were to look a Jew in the face he would know all his sins.

I.F.

Alexander Bistritzky

R. Motele Kreminitzer, the father-in-law of R. Aaron Karliner once swayed one of R. Aaron's daughters in his lap. It was Saturday night and he sang "God said to Jacob" [*amar Hashem le-ya'akov*]. He said to his grandchild who was then one year old – I promise you that you will have a husband who will be a king among the Jews.

I.F.

Alexander Bistritzky

R. Motele Chernobyler was once at a wedding in Galicia. Also at this wedding was the elder Belzer's (R. Shalom) son R. Moses of Kurov. R. Shalom, who once said "If R. Motele was 100 miles away from here I would go look at him," sent a note [*keviteh*] with R. Moses in which was written only his name and his mother's name along with redemption money [*pidyon*] in the amount of two Rhenish. He told R. Moses to watch closely what R. Motele would do with the note and the redemption money.

When R. Moses returned from the wedding R. Shalom Belzer asked him: "What did you see?" R. Moses replied: "The note he wrapped around the middle finger of his right hand. And the money he put in the pocket of his vest."

The elder Belzer said: "He did that with my note because he wanted to bless the Jews with my name – and the money he placed in the same pocket he sustains the thirty-six saints."

I.F.Bilitzer Rabbi

Rabbi Stern

When they began to conscript Jews into the Russian army the Ruzhiner's children were already in Austria – but the Ruzhiner Hasidism were asked to collect money to abolish the decree.

They sent a request to the Skverer and asked how much he would give – but R. Isaac did not want to give anything because he said that it would not help and he then told this story:

When R. Isaac was still the Ruzhiner's son-in-law and living with him (*oif'kes*) it was the custom of the Ruzhiner to go walking each day with one of his children or sons-in-law. The Ruzhiner once called for R. Isaac even though it was not his turn. He wasn't ready but as it was the Ruzhiner who was requesting he hurriedly prepared and ran to the coach where the Ruzhiner was already waiting. Usually, the Ruzhiner would sit on one side – R. Isaac on the other, and between them, it remained vacant.

They traveled into the forest. Suddenly they stopped the coach and a Jew approached from the forest and seated himself in the coach in the middle – the Ruzhiner and the Jew spoke a great deal among themselves but R. Isaac did not understand all of it. Suddenly, the Ruzhiner accompanied the Jew into the forest, remained there a while, and then emerged alone and returned home.

R. Isaac concluded: “Now I know what took place between them – and that is why I do not wish to give any money to abolish the decree of military conscription – because I know that it will not help.”

The Bilitzer Rabbi heard this from R. Jacob Joseph Skverer.

I.F.

Bilitzer Rabbi

Rabbi Stern

R. Isaac Skverer once criticized R. David Tolner for his [manner of] living so opulently – riding a coach driven by four horses.

R. David debated with him and demonstrated to him that his way was correct.

R. Isaac replied – “It might be that your way is indeed correct and good for you. However, what will be with your children – if your children will not be like you (meaning in sanctity and ethics) then this will not be alright.”

He went on – “My children, on the other hand, if they will follow my way of much fasting and constant immersion in the mikveh – even if they will not be so sincere about it – well, it is still good.”

I.F.

Bilitzer Rabbi

Rabbi Stern

The Ruzhiner once asked the Sadagerer when R. Abraham Jacob was still a child – “Why do we sell our leavened to a Gentile before Passover?”

R. Abraham Jacob replied – “leavened refers [*behinah*] to the evil inclination – evil – so we sell him.

“If so,” asked the Ruzhiner, “why then do we buy it back after Passover?”

The future Sadagerer replied, “Passover refers to love – if we sell evil – this means that we are repenting out of love, and repentance out of love turns sins into merits so the leavened becomes exchanged for goodness – that is why we buy it back.”

I.F.

Boyaner Rebbe

The Berditchever once told the following story: There once happened that the heavenly court judged a Jew and he unfortunately had few merits. They recalled that he once supported a widow and saved her life. So they placed the widow on the scale and she outweighed all his sins.

The prosecutor argued – “it once happened with a Jew who stole money and in his case, they considered as sin only the coins that he stole – shouldn’t they also in his case weigh the person from whom he stole the money?”

The angel Michael replied – “Follow the reasoning! We understand that in the case of the widow, the main thing wasn’t the few coins that he gave her – he intended to save her life – that is why we consider the entire widow whom he saved and place her on the scale. In the case of the Jewish thief – he had no interest in the life of the Jew – only his money and that is why we weigh only the coins.

The *tsadikim* of the generation said – that the Berditchever Rabbi told this over in the name of the angel Michael but that he came up with this solution.

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

Before he passed away, the Apter Rebbe said: “You might yet hear nicer teachings – but never out of such a mouth.”

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

Before he passed away, the Apter Rebbe said: “If I wanted to I could fly over from this world to the other world like a bird. But what will every one [*di vel*] say? – that the Apter Rebbe died in a bizarre manner.”

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

Many of the [author of the] Hidushei ha-rim's children passed away during his lifetime. At the passing of his last child, he cried bitterly.

His followers asked him: "Rebbe if you are becoming distraught [*be-atzvut*] then what will we be able to say?"

He replied: "I am not so distraught over the death of my child – I am just very pained. I had already started studying with him and now I am no longer able to fulfill the commandment of "And ye shall teach [them] your children" [Deut. 11: 19].

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

At the yahrzeit of the Ruzhiner, the Husyatiner came to his older brother the Sadagurer in Sadagura.

They sat at the table [*tish*] and the large audience was very curious to hear what the two brothers would say to each other.

The Sadagurer said to the Husyatiner: “Did you pass over the Zalutshiner bridge coming here?”

The Husyatener: “Yes!” Sadagurer: “How tall is the bridge?” The Husyatener answers him that it is so many meters tall. The Sadagurer questions: “No, I think that the bridge is taller.” And the two brothers argued for a long while about how tall the bridge was.

Afterward, the Husyatener said: “I forgot to tell you – on the way there was a terrible fog [?]. Be well.” – and with that, he left.

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

R. Zusha Anapoler once came to a tavern – tired out and weak – he asked the tavern keeper for a glass of whisky – the tavern was filled with gentiles at the time – and the tavern keeper did not want to bother with the poor outcast Jew. R. Zusha asks him again – he is about to faint from weakness – the tavern keeper gets angry and gives him a hard slap.

R. Zusha goes to a corner and begins to speak to himself – “Zusha, Zusha, repent, repent!”

This makes an impression on the tavern keeper – he gives someone a slap and that person seeks yet repentance – very strange – he thinks – and he is seized with terror – he goes over to R. Zusha and begs him: “Rebbe – forgive me Rebbe – I would like to confess to you – for several years now I have not prayed the afternoon prayers [*minhah*].” R. Zusha replied – “For that one does not yet deserve a slap” (that is to say, the tavern keeper had not sinned and fallen to such a degree that he might allow himself to slap R. Zusha).

So he enumerated further sins – he didn’t eat kosher food – also failed to observe the Sabbath – and R. Zusha kept replying – “For this Zusha does not yet deserve a slap.”

In the end, the tavern keeper admitted that he had a son [*shegetz*] by a gentile woman.

“Woe” – he then said – “For this Zusha does deserve a slap” – (that is to say, a Jew who committed such a sin

is liable to give such a slap). It is written in Tractate Hagigah – ‘Who is “the crooked that cannot be made straight” [Eccles. 1: 15]? This is one who engaged in intercourse with a woman forbidden to him and fathered a *mamzer* with her’ [b.T. Hagigah 9a]. Repentance only helps for this if the *mamzer* leaves this world. This is the only solution.”

R. Zusha asked what the son did – the tavern keeper replied that he worked in a forest chopping trees. R. Zusha prayed and immediately there came a message that the son was found dead under a tree, which had fallen on him.

Then the tavern keeper was able to repent.

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

R. Hershele Chortkover the father of R. Shmelke and the [author of the] *Hafla'ah* – was the chief judge in Chortkov – a holy Jew – one of those saints, masters of accounts, who recorded everything they did throughout the day and made an accounting of everything that occurred that day.

Once when R. Hershele went over the things he had done that day he sensed that regarding a question over a menstruating woman he had overlooked [the opinion of] a *Tosefot* – he quickly called his assistant to go tell the woman that the ruling he had given her was incorrect. The assistant went right over but immediately returned with the information that it was already too late. R. Hershele was very pained, and he began to consider what might have brought him to such a sin. He concluded to himself – that since the Besht “was playing his tricks” [*pravet zayne shtiklakh*] in Tlust – just a few miles from Chortkov and he – R. Hershele leaves him be and doesn't persecute him – that is why he is deserving of this punishment.

Since he did not wish to judge someone who wasn't present – and wished to be convinced himself he traveled to Tlust to observe the behavior of the Besht. He arrived in the morning – he saw how the Besht received two women whose husbands went missing [*aganot*] – both moaned and wailed and wished to know where their husbands were. The Besht went to the privy – relieved himself – washed his hands and then told the women that they should go to such and such a place – and they would find their husbands.

R. Hershele was even more convinced that he must persecute the Besht – incredible! To such places, the Besht goes seeking the holy spirit! ?

When the women left – the Besht went over to R. Hershele and greeted him – and he told him – “Don’t be pained – you did not rule badly – you did not overlook the *Tosefot* – you just erred in interpreting it – you thought that according to the interpretation of the *Tosefot* one rules in this way – no, one ought to rule as you did rule” – and he took the volume of the Talmud [*gemara*] and taught him the true interpretation.

R. Hersh said “We have a tradition that signs and wonders can also be done through the [power of the] other side but Torah is truth.

and how you interpreted the *Tosefot* is the true Torah – Peace upon you, my rabbi and teacher!

Now I know that all you do is done with the [power of the] side of holiness – but one thing I don’t understand. Why did you need to go to such a place to seek through the holy spirit where the husbands were to be found.”

The Besht replied: “I knew that their husbands were in very lowly places and when I think about matters of the Torah I do not look upon such disgusting places – in the privy one may not think about matters of the Torah – so I was then able to see the disgusting place where they were to be found now – so I searched them out and found them there.”

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

The Boyaner Rebbe of Chernovitz (R. Menahem Nahum) once told the following story:

The Ruzhiner used to go take walks in the forest and there to pray the afternoon prayers [*minhah*]. Each time he would take with him a different son. Once the Shtefeneshter went with him. When they came to Mahala near Boyan the Ruzhiner saw a gentile carrying a large fish. The Ruzhiner said to his servant Leib – “Go down and buy that fish.”

But R. Leib said that he had no money. The Ruzhiner replied – “If so, then go to the leaseholder [*arenden*] and borrow money – but buy the fish.”

When the fish was bought the Ruzhiner took it in his hands and looked at it for a long time – then he placed the fish under his feet and returned home. The Shtefeneshter used to relate that when the Ruzhiner Pressed the fish with his foot he heard the fish crying: “Oh, woe is me! Oh, woe is me!”

When they arrived back home in Sadagura the Ruzhiner told them to cook the fish for Friday night. When they brought the fish to the table, the Ruzhiner handed out leftovers [*sharayim*] to all his children and said the following: “You know who this fish is? In it is reincarnated

a great saint – so we must rectify him. I would even tell who this saint is but his grandchildren, who came for the Sabbath, are sitting here so I do not wish for them to become embarrassed.

I.F.

Shalom Nahman of Mezritsh heard from the Boyner Rebbe written to Moses Narshen a Boyner Hasid

A Jew fled Austria from Russia and changed his name but he used both names by mistake. This was considered a criminal offense.

So they summoned him to court. He became very afraid and he came to the elder Kopishnitzer – he blessed him and told him to go to court on time. The Jew listened and arrived shaking to the court and showed the paper to the first official sitting there. The official sent him to a second and the second to yet another. Nobody knew what to do with him until he came to the highest official – he consulted all his records but did not find his name so he told him to go home.

Afterward, he went to the Kapishnitzer and recounted the story.

The Kopishnitzer said: “I spun all their heads around [= I confused them].”

I.F.

Abraham Lipa Popik

The Rabbis established the Kadish prayer for a reason { ? }

Since the Rabbi of Apta was the chief rabbi and rebbe of his generation he naturally recited the Kadish. His children then adopted the custom.

I.F.

P. Landau

When the Magid initially came to the Besht for Sabbath to become acquainted with his way he was not very impressed by his Kabbalistic [knowledge] and behavior. On the Sabbath, he decided to test him. The test was [as follows]: he will think about a difficult *Tosefot*; he wanted to see whether the Besht would sense it.

At the third meal [shalosh se'udot] the Besht began a discussion on the topic of that Tosefot.

From then on the Magid became one of the most fervent followers of the Besht.

I.F.

P. Landau

When the Sadagurer Rebbe passed away the Chortkover wished to take over the presidency of the Kollel Volhynia.

However, rabbis decided that [running] a charitable cause is inherited unless that person is confirmed to be wicked, heaven forbid. Therefore, the presidency went to the Boyaner Rebbe, R. Isaac Friedman.

I.F.

Mezebizer Rebbe

Before his passing, the Aperi wept greatly over the suffering of Jews in exile and sobbed because the Messiah was not coming yet.

He said: “The holy Berditchever said before his passing that when he arrives in the other world he will not rest until he will convince the Master of the World that the Messiah should come. But when he arrived in the other world they gave him such a great reception in the heavenly palaces that he forgot about his mission.

I, however, promise you that I will not forget.”

I.F.

Mezebizer Rebbe

Before R. Moses Lelever left for the Land of Israel, he took leave of the Ruzhiner, the Mogelenitzer Rebbe, and the elder Belzer Rebbe.

R. Moses traveled with his own quorum of Jews, and he traveled with self-sacrifice. The rebbes initially did not wish to allow him to travel: how would he be able to abandon such a community of Jews and followers to the winds?

This year will be exactly 100 years since the Lelever Traveled to the Land of Israel.

He was on the ship during Sukkot and did not have the opportunity to obtain an Etrog.

The elder Belzer wondered: “A strange thing for a *tsadik*. He had such a love of the land that it didn’t bother him that he lacked an Etrog.

On the ship, he spent a lot of money to convince the captain – a very wicked man – to allow him to build a sukkah.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

The old rebbes did not at all tell the populace to move to the Land of Israel – only particularly special people.

They maintained that the sanctity of the Land of Israel was so great that only very saintly people could enjoy the Land of Israel and conversely that the Land of Israel would only enjoy such particularly special people.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

R. Shalom was a distant relative of the Ruzhiner. He was a simple [*proster*] man and was given no recognition in the Hasidic world. However, he looked exactly like the Ruzhiner – to the point that he was mistaken for him several times.

Once, the Ruzhiner had to visit the Apter. It so happened that this R. Shalom was in that area and arrived a half hour before the Ruzhiner. He went into the Apter and the Apter did not recognize him – he sat with him and kept on sighing.

When the Ruzhiner finally arrived the Apter was very pleased and said to him: “Woe, woe you caused me great pain – for a while I was afraid that you have an entirely different face [*panim*].”

{ Chronologically, one story does not fit the other (I.F.) }

That same R. Shalom later moved to the Land of Israel and obtained a position in a Kollel.

Two years into his time in the Land of Israel, he came to Europe and visited the Apter. The Apter said: “See, see what a wonderful power the Land of Israel has. It changed R. Shalom entirely. It is verily

similar to Rosh Hodesh. Make a big meal – exactly like in Rosh Hodesh”

I.F.

P. Landau

R. Baruch David Kahana, a respected Hasid, once came to the Sanzer Rebbe, the [author of the] *Divrei Hayim* to take leave of him as he was moving to the Land of Israel.

The Sanzer said to him: “Why are you rushing so – wait a while and I will accompany you.”

However, a year later he passed away.

I.F.

Sanzer Rebbe

When the Apter Rebbe lived in Jassy he wished to go meet R. Baruch. However, his servants, who knew that R. Baruch was a very stern person, feared that when R. Baruch heard the Apter Rabbi's exaggerations and saw the way he eats (the Apter Rebbe would eat a great deal) this would result in a dispute.

But nothing could dissuade him – and the Apter Rebbe left, and he came for the Sabbath to R. Baruch. At night at the table [*tish*] they served noodles – an entire bowl. First, the Apter Rebbe ate with a spoon, but he soon took the bowl in his hands and began to eat out of the bowl.

They were afraid that this kind of eating would bother R. Baruch. No! He only said: “Look how a Jew lusts after the Temple sacrifices!” Later, he invited him to give over teachings.

Sabbath morning, he again invited the Apter to give over teachings.

At the third meal, the Apter Rebbe did not wish to go to the table – he said – “I gave over teachings Friday night and Sabbath morning – I fear that he will honor me again [to give over teachings].”

R. Baruch promised him that he would give over the teachings but that he should come. So he came.

At the third meal R. Baruch began to recite a passage from the Zohar – but only the simple reading – without any explanation.

After the blessing after meals, the Apter Rebbe went home to his guesthouse – and he said to one of those close to him: “R. Baruch verily broke me with his teachings.”

And R. Baruch said regarding the Apter’s exaggerations: “His mouth is a golden weight.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Mezibuzer

The Ruzhiner once visited the Apter Rebbe. The Apter Rebbe said to him: “I study the Zohar and you study the Zohar! I visited R. Baruch – I can tell you that we do not even know the pronunciation of the Zohar.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Mezibuzer

During the First World War, there were denunciations made against the Chortkover R. Israel [claiming] that he was helping Jews evade military service.

Once, there came to him an old broken Jew crying and complaining that his son – an only child must report for military duty and that the Chortkover should pray for him and figure out how to save him.

The Chortkover replied: “I am very sorry that I am not younger – otherwise I would report to serve the fatherland myself – I am unable to do anything for you – your son should report and be a good soldier.

As soon as the Jew heard this he admitted that he was a police spy and that he came to find evidence for the denunciations – since he had seen how wise the Chortkover was, he felt that he must reveal the truth about himself.

I.F.

Joseph Varman

Husyatener Hasid

When the Husyatener left Sadigura he first settled in Strusiv, then in Nykulyntsi [?], and then – after several years he settled in Husyatin and built his court.

When he was in Srusiv (or Mykulyntsi) the Husyatener Rebbe did give over teachings.

At one point he began to give over a series of teachings at each table [*tish*] on the ten sefirot.

A certain Jew – a wise man – wished to show that he also knew something and interjected his own idea while the Rebbe was giving over his teaching.

From then on the Husyatener ceased to give over teachings.

I.F.

Joseph Varman

Husyatener Hasid

The [author of the] *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* – the Sudylkiver Rabbi, his brother R. Baruch, and the Apter Rebbe lived in Mezebuz to³ 12 years.

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Mezebuzer

³ A bit unclear. It could either mean until 12 years old (including the previous years) or at the age of 12 (regardless of where they lived in previous years).

Besht { 1 }

A wealthy man from Drazna didn't have any children [Heaven save us!]. So he went to the Besht and begged for mercy. The Besht said 'If you wish to have a child you can but you must be prepared to be a pauper. Talk it over with your wife and see if she agrees to this.'

His wife agreed and he returned to the Besht. The Besht blessed him – and he had a son and immediately became poor. His house burned down – and his business failed. He became such a pauper that when the child grew up he was verily unable to give him a piece of bread.

So he came to the Besht to complain. The Besht told him to go out into the world – so far that they hadn't heard of the Besht.

He listened to him – took his only belongings – his Tallit and phylacteries and went off.

He went from one shtetl to another. He would enter the synagogue [*kloyz*] and listen to what the Jews conversed about among themselves – and when he heard that they spoke of the Besht he went on.

One time he found a village where they were already not speaking of the Besht. He knew that his journey would soon be over. However, he had nothing to do in the village so he went on from there as well. A great frost and storm occurred

and the Jew with great effort just managed to make his way to a shtetl – it was dark – only in one house did he still see light. He went over and stood in front of the door – but apparently, they did not hear his knocking until they happened to open a window to pour out a bucket of water. The water fell upon the nearly frozen Jew, and he gave such a bitter cry that they opened the door and let him in.

They then changed his clothes, gave him something to eat, and gave him a bed.

The householder was a wealthy Jew and as the Jew tried to go to sleep the wealthy man was sitting and studying. The Jew began to recall that he was also once a wealthy man – and was able to sit in his warm home and serenely study a page of the Talmud his heart became bitter and he was unable to sleep.

He saw a young woman enter – with bitter sobbing and he heard her arguing with the householder – over why he doesn't see better doctors and the householder tried to excuse himself, 'What can I do – I am doing everything possible.' Afterward, she left.

The Jew – who in any case was unable to sleep was bothered by this. So he got up and asked the householder for information about what had occurred. The householder did not wish to answer his – 'What business is it of yours?'

But the Jew did not relent – so the householder told him that the woman was his daughter who had been married already for several years – and completely healthy. There is only one problem: when she has to immerse and goes to the mikveh – she becomes ill, and she gets her period again – and it has already been several years like this and no doctors can help.

The Jew tells him about the Besht and advises him strongly to travel to him. And although the householder had never heard of the Besht he agrees and takes with him the Jew and travels to the Besht.

When they came to the Besht, the Besht said to the wealthy man – go home but take with you this Jew – and I too will later follow. The Besht took with him 10 of his followers [*hevraya*] and traveled to the wealthy man's shtetl.

The Besht went to the mikveh with his followers and took along a knife – and before he went to immerse himself – the followers were to constantly repeat the “alphabet.”

After this, he went to immerse himself and he immersed himself together with the knife, and they saw that the water immediately became full of blood. When the Besht emerged from the mikveh he related that there were demons in the mikveh who had been harming the woman. However, now everything will be alright.

When the wealthy man came to thank him – the Besht asked him: “Do you recall – that by fate, a year ago

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you found a boat of wheat?” He replied “Yes.” “How much money did you get for that?” He replied “Such and such amount.”

“Well, if so give the Jew the money. When he became poor – he happened that one of his ships of wheat disappeared. This was your ship.” He did so and both of them were helped.

The Jew had a child and recovered a portion of his former fortune. And the householder, his daughter was healed.

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Mezibuzer

It once happened that in the Besht's synagogue [*kloyz*] at the Kol nidrei prayer – the cantor complained to the Besht that for some reason his praying was not going well – he did not have the proper intentions.

The Besht told him: “Just hold on to my belt [*garTEL*] and you will be sure to pray well.” And of course, the praying of the cantor did indeed go well.”

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Mezibuzer

When the Besht passed away his disciples immersed him in the mikveh.

When it came time to take hold of the head and to immerse it none of the disciples dared to touch the head and immerse it. It is told that the Besht himself bent and immersed his own head.

I.F.

Elazar Zohn

A Mezibuzer

R. Isaac Arlesker [=of Olesko] was the son of R. Henokh Arlesker, a son-in-law of R. Shalom Belzer Miracles of R. Isaac, Arlesker Rebbe

R. Popik recounts that his aunt did not have any children 10 years into her marriage. R. Popik's father traveled to the Arlesker and he gave his blessing and soon after she had a girl.

R. Popik's father had a daughter he needed to marry off – they were negotiating a match and promised a dowry of 200 Rhenish. However, his business went bad and the father was unable to put together the 200 Rhenish for the dowry.

So he traveled to R. Isaac Arlesker and told him the story. And also told him that even if he would still bake another oven of bread he would still only earn another 32 Kreuzer – in other words – that he has no chance at all – to put together the 200 Rhenish.

The rebbe did not say anything to him: “I wish you success” – and this was the entire interview – but when he returned home his success was so great that in a few months, he had the 200 Rhenish for the dowry – was able to cloth the whole family and after the wedding, he still had 300 extra Rhenish in his pocket.

R. Popik's father-in-law was involved in a court case with a Gentile, so he traveled to R. Isaac Arlesker.

His father-in-law asked the Arlesker at the interview: "Rebbe please pray that the Gentile will die a horrible death – so we will avoid going to trial."

The Rebbe only replied: "I wish you success."

The father-in-law went home. At the trial, the father-in-law was acquitted but afterward, the Gentile became the father-in-law's best friend in the business – concluded large deals with him – and the father-in-law earned a lot with him.

I.F.

Abraham Lipa Popik

At R. Isaac Arlesker one could always find women with young men [*bahurim*] who had gone insane. They would remain in Arlesk for 5-6 weeks and the rebbe would speak with each young man each day – and they would return home well.

I.F.

Abraham Lipa Popik

R. Solomon was the brother of R. Isaac Arlesker. He lived in Sasov.

R. Popik was present himself when this story occurred. He had already ended his interviews when a young man entered holding a child. The child was already 3-4 years old and he wept that the child still wasn't walking. He placed a Krone on the table. The Rebbe said to him: "You were just here yesterday and I blessed you with a full recovery."

The rebbe told the child to stand on the table. He grasped the child's knee – and began to press, and holding the knee he thought for about 5 minutes.

He then told the young man – to put the child down on the floor – and on the spot the child began to walk.

I.F.

Abraham Lipa Popik

Besht (1)

When the Besht came to Medzibuz the town was full of opponents but they were great scholars.

The chief of the opponents was a wealthy Jew who had a daughter. The daughter became very ill and nothing the doctors tried to do helped.

Women came to his wife and advised her that they should go to the Besht – perhaps he would be able to help.

The wife convinced her husband to go to the Besht – but since he was ashamed before his friends – the opponents, he went to the Besht late at night.

He told the Besht about his daughter's illness and the Besht did not say anything to him – except that he should go home and that he – the Besht will come to him tomorrow.

The Jew was in turmoil – on the one hand, he was ashamed before the group of opponents of which he was the chief – but at the same time he was afraid to tell the Besht not to come to his house. In the morning the Besht came to his home, went over to the sickbed, and blessed the daughter: “I bless you with a full recovery from heaven [*gan eden*]” and he went home. Since he was a wealthy man, the Jew always had at night two guards – when one went to sleep the other was awake, and every few hours the guards

changed. The night after the day when the Besht had visited their home – the door opened in the middle of the night (even though the door was bolted) and a Jew entered – he looked like a wagon driver and in one hand he had a whip and in the other hand a flower. The Jew went over to the patient and said to her: “Smell this flower.” She obeyed him and the wagon driver promised her that tomorrow night he would come again.

The Jew became very afraid – he woke up the other guard and told him what had happened. But they immediately saw that there was a change for the better in the girl. In the morning they told the father what had happened – he no longer cared what the town’s opponents would say and he ran to the Besht and told him the story.

The Besht told him that ‘when the Jew comes again tonight tell him to come to me.’

That night was the same. The Jew came again – gave the girl the flower to smell and they saw that there was a change for the better. The father of the girl told the Jew what the Besht had asked and he left. In the morning the father went to the Besht and the Besht told him to sit and he told him who that Jew was: ‘The Jew was a wagon driver all his life –

Besht (2)

but a great sinner – he committed every sin in the world. He was once traveling in a forest with his wagon – and he saw a Jew hanging from a tree. He brought his wagon under the tree – cut the Jew down and fell into the hay wagon – he brought him to a village and they saved the Jew and he remained alive.

When the wagon driver died and came to the heavenly court all the maleficent angels came and showed that they were each created from this sin – another from that one.

But then the angel Gabriel himself came and told the story of how the wagon driver saved the Jew from certain death. They decided to place all the sins on one scale and the horse and wagon with which he had saved the Jew on the other scale – and it was even.

They did not know what to do – they couldn't send him to hell – he did save a Jewish soul but neither [could they send him] to heaven – his sins cannot simply be dismissed. So they decided to make him a servant of Heaven – and when they need to send healing from heaven they send the wagon driver.'

The Besht concluded: 'This was the Jew who visited your daughter.'

I.F.

Abraham Lipa Popik

Heard from R. Elazar Zohn

A Mezibuzer

They once came to R. Israel Shalom Joseph Heschel the Mezibizer Rebbe about a woman who had a difficult labor. He gave his blessing that she should be helped. He then said: “A remedy for a difficult labor is to go for a walk and tell a story.” He took the two[?] people close to him and told them the following story.

In a shtetl, there lived a very wicked nobleman. He used to do whatever he wanted, and no one dared to confront him. For example, he would stand near the mikveh, wait for the women to leave from immersing, and abduct them for his nefarious deeds.

He once abducted in this way a young woman at the mikveh and forced her to come with him to his castle. He was suddenly called away – so he undressed the woman naked so that she would be unable to run away, and he locked her in a room. The woman was beside herself. She noticed that there was a balcony that had remained open and from which one could jump down. She was prepared to risk the big jump – but she was naked – so she took a bedcover – wrapped it around herself – jumped down and with God’s help she escaped.

She came to her husband and told him the story. However, he did not believe her even though she swore that the nobleman did not even manage to touch her.

He told her that he no longer wanted to live with her – but since he was very angry, he decided to run away. The town in which he lived was a port and he wanted to embark and travel far, far away.

While waiting for a ship, he saw the nobleman running like a wild man – hitting himself in the head. The Jew recognized him – and he asked him what had happened – the nobleman told him the story and that he didn't care about the woman who ran away even though he never even touched her – but his entire fortune was sewn into the bedcover that she had taken.

The Jew was overjoyed – especially as he had learned that his wife had told the truth. He returned to her – appeased her and when they cut open the bedcover they indeed found a hoard of money [*mamon korah*].

Just as the Mezibizer finished the story they were greeted with the news that a boy was born.

I.F.

Abraham Lipa Popik

The Apter's attitude toward the Land of Israel

When the Apter Rebbe sent money to the Land of Israel he had such joy that he put on his fur hat [*shtrayme*].

I.F.

Kopishnitzer Rebbe

The [author of the] *Ohev Yisrael* was the president of the Volhynian Kollel. However, he gave over the Kollel to the Ruzhiner.

Zinkover Hasidim were even angry that the Land of Israel money that was being collected in Ukraine were being sent to Sadagura and Boyan.

The Mezibizer Rebbe, R. Israel Shalom Joseph Heschel sent the money to Boyan. However, he had the privilege to send along a list of people in the Land of Israel to whom the money should go.

An important Jew once came to the Apter for Sukkot. At night at the meal, he saw that there were no other guests so he sat next to the Apter. The Apter told him to move down. The Jew wondered greatly and when he asked him why the Apter replied – ‘this seat is for the eminent guests the Ushpizen.’

The Jew pleaded that he would do anything in the world to see them. The Apter replied that this was only possible on the condition that he accepted that he would have to die soon after. The Jew agreed to the exchange.

The Apter waved his handkerchief and the Jew saw the Ushpizen. Soon after he did indeed die.

They say that since he merited to see the Ushpizen and accepted such a sacrifice from then on the Apter began to recite the Kaddish before the Kegavna prayer.

I.F.

Manistricher Rebbe

Once the Apter Rebbe did not have an Etrog for Sukkot. At the last minute, a Jew turned up with a magnificent Etrog and gave it as a gift to the Apter.

However, he immediately became ill and died. On his deathbed, the Apter promised him that he and his children would recite the Kaddish for him and he chose the Kaddish after the Kegavna prayer.

I.F.

Mezibizer Rebbe

The Rabbi of Brody, R. Abraham Mendel Steinberg – related that the [author of the] *Hidushei ha-rim* once traveled to the Ruzhiner – and he took along with him famous rabbis from Poland.

When came to the Ruzhiner, the Ruzhiner asked him: “Is it true that in Warsaw they are making a paved road?” The *Hidushei ha-rim* replied: “Yes!” The Ruzhiner: “They are working on the road with Gentiles or with Jews?” The Rim: “With Jews!” The Ruzhiner: “A paved road can only be built by Jews, “But the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn” (Proverbs 4: 18). And he repeated this verse several times.

When the Rim took leave and left, he wrapped a wet towel around his head and said to the Polish luminaries who had accompanied him: “You certainly did not understand but he reviewed with me half of [the book] *Peri Etz Hayim*.”

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Brody, Rabbi Abraham Mendel Steinberg once related that the Besht said about R. Hayim Sanzer – of the wise men of Brody – that he had the soul of R. Johanan ben Zakai.

R. Johanan ben Zakai did not commit a single sin his entire life – except for one sin that he committed before his death when he wept ([b.T.] Berakhot 28b “When Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai fell ill his students entered [to visit him]. When he saw them, he began to cry...”) so he was reborn in the form of R. Hayim Sanzer to rectify in this way this sin.

It should be noted that in the Brody record book [*pinkas*] it is written that before he died R. Hayim Sanzer called for a group of musicians to play music – and for there to be joy when he passed.

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum

The Rabbi of Brody, Rabbi Abraham Mendel Steinberg – A Sadigurer hasid related:

R. Isaac Hamburger was once in the same town where the Besht resided. It was the first day of Sukkot and it rained so heavily that they were not able to fulfill the commandment of the Sukkah.

They told him that in the Besht's Sukkah, it was not raining and that the hasidim were singing and dancing and fulfilling the commandment of the Sukkah amply.

So he went over and it was indeed so – it was possible to sit in it. R. Isaac Hamburger recited the Kiddush and fulfilled the commandment to eat [the amount of] an olive in the Sukkah – and the hasidim were reveling – dancing and singing.

When he finished eating, he immediately left. Hasidim asked him – “why are you running away already?” He replied: “I shall not sit in the seat of the scornful” [*Psalms* 1: 1].

The Rabbi of Brody concluded: “See what the epitome of an opponent is – he witnessed such a miracle and afterward he permits himself to say something like that.”

I.F.

Jacob Teitelbaum