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FORWARD

May Hashem's Name be blessed and glorified for constantly standing at our side and enabling us to publish the sefer *Men of Faith*. Through reading this sefer, one can catch a glimpse into the roots of the holy illustrious Pinto dynasty, which traces its lineage from the tzaddik Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto (the *Rif*), zy"a, until the present.

In addition to the family history of the righteous Pinto family, this sefer relates some of the wonders wrought by these tzaddikim during their lifetime in order to bring salvation to Bnei Yisrael throughout the generations. These stories transmit the outstanding greatness of these holy tzaddikim, zy"a. May it be Hashem's will that we continue in their exalted ways of constant ascent.

For thousands of generations, the Torah scholars served as a lighthouse, illuminating the skies for Bnei Yisrael, showing them the proper path to take. Generations were raised through the guidance of the tzaddikim and learned how to behave from their lofty examples. The tzaddikim served as role models for Bnei Yisrael, leading them to excel in Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Chassadim in holiness and purity.

For over three hundred years, Rabbis from the Pinto family served as spiritual leaders in Morocco. Until our day, generation after generation, son after son, the heads of the Pinto households continue to serve as spiritual beams, lighting the way for their followers, who learn from their conduct and receive their encouragement and assistance in the difficult and dark days of our exile. Their success lies in the fact that they are exceptional scholars and Torah giants.

Since the Rabbis of the Pinto dynasty were knowledgeable in the

secrets of the Torah, they also became famous for performing miracles. Consequently, their homes turned into centers for people seeking advice, blessing, or salvation. People knew that these tzaddikim exemplified the words of Chazal, "A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills the decree," as well as, "Hashem decrees and the tzaddik reverses it."

But the top priority of the tzaddikim of the Pinto dynasty was not at all to stand out and impress future generations by performing miracles. These tzaddikim dedicated their lives, day and night, to the study of Torah and the service of Hashem, as well as tending to the needs of the people, assisting their brethren at all times.

This is why their lives, so full of spiritual achievements, serve as a light for each person who seeks to go in the ways of the holy Torah.

When the wave of emigration from Morocco to Eretz Yisrael began, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zy"a, and his family were among the throngs who immigrated to Eretz Yisrael. They settled in Ashdod. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was well aware of what he left behind: the graves of his saintly fathers, who performed miracles and wonders. Their holy graves serve as a life-line for all who visit and prostrate themselves over them, since they thereafter experience salvation from their troubles and experience much success.

It is important to note that it was never the aspiration of the tzaddikim of the Pinto family to become famous. In fact, modesty has always been their trade-mark. They never expected that a book of stories about the wonders and miracles which they wrought throughout their lives would be published to benefit the public.

However, authority has been granted to us by the great Torah scholars and tzaddikim of our days to publicize the stories that happened in the merit of these holy tzaddikim. By reading these stories, people will learn how to serve Hashem, love Him, fear

Him, and cleave to Him. They will ultimately become imbued with faith and love of Hashem.

Most of the stories in this sefer were adapted from the sefer *Shenot Chaim*, written by Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"a. He personally heard these stories from his illustrious father, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zy"a.

The rest of the stories were adapted from the books, *Mekor Chaim*, *Shivchei Tzaddikim*, and *Shivchei Chaim*, or were taken from trustworthy sources who personally heard them and did not add or subtract any detail.

There are countless additional stories which are told about the tzaddikim of the Pinto family, but are not recorded in these books. The stories that are printed here have been verified for their accuracy.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff who edited the sefer: Rabbi Yehoshua Silverberg, Rabbi Binyamin Cohn, and Rabbi Zev Greenwald, who worked tirelessly in preparing the material with precision. We would also like to thank Rabbi Efraim Levi, who reviewed the documents and deeds. May Hashem grant them success in all their endeavors.

We extend our heartfelt prayers that these sefarim should impart to their readers the aspiration to draw closer to Hashem. It is well-known that delving in the stories of tzaddikim is considered as if engaging in the mystical *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. The fame of tzaddikim is eternal and this is their memorial from generation to generation.

Machon Peninei David

INTRODUCTION

Faith in the Tzaddik Leads to Faith in Hashem

"And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant" (*Shemot* 14:31)

The essence of the Song of the Sea is praise to the Eternal G-d for the awesome wonders that He performed for Bnei Yisrael when they crossed the Yam Suf. In addition, it expresses praise of Bnei Yisrael for believing with complete faith that Hashem would deliver them from the Egyptians.

However, if that was the extent of their faith, it would have been enough to write "And they had faith in Hashem," without mentioning their faith in "Moshe, His servant." Why does the Torah associate their faith in Hashem with their faith in Moshe?

This is clarified by Chazal's statement, "Greater is the service of Torah than its study" (*Berachot* 7b). A person cannot blossom and thrive, achieving high levels in Torah and fear of Heaven, without establishing for himself a role model for spiritual ascent. He must find a Torah scholar whom he admires and respects, and from whom he can learn proper conduct and virtuous behavior. The image of his mentor must always be engraved in his mind so that he can learn from him the ways of the holy Torah, the correct path to follow, and the appropriate actions to take. When one serves his teacher, attaching himself to him, and deferring to him by submitting himself to his rulings, he will be influenced by him. Because he holds his teacher in such high esteem, he will emulate him.

According to this, we can explain the pasuk, "And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant" in the following

way. Moshe Rabbeinu merited becoming the most influential mentor of Bnei Yisrael. This was because the people had faith in him and deferred to him, accepting his authority with total submission. They obeyed all his commands and followed him unquestioningly. This is why they succeeded in drawing from his wellsprings of Torah and absorbing his holiness and purity. Consequently, they rose to great spiritual heights.

Since they had faith in Moshe Rabbeinu, the leader of the generation, they merited having faith in Hashem. The purpose of life is to become close to the Creator. One should believe in Him with complete faith, trusting Him and fulfilling His will happily. Although witnessing Hashem's miracles strengthens a person's faith, this is not the optimal way to attain faith, since Hashem does not always change the order of nature. In order to strengthen one's faith in Hashem, he should cleave to the leaders of the generation, deferring to them entirely and placing his faith in them. Then, he may be influenced by them. The tzaddik is a messenger chosen by Hashem to represent Him in this world. It is sufficient for one to observe his holy ways and his dedication in serving Hashem in order to acquire genuine faith and fear of Heaven.

Bnei Yisrael clearly beheld Hashem's Presence and their faith in Hashem was strengthened, when they witnessed the wondrous miracles that He performed before their eyes, such as the Ten Plagues that afflicted the Egyptians, the Splitting of the Sea, and the manna that descended from Heaven in a precise measure, "each day's portion on its day." Without doubt they were inspired greatly by all that they witnessed, and consequently drew much closer to Hashem.

However, they had to understand that miracles do not occur each day. Hashem does not conduct the world in a manner above the laws of nature. But, without miracles, how would Am Yisrael's faith in Hashem endure? How would they attain love of Hashem? How would they be influenced for the good? The answer is clear: Through the tzaddik and the leader of the generation. This is the

reason that Bnei Yisrael accepted upon themselves the authority of Moshe Rabbeinu and possessed full faith in him. In this way, they were positively influenced by him, learning from his deeds and drawing from his wellsprings of Torah.

The capacity of a tzaddik to influence his generation is truly amazing. The pasuk states (*Shemot* 15:1), "Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang this song." Chazal explain that Bnei Yisrael sang the Song of the Sea together with Moshe Rabbeinu, word by word, from beginning to end. This seems incredible. How did they know the words, and from where did they know the tune?

This reflects an important principle. The capacity of Moshe Rabbeinu to influence Bnei Yisrael was extremely powerful. When Moshe began to sing the Song of the Sea through Divine inspiration, Bnei Yisrael were influenced by him to the extent that they too acquired Divine inspiration. Moshe inspired them with his spirit. Therefore, Bnei Yisrael were able to sing the Song of the Sea together with him. They were as one man with one heart.

Clearly, the tzaddik can influence only one who submits himself to his authority and defers to his ruling, abandoning his personal preferences. He must accept the tzaddik's judgment and obey him implicitly, as the pasuk states (*Devarim* 17:11), "You shall not turn from the word that they will tell you, right or left." Chazal add (*Yerushalmi*, *Horayot* 1:1) that even if he will tell you that right is left and left is right, you must accept his word. When a person defers entirely to his Rabbi, he can benefit from his influence, and in this way all the channels of abundance are open to him, granting him Torah, fear of Heaven, and sanctity.

This is the way Bnei Yisrael related to Moshe Rabbeinu. They entirely submitted themselves to his authority and had whole-hearted faith in him. This is why they merited being influenced by him to the extent that they merited receiving Divine inspiration, stemming from his spirit.

I believe that this is the reason that Chazal instituted the custom to recite the Song of the Sea daily. It teaches us that each person must defer to his leader. Just as Bnei Yisrael were influenced by Moshe Rabbeinu, attaining Divine inspiration in the merit of their faith in him and by submitting themselves to his authority, so too, when a person desires to become attached to Hashem and strengthen his faith and fear of Heaven, he must draw close to a tzaddik and become attached to him. It is incumbent upon him to defer to him entirely, surrendering his own opinions and accepting the rulings of the tzaddik. Upon closely observing the tzaddik's behavior, his toil in Torah and dedication in serving Hashem, he will aspire to live in a similar manner and become like him.

This is why Chazal teach (*Ta'anit* 7a), "The Torah is acquired only by one who lowers himself for it." Only by surrendering oneself totally to his teacher and submitting himself humbly before him, can he draw from his wellsprings of Torah and learn from his deeds, thereby acquiring Torah.

How much trouble and pain does a person suffer in this world in order to merit worthy children who are involved in Torah and mitzvot. They are the fruit of his labor. If this is so regarding simple people, how much more so is this true of the tzaddikim of the generations, who pour their hearts out in prayer, investing much time and effort so that their children should follow the proper path.

One who succeeds in progressing constantly to yet higher levels while he is alive is termed "one who goes." The moment he departs from this world, he is considered "among the dead who are free," because when a person dies he is freed from fulfilling mitzvot. After he dies, he is stationary as opposed to going. Even if he would offer all his possessions and riches, he would not be able to add even a single mitzvah to the stock that he amassed during his lifetime.

However, "a son brings merit for his father." If a person leaves over sons who go in the ways of the Torah and mitzvot, then, even after his death, he is considered to be "going." This is why each person should maintain his father's traditions and strengthen himself in Torah and mitzvot. In this way, his father will rise to infinitely greater heights in the Upper Worlds.

So That the Final Generation May Know

Since in our generation there are many people lacking in faith, who cast doubt upon the wondrous deeds of the tzaddikim, I have decided to print a book about the outstanding conduct of my holy forefathers, zy"a, who sacrificed their lives for the nation, as well as for each individual, in order to assist each and every person.

I do not intend to bring honor upon myself and display arrogance by publicizing stories about my forebears. Nor do I intend to detract from the greatness of other tzaddikim, *chas v'chalilah*! After all, the Baal Shem Tov, zy"a, wrote in his will: "Flee from contention, even that which is for the sake of Heaven, because it is only falsehood, especially in these generations." Dissension is not worthwhile, since an argument that is not for the sake of Heaven results in much pain and suffering.

An example of a dispute for the sake of Heaven is that between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel, who exemplified those who "only love truth and peace" (*Zechariah* 8:19). Despite their differences of opinion, they loved one another unconditionally. This enabled them to produce the Oral Torah for Am Yisrael, for all generations to come.

Each person has the ability to assist his fellow, and even affect obvious miracles. This is because each person contains a Divine portion, since (*Bereishit* 8:6) "In the image of G-d He made man." He can obtain strength from Hashem in order to help

another person, as it says (*Yeshayahu* 41:6), "Each man would help his fellow, and to his brother he would say 'Be strong!'"

Thus, it is the awareness of the wondrous ways of the tzaddikim that generate within a person the desire to reach and cleave to the manners of his forebears, whose actions are a portent for their descendants. He will wish to go in their ways and become elevated in the study of Torah and fulfillment of mitzvot and good deeds through infinite loving kindness. This is what inspired me to record a portion of the wondrous greatness of my righteous ancestors.

From all the above, we learn how important it is to have faith in tzaddikim. The stories about tzaddikim demonstrate how much a person gains when he has faith in Hashem, and how much he may lose when lacking this faith. The main objective in life is to acquire faith. Consequently, Chavakuk concludes that the entire Torah is dependent upon only one foundation, declaring, "But the righteous person shall live through his faith" (*Chavakuk* 2:4). What is it worth if a person learns Torah or fulfills mitzvot if his faith in Hashem is lacking?

The Satan desires to reduce a person's faith in tzaddikim. What can a person do in order to overcome this challenge and strengthen himself? He should follow the advice of David Hamelech (*Tehillim* 8:4) and "behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have set in place," then he should say (ibid. 104:24), "How abundant are your works, Hashem." Hence the *Navi* commands (*Yeshayahu* 40:26), "Raise your eyes on high and see Who created these [things]!" This indicates that a person should observe every detail of the Creation and perceive the infinite greatness of Hashem.

If a person believes with perfect faith the words of Chazal (*Chulin* 7b) that "one cannot lift his finger down below unless it was so decreed upon him from Above," and he believes that there is Divine intervention orchestrating every facet of his life, he will achieve great faith. Conversely, if a person relates passively to all

that he encounters and interprets every event as coincidental, he will never acquire true faith.

A person who does not believe and does not perceive Divine intervention in his life suffers a great loss. One should believe in Hashem and in His servants, the tzaddikim, without any doubts. Thus, he will recognize the wondrous miracles that Hashem does for him. He should know that all the stories of tzaddikim are rooted in simple faith. Whoever believes, merits experiencing supernatural salvation at all times.

May all those who read these stories become strengthened with faith in Hashem. May the merit of my fathers, zy"a, protect them and all of Klal Yisrael, Amen!

I pray to Hashem that I should not have any ulterior motives in relating the wonders that Hashem has done for His people, or derive any personal honor from them. If, *chas v'chalilah*, any honor or pride steals into my heart, I beg Hashem to forgive me. I sincerely declare that my entire purpose in writing this sefer is only to relate the wonders of Hashem. I wish to negate any pride or personal honor that I might gain by doing so. May Hashem grant me the merit to execute His will and serve Him wholeheartedly, Amen!

The Servant of Hashem,
David Chananya
The son of my Father and Master, the tzaddik,
Rabbi **Moshe Aharon Pinto,** zy"a

The Pinto Dynasty

listed from father to son

Rabbi Yosef Pinto – late 1400's to late 1500's

Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto (The Rif) – 1565-1648

Rabbi Daniel Pinto – 1600's (died 1681)

Rabbi Shmuel Pinto – mid 1600's to 1715

Rabbi Yosef Pinto –1600's to 1700's

Rabbi Yitzchak Pinto – 1600's to 1700's

Rabbi Shlomo Pinto – early 1700's (died 1761)

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol – 1749-1845

Rabbi Hadan (Yehuda) Pinto – 1800's (died 1881)

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan – 1865-1937

Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto – 1912-1985

Rabbi Refael Pinto, son of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan – 1900's (died 1980)

Rabbi Meir Pinto, son of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan – 1900's (died 1980)

Rabbi Nissim Pinto, son of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan – 1900's

Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan – 1900's

Moreinu, Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, son of Rabbi Moshe Aharon – 1950 to the present day

Other descendants of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol

His daughter Bébéh – married to R' Chaim Ifergan

Her daughter Taneh Sultana – married to R' Chaim Afriat

Her daughter Mira – married to Avraham Moyal

Her daughter Maguy – married to Yonatan Meir Lebée

CHAPTER ONE

The Roots of the Pinto Family

The Pintos of Spain

The ancestry of this illustrious family, which produced generations of great Torah scholars, righteous and devout men, who possessed true fear of Hashem, can be traced back to Rav Sharira Gaon, who lived in the times of the Gaonim and was the Rosh Yeshiva of Pumpedita and the Rosh Hagolah of Ariel. He returned the glory of Torah to its former magnificence, reestablishing its grandeur among Am Yisrael.

Family members, who in that period achieved the title "Gaon," were dispersed in many Jewish communities. However, they established their main residence in the city of Pinto, in Spain. It is a small village on the outskirts of the capital city of Madrid. There they established their residence, and there they secured deep family ties. We do not know what merit the city possessed that its name identifies the illustrious Pinto family for posterity. The generations of leaders, great Torah scholars, righteous and courageous tzaddikim and holy *chassidim*, who possessed true fear of Hashem, all stem from the leaders of the ancient Jewish *kehillah* in the city of Pinto in Spain.

The Expulsion from Spain

At the end of a long period of time in Spain, which is referred to in history as the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry, years in which Jews were allowed to practice their Torah lifestyle without opposition, the Jewish people began to be assaulted by suffering

and evil decrees, in spiritual matters as well as material ones. Their situation became intolerable, and only got worse as time passed. There was not even a ray of light on the distant horizon.

The final blow to the Jews in Spain occurred in 1492 (5252). However, the Spanish kings began to persecute the Jews approximately one hundred years earlier. The Jews were forced to attend the sermons of the Christian priests and wear specific articles of clothing, as well as keep other strange edicts, whose objective was to force them to abandon their religion. Almost all of the Jews withstood the challenges, just as they had done for hundreds of years, and did not alter their beliefs. They bravely clung to their Jewish attire, proudly representing G-d's people.

The edict to expel the Jews from Spain

Ultimately, in 1492 (5252), the era of Spanish Jewry came to an abrupt end when the royal edict was publicly announced, signed and sealed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, may their bones rot. They declared: In our best judgment, and according to the opinion of priests, nobles, and other wise people of our courts… we agree to order an expulsion of all Jewish men, women, and children, of every age which they may be, who live and reside and are found in our kingdom and under our rule, including their sons, daughters, maids, servants, and family members who are Jewish, old and young, from whichever age they may be, and they should not dare to return to live in the places in which they once lived, not through immigration, nor in

any other manner. If we discover any Jew residing in our kingdom, or should one enter in any manner, he will be punished by death; his possessions will be confiscated and used for the benefit of the kingdom. For the violation of being present in the country, punishment will be meted out without a court hearing, without a judge's ruling, and without prior warning.

Don Yitzchak Abarbanel

Rabbeinu Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, one of the advisors of the King of Spain at the time, describes how he attempted to avert the decree. In his introduction to his commentary on sefer *Melachim* he writes: When I was in the courtyards of the King's palace, I was tormented by what I heard, and my throat went dry. I spoke to the king twice, three times. I personally beseeched him, "Your Majesty, the King, save us! Why would you do this to your subjects? We have many businesses, gold and silver which we can contribute to your coffers…" However, the king turned a deaf ear to my pleas and would not answer my cries; similarly, the queen, who aided him in his wickedness.

According to the edict, Jews were given a three-month period to execute the order. The king, in his good graces, "allowed" the Jews to sell their possessions. He promised to protect them and their belongings during this time. However, this part of the order was neglected, whereas the section prohibiting them to take gold, silver, and currency was strictly enforced. In other words, the Jews were allowed to sell their goods, but not in exchange for these three things. Consequently, they obtained little money or goods in exchange for their possessions. Their gentile neighbors knew that they were required to sell their belongings quickly, and they took advantage of the opportunity to exploit and rob them.

When the Jews in Spain realized that their fate was sealed, they packed the belongings that they were allowed to take and left the country, men, women, and children. Many prominent people

abandoned all their wealth and possessions, and in due time left the country, never to return.

There were those who feared losing their money and therefore preferred to pretend that they had converted, while continuing to observe the Torah in secret. However, the Inquisition began to supervise all their actions and ultimately brought doom upon them.

Thus, the devastation of the Expulsion, which resulted in persecution and torturous murder, was felt by all the Jews in Spain.

Leaving with Pride

At that time, the Pinto family, just like the other Jews who were loyal to the ways of their fathers, decided to leave their high positions, their professions, and all their wealth and emigrate to nearby countries. They emigrated to Morocco, Syria, Portugal, Turkey, Holland, and other European countries. The date for the Expulsion was set for the seventh of Av, close to the ninth of Av, the day upon which the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed. This is a period designated for suffering and persecution. During these days of Bein Hametzarim, everyone experienced the throes of exile all over again. The longing for Mashiach was palpable.

Rabbeinu Abarbanel eloquently describes the exile of the Jews:

The expulsion

They trudged without any strength, three hundred thousand people, myself among them, young and old, women and children, on the same day, from the entire land of the Spanish Kingdom, wandering to wherever they could go. The leaders led the procession, and Hashem was at its head… Alas, much suffering and darkness overcame them; anguish, hunger, epidemics… very few survived… all were dying and lost, may Hashem's Name be blessed.

Another testimony of the expulsion is recorded by the *Chassid Ya'avetz* in his sefer *Ohr Hachaim*, as follows: During the expulsion of Spain, there were close to three hundred thousand families forced into exile via the island of Sicily. We were trampled on and humiliated, many were killed by sword, many died of hunger and thirst, in deprivation and nakedness. People of high stature and prominence were reduced to misery; wealthy and honorable people were begging for bread, not having a crumb to eat. Who can describe all the hardships and suffering that we endured in the years beginning in 1492 up until now?

Exile to Portugal

Many of those exiled from Spain, a group of approximately 130,000 people, preferred not to wander too far from their home country and found temporary shelter in the neighboring country of Portugal. They thought that this choice had great merit, since in Portugal they would be able to continue living publicly as Jews, while the change in lifestyle would be minimized, because the language was similar to Spanish and the culture was almost identical.

Although this shelter came with a heavy price, since each person was required to pay exorbitant taxes, the Jews thought that in this way they would be able to live in peace. However, this was not the will of Hashem, and they were persecuted in Portugal as well. Officially, they were allowed to remain in the country for eight months. However, all those who were not able to pay the taxes, which became more inflated with each passing day, were forced once again to pick up their wandering staffs and move

on to other countries and continents. Some unfortunate people were forced to become slaves in order to spare their lives.

In those treacherous days of persecution and wandering, when many assembled at the gates of Portugal in a state of hunger and starvation, fatigued and trodden, an epidemic broke out, striking many of the exiles. The Portuguese government ordered all the exiled Jews to leave their country on special boats that they provided. Many of the exiles followed these orders and boarded the boats, sailing to an unknown destination. The government's intent was to use the exiled people as slaves in the various colonies that they had captured at that time. However, because the inhabitants of the colonies feared being infected by the epidemic, they refused to let the boats dock on their land, and the ships were left to wander at sea, rocking in the waves for many weeks. In addition, the devastated people remaining on board were treated harshly by the crew, being humiliated and forced to stay in the bottom of the ship. All their possessions were confiscated, and their wives and children were sold as slaves. Those who survived the treacherous journey eventually arrived in Morocco.

Portugal – The Second Expulsion

The refugees who remained in Portugal were accorded cruel and difficult conditions by the king, Juan. Whoever could not afford to pay the heavy taxes was sold as a slave to Portuguese noblemen, and the abduction of women and children became routine. The lives of the Jews turned into an endless nightmare. During the day they wished it was night, and at night they wished it was day.

The Jews of Portugal enjoyed a short respite from their troubles after King Juan died. His heir, King Manuel I, was crowned as king, and he freed all the exiled people from slavery. The Spanish Inquisitors, who constantly attempted to dig their nails into neighboring Portugal, were met with the opposition of the king.

This lasted only until 1497 (5257). At that time, King Manuel

unleashed his cruelty against the Jews when he married Princess Isabella of Spain, who, like her mother, the Queen of Spain, wickedly aspired to free Portugal from Jews. King Manuel conceded to her wishes.

At first, he ordered the expulsion of all the Jews. On the thirtieth of Kislev, 1497 (5257), he proclaimed that all the Jews had ten months in which to leave Portugal. Soon after, he began to decree many harsh laws upon the Jews. Children were forcibly abducted from their families (in the beginning, children only until the age of fourteen, and afterward until the age of twenty) and were ordered to be baptized. Their parents faced a painful dilemma. If they left the country, they would never see their children again; if they wished to be united with their children and remain in Portugal, they faced baptism. The heartrending scene of children being torn from their parents' hands was repeated routinely all over the country. Young children were forcefully removed from their mother's arms, and young toddlers were ripped away from their fathers, who sobbed bitterly, calling after their children "Shema Yisrael," so that they should remain imbued with belief in Hashem.

King Manuel conducted himself in this cruel manner because he knew that the economy of his country was dependent on the wisdom of the Jews. He did not want them to leave, only to abandon their faith. However, he was not successful. When he saw that the Jews were proceeding with their plans to flee Portugal, he realized that nothing could stop them, not even abducting their children. He thus devised a devious plot, which would force all Jews to become baptized. However, he did not publicize his intent. Instead, he promised the Jews that if they would assemble at the port of Lisbon, he would provide them with ships to sail to whichever country they chose. Upon their arrival at the port, they were forced to convert to Christianity and become baptized. Those who refused were imprisoned and systematically tortured, undergoing unbearable suffering and humiliation. Few survived (only a few thousand out of over one hundred thousand Jews who remained in Portugal at that time),

and they were exiled without any provisions. The majority of the Jews were caught and forcefully baptized. They had no choice but to live as Marranos.

Most of the Jews preferred the first option of leaving the country, despite their impoverished condition, because of their pride in remaining practicing Jews. However, this option was almost impossible to achieve, because, despite the king's promise to procure ships for them, he did not. Ultimately, those Jews waiting to escape were ravished by hunger and were baptized against their will.

The Testimony of Rav Avraham Saba

Among the great Torah scholars who fled to Portugal was Maran Rav Yosef Karo, *zy*"a, who was then very young.

The *gaon* and *mekubal*, the Chacham, Rabbi Avraham Saba, *zy*"a, author of the sefer *Tzror Hamor* on all five Chumashim, describes his experiences during the devastating expulsion (Introduction to *Eshkol Hakofer*):

Title-page of the sefer Tzror Hamor

During my sojourn in Portugal, after being evicted in the expulsion from Castile, I, Avraham Saba, the lowest among my peers, decided to write a commentary on the five Megillot, and I explained them. Then the wrath of Hashem descended upon His nation with the second expulsion from Portugal, and the king ordered the confiscation of all sefarim. I took all my sefarim to the city of Porto, and I placed myself in great danger to smuggle into Lisbon the commentary on the Torah that I had composed in the city of Portugal with a commentary on the five Megillot and a commentary on *Masechet Avot* with my manuscript *Tzror Hakesef*, which I had composed in my youth, dealing with the subject of *dinim*. When I arrived in Lisbon, Jewish people

approached me and warned me that there was a rumor circulating around the camps that whoever would be found with a sefer in his possession, would be killed immediately. I quickly went to hide all my work under an olive tree, and I called the tree *Allon-Bachut* (A Weeping Oak Tree), since there I buried my treasures: the commentary on the Torah and the mitzvot, which are more precious than gold or money, since they served to comfort me for my two sons, who were close to my heart, but were taken against their will to be baptized, while I was thrown into prison and remained languishing there for close to six months.

De Pinto

Among the numerous people who left Spain during the expulsion and merited leaving Portugal spiritually unscathed, despite being tortured and impoverished because they did not want to convert and denounce their faith in Hashem, was the Pinto family.

The De Pinto Building

Some of the members of the family went to Holland, and until today they appear in country records as the De Pinto family. There is even a large building standing, which is called the De Pinto Building.

The most famous member of the dynasty was Rabbi Yitzchak De Pinto, who served as the community leader in Amsterdam. He recorded all the events and experiences of the family from the time they left Portugal until after they were established in Amsterdam. He finished writing this sefer in 1571 (5331); however, it was printed only approximately ninety years later.

There is a drawing in the book of their illustrious family tree describing the Pintos as one of the most prominent families of the

kehillah. The family tree is designed as a palm tree, with the pasuk, "A righteous man will flourish like a date palm" inserted in the heading, as well as the Portuguese translation: "Justo como tamaral floressera."

Family Tree

Another reference to the family was discovered in the cemetery of Odekork in Amsterdam, where the tombstone of Rabbi Daniel Pinto was found. He died in 1681 (5441), nearly two hundred years after the family first arrived in Holland.

Other members of the Pinto family made their way to Portugal, including Rabbi Shlomo and Rabbi Yosef and their families. They finally settled in the city of Ancona, Italy. Upon their arrival, their fame spread quickly among the Jews, as well as the gentiles. They were renowned for their outstanding righteousness. However, their illustrious reputation was to their great disadvantage, since these rumors reached the ears of the wicked head viper, none other than the pope himself.

The tombstone

He forced them to debate with his most senior clergy, who were well versed in their edicts. Ultimately, since the Pinto family won on every score, he ordered them to be burned at the stake unless they converted to Christianity.

These holy people would not defile their souls by casting doubt upon their faith. Rabbi Shlomo and his wife were burned at the stake, may Hashem avenge their death. Rabbi Yosef and his family managed to escape from Italy to Damascus, where they

established a thriving Jewish community, including prosperous businesses.

Rabbi Yosef Pinto

Rabbi Yosef, who barely escaped from the valley of death, did not lose hope. Despite the fact that he was already in his mid seventies, he shouldered the responsibilities of his people. A new chapter in his life began; a chapter of Torah and greatness. He started a business and prospered greatly, becoming very wealthy.

His son describes him in the introduction to his sefer *Kesef Mezukak* in the following way: "Valiant and outstandingly brilliant, prominent and very exalted, more precious than silver coins, famous, noble, a leader, a dedicated man of valor, well-liked by all, wise, lofty and exalted, praised is his name." Afterward, he adds, "He mustered all his strength, investing all his energy and resources, possessing G-dly wisdom."

Rabbi Yosef became one of the wealthiest people in Damascus. His charitable deeds increased in proportion to his wealth. He supported the poor and was known as one of the greatest supporters of Torah and Torah scholars in his generation.

Rabbi Yosef Pinto also merited vast spiritual wealth, since in his old age, in 1565 (5325), a son was born to him, Yoshiyahu, who illuminated the world with his Torah and anctity, publishing many important sefarim, from which countless Jews still draw wisdom.

CHAPTER TWO

Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto – The Rif 1565-1648

His Youth

From his youth, the young Yoshiyahu became famous as one who would eventually illuminate the world with his Torah, holiness, and devotion to the service of Hashem. His father, Rabbi Yosef, recognized the unusual qualities of his son and his exalted conduct, and imparted his Torah and wisdom to him. He regularly sent him to the wise scholars in Damascus and to the tzaddikim and holy people of his generation. They all infused him with their Torah and wisdom, and he was nurtured by them in his growing years.

Rabbi Yoshiyahu learned from the *gaon* and tzaddik, Rabbi Yaakov Abulafia, zt"l, in Damascus. These were the most important years of his education. He dwelled in Rabbi Yaakov's shadow and followed in his footsteps. He submitted himself to his guidance, achieving great heights in Torah and holiness.

The Ordained Rabbi

In 1617 (5377), Rabbi Yoshiyahu went to Eretz Yisrael, visiting the holy city of Tzefat. There he acquired *semichah*1 from his

1 Semichah (Rabbinical Ordination), which was given throughout the period of the Mishnah and Talmud, was stopped in the days of Hillel, who was from the last Nesi'im. It stems from the early stages of the Jewish Nation. Yehoshua Bin Nun, Moshe Rabbeinu's student, was the first one to be ordained.
Yehoshua was ordained when Hashem told Moshe (Bamidbar 27:18), "Take to yourself Yehoshua son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lean your hand upon him." It also says (Devarim 34:9), "Yehoshua son of Nun

main teacher, Rabbi Yaakov Abulafia, who had been ordained by

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was filled with a spirit of wisdom, because Moshe had laid his hands upon him, so the Children of Israel obeyed him."

Apart from Yehoshua Bin Nun, another seventy elders were ordained by Moshe Rabbeinu, and they assisted him in governing the nation.

Since the ordination of Yehoshua, the system of ordination has been transmitted from one person to another and from generation to generation. The objective of ordination is to qualify the student being ordained to ecide halachic rulings, as the Rambam says, "He is called Rabbi, and he is told that he is qualified and permitted to decide on penalties." His job is to rule and guide the nation in the path that they must take, and which actions to take. Only one who was ordained was qualified to ordain others.

As a result of the process of ordination, referred to as semichah, the Supreme Court of Am Yisrael was established, which was called the Sanhedrin. It was the place where cases were decided upon by judges who had received Rabbinical Ordination from another ordained Rabbi, belonging to the chain that led back to Moshe Rabbeinu, who was delegated by Hashem. Through the act of ordination, they were qualified to issue penalties and decide other matters. Those who were not ordained were unable to do this.

Semichah was only issued in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, the title "Rabbi" is not given to the Amora'im from Bavel. They are referred to only as "Rav." When a Rabbi was ordained, he wore special garments, and songs of praises were sung at the ordination.

The tradition of Rabbinical Ordination came to a halt in the days of Hillel II, who was the last of the Nesi'im to be ordained. Since then, because of the turbulent times that existed during Am Yisrael's exile in foreign lands, their entire way of life was disrupted, and people did not seek the decisions of Torah as before.

After the revolution led by Bar Kochba, the Caesar, Hadrian, prohibited ordination of the elders, and issued the penalty of death upon those who were ordained, as well as those who conferred ordination upon others, and upon the entire city in which it was performed. We are all familiar with the execution of Rabbi Yehuda Ben Bava, who was killed because he ordained his students.

Around the time of Maran Beit Yosef, a group of Torah scholars, headed by Rabbi Yaakov Bi Rav, decided to renew the issuing of semichah. Their decision was based on the ruling of the Rambam, recorded in Perek 4 in Hilchot Sanhedrin, stating: "It seems to me that if all the Chachamim in Eretz Yisrael agree to appoint judges and ordain them, they shall be considered ordained, etc."

Those who sided with the renewal of semichah did so based on the fact that almost all the Torah scholars were concentrated in Tzefat at that time. There were those who felt that this heralded the redemption.

Rabbi Yaakov Bi Rav was the first one to grant Rabbinical Ordination, and through him and his students the semichah system spread in that generation.

Those who opposed his view, including the Chachamim of Yerushalayim, refused to recognize this semichah system. There are records of many discussions on the topic about the opposing viewpoints on semichah.

the students of Rabbi Yaakov Bi Rav, who renewed the tradition of Rabbinical Ordination in Eretz Yisrael. From then on, Rabbi Yoshiyahu was referred to by the great Torah scholars by the title "The Ordained Rabbi." (Rabbi Yaakov ordained only two students in his lifetime: his son and Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto).

Rabbi Yoshiyahu returned to Damascus adorned with the crown of *semichah*, which served as a magnificent embellishment to his virtuous character, which was molded by the Torah. His brilliance in *halachah*, *mussar*, *drush*, and Holy Scriptures was outstanding, and many Jews from Damascus flocked to him and drew from his vast Torah knowledge and holiness.

The Commentary on Ein Yaakov

Most of all, Rabbi Yoshiyahu's name became associated with the famous sefer *Ein Yaakov*. He became world famous as the *Rif*, which is the acronym of his name – Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto (רבי יאשיהו פינטו - ריף). This was because of his sefer *Meor Einayim*, which he composed as a commentary on the *Ein Yaakov*. He wrote this sefer following the death of his son Rabbi Yosef, zt"l, in 1626 (5386).

A copy of the title-page of the sefer Meor Einayim on the Ein Yaakov

Maran HaChida, Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai, comments regarding this commentary, "In all of the land, praises are heaped upon him." In fact, this commentary has become an inseparable part of the sefer *Ein Yaakov*. The commentary is a detailed and clear explanation, exact and extensive. It is a true masterpiece on the *aggadot* of the *Shas*.

After the first part of the sefer *Meor Einayim* was published, it was printed in the *Ein Yaakov* alongside the explanation of the Maharsha, and it is called *Biurei Harif*. It is now commonly printed in the *Ein Yaakov*, so that scholars may draw from its wellsprings of knowledge while learning this magnificent work.

The second part was not published until the worthy Rabbi Moshe Nejara, an emissary from Eretz Yisrael, came to Aram Tzova and discovered this treasure. He found it in the Beit Hamidrash of Rabbi Moshe Laniado, and published it in the city of Mantova in 1740 (5500) as a separate volume. In that year, the second part was also added to the *Ein Yaakov*, and both parts were finally combined into one sefer.

From that time, the commentary of the *Rif* has served those studying the *Ein Yaakov* and illuminates their eyes with brilliant clarity.

Ascending to Heaven

Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, zy"a, was linked through marriage to the *mekubal* Rabbi Chaim Vital, zy"a. Rabbi Chaim Vital's son, Rabbi Shmuel, zy"a, who continued his father's study in Kabbalah, and

The tombstone of the grave of Rabbi Chaim Vital, zy"a

composed the sefarim *Mekor Chaim* and *Be'er Mayim Chaim*, eventually became Rabbi Yoshiyahu's son-in-law.

In 1620 (5380), when Rabbi Chaim Vital died in Damascus, the *Rif* was appointed to serve as Rabbi in his stead. However, in 1625 (5385), the *Rif* left Damascus to settle in Eretz Yisrael, making Tzefat his permanent residence. A year later, upon the death of his son Rabbi Yosef, who was only twenty-four years old, he returned to Damascus, and served as the Chief Rabbi until the day of his death, on the 23rd of Adar, 1648 (5408), when he was eighty-three years old.

The entire Jewish community joined in his funeral procession, according him his final honor. His esteemed son-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Vital eulogized him, crying bitterly for the great loss of all Am Yisrael, and especially the Jews of Damascus. His grave is situated in Damascus.

On his tombstone, the following words are engraved:

If you may ask the people of this city
To whom this tomb belongs
The stone will cry, "Alas"
For the Rav, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Yoshiyahu Pinto
Who merits eternity, 5408

His Torah Serves as Protection

The *Rif* wrote several important sefarim. Among them is the sefer *Kesef Nivchar*, which was published in 1616 (5376), by the publisher, Avraham Ashkenazy of Damascus. The sefer is comprised of *drashot* on the Torah. Since there was a problem with the original publishing, the *Rif* published the sefer again in 1621 (5381) in Venice.

Title-page of the sefer Kesef Nivchar – Torah discourses

His sefer *Kesef Mezukak* explains the parshiyot of the Torah according to *drush*. It was published in 1628 (5388) in Venice. In addition, he wrote the sefarim *Kesef Tzaruf*, which is a commentary on *Mishlei*, printed in Amsterdam in 1629 (5389); a commentary on *Eichah* called *Kesef Nim'as*, which was never printed; and a sefer of *she'ailot u'teshuvot* on the *Arba'ah Turim* called *Nivchar Mikesef*. This sefer was written approximately four hundred years ago, and for many years it remained a handwritten manuscript, as Maran HaChida testifies in his sefer *Shem Hagedolim* (10), since in his time it was not yet printed. Only in 1869 (5629) did the world benefit from its brilliance, when it was published in Aram Tzovah (Aleppo), Syria, by the publisher Rabbi Eliyahu Chai ben Avraham Sasson.

Title-page of the sefer Kesef Mezukak – Torah discourses

The reason for the repeated use of the word *kesef* (כסף – money) in the names of the *Rif's* sefarim

is because the root of the word *kesef* is the same root as the word *nichsaf* (נכסף – desired). Just as a person desires money, to the same degree, the *Rif* desired studying Torah and fulfilling its mitzvot. This corresponds to the pasuk in Tehillim: "The Torah of Your mouth is better for me than thousands in gold and silver."

Moreinu v' Rabbeinu (Rabbi David Chananya Pinto), shlita, eloquently describes this appreciation:

How can one sincerely know if he really and truly loves Hashem? Perhaps, after 120 years, one may discover that he did not serve Hashem truly at all, but *chas v'chalilah*, will be shown the opposite, since he only gave lip-service to his Avodat Hashem, while wholeheartedly pursuing the vanities of this world.

For example: When a person has to fly to a certain destination, he will arise early in the morning in order not to miss his flight. Would he invest the same effort in order to arise early to come on time for his prayers? Do his personal matters take preference, making the service of Hashem secondary?

Each person should constantly yearn to serve Hashem, desiring to fulfill His will, as David Hamelech says, "My soul yearns, indeed it pines, for the courtyards of Hashem; my heart and my flesh pray fervently to the Living G-d."

Kesef Tzaruf

The following is a short quote from the introduction that the *Rif* wrote in his sefer *Kesef Tzaruf*, which is a commentary on *Mishlei*:

So says the small Yoshiyahu, son of the prominent great Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rav Yosef Pinto, may Hashem heap abundance of blessings upon him. May Hashem make me worthy of finding the

ספר
כסף צרוף
באמשטרדם

Title-page of the sefer Kesef Tzaruf on Mishlei

right words in order to arrive at the true meaning of the Torah in a clear way. May I not err, and may the commentaries and *halachic* responses that I present be true. May the elders who sit as judges learn correct rulings on every issue, as is characteristic of those who seek Hashem; his G-d he seeks, to become part of its head, which is the Torah, which is called the head.

With the mercy of Hashem I gathered treasures of riches (*kesef*) in my chosen (*nivchar*) sefer, *Kesef Nivchar*, preferred over material riches, which was printed twice. Whoever is fortunate will become attached to the sefer, which is more refined than silver, in which I invested my whole heart to bring merit to the public by publishing it with the help of my Savior. As long as I live, I will not rest, no matter what, until truth will be published, since otherwise I will be devastated.

He also poetically writes the following:

The Torah is as sweet to my palate as honey; therefore it is called *Kesef Tzaruf*, because I have purified it as one refines silver, and I have delved into its depths as one digs for gold. Just as one longs for silver and riches, my heart yearns to serve Hashem all my life until my death. May it be my portion to find shelter in the courtyards of Hashem…

He continues to express his immeasurable love for Hashem and His Torah, which is more precious than pearls, and thanks Hashem for his boundless compassion toward those who fear Him.

The following is an excerpt from the approbations of the Rabbanim of the religious *kehillah* in Amsterdam:

> Let us express our gratitude for the young man, Yitzchak, the son of the esteemed Rav Moshe Lopez Ferrara, who published the precious sefer *Kesef Tzaruf* on *Mishlei*, which the famous and brilliant Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the honorable Rabbi Yoshiyahu ben Yosef Pinto wrote.
>
> The words of his palate are sweet and are absolute delight.

> His commentary is pleasant and clear and compelling, expressing the absolute truth.

It is signed with great respect by the Sephardi leaders of Amsterdam.

Nivchar MiKesef

In a few short words, we will describe a portion of the greatness of the sefer *Nivchar MiKesef*, which the holy *mekubal* the *Rif* wrote. Its primary subject is *halachic* responses on the *seder* of the *Arba'ah Turim*.

זה ספר
נכחר מכסף
שאלות ותשובות על סדר ד׳ טורים
לרבינו הגדול הרב המוסמך הגאון
המפורסם בישראל ונכי עדיו מראש
שרים כמוהר״ר רבינו יאשיהו פינטו
שר השרים זצ״ל זיע״א
נדפס בארם צובה יע״א
שנת התרכט לב״ע

Title-page of the sefer sh"utim Nivchar Mikesef

This important work was published many years after Rabbi Yoshiyahu's demise, in 1869 (5629), in Aram Tzovah, by the printer Eliyahu Chai ben Avraham Sasson, z"l. In the beginning of the sefer, there are approbations given by seven Rabbanim from Aram Tzovah. They praise the sefer extensively:

This is to inform the Jewish nation that Hashem sent His nation prophets to relate His messages and bestowed Torah wisdom to scholars, each one in a specific measure. In our times, we are blessed with an exceptional Torah scholar who has written an awesomely lofty sefer called *Nivchar Mikesef*, *shu"t* of the great Rabbeinu, the Rav *Musmach* Hagaon Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Yoshiyahu Pinto, ztk"l, a contemporary of the holy Rabbi Chaim Vital, ztk"l, who is comparable to one of the *Rishonim*, who are considered as angels, and whose children are all knowledgeable in Torah, reflecting those who were present at Har Sinai.

Today we see that the light of the *Rishonim* has cast its rays upon us so that we can enjoy the fruit of our patriarchs. He is an

outstanding *gadol* in Am Yisrael, who is like a fiery angel from Above. He disseminates Torah among his people and possesses wisdom in all areas of the Torah. All difficult issues are explained with clarity, in order to simplify them.

May Hashem grant us the merit to see with our eyes Am Yisrael's salvation with the coming of Mashiach, when we will all be able to rejoice with delight.

We hereby place our signatures, in the month of Adar in the year וקנות בינה נבחר מכסף ושלום:

Chaim Mordechai Levaton, Avraham Dayan, Yitzchak Sarim, Shalom Kaski, Moshe Cohen, Nissim Harrari, Moshe ben Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Sutton.

Similarly, the following is an excerpt from the approbation to the sefer given by the three Rabbanim of Damascus:

In our generation we have merited receiving an exceptionally precious sefer, written by a Torah giant, who transmits Torah in an honest, trustworthy and correct manner. He is the great tzaddik, Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the outstanding *gaon*, the Ordained Rabbi, Rav Yoshiyahu Pinto, ztk"l, whose fame has spread due to his holy sefer, which is more precious than gold or riches.

How honored we are that in our days we have merited the revelations of the holy sefer, a light for our nation, the collection of *shu"t* of the Torah called *Nivchar Mikesef*. It is the glory of our land…

We urge all of our brethren to purchase this sefer at all costs. In this merit, may Hashem protect us and bring us Mashiach speedily.

We, the humble leaders of Damascus, place our signatures on Rosh Chodesh Shevat, in the year צדק ומשפט ומשרים:

Aharon Yaakov, Yaakov Peretz, Yitzchak Abulafia

A True Masterpiece

In addition to these letters, Rabbi Avraham Sasson himself wrote an introduction to the sefer *Nivchar Mikesef*, in which he mentions the other works of the *Rif*, zy"a, (such as, *Kesef Nivchar*, *Kesef Mezukak*, *Kesef Tzaruf*, *Kesef Nim'as*, *Kevutzat Kesef*, *Meor Einayim*). He extensively illustrates the virtuous deeds of the *Rif*, describing how he guarded the holy nation, assisting and aiding all of his brethren wherever they were, both physically and spiritually.

The sefer *Kevutzat Kesef* written by the *Rif* concerns the *halachic* rulings of the Rambam dealing with *dinei nashim* and monetary matters. In addition, his opinions and *halachic* rulings appear in sefarim that prominent Rabbanim published in his times. Among them is the sefer of *halachic* responses by Rabbi Yom Tov Tzahalon, zt"l, as well as the sefer *Yad Aharon* of the *mekubal* Rabbi Aharon Alfandri, zt"l.

However, Rabbi Yoshiyahu was most famous for his outstanding work, *Meor Einayim*, originally printed under the title *Peirush Harif*.

The sefarim of the *Rif* were embraced by all Jewish *kehillot* worldwide, and they were held in high esteem by the leaders of the generation. Among those promoting his works was the *Rif's* teacher and mentor, Rabbi Yaakov Abulafia, as well as all the Torah scholars of Aram Tzova and the *gaonim* of Damascus.

Break, Destroy, and Obliterate Them

The following is a story that reveals the great level of holiness and purity of the *Rif*:

In the Jewish *kehillah* of Constantine, there lived a poor, wretched Jew. He earned his livelihood by collecting old vessels, worn clothing, and various trinkets. He would offer his wares in public booths for a few coins. He made the rounds knocking on all the doors in his city, buying and selling his goods from Jews as well

as gentiles. This is how he would eke out a living and support his family.

Once, he chanced upon a deal in which he purchased a large amount of old clothing and broken vessels. He was kept busy for many hours sorting out his merchandise. He made one pile of copper trinkets, a second pile of iron trinkets, and a third pile of the clothing.

While the poor man was sorting his wares, he found among the trinkets a small copper figure, which had been used by its former owner as an idol. Without a second thought, the poor merchant took the idol and threw it into the pile of copper and continued sorting.

As he was sorting, the pauper suddenly heard an unfamiliar voice calling him, "Jew, Jew, why neglect me?!"

The strange voice made him shudder. He glanced around to see who was calling him, and from where the voice was coming, but did not see anyone. A tremor went up his spine, since he was alone in his house. From where did the strange voice come?

When he somewhat recovered from his initial shock, he was inclined to believe that the strange voice he heard was just his imagination. He industriously returned to his sorting. However, after a few moments, he once again heard the strange and unusual voice, "Jew, Jew, why leave me here thrown on the floor in disgrace? Have pity on me and pick me up. Have mercy and compassion."

The man was filled with terror. He searched his entire house to see where the voice came from. However, to his amazement, he could not find a trace of anyone in his house. He returned to his sorting, and then he heard the voice for the third time. This time it was louder and more compelling. It was crying and screaming, "Have pity on me and do not destroy me. I will pay you for all your kindness and trouble."

He searched and searched until he discovered that the voice was

coming from the pile of copper junk. He rummaged through the pile and found the small idol that he had thrown in a short while ago. When the idol was in his hands, it began to beseech the pauper not to discard it. It begged the man to lift it up and place it on a high shelf in a respectable way. "If you place me on this high shelf," it promised, "you will profit today twice as much as usual."

The simple pauper was convinced by the idol. He did not see anything wrong with what he was doing. He placed it on the shelf as it requested, and went out to sell his sacks of wares in the market as usual.

Amazingly, just as the idol had promised, he earned a large sum of money that day. The pauper attributed it to the fact that he had obeyed the idol and did as it requested.

The next day, the idol once again asked the pauper to dust and clean it. "If you do so," the idol persuaded him, "you will earn today twice as much as yesterday."

The poor man remembered well how his fortune had shone the day before, and he fulfilled the idol's request. When he went out to the market and began selling his wares, he was met with success, and his profits doubled, just as the idol had promised.

On the third day, the idol requested that the man delegate a special stand for it, which would serve as its home, promising him an immense reward. The man, who was no longer poor, complied with the demands of the idol and faithfully fulfilled its requests. He began to gain great wealth in a supernatural way.

The more the merchant complied with the demands of the idol, the more his wealth grew. All those who observed him were amazed by his good fortune. The huge amount of money that flowed through his pockets in this unusual manner blinded him to its devious origin. He did not comprehend the seriousness of his misdeeds.

Not long after, he designated a special room for the idol. It stood in the center with a candle constantly burning at its side.

Despite the immense wealth of the merchant, he did not forget how in the past he had rummaged through garbage in order to eke out a living. He did not reveal the secret of how he became rich to anyone, except for his wife. When he was asked for the reason for his sudden turn of fortune, he would answer simply, "Everything stems from the benevolence of Hashem."

As a token of gratitude for his wealth, he established a yeshiva in his house, where ten Torah scholars learned each day. Each day, a different group would come, and he would provide for all their needs. At the end of the day, they would eat at his table, and in addition, he would grant them a considerable sum of money before they left.

He donated huge sums of money to the Beit Hakeneset and Torah institutions and dispensed large sums of money to the poor and needy, who ate at his home regularly. He soon became known as a benevolent man and was accorded great honor because of his good deeds.

One day, the tzaddik and *mekubal* Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto visited the city. He was on his way to search for places where idolatry still existed in order to eliminate it. He heard that in Constantinople there lived a wealthy Jew whose house served as a center for Torah scholars and who dispensed large sums of money for charity. The *Rif* visited his house and saw for himself that the reports about him were well-founded. The rich man received him graciously and invited him to learn Torah in his home. He invited him to eat a meal at the end of the day and served him lavishly.

During the meal, the *Rif* observed the face of the rich man and something disturbed him. Our Sages say, "The wisdom of a person illuminates his countenance." However, it was apparent that this person was an ignoramus. If so, how had he achieved such enormous wealth and honor?

The *Rif* questioned all the scholars seated next to him, but they could tell him only that this merchant had once been a poor

peddler and had suddenly become exceedingly wealthy. No one knew how.

This intrigued the *Rif*. Deep in his heart he felt a growing suspicion and wished to uncover the secret of the matter. At the end of the meal, the *Rif* went into a side room and called for the rich merchant. He began his conversation by praising his host for his hospitality, and then asked him, "Please tell me! How did you become so rich? How did you turn from a wretched pauper to a wealthy man in such an unnatural manner? Surely, you must have some secret. If so, please share it with me."

The *Rif* continued speaking with the merchant in a direct manner, unambiguously and firmly convincing him to tell him the truth. When the merchant realized that he was cornered, he revealed to the tzaddik his incredible secret.

When the *Rif* heard his story, he asked his host, "Are you still the same observant Jew that you were before you became wealthy? Do you still believe in Hashem and in His holy Torah with perfect faith?"

"Of course," answered the man. "I am a Jew and believe in Hashem with all my heart and all my soul. Every day I declare my belief in His Oneness when I recite *Shema Yisrael*, and I am fond of Torah scholars, as my actions testify."

"And if you would be offered much wealth in order that you should serve idolatry, would you accept it?" the *Rif* asked.

The man was shocked at the suggestion.

"*Chalilah*! Even if I would be offered all the riches in the world, I would not worship idols!"

They then entered the room designated for the idol. There, the *Rif* beheld the special stand on which the idol stood. The *Rif* immediately reached for the idol and smashed it to the ground with a mighty force. Then, he requested a hammer and began to pound it with continuous blows. With every blow, the idol

screamed bitterly, and with every scream the Rif intensified his blows, until it was ground into thin dust.

When the *Rif* finished destroying the idol, he turned to the rich man and said, "You should know that all the mitzvot that you did from the day you became wealthy were accomplished with money derived from idolatry, from which one is prohibited to derive pleasure. Since you did so unintentionally, surely Hashem will not deny you your reward for the past. However, if you do not wish to lose your merits, you must destroy all of the possessions that you gained through this idol. Only after you burn and destroy all your property, will Hashem help you and sustain you in a permitted manner, and He will provide for all your needs. Hashem knows that you acted in this way only from your great love of Him, and all your deeds were for the sake of Heaven, since you pursued mitzvot and fulfilled them with great devotion."

The rich man was crestfallen after hearing these words, since he realized that all his wealth was derived from the abomination that he had placed in his home. Without hesitation, he swiftly hurried to implement the advice of the *Rif*. He set fire to all his belongings, which were burned to the ground.

The merchant once again became the topic of conversation among the townspeople. They were impressed that he had not hesitated to surrender his riches but had instantly turned himself into a destitute pauper, in order to avoid experiencing pleasure from idolatry. He had clearly demonstrated that he placed his trust only in Hashem.

The people remembered clearly how generously he had acted toward them when he had been wealthy. Now, in his time of difficulty, they extended their assistance to him, kindly lending him their support and encouragement.

The blessings of the tzaddik were realized and, despite losing all his wealth, he did not experience poverty or any lack until the end of his days.

The Splendor of Sons Glorifies Their Fathers

Rabbi Daniel Pinto

The chain of the holy Pinto dynasty continued to branch out for generations. The common thread winding through the tapestry of the descendants of this illustrious family was the study of Torah in holiness and purity.

Rabbi Daniel Pinto, zy"a, was the son of the tzaddik and *mekubal*, Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, zy"a. He was an outstanding Torah scholar, who was known as one of the greatest Rabbis of Aram Tzova.

Rabbi Daniel Pinto wrote the holy sefer *Lechem Chamudot*, which was never printed.

Rabbi Daniel departed to the Heavenly Study Halls on the seventeenth of Menachem-Av, 1681 (5441), may his merits serve to protect us.

Rabbi Shmuel Pinto

Rabbi Shmuel Pinto was the son of Rabbi Daniel Pinto, zy"a. He was a brilliant and prominent *posek*. Rabbi Shmuel Pinto continued the tradition of his holy ancestors and served as the Rav in the city of Aram Tzova until his passing on the sixth of Kislev, 1715 (5475).

Title-page of the sefer Mikdash Melech

Rabbi Yaakov Pinto

As mentioned, the exiles of Spain emigrated to various countries. Some went to Portugal, others to Europe. A large portion of the Pinto family emigrated to Morocco. First,

they stopped over temporarily in the port city of Tangiers, and from there they continued to Marrakesh, where they settled.

One outstanding member of the Pinto family was the *gaon* Rabbi Yaakov Pinto, zy"a. He was the son of Rabbi Reuven Pinto, zy"a, and the main student of Rabbi Avraham Azulai, zt"l, who wrote an exceptional commentary on the Zohar. Rabbi Yaakov was known for his commentary on the sefer *Mikdash Melech* on the Zohar, written by his close friend, Rabbi Shalom Buzaglo, zy"a. A commentary by Rabbi Avraham Azulai was also included in the sefer.

Tombstone of the mekubal and gaon, Rabbi Avraham Azulai, zt"l

In 1783 (5543), the popular sefer *Otzrot Hachaim* was printed in Tunisia, and in Yerushalayim. Many Rabbanim from the West wrote comments on this sefer, including Rabbi Yaakov Pinto. His comments were mainly on the second part of the sefer.

A structure built over the grave of the mekubal and gaon Rabbi Avraham Azulai, zt"l

Rabbi Avraham Pinto

The *gaon* Rabbi Avraham Pinto, zy"a, was the son of Rabbi Yaakov Pinto. He was an outstanding genius in all areas of the Torah. He wrote many commentaries on sefarim written in his times. He served as the Rav and highest authority in the city of Marrakesh and was a close friend of Rabbi Yitzchak Tzeva, zt"l, the author of the sefer *Makom Binah*.

In the sefer *Chessed V'Emet*, a commentary on the *Shas* compiled by several Rabbanim, which was printed by Rabbi Yitzchak Tzeva, we find the insights of Rabbi Avraham Pinto on *Masechet Ketubot* (page 43b). In the introduction, Rabbi Yitzchak Tzeva writes a few words about Rabbi Avraham Pinto:

Marrakesh

I found a new publication in the city of Viharan, annotations on *Masechet Ketubot*, by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rav Avraham Pinto, z"l. He was known as an exceptional person, serving as Chief Rabbi in a large city of Torah scholars and scribes, Marrakesh, the inner West. It is approximately nine years since he departed to the Heavenly Yeshiva (the sefer was printed in 1812 (5572), or 1813 (5573)). His honorable memory is memorialized by his descendants who follow in his way, ordained Rabbis, who also decide *halachic* rulings, may Hashem grant them long life.

In the introduction to the sefer *Chessed V'Emet*, Rabbi Yitzchak Tzeva writes that many years ago, he had requested the assistance of Rabbi Avraham Pinto in printing the sefer *Makom Binah*: I made a request of one of holy lineage, Rabbi Avraham Pinto, z"l, and also from the scholars of his Beit Hamidrash, may Hashem help us glorify His Name, to print another sefer, *Makom Binah*,

compiled from commentaries found in *Otzrot Chaim* and in the *Sefer Hakatan*… and from the Rav, their grandfather, the *Rif*, z"l.

His wish was fulfilled in that same year, and the sefer *Makom Binah* was reprinted.

ספר
מקום בינה
ח"א
שאלוניקי

Title-page of the sefer Makom Binah

Complex Dissertations

When the sefer was reprinted, Rabbi Avraham Pinto added many notes to it, reflecting his own opinions and also the opinions of his father Rabbi Yaakov Pinto. In addition, he wrote annotations on the sefer *Sha'arei Binah*. Explanations of Rabbi Yaakov Pinto are found on pages 22b-44a, as well as pages 93b until the end of the *masechta*. Likewise, in the sefer *Sha'arei Binah*, the first part is dedicated to quoting the explanations of Rabbi Yaakov Pinto on the *Sefer Hakavanot*. It is interspersed with annotations from Rabbi Avraham, his son, and from his teacher, Rabbi Avraham Azulai, and Rabbi Yaakov of Razhi.

In the sefer *Makom Binah*, there are complex dissertations of Rabbi Avraham Pinto on the topics of Pesach, Sefirat Ha'omer, Rosh Hashanah, and Sukkot, from which one can perceive his outstanding brilliance in Torah. His novel insights are interspersed with profound thoughts of great Torah scholars of the past.

Wisdom in Torah

The Sefer *Otzrot Hachaim* also has annotations from Rabbi Avraham Pinto. Some of his comments are based on the words of the *gaonim* who preceded him. There are also explanations on the teachings of Rabbi Avraham Azulai, the Rabbi of Rabbi

Yaakov's father, with comments of the *Ravam*, as well as his father, Rabbi Yaakov Pinto.

Thus, one can clearly perceive the great extent of his wisdom in Torah.

Tombstone of the grave of Rabbi Yaakov Pinto

CHAPTER THREE

The Family's Roots in Morocco

Rabbi Shlomo Pinto (Early 1700's – 1761)

The *gaon* and *mekubal* Rabbi Shlomo Pinto, zy"a, was the great-grandson of the grandson of Rabbi Yoshiyahu, zy"a, who illuminated all of Israel with his commentary *Meor Einayim* on the sefer *Ein Yaakov*, among many other holy sefarim whose "precision goes forth throughout the earth, and whose words reach the end of the inhabited world."

Rabbi Shlomo Pinto married the sister of the Admor Rabbi Khalifa Malka, zt"l, from the city of Tetouan. Rabbi Khalifa was known as a great tzaddik, who served Hashem in holiness and purity. He was also famous for performing miracles, and his blessings were known to come true.

Rabbi Khalifa Malka engaged in business to support himself. After Rabbi Shlomo Pinto married his sister, the two became loyal partners, enjoying much success in their endeavors. From then on, Rabbi Shlomo earned a profitable income from the business and was able to devote all his time to learning Torah and serving Hashem.

They entrusted most of their business transactions into the hands of loyal employees, who acted as their managers. Thus, the two tzaddikim were free to engage in the study of Torah with peace of mind. Occasionally, their learning sessions were interrupted by the managers, who came to receive guidance or permission to complete transactions, or to secure signatures for various documents.

Enjoying the Wealth of Torah

It was an amazing sight to observe the two tzaddikim plunge into the depths of Torah study the moment that their employees departed from them, without wasting a moment. All business and economic considerations were thrust away, reflecting the words of David Hamelech: "The Torah of Your mouth is better for me than thousands in gold and silver."

Most of the day, the two tzaddikim sat wrapped in their tallit and tefillin, learning together. A large portion of their time was spent learning halachot pertaining to business dealings, and they strictly adhered to the responses they received from their leaders.

Their study sessions continued constantly, whether they were on land or at sea, when traveling far from their homes for business purposes. The sound of their Torah study never ceased.

Eventually, Rabbi Shlomo Pinto followed his brother-in-law to the city of Agadir.

A view of Agadir

The Birth of Rabbi Chaim

In the city of Agadir, on Shabbat, *parashat* Pinchas, on the fifteenth of Tammuz, 1749 (5509), the entire house was illuminated with joy at the birth of a son, who was named Chaim. He became the famous *gaon* and *mekubal*, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, *zy*"a.

However, Rabbi Shlomo did not merit seeing his son blossom into a Torah giant. When Chaim was merely twelve years old, Rabbi Shlomo departed to the Heavenly Yeshiva, on the first day of the month of the redemption, in Nissan, may his merit protect us.

Your Husband Has Already Been Healed

Rabbi Shlomo Pinto had ten sons. They all learned Torah day and night in the yeshiva of Agadir. The blessing of David Hamelech was fulfilled in him: "Your children will be like olive shoots surrounding your table."

One evening, one of the sons of Rabbi Shlomo Pinto returned from yeshiva and hung his jacket in the entrance hall of his home. At that moment, a poor man entered their house. He was so destitute that he did not even have the means to provide his children with food. He grabbed the jacket of the Rav's son and left the house. He sold the jacket and bought food and provisions for his family's dinner.

At midnight, he began feeling excruciating pains in his abdomen. His wife, observing his intense pain, tried to solve the mystery. "Please, tell me," she asked her husband, "Did you commit any transgression today which may have caused you such suffering?"

"Yes," he admitted guiltily. "I stole a jacket from Rav Pinto's house, which belongs to his son. I sold it in order to acquire the money to buy food."

Upon hearing this, his wife understood exactly what the source of her husband's tormenting pain was. With the first rays of dawn, she rose and took one of her possessions. She ran quickly to

the person who had purchased the jacket from her husband and gave him the object in exchange for the jacket of the Rav's son.

Meanwhile, in the house of the Rav, Rabbi Shlomo's son awoke and began preparing for the Shacharit prayers. He went to the entrance hall where he had hung his jacket, but to his dismay, he could not find it. The young boy hurried to his father and told him, "Father, my jacket has disappeared! How will I be able to go to the Beit Hakeneset to pray Shacharit?"

"Whoever took your jacket will return it shortly," his father answered him.

As they were talking, they heard knocking on their door. On the doorstep, stood the wife of the pauper, holding the jacket in her hand. She began to beseech the Rav, crying, "Honorable Rav, you know that my husband is very poor, and he stole the jacket. However, now he is lying in bed, writhing in pain. Please, honorable Rav, pray for him to be healed."

"Go home, your husband is already cured," Rabbi Shlomo informed her.

The woman went home and, to her amazement, saw that her husband's pain had subsided after she had given back the stolen article and begged forgiveness in his name.

An Irreplaceable Loss

The tzaddik Rabbi Khalifa Malka owned many ships. These ships transferred goods from city to city and country to country. However, Rabbi Khalifa did not devote much time to his material concerns, immersing himself in the life-giving waters of the holy Torah. He also wrote sefarim and composed songs and poetry. Among them is the sefer *Kav V'Naki* and *Kol Zimrah*.

The Chida, in his sefer *Shem Hagedolim* (*Chelek Sefarim*, *Ma'arechet* 20, *oht* 55) mentions the manuscripts of Rabbi Khalifa and praises them:

> *Kav V'Naki*. Presented by the wise, pious *chassid*, the

miracle worker, the elderly Rav Khalifa Malka, from the holy community of Agadir. It is a commentary on tefillah, including poetry and other matters. It includes five sections, corresponding to the five fingers of a hand (*kaf*). The Rav Mahara Ankava, zt"l, also praised them highly.

Most of the manuscripts and novel insights of Rabbi Khalifa were lost over the years. The following story is cited as a reason for this. Rabbi Moshe Karkus sent Rabbi Aharon Vizman to search for the sefarim of Rabbi Khalifa in the city of Souss. They were kept there because Rabbi Khalifa's family was then living in Amsterdam. He wished to print the sefarim and have them widely distributed so that their wisdom would be enjoyed by many.

The efforts of Rabbi Aharon Vizman proved successful, and the manuscripts of Rabbi Khalifa were located. The procedure to have them printed was put into motion. However, on the way to Amsterdam, a huge storm struck at sea. Rabbi Aharon managed to escape with only his life. His baggage, including the precious manuscripts of Rabbi Khalifa sank in the depths of the ocean. This was an irreplaceable loss.

Requesting Poverty

The following story is popular among the Jews of Agadir. They relate that at the peak of the holy day of Yom Kippur, when Rabbi Khalifa was in the Beit Hakeneset immersed in fasting and prayer, several ships laden with merchandise belonging to the Rav arrived at the port of Agadir.

Rabbi Khalifa was worried that the gentile merchants would soon seek him out and trouble him with business matters. He immediately gathered his strength and prayed fervently to Hashem, begging Him, the Omnipotent, to sink all his ships with their precious cargo at sea, so that the holy day should not be violated because of him.

The supplications of the tzaddik were accepted. In front of the unbelieving eyes and accompanied by the shouts of the dock workers and merchants witnessing the scene, the ships

inexplicably sank into the depths of the sea. From then on, the wheel of Rabbi Khalifa's fortune turned for the worse, since he had lost all his merchandise, and he became destitute.

It is fascinating to hear the testimony of the Jews of Agadir, who live in the port city. They testify that under certain weather conditions, when the sea is at its lowest point, it is possible to discern the masts of Rabbi Khalifa's ships protruding from the bottom of the harbor.

Small Creatures Teach Great Respect

Based on the *halachic* ruling of Rabbi Khalifa Malka, some of the Moroccan Jews were accustomed to eat grasshoppers. Rabbi Khalifa only allowed the consumption of grasshoppers bearing specific signs that according to tradition rendered them pure.

On the other hand, Maran Rabbeinu Hakadosh, Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar, the holy Ohr Hachaim, zy"a, was stringent in this matter and prohibited eating grasshoppers. He wrote in his commentary on the Torah (*parashat Shemini* 11:21) "Therefore, every G-d-fearing Jew should tremble with fear and not help themselves to this insect. He should admonish anyone partaking of it. From the day that my words were publicized in the West, many abstained from eating it, and Hashem did not smite them with this plague. In fact, it has not struck for over twelve years, because Torah and good deeds serve as a shield in the face of calamity."

It is noteworthy to mention that despite the difference in opinions that existed between the tzaddik Rabbi Khalifa Malka and Maran the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh concerning the consumption of grasshoppers, they held each other in great respect. Rabbi Khalifa himself would constantly remind the public of the importance of according honor to Torah scholars. He would say, "Despite the fact that one differs in opinion, it is incumbent for each person to honor the other, since every person has special status in the merit of his Torah."

Honor Him

Concerning this issue, it is worthwhile to quote an incredible letter written by Rabbi Khalifa Malka, which appears in his sefer *Kav V'Naki*. He warns people of the extent to which they must honor Torah scholars and not disparage them. He states the following:

> I would like to make you aware, my dear readers, of the wonders of Hashem, and sound in your ears a warning so that you should not stumble with your mouth by diminishing, *chas v'chalilah*, the honor of an author of any sefer, who is genuine, possesses fear of sin, walks in the right path and whose sefer does not express heresy, *chas v'chalilah*. Even if he did not arrive at the correct *halachah*, judge him favorably.
>
> I will relate to you what happened to a simple person like me on the tenth of Tevet, 1704 (5464). I was visiting the city of Taroudant, representing my father-in-law, z"l, on government business. I was staying in the home of a Torah scholar, and that night there were a few Torah scholars in the attic where I slept. I was sitting on my bed, and the Torah scholars began to discuss a sefer, *Heichal Hakodesh*, that an authentic Torah scholar from the city of Taroudant (Rabbi Moshe Elbaz, zy"a) had written. (This sefer is an explanation of the prayers according to the Zohar and the Maharam Recanti.) It was printed by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas, z"l.
>
> Some of the Torah scholars were praising its merit, while others where speaking unfavorably about it. I said to them that I remembered hearing from a great scholar of *Shas* and *Poskim*, fluent in the writings of the Arizal, whose name is Moreinu Avraham ibn Mussa, z"l, while learning together in our youth, that this sefer was not written with proper intentions. I also heard that a certain Ashkenazi scholar, Rabbi Cohen, whom I knew from the city of Tezza, burned the sefer with the candle, whose light he was using to read it. (Afterward, I found out that he had left the fold, cutting off his beard and drinking wine with gentiles.)

When I finished saying these words, I fell into a deep sleep. In a dream, I saw three dignified men, with long beards and dressed in white, sitting close to the wall facing the entrance to the yeshiva of my teacher, z"l, where I learned when I was young. Behind the three, sat a dignified man dressed in white. He was tall and held a very long, thin stick in his hand. As soon as he saw me, he rose from his place and ran toward me to strike me with the stick.

Although I was frightened, I did not want to turn my back on him, and I stepped backwards facing him until I reached the doorway of the yeshiva. I stood inside the entrance facing him. He struck me with the stick and because of its length, it struck the doorpost and also my lips. Immediately, the three men sitting near him screamed "Leave him alone!"

I suddenly woke up and opened my eyes. I found my friends still arguing about whether the sefer was proper or not. Then I told them that they should not criticize it anymore, since the author of the sefer had just struck me on my lips to silence me. I related my dream to them, and they looked at each other in amazement.

Therefore, anyone who hears this should neither disparage an author of any sefer, nor words of great *gaonim*. One should be especially careful neither to criticize the devout who are deceased, nor G-d fearing Jews. I can testify that if not for that great Torah scholar's piety, his sefer would not have merited eventually reaching Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Sasportas, z"l, who printed it and distributed it all over the world, so that it should not remain buried and unknown, as was the fate of other important manuscripts…

Hashem should save our souls from speaking falsehood and place us with those who fear Him and glorify His Name. From then on, I decided to honor Rabbi Elbaz, and I exalt and praise him.

The Chida, zt"l, mentions this story briefly in his sefer *Shem Hagedolim*, when referring to the sefer *Heichal Hakodesh*. He warns of how important it is to be careful before stating an opinion and denigrating an author of a sefer. This is because all the great scholars of Am Yisrael speak truth and their holiness is unfathomable.

Joyously Fulfilling His Mission

Once, when Rabbi Khalifa was walking with Rabbi Eliezer Davila, z"l, in the streets of a certain city, a famous non-Jewish sorcerer passed by. When the sorcerer came within earshot of the two, he hinted to Rabbi Khalifa in a roundabout way that Rabbi Eliezer would perish within the year.

Tombstone of Rabbi Eliezer Davila, z"l

When Rabbi Khalifa heard this, he was saddened. When Rabbi Eliezer noticed his pained look, he asked him what the sorcerer had said that made him so sad.

At first, Rabbi Khalifa refused to reveal what he had heard. However, after Rabbi Eliezer pleaded with him, Rabbi Khalifa repeated the prediction, without mincing words.

Rabbi Eliezer did not lose his composure at all. Without a trace of anxiety he turned to Rabbi Khalifa and said, "In fact, I am joyous; I am not worried at all. This is because I know that I have fulfilled my mission in this world perfectly. Now, I may leave it."

Eternally Linked

For a long time, Rabbi Khalifa and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Pinto were buried in the cemetery of Agadir. Many years

ago, the government cleared out the cemetery and moved the grave of Rabbi Khalifa Malka to a different location.

On the day that the government officials moved the remains of the tzaddik, the Jews of Agadir declared a day of prayer and an abstention from speech for a specified period of time. Around the new gravestone, they built a magnificent building made of marble, and engraved the following words:

This place is awesome, for it is a place where an ark of the Torah is laid. This holy man shook the earth with deeds that have become famous throughout the world. Everyone seeks to prostrate themselves before his gravestone, so that his great merit should stand in their stead in his death as it did during his life. He was holy of holies, a pious *chassid*, a divine *mekubal*, a great *gaon*, from the most prominent leaders, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi Khalifa Malka, zy"a.

Tombstone of the grave of Rabbi Khalifa Malka, zy"a

The structure over the graves of the tzaddikim Rabbi Khalifa Malka and Rabbi Shlomo Pinto, zy"a, in Agadir

CHAPTER FOUR

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol 1749-1845

In the Paths of Chaim

Many stories have been written about the wondrous tzaddik, the holy *mekubal*, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, *zy*"a. Some of them appear in the well-known sefer *Shevach Chaim*, which was written in Arabic by Harav Makhluf Mazal Tarim, zt"l. It was recently translated to Hebrew by Rabbi David Cohen, shlita, the student of Moreinu, shlita. Most of the stories in this chapter were taken from this sefer.

It says, "Do not withhold good from its rightful recipients." Therefore, we present to you as an introduction to this chapter the words of the author Harav Makhluf Mazal Tarim, which he wrote as a foreword to his sefer *Shevach Chaim*:

> It is incumbent upon every person to always be conscious that he is in Hashem's Presence and publicize the miracles that Hashem does, because such words ascend on High, and all the Heavenly Hosts gather and thank Hashem for these wonders. Consequently, the *Shechinah* of Hashem resides upon them Above and below.
>
> The reason that Chazal obligated us to recount the miracles is in order that everyone should become aware of His greatness and awesomeness and thus fear Him. Chazal say that if one discusses the deeds of tzaddikim, it is considered as if he engaged in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. Therefore, each member of the Jewish people must gather his family and transmit these

tales with trepidation. He should acknowledge the acts of Hashem, because they are awesome. He should be joyous and delight in the kindness that Hashem has performed for us since the day He created the earth until the present.

Also, while performing mitzvot, he must tremble and fear to achieve Hashem's will, as it says, "Yours, Hashem, is the greatness, etc.," while being aware before Whom he is standing. This corresponds to the statement of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: Every mitzvah that is not accompanied by fear and trepidation is not a worthy and proper mitzvah. At the time when one learns Torah, prays, or performs a mitzvah, it is proper to concentrate before Whom he is standing and serve Him with love, for otherwise it is an empty act devoid of content.

Moreover, whoever did not learn the wisdom of Kabbalah, but serves Hashem, i.e., prays with heartfelt devotion, although his service is not perfect, is considered worshipping Hashem, since he reflects upon the greatness of Hashem, Who is an Omniscient and loving Father, Who waits for his return. One should delight with trepidation, and all his deeds should be calculated and not be led by his physical desires, for Hashem desires that one should travel on the correct path.

You are the Master of Mercy and Forgiveness, good to all, Who bestows abundant kindness to all who sincerely and faithfully call upon You, as it says, 'Hashem is close to all who call upon Him – to all who call upon Him sincerely.' The mighty and powerful King, how mighty is Your Name throughout the earth, mighty in holiness. May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, Hashem, my Rock and my Redeemer.

A Servant of his Master,

Makhluf Mazal Tarim

In Arabic

In the introduction to his sefer *Shevach Chaim*, Harav Makhluf Mazal Tarim clarifies the reason why he wrote the sefer in Arabic:

> I would like to inform you, dear readers, that a few of the select documents written by the great Rav, the glorious Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a, were lost in the Spanish War that was fought here in the city of Essaouira as a result of our extended exile, due to our many sins.
>
> This is why I recorded a few of the stories that occurred in the days of the tzaddik. I had to write them in Arabic so that it should be easy for the entire religious community to derive benefit from the sefer. It also serves anyone who wishes to contemplate the miracles and wonders that were done for our fathers in the days of the tzaddik. Ultimately, it may prompt a person to return to Hashem. May He bring us all back to Him in complete *teshuvah*, Amen!

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol

When Rabbi Chaim was only twelve years old, he was orphaned from both his father and mother. At that time, a strong earthquake rocked the city of Agadir. The port, which was the main source of income for the inhabitants, was destroyed. In its place, a new port was constructed in the city of Mogador. Consequently, many Jewish families, including the Pinto family, resettled in Mogador, where they eventually succeeded in earning a profitable and respectable income.

Rabbi Gedalia Yaakov was very active in assisting the immigrants who streamed to Mogador. He sent the youth, Chaim Pinto, to his relative, Rabbi Meir Pinto, who served as an official in the French Consulate in Mogador.

Rabbi Meir Pinto welcomed his young relative cordially and extended his hospitality to him. Eventually, he sent Rabbi Chaim to learn in the yeshiva of the *gaon* Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, zt"l, who

was the Rosh Av Beit Din of Mogador, so that he should grow in Torah.

The Far-reaching Influence of Rabbi Yaakov Bibas

In the sefer *Shevach Chaim*, an amazing story is recorded about the greatness and holiness of Rabbi Yaakov Bibas.

In the city of Mogador, there lived a Jew by the name of Eliyahu Abergeil, also known as "Ben Kiki." Eliyahu had a store where he sold sugar and tea. Rabbi Yaakov Elmaliach, zt"l, who was the brother-in-law of Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, often purchased sugar and tea from him on credit, paying at a later date.

One day, when the entire stock of merchandise was depleted, Eliyahu began to feel extremely anxious. He could not restock his store, because he owed large sums of money to his suppliers. How would he pay them?

In desperation, he considered running away to sea and committing suicide. He figured that in this way he would be relieved of the pressing debts that besieged him.

Just on that morning, Rabbi Yaakov Elmaliach arrived at the store, in order to purchase sugar and tea, but found the store closed. He was surprised, and immediately inquired from the mother of Eliyahu, the store owner, "Why is the store closed today?"

Angrily, she rejoined, "What do you expect?! You already emptied out the entire shop without paying! And now, because of his overwhelming debts, Eliyahu is on his way to the shore, seeking to drown himself…"

Upon hearing this, Rabbi Yaakov hurried toward the ocean. He found Eliyahu Abergeil standing at the edge of the waters. At the last minute, he grabbed the hem of his coat and told him, "It's my fault that you owe so much money to your suppliers. Do not worry! Tomorrow, with G-d's help, I will pay you fully."

Rabbi Yaakov Elmaliach then went straight to the cemetery. He

prostrated himself over the grave of his brother-in-law, the tzaddik Rabbi Yaakov Bibas. With heaving sobs he cried, "Honorable Rav, take care of your family members. I cannot take care of them any longer!" He cried until he fell asleep.

In a dream, he saw Rabbi Yaakov Bibas standing before him. Rabbi Yaakov ordered him, "Rise and go directly to Rabbi Yosef Elmaliach. He will give you a sum of money, which Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Amozeg sent you."

The grave of Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, zy"a, in Mogador

Simultaneously, Rabbi Yosef Elmaliach also dreamed that Rabbi Yaakov Bibas appeared to him. The tzaddik admonished him accusingly, "How did you forget to deliver the money which Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Amozeg sent to Rabbi Yaakov Elmaliach?"

When Rabbi Yaakov Elmaliach woke up, he set out quickly to Rabbi Yosef Elmaliach's house. Similarly, when Rabbi Yosef Elmaliach awoke, he ordered his attendant to accompany him to the Mellah.

The two met on the way. Rabbi Yaakov preceded Rabbi Yosef with the question, "Why did you arise so early this morning?"

"The one who appeared to you in a dream, also appeared to me," answered Rabbi Yosef…

Rabbi Yosef Elmaliach quickly ushered Rabbi Yaakov into his home and gave him the sum of money that Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Amozeg had sent him. He apologized profusely for delaying delivery of the money, explaining that he had been very busy.

Relieved, Rabbi Yaakov Elmaliach hurried to the shop owner,

Eliyahu Abergeil. He paid up his entire debt. Consequently, Eliyahu was able to pay his suppliers. He even had some money left over to restock his store with sugar and tea.

While Still Young

As previously mentioned, the young Chaim Pinto arrived in Mogador when he was only a young boy of twelve, orphaned of both his father and mother. He was weary from his journey, hungry and thirsty, but had no food or drink in his sack. He sought refuge in the Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Meir Ben Attar. He was utterly exhausted, and his head dropped slowly, until he fell fast asleep.

At that time, Rabbi Meir Pinto, one of the charitable residents of Mogador, was sleeping comfortably in his bed. Two tzaddikim appeared to him in a dream: Rabbi Shlomo Pinto, zy"a, Chaim's father, and Rabbi Moshe Tahuni, zt"l.

Both tzaddikim began to admonish him in his dream, since while he was sleeping in comfort, the young orphan, Chaim Pinto, was in the Beit Hakeneset, hungry and thirsty.

"You should know," the two disclosed, "that although he is still young, a great light will emanate from him in the days to come. Arise quickly and take him into your home. You must take care to hire a teacher who will teach him Torah."

The two tzaddikim also appeared to the young Chaim Pinto in the Beit Hakeneset, informing him that shortly Rabbi Meir Pinto would arrive, and he should go to his home. In order to verify the validity of the dream, the tzaddikim woke him up and stood before him while he was actually awake. They also blessed him and shook his hand.

Rabbi Meir awoke startled and immediately hurried to the Beit Hakeneset to search for Rabbi Chaim. He knocked on the door.

"Who is there?" asked Rabbi Chaim from behind the door.

"It is I, Meir Pinto."

"Recite the psalm *May the pleasantness of the L-rd* so that I should know that it is really you and not an agent of the *Sitra Achra*." (The *mazikim* are afraid of this psalm, as is known by those who learn the hidden secrets of the Torah.)

Rav Meir Pinto recited the psalm, and then Chaim let him in. He recounted his father, Rabbi Shlomo's, visit in detail.

Rabbi Meir trembled when he heard his relative's tale. He brought the young Chaim to his home and took care of all his needs, spiritual and physical. Each day, Rabbi Meir would accompany Chaim to the house of Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, where he studied Torah diligently until he became a great Torah scholar.

Devotion to Each and Every Person

Rabbi Chaim's fame spread. At first, he was known as a *gaon* and a genius in Torah. Later on, people began to recognize what an outstanding tzaddik he was. His vast knowledge emanated from his lofty levels of holiness. He brought about many salvations and performed miracles.

Rabbi Chaim engaged in the study of Torah day and night. His diligence in learning enabled him to reveal the secrets of the Torah. He lived in holiness and purity, and thus rose in stature from day to day, acquiring great honor.

The name of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was lauded throughout the land, and he became famous among the Jews of Morocco. The native Arabs also greatly respected him and considered him a holy miracle worker.

His good name reached far and wide, beyond the borders of Morocco, to Europe and the Middle East. Many times he would receive requests from Jews from far off countries, beseeching him to pray for them and help them merit salvation and annul harsh decrees.

The doors of his home were open throughout the day to all, rich

or poor, prominent or simple. He would make an effort to assist each person who turned to him, as a father caring for his son.

Bearing the Burden of the People

When his esteemed teacher Rabbi Yaakov Bibas died, the members of the community turned to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and asked him to fill his position as Rav of Mogador. At first, Rabbi Chaim refused due to his immense humility. However, since the leaders of the community insisted, Rabbi Chaim agreed to fill the position of his holy mentor. He took upon himself to bear the burden of the people in all matters, communal and individual.

Rabbi Chaim was aided in his rabbinical duties by his close friend Rabbi David Chazan, zt"l, who served as his assistant in leading the community and was also a member of the special Beit Din established under his auspices.

A Small Glimpse

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol also authored several sefarim, including those on *halachah*, *aggadah*, methods in Kabbalah, as well as novel insights in *Shas*. Unfortunately, he did not succeed in printing his many manuscripts, and eventually most of them were lost.

Some of his *piyutim* and responses in *halachah* that were recorded in the *sifrei shu't* of other brilliant authors with whom Rabbi Chaim had corresponded survived and have been printed.

An example can be found in the sefer *Shufra d'Yaakov* (*chelek Choshen Mishpat, siman* 17), where questions and responses of the Rabbis of Mogador, Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi David Chazan, are recorded. There are many other examples of this in the sefarim of the Rabbis of Morocco of that period.

Rabbi David Chazan

The three exceptional tzaddikim, Rabbi Avraham Koryat, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, and Rabbi David Chazan learned each

day as *chavrutot*. The first letters of their names spell the word *echad* (אחד). They served together in the Rabbinical Beit Din of Mogador.

הסכמת רבני וחכמי המערב הי"ו * רבני אצוירה יע"א :

אנן כמו חכינן לפא דפנו רבנן הקדומים למעלם כאמורי פרף כיסודים ועור לקרא ופזינן לסוכיאנה
דחכימו העוסק כמלאכת הקדש עשה מזנים לתורה על דרך אלנא כיקא נופו נוטה לתקוס עסרים -
מלבר ספריו אשר מיכר מליאים סוסנים ליהודים הוקא אורים - ששים ושמחים בחדושיו וכמעשיו הוכעות
אומא קרא אוכעות אומא סכרא ומעצה עוכו לשמייה נטלות לקח כלב עם ישראל הרמים והנכאים להיות לפר'
מעיר לעזור לקעדו כעסר ורוס להעלות על מזב"ח הרפוס הספר הנחמד הזה ונקמלא הבי"ת אור"ם -
גדול מרכן שמו החכם השלם והכולל הריין המצויין כמוהר"ר אברהם בלעיש הי"ו סיעו"ן ורסועו
רסוע כוים נ' כשכת שמנה ימים לקמוו רבאי סקא תצמחנ"ה לפ"ק סעירה מונגדור יע"א -
הלא כה דכרינו מנעירו הנאן אפר במונגאדור * ע"ה חיים פינטו סל"ט *
ע"ה אברהם קוריאט ס"ט *

Approbations of the Rabbis of Mogador, Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi Avraham, for the sefer Petach Habayit

ספר
פתח הבית

Title-page of the sefer Petach Habayit

Every Erev Shabbat Kodesh, Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi David Chazan regularly learned together the commentary of the Alshich, zy"a, on the parashah. This custom was very dear to them. They both wished for it to continue uninterrupted. Therefore, they agreed between them that whoever would die first, would appear to his partner, in order to learn with him *parashat hashevuah* with the commentary of the Alshich.

A Study Partner from the Upper Spheres

In fact, it is told that on the Shabbat after the demise of Rabbi David Chazan, zt"l, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol waited for his arrival. However, Rabbi David did not appear. Rabbi Chaim called his attendant and asked him to go to Rabbi David's house and ask his widow why her husband was not keeping his promise to learn with him the sefer of the Alshich on Erev Shabbat.

The attendant did not comprehend his Rabbi's request, and did

not hurry to fulfill his order. He thought to himself that Rabbi Chaim was well aware that Rabbi David was no longer alive.

Rabbi Chaim noticed the attendant's hesitation and emphatically repeated his request. The attendant finally understood that this was an extraordinary request beyond his comprehension. He hurried to Rabbi David's house and asked his widow why her husband was not keeping his promise to learn the sefer of the Alshich on Erev Shabbat with Rabbi Chaim.

The widow was taken aback by the question. "From where does Rabbi Chaim know that my husband is presently at home?" she asked the astonished attendant.

It did not take long for Rabbi Chaim to receive an explanation.

Rabbi David Chazan appeared to his friend and told him that he had also vowed to his wife that he would come home to make Kiddush for her every Friday night (as Rabbeinu Hakadosh did). This was the reason that he had not appeared to learn with Rabbi Chaim; he could not be in two places at the same time. In addition, he informed Rabbi Chaim that from then on, he would continue to appear to him physically, whereas, he would appear to his wife only in a dream, since she had revealed his secret.

Revealing the Secrets of the Torah

The great tzaddik, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi David Chazan, Rabbi Chaim's beloved friend, did not merit having children for many years. At every opportunity, he prayed to Hashem that He should merit having sons who would serve and fear Him.

His prayers bore fruit and after a period of time, to his immense joy, Rabbi David had a son. However, his joy was short-lived, since this only child died while still very young. The following tale is told describing the episode:

Rabbi David Chazan engaged in the study of Kabbalah, unveiling the secrets of the Torah. Once, while he was learning, his son, who was approximately seven years old at the time, approached

him and began to learn with him the hidden mysteries of the Torah.

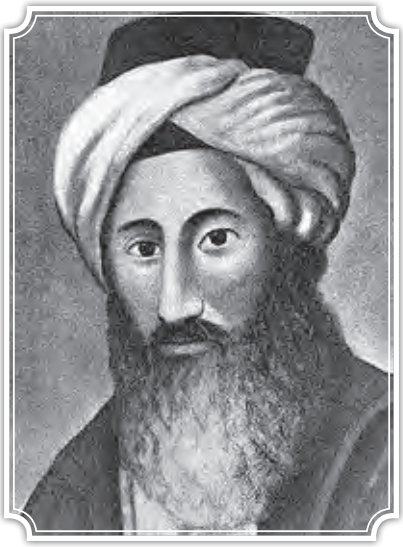
The young boy quickly grasped everything his father taught. Afterward, he proceeded to transmit the mystic secrets to his father's students (*Shenot Chaim* and *Mekor Chaim*).

From then on, all the people referred to the boy as "the prophet," because every word that he uttered was true. His father, Rabbi David, feared this development, and beseeched Hashem to cause his son to depart from the world, so that he would not frighten people by revealing to them what was on their conscience.

His prayers were realized, and his son died at the height of his youth. He had exceeded his limits due to his lofty *neshamah*. He was buried in the cemetery of Mogador, near the place where Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol was eventually laid to rest (*Shevach Chaim*).

How Could He Have Known?

Rabbi David Elkayam once traveled from Mogador to Livorno, Italy. There, he met the Chida, ztk"l. Before he left, the Chida presented him with three sefarim that he had authored: *Rosh David*, *Chaim Sha'al*, and *Simchat Haregel*. He told Rabbi David Elkayam, "The sefer *Rosh David*, give to Rabbi David Chazan; *Chaim Sha'al*, give to Rabbi Chaim Pinto; and *Simchat Haregel* is for you as compensation for traveling to me on foot."



The Chida, zy"a

Even before Rabbi David Elkayam let anyone know of his return to Mogador, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was already

aware of his presence and sent a messenger to bring the sefer of the Chida to him.

The Image of the Child

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu relates the following:

A few years ago, when I visited the cemetery in Mogador, close to the gravestone of the holy Rabbi, the *mekubal* Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, I saw the image of a child standing near the grave of the deceased boy, called "the prophet."

I informed the guard of the fact that there was a solitary child wandering around the cemetery. The non-Jewish watchman glanced around but did not see any child there.

I pointed precisely to the spot where the child was standing, but the words of the pasuk were fulfilled, "They have eyes, but cannot see." I believe it was the image of the child called "the prophet," standing near his grave in the cemetery. Unsurprisingly, the non-Jewish watchman could not behold the image of the holy child, who was an exalted tzaddik.

Fish for the Shabbat Feast

Rabbi David Chazan had the custom of eating fish in honor of Shabbat every Friday night. Since in those days there were no refrigerators, it was necessary to go to the market on Friday in order to purchase fresh fish.

One Friday, as Rabbi David Chazan set out to the market to buy fish for Shabbat, he was informed by every shopkeeper, "Today there are no fish! There was a storm at sea and the fishermen could not spread their nets. Everyone returned empty-handed."

At first, Rabbi David was crestfallen, since he would not be able to fulfill his custom of eating fish on Shabbat. However, he came up with a brilliant plan. He knew that Rabbi Chaim Pinto always had plenty of fish in his house. Thus, immediately following the Evening Prayers on Shabbat night, he turned directly to the

house of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, in order to join the tzaddik in his meal.

A street in the marketplace

Rabbi Chaim welcomed his guest warmly. While enjoying an array of fish in honor of Shabbat Kodesh, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and Rabbi David discussed various topics in Torah, *halachah*, and *aggadah*. They continued with their discussion, not noticing the time passing, until it was very late at night.

When Rabbi David turned to go home, he noticed the time and became apprehensive. In those days, traveling alone at night was perilous, since bands of robbers lurked in the streets.

Perceiving Rabbi David's predicament, Rabbi Chaim immediately summoned a demon (called Gedalya). He ordered it to accompany Rabbi David to his house and guard him from any danger.

On the road, they began to converse. It began when the demon stuck out its tongue and a fiery flame shot out from its mouth.

Rabbi David scolded, "I am afraid that you are desecrating the Shabbat."

The demon shot back, "I'm sorry to inform you, honorable Rabbi, that is not so! The prohibition to desecrate the Shabbat is only incumbent upon people made of flesh and blood, but does not obligate us, since we are made of fire" (*Shenot Chaim*).

Discovering "Chaim" – Life

The following story was told by Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy"a:

One year there was a big shortage of fish. Since it was a custom to eat fish on Shabbat in accordance with Kabbalistic teaching, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol summoned a fisherman and requested, "Please go to the ocean and catch some fish."

"Rabbeinu! For so many weeks now there have been no fish in the sea."

Rabbi Chaim instructed him, "Go to the edge of the sea and every time you throw your net into the water, say 'Chaim,' and fish will emerge."

A view of Mogador from the sea

The fisherman did as the tzaddik instructed, and in a few moments he had amassed a large stock of high-quality fish with which to honor Shabbat Kodesh.

When people heard that the fisherman had a stock of fish, they flocked to him, begging him to sell them some. However, the

fisherman refused to sell even one fish, insisting that the fish were not his, but belonged to Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto took the whole stock and distributed the fish to all the people of the city, leaving only a small portion for himself.

When his friend, Rabbi David Chazan heard about the episode, he came to the Rav's house on Shabbat night and said, "Rabbi Chaim! I heard that you have *Chaim* (life) in your house."

"That is true," Rabbi Chaim replied. "I have Chaim in my house."

The two sat together by the Shabbat table, relishing the special dishes of fish. Thus, they were able to uphold this traditional custom, originating in Kabbalistic teaching.

The fishermen's marketplace in Mogador

A Lashing at the Rav's Command

Rabbi David Chazan related the following account:

The light would burn until the wee hours of the night in Rabbi Chaim Hagadol's room. Long after all the people of the city had retired, he would continue to delve in the study of Torah, without a break.

One night, while he was engaged in learning the holy Torah, his eyelids drooped, and he began to doze. Unintentionally, his foot fell upon the holy sefer of Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto – the *Rif*, zy"a.

When Rabbi Chaim awoke from his sleep, he realized what he had done, and he was deeply anguished, despite the fact that it was unintentional.

The incident cause Rabbi Chaim great distress, and he had no peace of mind. He called his attendant and asked him to come to his room with a leather strap. When the attendant brought the strap, Rabbi Chaim instructed him to lash the foot that had unintentionally rested upon the sefer of the *Rif*.

The attendant was shaken by the thought, "How can I lash the honorable Rav? I cannot bring myself to do such a thing!"

However, Rabbi Chaim was not deterred. He ordered his attendant to fulfill his wish and do as he ordered and lash him soundly until he told him to stop.

Having no other choice, the attendant whipped the foot of Rabbi Chaim with all his might. He delivered lash after lash, as the Rav ordered, until the foot began to swell. The pain intensified with each lash until Rabbi Chaim told him to stop.

A Spark of Achiya Hashiloni

That night, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was unable to rise to recite the *tikkun chatzot* in the Beit Hakeneset, as he usually did.

When the *shamash*, who regularly joined the Rav in the *tikkun*, showed up, he was surprised to find himself alone in the Beit Hakeneset. He was even more astonished when he suddenly heard a voice emanating from the Aron Hakodesh, "Where is Rabbi Chaim Pinto? Why did he not come as usual to say the *tikkun chatzot* prayer? Why is he not singing the praises of his Creator?

All the Celestial Hosts are waiting to hear his song and prayers."

The attendant became extremely frightened. He gathered his courage and quivered, "Who is talking?"

"It is I," answered the voice, "Rabbi Yisrael Najara. Go quickly to Rabbi Chaim and tell him that he possesses a spark of the *neshamah* of the prophet, Achiya Hashiloni. He should cease torturing himself, because his sin has already been forgiven."

The voice continued, "I used to give my Creator pleasure with the songs that I composed, but since the day that I departed from the world only Rabbi Chaim Pinto masters the depth of song."

Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Chaim in the Mellah in Mogador

The attendant trembled from the sound of the voice. He quickly went to Rabbi Chaim's house, in order to repeat to him all that he had heard. However, before he could open his mouth, Rabbi Chaim said, "You heard the voice of Rabbi Yisrael Najara in the Beit Hakeneset. Blessed are you and blessed is your portion!"

The following night, the *Rif* appeared in a dream to Rabbi David Chazan and told him, "Tell Rabbi Chaim that he should not worry about what he did unintentionally. Order him to rise from his bed. His swollen leg is already healed."

At the same time, the *Rif* appeared to Rabbi Chaim in a dream and told him the following, "You have received full pardon in all the spheres. Tomorrow, with Hashem's help, you will arise from your sleep and be healed."

The next morning, when Rabbi David Chazan came to Rabbi Chaim to tell him about his dream, Rabbi Chaim preceded him,

saying, "The one who came to you in a dream came to me as well." Just as he had been promised, he rose from his bed and stood on his two feet, completely cured (*Shenot Chaim*).

A Hidden Secret

There is an amazing tale describing what transpired on the day of Rabbi David Chazan's demise:

Rabbi David came to Marrakesh together with Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol upon the request of the governor of the city, who wanted the holy tzaddikim to serve as judges in the hearing of a wealthy man, Rabbi Chaim Ben Bakhas.

When they arrived in the city, it was time to pray. In the midst of the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer, Rabbi David Chazan's *neshamah* departed in holiness and purity.

The members of the *Chevrah Kadisha* approached the body to begin the purification process and bury him. However, to their astonishment, they were not able to proceed. Whoever came near the holy body of Rabbi David promptly got knocked down. This occurred to the first person, the second, and all others.

The members of the *Chevrah Kadisha* realized that there were mysterious circumstances preventing them from burying Rabbi David Chazan. They hurried to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol to tell him about the strange series of events.

He thought for a moment and then told them, "*Rabbotai*, you should know that I shared a deep secret with Rabbi David Chazan. Now that he has departed to the Heavenly Spheres, I can reveal it to you.

"Whoever will approach his body will immediately fall. However, there is only one way to conduct the *taharah* and arrange for his burial. His body must be bathed with his own tears, the tears that flowed freely from his eyes while crying every night during the *tikkun chatzot* prayers, in grief over the destruction of the Temple.

"These tears," Rabbi Chaim explained, "are found in a special jar in his house in Mogador. Go quickly to Mogador and bring the jar, and then you will be able to arrange the *taharah* properly."

The members of the *Chevrah Kadisha* were confounded by the tzaddik's suggestion. "How can we possibly fetch something from Mogador? It is very far from here, and it will take a few days to travel there and back. Leaving the body without burial during this time is a desecration of the deceased."

Rabbi Chaim agreed that it was not appropriate to allow the deceased to remain unburied for such an extended period. He entered his room to reconsider the situation and then emerged and announced, "Wait a few moments, and the jar will come to you."

Beit Hakeneset Alazama today

Rabbi Chaim strode over to the Beit Hakeneset Alazama, in Marrakesh, and opened the Aron Hakodesh with awe. When he emerged, he was holding the jar filled with the tears of Rabbi David Chazan.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto handed them the jar, to their absolute amazement. The members of the *Chevrah Kadisha* first immersed themselves in the *mikveh*, in order to purify themselves in honor

of the deceased. Afterward, they bathed the holy body of Rabbi David in his tears. Miraculously, the tears in the jar sufficed for the entire washing process.

Then, the body of Rabbi David Chazan was finally brought to its burial. Throngs of people came to accompany him in Marrakesh, where he had departed suddenly, in fulfillment of the pasuk, "He will come in peace; they will rest on their resting places – he who walks in his integrity."

There was a shelter built over the grave of Rabbi David Chazan, and on the tombstone the following words are written:

This is the grave
Of the exalted Rav, the G-dly *Mekubal*
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi **David Chazan**, zt"l,
From the city of Mogador
Who learned and reviewed Torah with Eliyahu Hanavi
He was called to the Heavenly Yeshiva here in Marrakesh
On the Sixteenth of Menachem Av 1833 (5593)

Tombstone of the grave of Rabbi David Chazan

CHAPTER FIVE

On Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Chassadim

A Revelation of Eliyahu Hanavi

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol would spend his nights engaged in the study of Torah. His extraordinary diligence in learning aroused the admiration of the people. His family members knew not to bother him, since he was dedicated to learning.

One night, his daughter Mazal, a"h, entered his study, in order to get something. Surprisingly, she saw that there was another person in the room, whose identity was not familiar to her.

When Rabbi Chaim noticed his daughter's presence, he leaped from his seat and exclaimed, "My daughter, why did you enter my study without receiving permission? The figure that you saw was Eliyahu Hanavi of blessed memory. You beheld his countenance while not being worthy of such a privilege. Consequently, a harsh decree has been issued upon you; the eyes that beheld him will turn blind, or alternatively, you may depart from the world, *chas v'shalom*…"

His daughter turned speechless from fright. She could not utter a single word in her defense or beg her righteous father to pray on her behalf.

Rabbi Chaim pitied his daughter and prayed to Hashem, begging His mercy that she should not go blind before she got married. Then, Rabbi Chaim told his daughter that he had prayed for her. Mazal was a very righteous girl and accepted the decree upon her with equanimity.

Many years passed, and one day Rabbi Aharon Mellul, the grandson of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Khalifa Malka, visited the city of Mogador. Every time he would come to Mogador, he would stay as a guest in the house of Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

When Rabbi Aharon Mellul met the Rav's daughter, Mazal, was struck by her modesty, righteousness, and honesty. Consequently, he approached Rabbi Chaim and informed him that he wished to marry his daughter, who was of holy lineage.

Rabbi Chaim flatly refused his request.

The more Rabbi Aharon begged the Rav for permission to marry his daughter, the more firmly Rabbi Chaim stood his ground, refusing to fulfill his request. The Rav did not reveal to him the real reason for this.

Rabbi Aharon returned home dejected. He began to worry that perhaps Rabbi Chaim had perceived some fault in him and therefore had rejected him as a son-in-law.

Thus, the tzaddik Rabbi Khalifa Malka appeared to Rabbi Chaim at night in a dream and told him, "Rabbi Chaim! I sent you my grandson in high spirits, and you sent him away dejected and depressed…"

Rabbi Chaim responded, "Your honor surely knows that it was decreed upon my daughter Mazal to become blind in both of her eyes after her marriage, because she beheld Eliyahu Hanavi of blessed memory. That is why I refused to allow her to marry your grandson Aharon."

"Rabbi Chaim! Do not worry at all. My grandson will accept the decree from Heaven, come what may."

Early that morning, Rabbi Chaim quickly sent a letter to Rabbi Aharon Mellul, asking him to return to Mogador. When he arrived, Rabbi Chaim revealed to him what had happened to his daughter and of the bitter fate that awaited her after she would marry. "This is why," explained Rabbi Chaim, "I refused to allow you to marry her."

Rabbi Aharon was not deterred. "Even so, I am willing to marry your daughter. Such a privilege does not present itself every day," he said.

Not long after, Rabbi Aharon's wish was fulfilled, and he stood under the chuppah and married Rabbi Chaim's daughter, according to Jewish law.

Ultimately, the terrible decree was annulled. The merits of their holy ancestors stood in their stead. Mazal continued seeing normally. They both lived long lives and enjoyed generations of righteous descendants.

They passed away within a week of each other, at a ripe old age and they were buried next to each other in the old cemetery of Mogador (*Shevach Chaim*).

The Voice of Eliyahu Hanavi

Close to midnight, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol would strengthen himself as a lion and begin his evening schedule of Avodat Hashem.

At that hour, his attendant Rabbi Aharon ibn-Chaim would fufill his holy duty of brewing a hot drink for the Rav.

One night, the attendant heard two voices coming from the study of Rabbi Chaim. Rabbi Aharon thought to himself, "If the Rav has a *chavruta* in learning Torah tonight, I should also prepare a hot drink for the guest."

Acting upon his noble intentions, he sent in two cups of hot drinks to the Rav.

Upon daybreak, following the Shacharit prayers, Rabbi Chaim called his attendant, Rabbi Aharon, and said to him, "Tell me, please, why did you bring me two hot drinks instead of one as usual?"

"I heard that the Rav was speaking with someone else, and I figured that I would honor the guest with a hot drink as well."

The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim nodded his head in silence and gazed at Rabbi Aharon, saying, "Blessed are you, my son, that you merited hearing the voice of Eliyahu Hanavi. His was the second voice that you heard at night. However, I forbid you to reveal this secret to anyone."

Rabbi Aharon honored his Rav's wishes for many years and did not reveal even a hint of what he had heard. When the time came for Rabbi Chaim to depart from the world, Rabbi Aharon felt that he could finally disclose this amazing secret to the followers of the Rav. He told them how Eliyahu Hanavi had come to learn as a *chavruta* with Rabbi Chaim Hagadol (*Mekor Hachaim*).

Blessed Are You, Rabbi Makhluf

Many people would frequent the house of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, seeking advice in different matters regarding the religious community of Mogador. Among those who came to his house one day was Rabbi Makhluf Loyb (also known as Rav Lissa). He was summoned to Rabbi Chaim's house on an urgent matter. The incident took place late at night. Rabbi Makhluf knew how to reach Rabbi Chaim's study by the telltale candle that burned in his room. Upon entering the study, he saw two men.

One was Rabbi Chaim, his face aflame, shining with a brilliant light. The other was an unfamiliar figure, who resembled an angel. Rabbi Makhluf felt his knees buckling under, and terror gripped him. He turned on his heels and fled.

The next morning, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol met Rabbi Makhluf and told him, "Blessed are you, Rabbi Makhluf, that you merited seeing the countenance of Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory."

Rabbi Makhluf was astonished, but his heart pounded with the fear that perhaps he would be punished for gazing at the countenance of Eliyahu Hanavi. He beseeched Rabbi Chaim to pray for him that he should not die before his time.

Rabbi Chaim promised to do so. He begged mercy from Hashem that Rabbi Makhluf should not die young. His prayers were

accepted on High, and Rabbi Makhluf lived a long life, passing away at the ripe old age of 110.

This incident was recorded by Rabbi Makhluf himself in the siddur from which he prayed. His sons and grandsons, who were close to the Pinto family, publicized the story (*Mekor Hachaim*).

Rabbi Chaim Pinto's study, where he learned with Eliyahu Hanavi, referred to as "Eliyahu's room"

Gemilut Chassadim

Search Under the Bed

One year, the people of Morocco experienced exceptionally difficult times. There was no rainfall, causing a shortage of food and money. In that year, *shelichim* from Eretz Yisrael and from Marrakesh arrived in Mogador to collect donations for orphans and Torah scholars.

The *gabbaim* of the city were at a loss. What should they do? On one hand, they could not turn the charity-collectors away empty-handed. On the other hand, they did not know whom to assist; those from Eretz Yisrael, or those from Marrakesh.

There were not enough funds to provide for both, because it had been such a difficult year. What did they do? They went to consult with Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, requesting his advice.

Hearing their problem, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol told the *gabbaim* to go home and return to him the next day. Meanwhile, he instructed them to offer food, drinks, and lodging for the *shelichim*.

The *gabbaim* did as instructed and returned to Rabbi Chaim's house the following morning. Rabbi Chaim inquired of them, "Tell me! Did this pauper, so-and-so, pass away recently? The *gabbaim* went to check in the files of the *Chevrah Kadisha* and found that he had indeed died.

"Yes, it is so. This pauper died yesterday."

Rabbi Chaim ordered the *gabbaim*, "Go to the pauper's house and search under his bed. Bring me everything that you find there."

The *gabbaim* were taken aback. After all, the deceased was known to be a destitute pauper. What could they possibly find

there? However, since they knew they must obey the Rav, they hurried to the pauper's house. They searched under the bed and found a hidden sack filled with gold, silver, and precious gems.

The *gabbaim* returned to Rabbi Chaim with the treasures. Since the pauper had no family to claim the inheritance, Rabbi Chaim took all the riches and divided them evenly between the *shelichim* from Eretz Yisrael and from Marrakesh. There was even enough money left to support the poor people of Mogador (*Mekor Chaim*).

Tzedakah Saves from Death

In the Beit Hamidrash of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, it was prohibited to discuss with the tzaddik any matter that was not directly related to the topic being learned in the yeshiva. All matters, whether public or private, were postponed and dealt with after the learning session, without exception.

Thus, the students in the yeshiva were surprised when they noticed a most unusual occurrence. The Rav suddenly closed his sefer during the learning session and exited the study hall. No one dared guess or ask about this strange conduct, since everyone understood that there must be a good reason for it, which they did not know.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu in the Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Chaim Pinto in Mogador

The only one who followed the Rav out was his faithful attendant, who insisted on accompanying him. The attendant followed the Rav, until he stopped and stood on a street corner as if waiting for someone. After a few minutes, a wealthy man appeared. He never donated a coin to charity and was known by all the townspeople as being extremely stingy.

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol turned to the rich man and begged him to open his heart and his purse to the plight of the poor and donate some money to *tzedakah*. The wealthy man pretended not to hear the Rav and continued on his way.

Rabbi Chaim told his attendant, "Quickly, follow the man. These are his final moments on earth before he dies. See to it that he should not pass away without having someone recite the *Kriyat Shema* at his side!"

The attendant strode hastily after the rich man, curious to see how the matter would develop. Just as Rabbi Chaim predicted, when the rich man reached the entrance of his house, he suddenly collapsed and died on the spot. The attendant immediately began to recite *Kriyat Shema* upon the parting of the *neshamah*.

When the attendant returned to the yeshiva, the tzaddik called him and explained, "I perceived with Divine inspiration that it was decreed upon the wealthy man to die. This decree could have been annulled if he would have agreed to contribute a few coins to *tzedakah*, since it says 'Charity saves one from death.'" That is why I asked him to donate some money for *tzedakah*. It would have saved him from this fatal decree. Unfortunately, the man did not grasp this lifeline, and clung stubbornly to his errant ways. I knew that his end was near, therefore I asked you to follow him and stand at his side, so that you could recite *Kriyat Shema* at the parting of his *neshamah*."

The news of the stingy man's tragic passing spread throughout the city. Everyone beheld the loftiness of the tzaddik, who foresaw his death with Divine inspiration. They were also inspired by the great power of *tzedakah*.

From then on, everyone in Mogador made sure to have a "*kupat tzedakah* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto" in his house. Every time before embarking on a journey, before candle lighting on Shabbat, or in time of trouble, they would put a few coins in the *tzedakah* box, as it says: "Charity saves one from death."

Dire Consequences

A similar incident occurred as follows:

Every Monday and Thursday, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol would sit at the entrance of his house, and every passerby would donate a coin or two for Rabbi Chaim's *tzedakah* funds.

One Thursday, a wealthy man passed by. He was as stingy as he was rich. He had just finished shopping for Shabbat Kodesh, and Rabbi Chaim asked him to donate some of his money to *tzedakah*. However, the rich man paid no attention to the Rav's request and continued on his way.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto called his attendant and told him that it was decreed in Heaven for this rich fellow to soon die. Therefore, he asked him to stand beside him during the departure of his *neshamah* and recite *Kriyat Shema*.

The attendant did as he was told and when he returned from his mission, Rabbi Chaim told him the following, "I wanted to save the rich man from his untimely death through the mitzvah of *tzedakah*. Unfortunately, he refused to fulfill it. I knew that his fate was sealed because of his sin, and that is why I sent you after him, so that he should not die without *Kriyat Shema* being said at his side" (*Shevach Chaim*).

Why Are You Crying?

Every Erev Pesach, great excitement would mount in the home of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. As part of the tradition of *Leil Haseder*, the tzaddik would send out messengers throughout the city in order to search for poor people, or people who had come to the

city and had no place to spend the holiday. They would be asked to join the tzaddik at his table at the *Leil Haseder*.

One year, the messengers scoured the city, but could not find any poor person or other guest to bring to Rabbi Chaim's house. In the end, when it seemed that their search had been futile, they came across a lodging place where they found a Jew sitting and crying bitterly about his terrible fate.

The messengers approached the Jew and told him, "Honorable Jew, you are cordially invited to celebrate the Seder at the table of the holy *mekubal*, Rabbi Chaim Pinto."

To their disbelief, the Jew rejected their offer. Bitterly, he cried in grief, "I refuse to go with you, because for you it is a holiday celebrating the Festival of Freedom. However, for me it is *Tishah B'Av*, a day of weeping and lamentation."

The man sat in this way and continued crying bitterly without specifying the reason why he was so dejected.

The messengers returned to Rabbi Chaim's house and told him about their strange encounter. Rabbi Chaim directed his messengers, "Return to him, and convince him to come to me. If he will not listen to you, bring him here forcibly!"

The messengers returned to the man's lodging. They begged him to come to Rabbi Chaim's house. When the man continued to refuse, they took him and brought him by force.

"Why are you crying?" Rabbi Chaim asked. "Don't you know that tonight is *Leil Shimurim*, the night of the Festival of Freedom, when the Jews were delivered from Egypt?"

"Please, honorable Rav, leave me alone. Let me go back to my lodgings. Why should I disturb and interrupt your joyous celebration? I am bitter. I can neither eat nor drink. I cannot rejoice. I beg you, please allow me to return to my lodgings."

"What is the matter?" asked Rabbi Chaim. "Why are you crying

so bitterly? I promise that if you tell me, you will be able to rejoice greatly. Just tell me what happened."

The stranger gazed at Rabbi Chaim's holy countenance and calmed down enough to begin his story:

"I was born in Marrakesh, and at one point I moved to Spain. There, I worked at odd jobs and made an honest living, while managing to save a large sum of money for the future. When I decided to move back to my home town, I took all the money and invested it in precious jewels. Before I set sail, a widow approached me and requested that I deliver several precious stones to her daughter who lived in Marrakesh and was about to get married.

"I took the precious stones and the diamonds that I had purchased and placed them carefully in a small box. Then, I boarded a ship sailing to my homeland. On the way, a storm broke out at sea. Ultimately, the ship sank with all its cargo. Many people drowned, but I managed to survive by the skin of my teeth. I drifted ashore by hanging on to a wooden log and found myself here in Mogador.

"I am absolutely broke, since I lost all my possessions at sea. What pains me most is the loss of those precious stones entrusted to me by the widow to cover her daughter's wedding expenses. Oh, honorable Rabbi! What should I tell the widow's daughter? That the ship sank? How could I not cry about my unbearable predicament?"

Rabbi Chaim rose from his place and took the Kiddush cup in his hand. He filled it to the brim with wine and began to pray softly, concentrating deeply. Afterward, he commanded the Minister of the Sea to extract the box from the ocean…

The stranger looked on in astonishment at the developments, which were beyond his comprehension. His amazement increased even more when the tzaddik turned to him and said, "Watch!"

The man could not have imagined such a scene possible. He felt as if he were dreaming.

The edges of the goblet expanded slowly until it became wide and deep. The deep purple liquid that had filled the cup turned into blue sea waves, lapping gently against the brim of the goblet. Suddenly, in the midst of the waves a small box sprang forth, falling into the room.

The extraordinary sight caused the stranger to lose his composure. He screamed, "Rabbi! Here is my box. This is my box!"

Rabbi Chaim lifted the box and placed it on the table. At that moment, the Kiddush cup turned back to its original size. The blue waves abated, and the purple liquid once again filled the cup.

The man's face shone with delight. However, he had not yet verified the contents of the box. Rabbi Chaim asked him to open it. Upon seeing the jewels, his eyes lit up. All his possessions were intact, including the precious stones that the widow had sent to her daughter in Marrakesh.

Rabbi Chaim's promise to cheer him up was fulfilled. Thus, the guest sat together with Rabbi Chaim's family and celebrated the *Leil Haseder* with great joy.

Reality or Dream?

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was noted for his hospitality. Many guests from all over the world ended up staying in his house. The tzaddik would treat each one with kindness and good cheer. He never turned anyone away for lack of place.

Once, Rabbi Yitzchak Shapiro, a *shaliach* from Eretz Yisrael, came to Rabbi Chaim's house. He was an outstanding Torah scholar, whose fame had spread far and wide. Rabbi Chaim went out to greet him and received him cordially, as befit his distinction.

Since it was close to Pesach, Rabbi Shapiro naturally remained in Rabbi Chaim's house to celebrate the festival and joined him at the *Leil Haseder*. Suddenly, the members of the family noticed

tears flowing from Rabbi Shapiro's eyes. Rivers of tears fell down his cheeks, accompanied by stifled sobs.

Rabbi Chaim tried to comfort him, but the *shaliach* continued to cry. "Please, tell us why you are crying and I will try to help you," Rabbi Chaim told him. "Your pain is our pain. We cannot sit joyfully at the Seder table while you are crying."

Rabbi Shapiro listened, but continued sobbing. Rabbi Chaim tried once again to calm him down, "Rabbi Shapiro, if you are troubled because you need something, I will try to help you. Why should you spend *Leil Haseder* crying?"

The *shaliach* calmed down a bit and began to talk, "I left Eretz Yisrael on my own. Every year, I would joyously sit with my family members at the Seder table. When I saw the matzot, wine and the Haggadah, I remembered my family. I do not know how they are doing. Are they happy? Are they distressed that I am not with them? Is everything all right in Eretz Yisrael?"

Rabbi Chaim empathized with his agony and comforted him, "Do not worry. The salvation of Hashem comes speedily, like the blink of an eye. Let us go to my study. I wish to show you something." The two of them entered Rabbi Chaim's study, and then Rabbi Chaim said, "Just watch."

The man peered in the darkness and suddenly he saw clearly in front of his eyes the figures of his family members, sitting around the Seder table, rejoicing in the festival.

After he recovered from the wonderful spectacle of seeing his family, who were hundreds of miles away, his happiness was restored. He left the room with Rabbi Chaim in order to continue the Seder. However, Rabbi Chaim wanted first to confirm that Rabbi Shapiro had fully comprehended the implication of his vision.

"When you return, with Hashem's help, to Eretz Yisrael, ask your family how they felt at the Seder during your absence and verify

that everything you saw in my study, the beautifully set table and festive clothing, was real and not a dream.

In addition, Rabbi Chaim requested, "Please try to recall every detail of what you saw, including the seating order of the family members, how the table was set, and what was on the table. After confirming with your family how they fared on Pesach, especially on the *Leil Haseder*, send me a letter informing me exactly what they told you."

At the conclusion of the festival, Rabbi Shapiro bade farewell to Rabbi Chaim, thanking him for his outstanding hospitality, which made him feel like a member of the family. He left Morocco, and safely arrived home in Eretz Yisrael. After greeting his family, he asked them how they had fared while he was away and how they had felt at the *Leil Haseder*.

They recounted to him that right after he left, they had been downhearted about being alone. However, when the *Leil Haseder* arrived, they suddenly felt uplifted and celebrated the festival with great joy.

Rabbi Shapiro listened to their account, and his heart filled with joy. He hurried to send a letter with a detailed description to Rabbi Chaim Pinto in Morocco, as he had promised, emphasizing that everything that he had seen in his study had not been a dream, but had actually transpired (*Shenot Chaim*).

CHAPTER SIX

They Should Teach Your Laws to Yaakov

The Path of True Justice

All disputes within the Jewish community were decided in the Beit Din of Mogador, whether monetary, marital, or arguments between man and his fellow.

The gates of the Beit Din were open not only to the members of the Jewish community, but also to their gentile neighbors, since they recognized that the verdicts issued by the Beit Din expressed true justice. All would approach Rabbi Chaim Hagadol with awe, since, besides his broad expertise and sharp understanding of the Torah, he was well-versed in the ways of the world. He understood the customs, mentality, and way of life of the villagers, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Decisions were arrived at swiftly and accurately at the table of the tzaddik. Corruption did not gain entry into Rabbi Chaim's court. In his great wisdom, he led the Beit Din and supervised all investigations with absolute integrity and impartiality.

A Solid Foundation

At the time that Rabbi Chaim Hagadol served as head of the Beit Din, there was no established infrastructure of governance in the land. The judges of the courts passed judgment and decided laws without having a formal legal system upon which to base them.

Rabbi Chaim and his Beit Din contributed significantly to the legal system of the government, since they introduced a set of

laws and rulings in matters of civil law, legal arbitration, and financial compromises, which then served as an example for all the courts, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

Let Me Hear Your Supplicating Voice

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol served as the chief judge in the esteemed Beit Din of Mogador, and Rabbi David Chazan served as his assistant. The third pillar of the court was Rabbi Avraham Koryat, author of the sefer *Brit Avot*, who was a student of Rabbi Chaim.

How did Rav Avraham merit sitting as a judge in the Beit Din together with these Torah giants? It is told that when he was young, he was very musical and a talented poet. Once, when Rabbi Chaim passed through the streets of Mogador with his friend, Rabbi David Chazan, they heard an enchanting melody echoing from one of the houses. The two followed the sound and discovered Rabbi Avraham Koryat sitting in his house, singing *piyutim* with a captivating voice, accompanied by the violin.

For a whole hour, the Rabbanim remained entranced by the enthralling melody and prose. They inquired about the background of the young fellow, and they learned that he was a grandson of the famous tzaddik, Rabbi Baruch from Tetouan, zt"l, and lived alone without any family or financial support.

Upon hearing this, Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi David Chazan told him, "Such a sweet voice should be utilized for learning Torah. Come with us and join us in our study. We will provide you with all your needs."

ספר
שאלות ותשובות
זה שפ"ר זכות אבות

Title-page of the sefer Zechut Avot of Rabbi Avraham Koryat

Rabbi Avraham accepted their offer and joined them, learning both *b'iyun* and *b'kiyut*. Rabbi Chaim provided him with all his physical needs with the same devotion as a loving father.

In time, after Rabbi Avraham became well-versed in all areas of the Torah, he too was appointed as a judge in the special Beit Din of Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi David Chazan. From then on the three of them were referred to as *echad* (one), since אחד is an acronym of their names (אברהם, חיים, דוד).

In addition, Rabbi Chaim had other students, who eventually served as Rabbanim and as Rabbinical authorities. Among them were Rabbi David Zaguri, zt"l, who served as Rav of Lisbon, Portugal, and authored the sefer *David Lehazkir*; and Rabbi Yaakov Ben Shabbat, zt"l, author of the sefer *Ruach Yaakov*, in which he cites the *divrei Torah* of his teacher, Rabbi Chaim.

An Early Death

Title-page of the sefer Ruach Yaakov

Many people were apprehensive about being judged by Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, because he could see through people and reveal their true essence. Everyone feared him and approached him with trepidation. For this reason, they would request to have Rabbi Avraham decide their cases instead. He was blessed with exceptional intuition, dealing sensitively with each person according to his needs.

Rabbi Chaim permitted people to choose the authority of their choice, and Rabbi Avraham, who was relatively young, became the most popular judge. Rabbi Chaim felt that this was an affront to his rank, because he was many years Rabbi Avraham's senior.

Consequently, Rabbi Avraham did not live long, departing to the Heavenly Spheres when he was only forty-five years old. Despite the fact that Rabbi Avraham's overwhelming popularity had been somewhat disturbing, Rabbi Chaim was inconsolable. He

ripped his clothing in mourning and stated in his eulogy, "Woe to me that this is what occurred during my lifetime. It is an upside-down world that I see. Instead of the young one eulogizing me, I, the old man, eulogize him." He gave way to heartrending tears.

Afterward, Rabbi Chaim found a hint to Rabbi Avraham's short lifespan of forty-five years in the pasuk: "מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך – How abundant is Your goodness that You have stored away for those who fear You." Hashem had designated מ"ה (forty-five) years for Rabbi Avraham, may his merit protect us (*Shenot Chaim*).

Open Window, Closed Case

One case that became famous is recorded as follows:

A wealthy person from Mogador sold his house to a fellow Jew living in his community. The seller and the buyer negotiated all the details, and the sale was legally finalized. After the buyer paid the entire sum of money for the house, he moved in.

The seller, who lived in an apartment close by, decided to construct a window directly facing the house that he had sold, so that he could supervise the activities of his new neighbor. The buyer, who did not enjoy this violation of his privacy, begged him to block up the window that he had made. Such breach of privacy is legally considered as damage to the buyer's property. However, his pleas fell on deaf ears. The seller refused to listen to the buyer, and he did not close up the window.

Anxiously, the buyer turned to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol to decide the case. At the appointed time, both litigants appeared before the tzaddik, and each one presented his arguments. Rabbi Chaim knew clearly that the buyer was in the right, since the window constituted an invasion of privacy and thereby damaged his property. The Rav ordered the seller to close up the window and return the structure to its former condition.

The seller was not happy with the decision. He felt humiliated at losing the case. Since he feared Rabbi Chaim, he closed up

the window. However, he wickedly devised a sinister plan and forged a document stating that the buyer owed him a large sum of money. He put the document away, seeking an opportune moment to incriminate him.

A few years elapsed, and the buyer was blessed with a baby boy. The preparations for the *brit milah* were marred by the lack of necessary funds for the festive meal. The father had only two rial in his pocket. In addition, he also lacked basic provisions for the baby, such as a cradle and other furniture. He did not even own a table on which to serve his guests.

A marketplace in Mogador

The father paced around distraught. Without realizing it, his feet led him to the local market. He placed his trust in Hashem, praying that He would help him and send him salvation from Above.

When he arrived at the marketplace, he noticed a woman leading a donkey laden with fragrant herbs. He gave her the two rial that he possessed and purchased all her herbs. Then, he headed home.

His brother, who was a seasoned businessman, was staying at

his house. He realized that his brother had made an excellent deal without being aware of it. The value of the herbs was much higher than what he had paid for them.

Since he was aware of his brother's financial straits, which were compounded by the birth of the baby, he sold the herbs in the market for a large profit, which he happily presented to his poor brother. Overjoyed, the poor man took the money and ran to purchase all the necessary provisions for the *brit milah*. With the rest of the funds, he bought the furniture he needed. He even had enough money left over to invest in establishing his own business. His venture flourished, and eventually he became wealthy.

His rich neighbor followed the developments with envy, seeking an opportunity to finally take his revenge. When he observed his neighbor's vast wealth, he decided that the time had come for him to trump up charges about the "huge debt."

The seller approached the Beit Din of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, accusing his neighbor of not paying the debt that he allegedly owed him. The buyer was stunned by the false charges. He argued before the Rav that he had not borrowed any money from the seller, and the only transaction between them had been the sale of the house, which he had paid for in full.

Rabbi Chaim reviewed the case in his mind. On one hand, the plaintiff's claim appeared correct. He had a document proving his case. But, on the other hand, the defendant stood his ground firmly, arguing in his defense that he had never signed such a document and did not owe any money. What should he do?

"I will decide the case tomorrow morning," Rabbi Chaim finally told them both. "Go home now."

In the morning, the two neighbors stood before Rabbi Chaim. The plaintiff stubbornly insisted that he held a document proving that his neighbor owed him money. The defendant denied it saying, "I never signed such a document – it never happened!"

Rabbi Chaim turned to the rich man and ordered, "Give me the document, and I will check its authenticity in the Aron Hakodesh. If tomorrow dots appear on the document, then your claim is true and he owes you money. However, if the wording will be obliterated and the page will turn blank, then it will prove that the defendant is right and you forged the document."

Rabbi Chaim placed the document in the confines of the Aron Hakodesh. The following morning the two litigants once again appeared before the Rav. With fear and trepidation, the tzaddik opened the Aron Hakodesh, while murmuring words of prayer that Hashem should guide him to rule correctly. He removed the document and showed it to the litigants. It was a clean white sheet of paper!

"It is white. He is pure," declared Rabbi Chaim to the wealthy swindler. "The defendant is innocent. You forged the document

The entrance to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol's study where he learned with Eliyahu Hanavi

in order to deceitfully extract exorbitant sums of money from him. Admit your guilt; otherwise you will suffer immediate retribution from Heaven."

The plaintiff was compelled to shamefully confess that he had indeed forged the document in order to take revenge for his loss in the case of the window. He admitted his corrupt conduct before Rabbi Chaim and resolved never to behave this way again. Ultimately, the wealthy man achieved atonement for his sin (*Shevach Chaim*).

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Tzaddik Decrees

No Locust Left

The city of Mogador experienced years of famine and suffering in which many of the residents became impoverished and even lost their lives, perishing in hunger and thirst.

Every few years, a plague of locusts would strike. Flocks of locusts would raid the fields and orchards, leaving them bare of produce. The plague would lead to a sharp rise in the price of food, causing a huge financial crisis and widespread poverty.

One year, when the locusts descended in masses upon the city of Mogador, the people were panic-stricken, anticipating the extensive losses that would follow.

At this difficult time, the Jews of Mogador beseeched Hashem for mercy, as their ancestors had done in times of trouble. A day of fasting and prayer was designated throughout Morocco. Unfortunately the Jews of Mogador were not spared. They suffered greatly.

In the midst of the plague, just as Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was engaged in learning with his students, the house suddenly turned dark. Hordes of locusts descended and clouded the atmosphere. Some of the locusts covered the sefarim of the students, making it impossible for them to continue learning.

Rabbi Chaim halted his lesson. He took out his shofar and began to blow, in order to avert the terrible decree. Afterward,

he prayed fervently, citing the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. He did not stop beseeching Hashem until the decree was annulled. Suddenly, western winds began to blow, scattering the locusts and saving the city.

The Excommunication of Adar Bet

Hard times came upon Morocco. Half the month of Adar Bet had already elapsed and not a drop of rain had fallen to dampen the earth.

The Jews of Mogador approached Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, beseeching him to save them from their troubles and pray for them. There was already a great shortage of wheat, and with tears streaming from their faces they begged the tzaddik to arouse Heavenly mercy.

Rabbi Chaim declared, "Tomorrow, everyone should gather in the Beit Hakeneset. Do not eat or drink. Immerse yourselves in prayer and afterward head toward the cemetery, where we will await Hashem's salvation."

The old cemetery in Mogador

The next day, there was a public announcement about the mandatory fast day designated for communal prayer. The crowd

gathered in the Beit Hakeneset to pray, and when they concluded their supplications, everyone went to the cemetery, with Rabbi Chaim heading the procession.

Rabbi Chaim stood next to one of the tombstones and asked his attendant to proclaim loudly, "Adar Bet is excommunicated! Adar Bet is excommunicated! Adar Bet is excommunicated!"

The attendant did as he was told, even though he did not understand the extraordinary procedures, which were way beyond his grasp. Just as he was waiting to see how things would develop, Rabbi Chaim called out in a loud voice, "Adar Bet, we allow you; Adar Bet, we forgive you; Adar Bet, we permit you," just as one states in the procedure for annulling vows.

Rabbi Chaim concluded the ritual and turned to go home, with all the people following behind him.

As the congregants made their way to their homes, the skies suddenly opened, and torrents of rain came pouring down.

It is told that before the people were able to reach their homes, their clothing was soaked from the rain that descended in the merit of the tzaddik's prayers.

A Half of a Day Which Is Good

People knew that it was customary to leave some money to help support the poor and needy people when they visited Rabbi Chaim. There were those who brought a variety of foods in order for the Rav to distribute them as he saw fit. Rabbi Chaim actively engaged in charity, sustaining the destitute throughout his life.

One day, a woman came to Rabbi Chaim's house with two live chickens, which she wished to donate to the poor. Rabbi Chaim turned to his scribe, Rabbi Shlomo Azulai, and asked him to hurry and slaughter the birds in order that he could feed the poor people.

Rabbi Shlomo responded that he was busy at the moment and had other things to tend to. He informed the Rav that he would

be able to fulfill his request in the afternoon; he would then slaughter the chickens for the needy.

The reason why, in fact, this student refused to fulfill the Rav's request immediately is not clear. Perhaps he was involved in another mitzvah and therefore thought that it took priority over slaughtering the chickens for the poor.

Rabbi Chaim declared, "I see that you don't want to assist me in the mitzvah of *tzedakah*. So be it. Today you will experience half a day that is good, but the second half will be bad."

The words of the Rav seemed strange. Rabbi Shlomo remained silent and went on his way.

A police station in Mogador

While walking through the streets of the city, he met a gentile woman, who offered to sell him gold coins at a cheap price. He did not find this deal suspicious. Really, the woman was scheming to bring him to sin with her, because she was captivated by his good looks.

After he purchased the coins and turned to go on his way, the woman called to him and said, "I live close by. If you want to purchase additional gold coins, I have many more in my house. If you wish, I can sell them to you."

The evil scheme succeeded, and Rabbi Shlomo followed her to her house. As soon as his feet crossed the threshold of her home, she locked the door behind him and told him, "I can give you many more good things for free! But only if you will do as I wish…"

Rabbi Shlomo was terrified. He frantically sought an escape, but the woman would not allow it. She threatened him, attempting to scare him into submission. When all her efforts failed, she took a big rod and banged him hard over his head, causing him to bleed heavily and fall faint on the floor.

Then, the woman ran to the police station. She told the officers that a Jew had entered her house and had tried to seduce her. She had banged him over his head and now he lay bruised in her home.

The commissioner, who was a virulent anti-Semite, sent police officers to her house to find the man, dead or alive, and bring him to the police station in order to publicly humiliate this Jew, who had attempted to seduce a gentile woman.

As the policemen were rushing to her house, Rabbi Shlomo regained consciousness, gathered his remaining strength, and ran away as quickly as he could.

The police searched the house thoroughly, but did not find anyone. They returned to the commissioner and reported this to him. The commissioner became enraged at the woman who had fabricated the tale, and as a penalty, ordered that she be lashed. During the interrogation, she admitted the truth. She had attempted to seduce the Jewish man.

The commissioner was furious and ordered that she be administered one hundred lashes and thereafter be imprisoned.

Rabbi Shlomo Azulai continued running away. He came to a place called Elchadad, where he slowed down and began to reflect on all that had happened. He recalled that Rabbi Chaim

had mentioned he would have a half a day that was bad, but that the second half would be good.

In the afternoon, he arrived at a place called El-Ksarya Del Batan. He found himself in a large marketplace, where people sold fabrics and sheep. Rabbi Shlomo decided to rest a bit and calm down from the events of the day.

As he was clearing a spot where he could lie down, Rabbi Shlomo moved a stone and to his amazement, he discovered a treasure of silver and gold buried in the ground. He took the valuables and purchased fabrics and sheep. He sold them and bought more stock. Thus, he began to trade, and as the tzaddik had predicted, in the second half of the day, he experienced much success in his endeavors.

In the evening, Rabbi Shlomo returned to Rabbi Chaim's house and told him everything that had happened, from beginning to end. After begging Rabbi Chaim's forgiveness, the Rav told him, "Surely now, when you will be asked again to assist the poor, you will hurry to do so with joy."

Subsequent to this incident, the Jews of Mogador used to ask in jest, "How are you doing on the second half of the day?"

As a Cooing Dove

Once, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, who had an exceptional concentration span, felt there was something disturbing his Avodat Hashem. He understood that some sort of impurity was preventing him from concentrating in his study of the Torah.

When he confided his predicament to his friend, Rabbi Yehuda Russo, zt"l, his friend led him to the grave of the holy tzaddik Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, who had been Rabbi Chaim's teacher, and whose position he had filled as Rabbi. When they reached his burial spot, a white dove flew out from the grave and disappeared.

Rabbi Yehuda Russo explained to his friend the reason for this strange occurrence, "Obviously, some *dybbuk* or *kelippah*

prevented you from concentrating in your Avodat Hashem, since the *dybbuk* is created when you develop novel ideas in Torah. This is because it wishes to weaken the strength of the Torah. However, the merit of your teacher stood in your stead, and the *dybbuk* left you via his grave in the form of a white dove, in order not to frighten you."

Why specifically a white dove? Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, clarified this as follows: "We can explain it according to what I heard from the tzaddik Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy"a, a few days before his passing. It is because Knesset Yisrael is compared to a dove, and the color white symbolizes holiness. Knesset Yisrael connects to Hashem and then they resemble a cooing dove. We may assume that when a person has a *dybbuk*, the dove coos, since the person is weakened in the study of Torah. When the *dybbuk* departs, then the dove is white. If it does not depart, Knesset Yisrael remains permanently in pain."

Pronounce My Name

Rabbi Massoud Ben Ahbu, zt"l, one of the wise scholars of Marrakesh, would frequently come to the city of Mogador. He would always make sure to visit his Rav, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. Once, he requested the tzaddik's blessings for a safe trip.

He was taken aback when Rabbi Chaim refused to bless him and furthermore, instructed him not to leave the city.

Two days later, Rabbi Massoud came to Rabbi Chaim again, hoping this time to receive his blessings for a safe trip home. However, to his astonishment, Rabbi Chaim refused to bless him and again forbade him to leave the city.

On Thursday, the third time that Rabbi Massoud came to the Rav, he told Rabbi Chaim that he had to start back home in order to reach his house in Marrakesh before the commencement of Shabbat. Rabbi Chaim suggested, "Since I see that you are in a rush to return home and do not want to wait any longer, go. However, if you will encounter danger, cry out to me and call my

name. Even if you will be far away, pronounce my name, *Rabbi Chaim Pinto*, and you will experience unbelievable miracles."

Rabbi Massoud nodded in consent and took Rabbi Chaim's words to heart.

In the midst of his journey, highway robbers attacked his wagon. They prepared to kill him and steal all his possessions. Then, Rabbi Massoud remembered Rabbi Chaim's advice and began to call loudly, praying that the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto should protect him.

All of a sudden, the thugs heard an unexpected noise and a voice was heard from a distance shouting, "Thieves, thieves!" Panic broke out among them, and they feared for their lives. They abandoned Rabbi Massoud and fled in terror. Rabbi Massoud recovered from his shock and realized that Hashem had miraculously saved him. The merit of the tzaddik had protected his life. When he arrived home safely, he told his family about the great miracle that he had experienced (*Shenot Chaim* and *Mekor Chaim*).

Dropping Dead

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol once informed a person that his time had come to die. However, there was something he could do to avert his terrible fate. Since it was decreed upon him to die only in the city, he could be saved from death if he would leave it.

The man listened to the advice of the tzaddik and left the city.

Nevertheless, every day, the man would send messengers to the tzaddik to ask him if perhaps the decree had been cancelled, so that he could return home. Rabbi Chaim repeatedly warned him not to enter the city, since the decree was still in effect.

He began to long for his home and decided to return to his wife and family without the tzaddik's permission. As he stepped into the gates of the city, he dropped dead. Concerning this, Chazal

say (*Sukkah* 53a) "A man's feet are responsible for him; they lead him to the place where he is wanted."

Amazing Treasures

Once, while Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was in his study learning Torah, his daughter Sara entered the adjoining room.

Suddenly, she noticed a hidden opening leading to another chamber. Sara peered inside and discovered an enormous treasure. She entered the chamber and began collecting silver and gold valuables.

Her father the tzaddik sensed the scene through Divine inspiration and immediately warned his daughter to leave the room. She instantly complied, and then her father said, "You are very lucky that you left the room just in time. If you had stayed a bit longer, the wall would have closed in on you, and you would never have been able to come out!"

He added, "Whatever you succeeded in taking from the chamber of treasures is yours to keep. Save it for your dowry" (*Shenot Chaim*).

This story spread throughout the city, and many people sought to uncover the entrance to the chamber filled with treasures in Rabbi Chaim's house. However, his grandson, the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zy"a, never dared look for the treasure. He maintained, "If Hashem wants to reveal it, He will perform a miracle and open the door to the treasures, just as He did for the daughter of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol."

Water in the Middle of the Desert

Once, when war was raging in Mogador, many of the Jews fled for their lives. Since he feared invasion of the enemies, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol also escaped to the countryside with his family, accompanied by a group of his students.

In middle of their journey, enemy soldiers attacked them and

threatened to kill the Rav. However, just then, a local soldier showed up and shot the enemies, saving him.

After covering more distance, the heat became oppressive and the travelers were extremely thirsty. Rabbi Chaim approached his student, Rabbi Yaakov Ben Shabbat, author of the sefer *Ruach Yaakov* on the Torah, and asked him to search for water.

Rabbi Yaakov wondered to himself, "Where will I find water in the middle of the desert?" However, since he desired to fulfill the Rav's will, he went to search for a source of water, against the dictates of logic.

As he was wandering around, he noticed a black man carrying a large container of water on his shoulder. The black man handed the container to Rabbi Yaakov, and told him to deliver it to Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

The scene seemed as if it was written in a story book. However, the reality of the situation was clear. He was actually holding a container of drinking water in his hands!

When he returned to Rabbi Chaim, Rabbi Yaakov confided all that had transpired. The tzaddik did not seem surprised in the least. He turned to Rabbi Yaakov and said, "The black man that you met was none other than my master, my father, Rabbi Shlomo, who came from the Upper Worlds in order to revive me. Regarding this Chazal explain, 'Tzaddikim in their deaths are considered living,' and his merit stood in our stead to help us survive our journey in the desert."

It is not by coincidence that the tzaddik appeared in the form of a black man. It is because the term *cushi* (black man) hints to a handsome person, corresponding to what Chazal say, "Beautiful tzaddikim, who engage in beautiful deeds." This is similar to what is written in the Torah about Tzipporah, the wife of Moshe. She is described as a Cushite, and Rashi explains (*Bamidbar* 12:1) that "everybody admitted to her beauty, just as all admit to the darkness of a Cushite… You can have a woman who is pleasing in her beauty, but not pleasing in her actions, or a woman who

is pleasing in her actions, but not in her beauty. But this one was pleasing in all respects." The Torah also states (*Amos* 9:7), "Behold, you are like the children of the Cushites to Me, O Children of Israel" (*Shenot Chaim*).

Shabbat Protects

Rabbi Yaakov Ben Shabbat, the student of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol was called by this name because of an amazing experience he had.

It is told that Rabbi Yaakov once traveled in a convoy of donkeys with a group of Jews. When Erev Shabbat arrived, Rabbi Yaakov turned to the people in his group and informed them, "Soon Shabbat will commence, and we will not be permitted to continue riding. Therefore, we must rest here in the woods until Motza'ei Shabbat. Afterward, we will be able to continue on our journey, with the help of G-d."

The members of the group opposed his suggestion. It did not seem to be a viable option at all. "The area is very dangerous," they said. "There are many wild animals roaming around. We must continue traveling."

Rabbi Yaakov's pleas to halt fell on deaf ears. In the end, the convoy continued their journey and left him stranded and alone in the vast forest.

Rabbi Yaakov, who possessed strong faith in Hashem, began to prepare for Shabbat Kodesh. He placed a few stones around himself in a circle for protection. Then, he tied his donkey to a tree, lit candles in honor of Shabbat, and began to pray.

Suddenly, he saw an enormous lion in front of him, with its mouth wide open. (Two hundred years ago, lions were found in the plains of Morocco). Rabbi Yaakov was terrified and raised his hands to the heavens, begging Hashem to save him.

As he was praying, an old man appeared before him, and told him, "Do not fear, and do not panic!"

Thus, he calmed down and began to conduct his Shabbat feast with serenity. The entire time, the lion stood guard near the circle of stones, protecting him from other wild animals.

On Motza'ei Shabbat, Rabbi Yaakov saddled his donkey and prepared to continue on his journey. However, the lion approached him and lowered its head as if suggesting to Rabbi Yaakov, "Climb on my back and ride me."

Rabbi Yaakov climbed up and placed all his belongs on the lion. Then, it galloped away. Within a few minutes he found himself back in the city, far away from the forest.

His acquaintances were startled to see Rabbi Yaakov. They accused him of desecrating Shabbat, because he had returned to the city so soon after the termination of Shabbat. However, Rabbi Yaakov told them of his extraordinary experience, recounting what had transpired from the moment that he had parted from the convoy until he had reached the city, riding on the back of a lion.

The amazing story quickly turned into the talk of the town. Everyone believed its authenticity. It was reinforced when the remains of the members of the convoy that had deserted Rabbi Yaakov were found in the forest. Unfortunately, all the people who had continued on their journey on Shabbat had been attacked by a herd of lions. Only Rabbi Yaakov had survived.

From that day on, people began to call him Rabbi Yaakov Ben Shabbat, in memory of the miracle that was done to him in the merit of Shabbat. Ultimately, Shabbat Kodesh protected him from all harm. So too, will Hashem perform miracles and wonders for all those who observe the Shabbat (*Shevach Chaim*).

A Satisfying Explanation

A *shaliach* from Eretz Yisrael arrived in Marrakesh, in order to collect money for the poor people in the Holy Land. While delving into the commentary of the Ibn Ezra, zt"l, there was something which was not clear to him, and he could not resolve

the issue. He consulted the Torah scholars of Marrakesh, but no one succeeded in clarifying the matter.

One day, the *shaliach* found himself in Mogador. There, he heard about Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, and he decided to go to the tzaddik and present his question to him.

Rabbi Chaim proceeded to explain the topic in a clear, profound manner, until the *shaliach* was completely satisfied.

When the *shaliach* returned to Marrakesh, he related what he had learned. Everyone recognized Rabbi Chaim's outstanding greatness in Torah, and realized that he had achieved unusually lofty heights.

Eventually, the *shaliach* returned to Eretz Yisrael. He publicized the depth and greatness of Rabbi Chaim Pinto in Torah. From then on, the scholars of Eretz Yisrael would send the questions that baffled them to Rabbi Chaim for clarification, corresponding frequently. Rabbi Chaim would resolve their issues (*Shenot Chaim*).

Halting the Angel of Death

The year 1844 (5604) was a very difficult one for the people of Mogador. There were many harsh decrees levied at the Jews. The French bombed the city from the sea, and many Jews were either slaughtered, died in starvation, or fell captive. It was a period of mourning for the House of Jacob.

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol fought valiantly to save his brethren who were plundered and looted. In the merit of his Torah and prayers, he succeeded in preventing the enemies from entering the city.

Moreover, Rabbi Chaim's faithful *shamash*, Rabbi Uzi Saliman Ben Chaim, zt"l, testifies that from then on the Angel of Death was not permitted to enter Mogador unless Rabbi Chaim Pinto authorized it (*Shenot Chaim* and *Mekor Chaim*).

Reward in This World

When Rabbi Chaim was approximately seventy-eight years old, war broke out between Spain and Morocco. Rabbi Chaim sought help to escape the city and stood at the entrance of the Mellah calling, "Whoever will transport me to safety will be assured of a portion in the World to Come."

There was a man standing nearby called Uzi Ukah. When he heard the tzaddik's announcement, he immediately offered, "Honorable Rabbi! I am prepared to do whatever the Rav requests at once."

The Jew proceeded to transport the Rav outside of the city to safety. Ultimately, in his merit, the Rav survived the terrible war.

After taking Rabbi Chaim to safety, Uzi thirstily searched for water. He came upon a well, and began to draw water. To his amazement, he discovered a treasure of silver and gold, precious stones and pearls stashed in the bottom. One of the residents had hidden his valuables in the well, hoping to recover them after the war ended.

Uzi was overjoyed by the treasures and hurried to Rabbi Chaim's shelter to share the happy tidings with him. The tzaddik joyfully declared, "This is only your payment in this world; however, the principal is stored for you in the World to Come, just as I promised."

His descendants testify that he became exceedingly wealthy, as the pasuk states, "From the trash heaps He lifts the destitute." He

enjoyed long life, because of the mitzvah which he performed by saving Rabbi Chaim Pinto from the dangers of the war. He also merited fulfillment of the promise, "The principal remains for him in the World to Come" (*Shenot Chaim*).

Exile Atones

In Elul 1844 (5604), a year before Rabbi Chaim passed away, Mogador was ravaged by war between the Moroccans and the French. Many people were forced to escape from the city with their wives and children until the danger passed. They sought relief from the hunger and plagues that struck the city.

It is truly baffling. Why didn't the tzaddik pray to Hashem that the war should not strike the city? After all, in the merit of his intense holiness, Rabbi Chaim could protect the entire world; certainly he could have ensured that the city of Mogador would not be destroyed.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu explains this as follows. "We know that a harsh decree can be averted by suffering exile instead. Therefore, Rabbi Chaim preferred that people leave their homes and suffer exile, instead of, *chas v'chalilah*, risking their lives by remaining in the city."

A Righteous Gentile

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol joined some people leaving the city on foot, since all horses and wagons were reserved for the army. During his escape, a virulent anti-Semite attacked the Rav, lifting his hand to strike him. Miraculously, his hand became permanently paralyzed in mid-air.

At the time, the Rav was eighty-six years old, and the journey was extremely taxing for him. His son the tzaddik Rabbi Hadan, zy"a, lifted his father onto his shoulders. They journeyed an entire day in this manner, until they arrived at the city of Azgar. There they stayed in the house of the minister of the city, Chaz Abdallah, who was a righteous gentile. The minister Abdallah provided for

the Rav and his family with dignity. He protected the family the entire period, saving them from starvation and harm.

After the war ended, Rabbi Chaim and his family parted from the minister. The Rav blessed him with much success in the merit of the kindness that he had shown him and his family (*Shenot Chaim*).

Almonds for Sale

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol had two pious and god-fearing friends who engaged in business, enjoying much success in their endeavors.

One year, there was an abundant crop of almonds, and the two merchants purchased large quantities in order to sell them in London. However, to their misfortune, they received a letter from the authorities in London informing them that the almonds were not suitable for consumption and had consequently been banned. They could not be marketed anywhere because they posed a health hazard.

Distressed, the merchants turned to the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim.

"What happened to you?"

"We invested all our capital in almonds. However, we were informed that the almonds are not good and had been banned. Moreover, we are not allowed to market them to any other retailer selling almonds."

The tzaddik advised them, "Do not worry. First of all, write a letter to the authorities stating that the almonds are excellent merchandise. They are tasty and suitable for consumption. Meanwhile, store the almonds."

Three months later, there was suddenly a large demand for almonds. Their value rose sharply to unprecedented heights. The two merchants approached Rabbi Chaim and asked him how to proceed.

The tzaddik told them, "If the profit is substantial, you may sell

the almonds. Write to the authorities again informing them that the almonds are very good and should not be banned."

They did as the Rav told them and ultimately were able to sell them, earning a substantial profit from the sale.

This was the greatness of the tzaddik. Everything that he predicted materialized in the merit of his intense holiness (*Shevach Chaim*).

Hidden and Revealed

Once, a distinguished looking person visited the city of Mogador. He had the appearance of a Torah scholar, and the people were excited about his visit and accorded him great honor. However, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol blatantly ignored the visitor.

This baffled the people. They could not understand why Rabbi Chaim was ignoring the esteemed visitor. When the people approached Rabbi Chaim to invite him to join the scholar's lecture, he flatly refused.

"Why doesn't the Rav want to hear the lecture?" the townspeople asked him. In response, Rabbi Chaim warned, "You will regret going to hear his speech."

On Shabbat, the scholar received an *aliyah* for the Torah and pledged a substantial sum of money for the Beit Hakeneset. During Minchah he lectured to the townspeople, and a huge crowd gathered to hear him.

After the speech, the entire congregation accompanied the speaker to the port, since he was supposed to depart immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbat.

When Rabbi Chaim noticed the throngs following the scholar to the dock, he warned, "You will yet return disappointed…"

When they reached the port, the "Torah scholar" boarded the ship on Shabbat, took out a cigarette from his pocket and began smoking publicly.

The townspeople were shocked. They could not believe their

eyes. How could a Torah authority behave in this way? The alleged scholar also proceeded to show them that he was uncircumcised. To everyone's bewilderment, he openly declared that he was not Jewish. He had just amassed Torah knowledge by listening to lectures!

The incident caused great commotion. Amidst the turmoil, the people rushed to Rabbi Chaim and informed him of what had transpired at the port.

"Did I not tell you that in the end you would be disappointed?"

"Rabbeinu! How did you know? How did you know that this alleged scholar was really a gentile? You must possess Divine inspiration."

The tzaddik answered, "It is not through Divine inspiration, nor supernatural powers. I am not a prophet, nor the son of prophets. I perceived the truth by what is written in the Torah. It states (*Mishlei* 6:23), "For a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light." The Zohar reveals that only Jews sway when they learn Torah, while gentiles do not move while learning. This is because "a man's soul is the light of Hashem" (*Mishlei* 20:27). The soul resembles a candle, which is never extinguished. A Jew who learns Torah sways as a candle that waves from side to side. Since gentiles do not possess a *neshamah* from the Upper Worlds, they do not sway to and fro, but sit still.

"My dear people, I saw this alleged scholar studying Torah without moving. I realized right away that he had never stood at the foot of Har Sinai, and does not possess a holy *neshamah*. It was clear that he was not of Jewish descent."

"If so, why did you not inform us that he is not Jewish?!"

The Rav patiently explained, "My sons, I wanted to teach you a lesson. If a stranger whom you do not know visits your community and requests to deliver a lecture, do not rush to listen to him unless you carefully investigate his authenticity. One should not

listen to Torah lectures from anyone, only from a source who is clearly G-d fearing."

The people accepted the tzaddik's gentle rebuke, taking it to heart (*Shevach Chaim*).

Woe Is to Me!

Once, there was a terrible drought in Mogador. The people's prayers went unanswered. They cried and begged Hashem to send rain, but no clouds appeared. In anguish, they turned to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, so that he should pray for salvation. They all gathered in his house and began to recite Tehillim. While they were praying, Rabbi Chaim dozed off, falling into a deep sleep.

Everyone was taken aback. How could the Rav fall asleep precisely at this critical time? However, out of respect they did not say anything, but continued to recite Tehillim.

In his dream, the Rav saw one of the townspeople involved in a despicable immoral act. He woke up in distress. Turning to the crowd gathered in his home, he asked if the person whom he had seen in his dream was present. The people confirmed that he was not among them. Rabbi Chaim ordered everyone to go out and look for him, without sparing any efforts.

The congregants spread out over the city and went from house to house, but could not find him. They returned to Rabbi Chaim and reported that the man was not to be found. Rabbi Chaim persisted, urging them not to give up their search.

After a while, someone spotted the person. Everyone's excitement mounted, and within a few minutes he was brought before the Rav.

"What were you doing while everyone gathered to pray?" Rabbi Chaim asked the man. "Why didn't you join the people in prayer?"

The culprit began to fabricate excuses. But, the Rav told him

fumingly, "Admit the truth at once! Do *teshuvah* immediately, because you are about to die."

The moment the words escaped the Rav's mouth, the sinner fell faint on the floor. Rabbi Chaim ordered all the assembled members to recite the prayers for the departure of the *neshamah*. When they finished the prayers, the man took his final breath and died.

Within an hour, the skies opened up, and blessed rain poured down. A short while later, Rabbi Chaim sent his attendant to call the woman who had sinned with the dead man to his house.

Rabbi Chaim commanded her to describe exactly what had taken place. In a choking voice, the woman recounted how this man had continuously badgered her, seducing her to sin. At the time that everyone had gathered to pray in the Rav's house, he came to her house and violated her. She had screamed for help, but no one heard her. "Woe is to me!" she sobbed.

Rabbi Chaim listened to her testimony and confirmed that she was telling the truth. He quickly gave her a *tikkun* for the grave sin that had been committed. He informed her in front of all the people that she was prohibited to her husband. Everyone was impressed by the lofty holiness of the Rav and realized that he merited Divine assistance in revealing man's hidden deeds.

The Truth Revealed

Since Mogador is one of the main port cities of Morocco and a leading commercial district, it is a developed and modernized city. Consequently, it suffered greatly from the Enlightenment. Ideas and ideologies alien to Torah values penetrated the homes of the people. Rabbi Chaim Hagadol endeavored laboriously to save the community from these dangerous influences.

Rabbi Shlomo Knafo relates the following incident:

A member of the community humiliatingly confided to Rabbi

Chaim that he suspected his wife of being unfaithful. He consulted with the Rav how to begin the proceedings for divorce.

The Rav was shaken. He quickly called the wife.

"Is what I heard about you true? If it is, then do *teshuvah* at once."

The woman denied the story and argued that she had never been unfaithful. She insisted that she was innocent and was permitted to remain with her husband.

"If so," said Rabbi Chaim, "let us verify if your testimony is true or not." He proceeded to open a Sefer Torah, turning to parashat *Naso*. While the woman was standing at his side, he read the entire parashah of the *sotah*. When he finished, he sent the woman home with her husband.

On their way, the woman experienced sharp pains, centering around her womb and thighs. She fell down writhing in pain, until her soul departed.

Labor Pains

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was an honored guest at all affairs in Mogador, since everyone recognized his loftiness and great holiness. The people felt privileged when he participated in their celebrations.

One day, he was invited to a *brit milah* by one of the members of his congregation. Rabbi Chaim joined him in the *simchah*. After the *milah*, everyone began to eat the *seudat mitzvah*, as is customary. During the feast, a local woman suddenly rushed in and cried to the Rav that her daughter was experiencing difficulty giving birth, and her life was in danger.

To the surprise of all those present, Rabbi Chaim disregarded her, not even glancing in her direction.

"My daughter is in danger!" she continued to cry, "She may lose her life. I beg you, Rav Chaim, please pray for her that she

should give birth in good health and she should not be harmed, neither her nor the baby."

The Rav continued with the feast, not responding to the woman. The guests were surprised at his conduct. There were those who were upset that he ignored the woman at such a critical time. However, no one dared say a word. They understood that there must be a hidden motive behind the Rav's uncharacteristic behavior.

When the woman finished speaking, the Rav ordered the father of the baby to bring *mayim acharonim* to the table, and all the guests washed their hands. They recited the *Birkat Hamazon* with great concentration. Afterward, the tzaddik turned to the participants and told them, "Come with me to the woman giving birth and you will understand why I subdued my natural compassion."

When they arrived at her house, Rabbi Chaim asked to enter the woman's room. She was lying there, moaning from her unbearable contractions. The Rav asked her, "Tell me the truth. Did someone sin with you on the eve that you immersed yourself in the *mikveh*? You must admit the truth. If not, you will die here."

The woman burst out crying and admitted that it was true. However, she maintained that she was innocent.

"What happened?" asked Rabbi Chaim. The woman answered tearfully, "That night, my husband got drunk. He went out roaming the streets and did not return until late at night. Meanwhile, his partner entered my home and asked me if my husband had already returned from his drunken expedition. I told him that he had not yet returned, but was expected at any moment. Then he grabbed me against my will and violated me. I was at home alone, and there was no one to save me. I shouted loudly, but no one heard me."

Rabbi Chaim knew that her testimony was true. "I am aware of

what really took place," he told her, "however, I wanted to test your integrity and honesty."

Rabbi Chaim immediately calmed her down and told her that she would survive her crisis and give birth safely. He added that he could not promise her anything about the nature of her unborn child, and that the one who had violated her would receive retribution from Heaven.

Just as the Rav predicted, the woman gave birth safely, and the sinner received his punishment from Heaven.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu with the Moroccan Prime Minister at the inauguration of the street named after Rabbi Chaim Pinto

CHAPTER EIGHT

Burning Coals

Our Sages teach us the great obligation to honor Torah scholars. They say "Beware of their glowing coal lest you be burnt – for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like fiery coals."

The *Shulchan Aruch* considers honoring scholars a mandatory *halachah*, stating (*Yoreh De'ah* 143:6): "It is a grave sin to degrade Torah scholars, or to despise them. Anyone who degrades scholars forfeits his portion in the World to Come. It is considered as if the word of Hashem was shamed."

The following stories illustrate this principle.

The Chickens Come to Life

Every Monday and Thursday, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol would collect *tzedakah* for needy families. Once while sitting outside collecting, the following incident occurred:

One of the ministers of the king, who lived in Mogador, planned to prepare a lavish feast for his fellow ministers. Since it was his custom to eat chickens that were slaughtered only by Jews, the minister sent his servants to the Jewish *shochet's* house with baskets laden with fattened chickens.

In their great haste, the servants began to run while carrying the baskets of live chickens. They passed by Rabbi Chaim, who was

sitting on a chair in the Mellah. Some of the servants bumped straight in to the tzaddik's chair, sending him sprawling.

The servants did not retrace their steps in order to help the Rav up, nor did they apologize for their misdeed.

Their punishment did not take long in coming. When they arrived at the *shochet's* house, they were astonished to see that all the chickens had died. There was nothing left for the *shochet* to slaughter.

The minister, who was waiting impatiently, was surprised to see his servants returning empty handed and with downcast expressions. The servants reported to him the strange tale, how suddenly, without prior warning, all the chickens had died.

The minister did not believe their bizarre story. His blood pressure rose dangerously, since the feast was scheduled to begin in just a few hours. He demanded, "Did something unusual happen on the way to justify this strange occurrence?"

No one could say. Actually, even those who did recall the incident feared to admit what they had done. In the end, one of the servants bravely declared, "My master, maybe it happened because of the Rabbi of the Jews."

The streets of the city

This suggestion did not please the minister. "What does the Rabbi of the Jews have to do with dead chickens?" he asked scornfully.

"When we passed through the Mellah," the servant explained, "we were rushing to the *shochet's* house, in order to fulfill your request. A few servants bumped into the Rabbi and he fell off his chair."

"Who is this Rabbi? Describe him to me!" the minister demanded. The servant described the Rav's appearance, his saintly countenance and dignified attire.

"It is Rabbi Chaim Pinto!" cried the minister, who knew the Rav well. He immediately ordered his servants to return to the Jewish quarter and beg the Rav's forgiveness.

"Thereafter," he commanded, "you must lift the Rabbi on your shoulders and carry him to the palace with great honor."

A great *kiddush Hashem* was made when Rabbi Chaim was led throughout the streets of the city to the house of the minister. The minister pleaded before him, "Please, holy Rabbi, do everything within your powers to revive the chickens. Tonight, I am making a grand banquet for many important ministers, and if I will not have tasty chickens to serve them, I will suffer public humiliation. I beg you, Rabbi, do everything in your power for my sake."

After much pleading, Rabbi Chaim agreed. He asked that the chickens be brought to him. Then he lifted his cane and tapped them. To everyone's amazement, the chickens came to life, running around merrily, oblivious to the shocked spectators.

Finally, the moment of retribution had arrived for the errant servants. The minister ordered them to be hanged. However, Rabbi Chaim interceded, "Do not harm them. I only ask of you to command them never to run wildly in the Jewish quarter."

The minister accepted the Rav's request, and the honor of the tzaddik rose tenfold among the servants of the minister. From then on, whenever a gentile would walk through the Mellah, he would do so slowly and calmly.

Following this incident, Rabbi Chaim was revered by all the non-Jews, and held in great esteem. (This story is famous among the Jews of Morocco, and Rav Moshe Aharon would often repeat it.)

An Enemy Who Turned into a Friend

The minister of Mogador was an avowed anti-Semite. However, because of the following incident, he changed his attitude and ultimately became a friend of the Jews. The story is told as follows:

The minister of the city enjoyed harassing the Jews at every opportunity. Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was no exception, and the minister would frequently pester him as well.

Once, when Rabbi Chaim was passing by the minister's house with one of his students, the minister spotted them from his window. He ordered his attendant to bring them before him immediately.

The attendant, who recognized the great stature of the tzaddik, cautiously advised, "This Jew is one of the saintliest Jewish Rabbis in the city. Perhaps it is preferable not to harass him."

The minister was not impressed with his attendant's warning and demanded to have the Jews brought in. When Rabbi Chaim entered, the minister noticed that his trousers were longer than those generally worn. This was characteristic of Rabbi Chaim's exceptional modesty. He wore trousers that reached his shoes, in order not to expose even a hand's breadth of his limbs.

The minister glared at the Rabbi's feet and remarked, "Why are your trousers longer than usual? They are not appropriate. Beware! If I will catch you once again wearing such long trousers, I will arrange to have you soundly lashed."

The Rav did not respond to the minister's scornful words. He left the palace in absolute silence.

That night, the minister woke up from an intense throbbing pain wracking his body. It seemed as if demons were attacking him

and beating him relentlessly. It was uncanny. Moreover, despite his loud cries, his attendants did not rush to his side.

In the morning, his servants lined up at his bedside. They all offered advice and support to help ease the excruciating pain, but to no avail. The throbbing pain persisted, and the evil minister suffered bitterly.

News of the minister's mysterious ailment spread quickly throughout the city. Many people came to help ease his agony and find a cure. One person suggested one treatment, while another attempted a different therapy, but without success.

There were those who claimed that demons had entered him. There were others who blamed it on his new house, which he had just moved into at that time, suggesting that it was haunted. Many people came up with various theories, but no one could eliminate his discomfort.

The torturous pain intensified as time elapsed. He spent the first night in absolute agony. On the second night, the minister could not sleep at all. He screamed in pain all night. In the morning, he sent his attendants to summon the biggest doctors. However, all was in vain.

There was a righteous gentile living at the time in Mogador who was a friend of the Jews. He knew who Rabbi Chaim Pinto was, and had heard how the minister had humiliated the Rav in his house.

The man hurried to the minister, who was writhing in pain and told him, "It seems that you are suffering because you shamed the holy Rabbi, Rav Chaim Pinto. He is a saintly and righteous man, and you sinned greatly by treating him like one of the common people. If you will not beg his forgiveness, your pain will never subside."

His words fell on receptive ears. The minister immediately made the connection between the two incidents and sent the man,

laden with provisions as a gift for Rabbi Chaim, in order to beg his forgiveness.

The man hurried to Rabbi Chaim's house, where he was greeted by his wife. She informed him that the Rav was not home, and if he wished to meet him, he would have to wait until he returned home from the Beit Hakeneset.

When Rabbi Chaim returned home, the man fell to his feet and begged him to forgive the minister, so that he should be cured from his illness. However, Rabbi Chaim informed him that the minister had not yet suffered enough to atone for his wrongdoing. He would have to endure even more agony that night, and only in the morning would he be cured from his illness.

The righteous gentile begged Rabbi Chaim again to forgive the minister and heal him immediately. In the end, Rabbi Chaim conceded to the man's incessant pleas, and declared that he wholeheartedly pardoned the minister.

The tzaddik secluded himself in the corner of his room and began to pray that the minister should be healed. Then, he instructed the man to return all the provisions that he had brought, since they were not kosher. "Tonight, he will sleep peacefully," Rabbi Chaim promised.

Just as Rabbi Chaim had predicted, so it was. That night, after the friend repeated to the minister what Rabbi Chaim had said, describing how he had prayed on his behalf, the minister was

finally able to sleep peacefully. Thus, he recognized the loftiness of Rabbi Chaim, who had sanctified Hashem's Name greatly through this incident.

From then on, the minister stopped harassing the Jews, and he turned from being their enemy to being their staunch supporter and friend (*Shenot Chaim*).

In Dire Straits

Once, an anti-Semitic kadi, who was considered an important minister of the government, entered the Beit Hakeneset. The kadi began arguing with Rabbi Chaim about various religious issues. The opinions of Rabbi Chaim were not acceptable to him, and consequently, he had Rabbi Chaim imprisoned.

Just a few hours later, the wicked kadi suddenly dropped dead. Rabbi Chaim was set free.

In memory of the miracle, the tzaddik composed a beautiful verse, beginning with the words:

"Locking me up, falling in his trap; a fiend, enemy, and tormentor, placing me in dire straits." (As heard.)

The Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu

The governor of the city of Marrakesh arrived in Mogador and stayed as a guest in the house of the minister of the city. The two discussed religious matters and exchanged opinions. Their conversation led to a heated debate about the source of a certain phrase related to specific customs of their religion, which appears in the Koran.

The governor of Marrakesh argued vehemently that the custom stemmed from the Torah transmitted by Moshe Rabbeinu. On the other hand, the minister of Mogador countered that the opposite was true: what was written in the Torah stemmed from what was written in the Koran. The debate dragged on, without being resolved.

Since the weather was pleasant, the two decided to leave the palace and stroll through the streets of the city. As they were walking, they met the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, coming toward them. Naturally, they raised their issue before the Rav, asking him to decide between their opposing views.

Rabbi Chaim listened carefully to their argument and told them to read aloud the paragraph in question. After considering the matter, he declared that the governor of Marrakesh was right, since the words originally stemmed from Torah and not from the Koran. At this opportunity, Rabbi Chaim effusively praised the Torah given by Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai directly from Hashem.

The governor was immensely impressed by the words of the Rabbi and exclaimed, "Indeed, this Rabbi is a very wise man." But the minister of Mogador showed signs of resentment and anger. He was furious at Rabbi Chaim for siding with his opponent, which he felt was a slight to his honor and reputation. Thereafter, he held a grudge against Rabbi Chaim. He would humiliate him at every opportunity. But the tzaddik never responded, forgoing his honor by keeping silent.

The minister finally decided to have Rabbi Chaim imprisoned. When this became public knowledge, all the people protested before the minister. They threatened that they would leave the city of Mogador en masse.

"You are forbidden to do so!" the minister ordered. "You must remain here by the command of the king, who desires to have his city populated. What is the meaning of this threat?"

"How can we remain in the city if our Rabbi is locked up behind bars? It is only in the merit of the tzaddik that we enjoy Divine Providence," the people argued intensely. "If he is imprisoned, we have no reason to remain. We will all move away."

The minister realized that he was in a fix. He feared that if the king would hear about the mass emigration of all his citizens, he would punish the one who had caused it. Therefore, he ordered

Rabbi Chaim to be released from jail immediately. However, he did not hurry to beg his forgiveness.

Rabbi Chaim returned to his house, and the people cancelled their plans to leave the city. Not much time elapsed when, all of a sudden, disaster struck the minister's home. His oldest son died suddenly, falling from the roof of his house. When his wife heard the bad news, she died in anguish. Thus, the minister lost both his wife and son on the same day.

The advisors of the minister warned him, "This is not a coincidence. You are being struck by Heaven for what you did to the Rabbi of the Jews. Hurry quickly to Rabbi Chaim's house, and beg his forgiveness. Otherwise, who knows what other misfortunes await you and your family."

The minister did as they said and went to Rabbi Chaim to beg his forgiveness. Rabbi Chaim accepted his apologies wholeheartedly. Then he asked him, "Now that you have received your punishment, do you accept the judgment?"

The minister confirmed that he did and asked the Rav to give him a sign that he truly forgave him. Rabbi Chaim told him, "You should know that in another fifteen days there will be those who will vilify you before the king, fabricating that you behaved in a corrupt manner. The king will become angry at you and will order you to be imprisoned in Marrakesh. From there you will be taken to the city of Fez. However, do not despair. Whenever you feel discouraged, call out 'I beg in the merit of Rav Pinto that Hashem should help me,' and then I will come to your aid."

The minister doubted the validity of the account because it seemed so unrealistic. The king was his relative and close friend. It was unlikely that he would imprison him. However, he filed the information in his memory. In the end, everything that Rabbi Chaim had predicted occurred.

Two weeks later, some ministers vilified him before the king, fabricating a tale. The king got angry and ordered that he be transferred from one prison to another one. The minister was

broken from his extended imprisonment. Then, he remembered Rabbi Chaim's advice and cried, "I beg in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto that Hashem should help me."

While speaking, an image of the tzaddik appeared on the wall, in a life-like manner, and soothed him, "Do not worry. At the end of the week you will be released from this jail and transferred to another prison in Marrakesh."

At the end of the week, an order arrived to move the minister to Marrakesh for no obvious reason. When he arrived in Marrakesh, he once again sought the aid of Rabbi Chaim and called loudly, "I beg in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto that Hashem should help me." Once again a portrait of Rabbi Chaim appeared on the wall and spoke to him.

"Do not fear. At the end of the week, you will finally be released, and you will return to Mogador and be restored to your former

status." This is exactly what happened. The king ordered a new investigation of the minister's case. They discovered that the whole story was nothing but a vile plot to incriminate him. The king ordered his release and sent him home with great pomp,

returning him to his former position as mayor of the city. This occurred on the exact date that Rabbi Chaim had predicted.

A few days prior to the minister's release, Rabbi Chaim visited the minister's family and told them to prepare a lavish feast in honor of his homecoming. He stated the exact date that the minister would return and advised them to greet him at the gates of the city with much fanfare and carry him home on their shoulders.

The minister arrived in his hometown safely. Reflecting upon his experience, he decided to abandon his religion and convert to Judaism. However, when he saw the throngs of people coming to greet him, he feared the extreme reaction that his conversion would generate. Therefore, he did not implement his resolution.

When he arrived home, he was astonished. He saw the table set festively. He began to shout at his family, "While I was stuck in prison, you amused yourselves with banquets and feasts? What is this all about?"

His family sympathized with his confusion and calmly explained to him, "We did this at the command of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, who instructed us to prepare a lavish reception for you. He informed us that you would be returning shortly, and he even gave us the money in order to prepare a feast."

The minister realized that their words were true and Rabbi Chaim had helped him throughout his ordeal, and had even informed his family about his imminent return. He asked his attendant to invite Rabbi Chaim to join them, and he publicly thanked him for protecting him throughout his difficulties. He shared with everyone the many miracles he had experienced in the merit of Rabbi Chaim. Consequently, the Name of Heaven was sanctified in public.

The minister did not end up converting, but he did change considerably. He turned from a virulent anti-Semite to a friend and supporter of the Jewish people (*Shenot Chaim*).

Seek Permission

In the period that Rabbi Chaim Hagadol served as Rabbi, messengers would frequently come from Eretz Yisrael to Morocco in order to collect charity. Many of them were learned Torah scholars. However, among them there were also those who sought to impose their authority over the Jews of Morocco, pressuring them to contribute money to their cause.

There were also those, although few in number, who ridiculed the local Rabbanim, ultimately diminishing their respect in the eyes of the people.

One such *meshulach* came to Mogador. The people wanted to accord him honor and invited him to a *brit milah*. Rabbi Chaim was also invited to the same *brit*. In the middle of the *seudah*, Rabbi Chaim noticed the *meshulach* helping himself to a cup of wine without permission.

Rabbi Chaim was displeased and told him that it was not proper behavior; one should first seek permission from the host who had paid for all the food. The *meshulach* retorted, "I am a *shaliach d'Rabbanan* from Eretz Yisrael, and I do not have to ask permission from anyone here."

The two began to quarrel, and in the heat of their argument, the *meshulach* disgraced Rabbi Chaim. Rabbi Chaim, too, did not spare his words. Ultimately, the consequences were grave:

A few days later the *meshulach* died, and Rabbi Chaim was struck with a pain in his leg, which lasted a period of time.

After Rabbi Chaim was healed from his ailment, he composed a song, "I will exalt You Hashem, the G-d of Israel, Who saves and protects my feet from failing…" (*Shevach Chaim*).

The Hanging Head

In the times of Rabbi Chaim Pinto an extraordinary incident took place, which became the talk of the town. There was a certain member of the Pinto family who was exceptionally righteous

and performed many miracles. One night, during the holidays, when everyone was at home, a thief suddenly entered his house intending to steal all his possessions. When the wife of the holy Rabbi saw the thief, she immediately called her husband and told him, "Get up quickly! A thief has entered our home and wants to kill us."

The tzaddik raised his eyes and gazed at the gentile. He began enunciating pesukim and Holy Names. Before the tzaddik finished his recitation, the thief dropped dead, and his skull was left hanging from the ceiling by a rope. May all the enemies of Hashem perish in such a way.

The house in which this miracle occurred is still standing today in the Mellah in Marrakesh. Many people visit the place in order to observe first-hand the miracle that occurred. They light a candle there and pray in merit of the tzaddik, who once lived there.

The city walls of Marrakesh

In fact, the skull is still hanging from the ceiling until today. People who come to Marrakesh visit the house and witness with their own eyes the power of tzaddikim.

This story was told by the righteous Rabbanit Mazal, tichyeh, the wife of the tzaddik Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"a, who was in the house and saw the skull hanging from the ceiling.

The Demon that Healed the Tzaddik

We are told by our elders that there are harmful spirits in the world referred to as *sheidim*. They are created by sparks of *kedushah* generated through the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvot. It is prohibited to benefit from them, because then they gain control over the person. In the sefer *Oseh Pele* there are amazing stories written about this. Moreover, I heard from my esteemed father, a"h, that the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto was familiar with demons, and through the merit of his Torah, he ruled over them, not allowing them to harm people.

The following is a message from Moreinu v'Rabbeinu shlita:

> *Dear Reader,*
>
> *The following two stories are about demons. We heard these stories from our holy ancestors. It is well known that in Morocco, sheidim and harmful spirits were often seen by people. I can testify to many such instances. However, in order not to frighten the reader, I avoided writing about them.*
>
> *Furthermore, my father, the tzaddik, a"h, told me that many times he saw sheidim in the house in which I was raised. He never feared them. He also did not reveal this to my mother, tichyeh, so that she should not be scared and abandon the house. He also told me that the sheidim would protect the house from thieves, and we had nothing to fear from them. Fortunate are the tzaddikim!*

The following amazing story involved Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. Once, in middle of the night, while he was engaged in learning Torah, as he generally did throughout the night, a demon suddenly emerged from the well. It turned to Rabbi Chaim and said, "My father ordered you to teach me a *drashah* about tefillin in honor of my Bar Mitzvah…"

Rabbi Chaim, who was familiar with such occurrences, answered him, "Go away and come back tomorrow." The next day after midnight, the demon returned and asked the Rav to teach him a *drashah* for his Bar Mitzvah, and Rabbi Chaim proceeded to do so. Afterward, the demon kissed the hand of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Chaim gasped in pain, as a large welt appeared where he had received the demon's kiss.

"Is this the reward I get for teaching you Torah?" Rabbi Chaim scolded the demon.

"What can I do, your honor? We are made of fire."

Rabbi Chaim shouted, "Evil one! Whose son are you?"

"I am the son of Rav Avraham Zeradi."

Rav Chaim ordered, "Go quickly and fetch me a cure. If you do not do so, I will crush you as broken earthenware."

Your honor," answered the demon, "I will go immediately to my father and get medicine from him." The demon descended into the pit and told his father everything that had happened.

His father ordered, "Go tell the tzaddik not to worry. When he will hear the donkey braying at daybreak, he should tap on the welt, and then he will be cured. (The Zohar Hakadosh states that there are hidden secrets connected to the time of the donkey's braying.)

This is exactly what happened. When the donkeys brayed, Rabbi Chaim tapped the welt, and he was cured. We see from this the great powers of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, who did not fear the demons and succeeded in forcing them to cure him (*Shevach Chaim*).

The Battle against the Impure Forces

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol sat in his house in Mogador as usual and learned Torah the entire night. At midnight, two demons

emerged from the pit. They turned to Rabbi Chaim and told him, "We are about to kill anyone who passes here."

The tzaddik told them, "Tell me the names of the people who are supposed to die." The demons began to list the names of all the people whose time had come to die.

To his surprise, the tzaddik heard them mention that the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy"a, was destined to die in a few days time.

"Is there a *tikkun* for Rabbi Meir that will save him from death?"

"If he will leave the city, we will have no permission to kill him."

Rabbi Chaim immediately notified Rabbi Meir that he must leave the city. While they were talking, a demon placed its hand on the tzaddik's ear. Rabbi Chaim turned to it and said, "You have no right to harm me."

Rabbi Chaim recited several pesukim, and the demon turned deaf. Then, he threw it back into the pit.

The second demon, who observed what had happened and feared for its safety, turned to the tzaddik and pleaded, "Please, return the demon to its former condition."

Rabbi Chaim admonished sternly, "Next time it starts up with me, I will cast it into the deep chasm, and it will never be able to rise again."

Several months elapsed, and when Rosh Hashanah drew near, Rabbi Meir longed to return to his hometown of Mogador. Rabbi Chaim sent him a message saying, "When you enter the city, come to me and stay in my house." Rabbi Meir responded, "Certainly I will come to you. However, first I would like to go home and see my wife and children."

Rabbi Meir went home. The moment he reached the steps to his entrance, the demon appeared and killed him. Rabbi Chaim came at once to help arrange his burial.

May Hashem help to annul all evil decrees and protect the Jewish people from their enemies (*Shevach Chaim*).

CHAPTER NINE

Your Voice Is Pleasant

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was blessed with a special talent for music and poetry, and his reputation spread far and wide. He would sing with enthusiasm and elation. Some of his poems were printed in the sefer *Roni v'Simchi*.

He left sacks of manuscripts after his death, including songs and *piyutim*, displaying his intense love and devotion to Hashem and his yearning for the future redemption.

Unfortunately, many of the manuscripts disappeared. Bandits entered the city of Mogador and stole all the treasures, including the holy documents filled with beautiful verses and song.

A Hug and a Kiss

Shabbat was most beloved to Rabbi Chaim, more than any other day of the week. On Shabbat Kodesh, he would feel elevated and inspired, and would enthusiastically compose songs and lyrics. At every meal he would sing *zemirot* in his beautiful voice, sounding the praises of Hashem, while concentrating on deep Heavenly secrets.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu adds the following:

I heard from my elders that one Shabbat, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was singing the *piyutim* of the composer, Rabbi Yisrael Najara, zt"l, with his magnificent voice, as usual. He sang with such enthusiasm and devotion that Rabbi Yisrael Najara appeared to

him. He gave him a hug and a kiss for singing with such intense emotion in honor of the *Shechinah*.

Rabbi Yisrael Najara Is Waiting for Us

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol merited having his journeys miraculously shortened. Once, while traveling to a distant location, he took another person along with him. This is what happened:

Rabbi David Chassin, zt"l, was known as a famous composer of *piyutim*. He lived in Meknes, which was very far from Mogador. Once, in the middle of the night, Rabbi Chaim came to Rabbi Chassin's house, woke him up and told him, "Come with me to Mogador. Rabbi Yisrael Najara is waiting for us there."

Rabbi Chassin hesitated, since it takes several days to get from Meknes to Mogador. "How can I go? My wife may get up in middle of the night sensing my absence and get worried."

Rabbi Chaim reassured him, "With the help of Hashem, we will leave and return quickly, even before your wife gets up."

לדוד מזמור חסו ומשפט אשירה !

ספר
תרגלה לדוד

באמשטרדם

The songs of Rabbi David Chassin – First Edition – Amsterdam

"Although I heard about your greatness and outstanding capabilities, I cannot leave, since I am concerned about my wife."

Rabbi Chaim continued persuading him. "I promise you that your wife will not know anything about our departure."

In the end, Rabbi Chassin agreed. Their journey to Mogador was miraculously shortened. There they met the holy Rabbi Yisrael Najara, who descended from Heaven to sing with them the praises of Hashem.

When they finished singing, Rabbi Yisrael promised them that

from then on, every Rosh Chodesh, he would appear to them and sing together the *piyutim* in honor of the *Shechinah*.

The Three-ply Cord

Their meeting turned into a regular custom. Every month, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol would come to Rabbi Chassin's house and together they would travel from Meknes to Mogador in a miraculously shortened journey. They would sing lyrics and *piyutim* together with the lofty composer Rabbi Yisrael Najara.

The three of them were intertwined as a solid unit, as it says, "A three-ply cord is not easily severed." (As heard from Rabbi Aharon Chassin, zt"l, Rosh Av Beit Din Mogador, a grandson of Rabbi David Chassin.)

The surviving *piyutim* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol are included at the end of the book (Chapter 25).

The grave of the tzaddik in Mogador

CHAPTER TEN

Sunset

Accurate Judgment

When Rabbi Chaim Hagadol reached the ripe old age of eighty-four, the local scholars wanted to test the sharpness of his memory to see if the complex dissertations of Abaye and Rava in the Gemara were still clear to him.

They sent a member of their group to pose an exceptionally difficult question of the *Ba'alei Tosafot* on the Gemara. They intended to test his comprehension and see how he would resolve the issue.

When the scholar entered Rabbi Chaim's study, he began to tremble; Rabbi Chaim's face was lit like a torch. Rabbi Chaim sensed his bewilderment and greeted him, "Welcome! How can I help you? What is the reason for your visit?"

"I came to visit Rabbeinu," he answered sheepishly, as if caught in the act. Rabbi Chaim smiled and told him, "May it be as you say. But the truth is that you came across a difficult *Tosafot* while learning in yeshiva and decided that it was a good opportunity to test me and see if old age has confused my mind..."

Rabbi Chaim continued amazing the scholar, "Did you forget the words of our Sages that 'elderly Torah scholars: the more they age, the more accurate judgment they acquire'? So then, come and I will explain to you the true meaning of the *Tosafot*."

Rabbi Chaim opened the Gemara and clarified the meaning of

the *Tosafot*, resolving all the difficulties. He explained them, point by point, shedding light on the absolute truth of the Torah.

In the end, the scholar admitted that Rabbi Chaim's accusation was justified, and he humbly begged forgiveness (*Shenot Chaim*).

In Old Age

The local scholars were still not satisfied. They sent delegations of Torah scholars to test him by posing difficult questions in all areas of the Torah, but they could not confuse him.

Rabbi Chaim would precede them by presenting the students with seeming contradictions on various topics. They involved complex issues, which the students could not explain, and Rabbi Chaim had to clarify the meaning for them.

They were forced to admit defeat and agreed among themselves, "If in his old age his mind is so sharp and clear in Torah, how much more so was it in his youth?!" (*Shenot Chaim*)

I Will Not Leave You

In Elul 1845 (5605), approximately ten days before Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol deviated from his usual learning program in his Beit HaMidrash, and he began preparing his students for the approaching Days of Awe. The Talmudic lectures that he customarily delivered were replaced by discussions of the virtue of *teshuvah* and its importance in these days, when a person's fate is pending.

The tzaddik requested that his students continue to strengthen themselves in the observance of Torah and mitzvot, promising them explicitly, "I will continue to stand in prayer before Hashem after I die, just as I did during my lifetime. I will not abandon you in my death, as I did not abandon you in my life."

The concern in his voice left a deep impression on the people, and they began to sense that the tzaddik was about to return his soul to the Creator.

The bitter news passed throughout the city, quickly spreading to all Morocco as well, and a great cry arose. Everyone began to recite Tehillim and pray for their Rav, hoping that perhaps the terrible decree would be annulled and Rabbi Chaim would continue to live.

A Miracle Worker

Rabbi Chaim continued to speak passionately about service and fear of Hashem. Ultimately, on the twenty-sixth of Elul, 1845 (5605), his flame was extinguished, and his holy soul returned to its source from beneath the Heavenly Throne.

Tombstone of Rabbi Chaim before a structure was built above it

Rabbi Chaim was buried in the old cemetery in Mogador. Prior to his death, he requested of his sons neither to build a monument over his grave nor to inscribe any praise on his tombstone, but only to write his name.

After a consultation with the city's Rabbis, it was decided to inscribe the following words, which appear on the tzaddik's grave until today:

"The tombstone of the holy Rabbi, a bastion of strength, who was the most senior authority and known for performing miracles, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto, zy"a, who returned his soul on the twenty-sixth of Elul, 5605, may he rest in peace."

A few years ago, Mr. Shimon Levi from the city of Mogador built a magnificent shelter over Rabbi Chaim Pinto's grave.

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol left four righteous sons: Rabbi Yehuda, known as Rabbi Hadan; Rabbi Yosef; Rabbi Yoshiyahu; and

Rabbi Shaul, may their memory be blessed. Each one of them became famous for their righteousness, erudition in Torah, fear of Heaven, holiness, and for the many miracles they performed.

The structure built over the grave of Rabbi Chaim, zy"a

I Will Appear in a Dream

During the *shivah*, many people came to comfort the mourners and share in their sorrow. The flow of people increased daily, and at one point, fatigue overcame three of Rabbi Chaim's sons, Rav Yoshiyahu, Rav Shaul, and Rav Yosef, and they fell asleep in their seats.

Rabbi Chaim's oldest son, the tzaddik, Rabbi Hadan, was the only one who remained awake. While looking straight ahead, he suddenly saw his saintly father standing in the room.

Rabbi Hadan was startled and gave a shout. Then the figure of his father vanished. His brothers woke up in alarm from the cry and asked him what had happened. Rabbi Hadan revealed to them what he had seen.

That night, his father appeared to him in a dream and told him, "I wanted to appear to you while you were awake, but since you revealed the secret, I will come to you only in a dream and I will

tell you anything you wish to know concerning matters of all the worlds."

Rabbi Chaim would reveal to him in a dream who had promised money to *tzedakah* but had not been able to pay it, and who had bad decrees issued upon them. Rabbi Hadan would save them and assist them in all their affairs (*Shevach Chaim, Mekor Chaim, Shenot Chaim*).

Tombstone of Rabbi Yosef Pinto, zy"a

The G-d of Rabbi Chaim, Answer Me

Rabbi Yosef was one of Rabbi Chaim's four sons. He was honest and upright. He spent all his time learning Torah and paid no attention to worldly matters. He dedicated his life to growing in Torah and Avodah, and his wife would tend to all mundane matters.

Their financial situation was difficult. Rabbi Yosef lived according to the dictum "Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation..." His righteous wife never complained, since she embraced the Torah with love. She allowed him to engage in the study of Torah all his life, abstaining from all worldly pleasures.

The following story illustrates the extent of his righteous wife's faith in tzaddikim, and how Hashem would fulfill their wishes.

The month of Nissan was approaching, but they lacked the necessary provisions for Pesach. They could not afford matzot, wine, fruit and vegetables, nor clothing and shoes for the children. The righteous woman approached her husband with a modest request:

"The situation has become unbearable. Please go to the grave of your holy father and beg him to intercede on your family's behalf so that we should have matzot, wine, meat, clothing and shoes for the children, as well as a dress for me and a suit for you. Make a list of all these things so that you should not forget anything."

Rabbi Yosef did as his wife requested. The next morning he rose early, and immediately after praying Shacharit, he took his sefer Tehillim and went to the cemetery. He approached the grave of his holy father, placed his wife's list upon the tombstone and recited the verses in Tehillim beginning with the letters of his father's name.

After he finished, Rabbi Yosef returned to his house and informed his wife that he had done as she wished. Now there was nothing left to do but await Hashem's salvation, since it would surely follow.

That night, his father, Rabbi Chaim, appeared to him in a dream and informed him that salvation was imminent. "Tomorrow," his father instructed him, "stand by the window of your house, and an unknown merchant will come to you and provide you with all your needs. The reason for his great generosity is because, while he was sailing at sea, a big storm struck, and his ship almost capsized. Since his life was in danger, he resorted to the craft of his ancestors and began to pray, 'The G-d of Rabbi Chaim, answer me!' In addition he promised that if he would be saved, he would donate half of his possessions to my family. In the end, he did survive, and the following day he set out to fulfill his promise."

In the morning, Rabbi Yosef hurried to fulfill his father's instructions. He stood by the window of his house and waited

for what was to come. The events unfolded just as his father had predicted.

While he was standing by the window, an unknown merchant approached him and asked him if he belonged to the family of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

"Yes. I am the son of the tzaddik," answered Rabbi Yosef. The merchant proceeded to tell him what had happened to him while sailing at sea, and the miracle that he had experienced following his promise that if he would be saved, he would give half of his belongings to the family of Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

"I would like to keep my promise," the man told Rabbi Yosef, "and donate to you half of my goods that were on the ship, in gratitude to Hashem for saving me from death."

Rabbi Yosef heard the merchant's story, entirely familiar with its content, and informed him, "I will not take from you more than I need to cover the upcoming holiday expenses." Rabbi Yosef listed exactly what he required for himself and his family, such as money for clothing, shoes, and provisions for the *chag*. The merchant promised him that he would go home and immediately arrange for everything that he had requested to be sent with his servant.

There was joyous celebration in the house of Rabbi Yosef that Pesach, and, once in a while, his wife would remind him, "You see, it is good that you took my advice and went to your father's gravesite."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Powers Granted to a Tzaddik on the Day of His Hilula

An Ongoing Battle

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, often talks about the extraordinary powers granted to a tzaddik on the day of his *hilula*. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Raskin, zt"l, who served in Morocco as a *shaliach* sent by the Rabbi of Lubavitch, zt"l, for forty-five years until his death, would constantly emphasize this point when seeing the tremendous crowd gathered to pray at the grave of the tzaddik on the twenty-sixth of Elul each year.

On the *hilula*, one perceives the simple faith of all the participants. Educated, rich, and respectable people, whose lives are filled with materialism, attend the *hilula*. Yet, when they stand at the gravesite, they become entirely spiritual. They are totally humbled when praying by the tomb, and they somehow turn into different people. This proves that they are truly worthy individuals.

When a person stands facing the tomb and sees the grave, he realizes the ultimate destiny of every person. Consequently, he lessens the importance he places on the physical and concentrates on the spiritual. Following the event, when the *hilula* is over and everyone returns home, he aspires to achieve greater levels in spirituality.

However, the *Yetzer Hara* quickly begins to attack him, causing him to forget all the spiritual achievements he attained at the *hilula*. It is his job to defeat the *Yetzer Hara*, as it says, "When you will go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hand, and you will capture its

captives." This indicates that one should try to capture the enemy before the enemy captures him. It is possible to defeat the *Yetzer Hara* only with Torah. The *Yetzer Hara* knows this and therefore constantly attempts to sway the person.

This is what is hinted in the words "And you will capture its captives." One should continue to battle the *Yetzer Hara* continuously, not only for a limited time. The *Yetzer Hara* knows that after a while the inspiration will wear off, and then the spiritual elevation will diminish. Then, at an opportune moment the *Yetzer Hara* will strike. Therefore, one should always strive to achieve higher levels and reinforce the inspiration that he experienced at the *hilula* of the tzaddik.

One can maintain this lofty level by learning Torah, keeping mitzvot, and hearing stories about tzaddikim. He should constantly progress, as it says, "A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Altar; you shall not extinguish it."

However, this is very difficult. One needs much Divine assistance in order to succeed, since otherwise it is impossible to overcome the *Yetzer Hara*, which attempts to trap a person in its snare. This is why it says, "And Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hand," since only with Divine assistance can one retain his spiritual attainments and continue advancing spiritually.

The Little Holds the Many

During the *hilula*, the shelter over the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol expands beyond its limits. The room adjacent to the shelter is small, capable of accommodating no more than thirty people. It is a miracle that on the *hilula*, hundreds of people gather inside. This is similar to the description of what occurred in Yerushalayim during the time of the Beit Hamikdash, which is another example of "the little that held the many."

One year, at four a.m., the entire congregation was in the midst of the Selichot prayers by the holy gravesite. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu approached the Aron Hakodesh to lead the prayers, when

suddenly he saw a bright light flash before him. He thought that perhaps it was the flash of a camera or a bright overhead light. But it was neither. It was an unusually strong light, something extraordinary, which cannot be described in words.

The Rav wondered if perhaps he had been the only one to notice it. After questioning other participants, many of them admitted that they too had seen the bright light pass before them. The Rav maintained that it was a flash of the light of the tzaddik.

The large crowd on the hilula

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu explains the essence of the light similarly to the way the tzaddik, Rabbi Avraham Ben Attar, zt"l, describes it in his sefer:

When we light candles by the gravesite, it has a special meaning. In *Mishlei* it says, "For a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light." A candle refers to the *neshamah*, as well as to mitzvot. This means that a person illuminates his *neshamah* by performing mitzvot. When we light candles by the grave of a tzaddik, we commemorate the mitzvot that he did in his lifetime. By invoking the memory of the tzaddik's great merit, it ultimately serves as an

advocate on our behalf. This is the bright light; the light that is created by the mitzvot of the tzaddik.

When a person believes wholeheartedly in the powers of a tzaddik, that he is capable of performing miraculous salvation, the tzaddik advocates on his behalf. This can assist him greatly, especially prior to the Days of Awe, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when he seeks to find ways to promote his cause and increase his merits. There is nothing like the merit of the tzaddik to advocate positively for a person.

When we visit the grave of a tzaddik, we arouse his merits. Certainly this awakens the tzaddik to act on our behalf. This is why the tzaddik may send a sign that he is pleased, since people come and connect to Hashem in his merit. His presence is expressed through the bright light of inner spiritual satisfaction.

The large crowd on the hilula

According to this explanation, those who saw the flash are most fortunate. Not everyone is worthy of it. Seeing such a light is a sign that Hashem accepted his prayers. Hashem proves to

us how close He is when He sends us signs from Heaven to illuminate our way to Him.

The Locked Door

On the eve of the twenty-sixth of Elul, the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, the following incident occurred:

R' Yitzchak Vanunu from Ashdod, one of the veteran members of the Beit Hakeneset established in memory of Rabbi Chaim, could not sleep. At four a.m., he decided to go to the Beit Hakeneset.

For some inexplicable reason, R' Yitzchak did not go on his usual route, but went around the main street of the city. When he approached the building, in the wee hours of the morning, he heard loud sounds of prayer and supplications issuing from it. The place was entirely lit up. R' Yitzchak was surprised. What was going on at four o'clock in the morning?

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu inside the structure on the hilula

R' Yitzchak drew closer to the building and peeked inside. He saw a large crowd of people gathered there to pray. His surprise

increased tenfold. He had not heard of any special event taking place. What was going on? If there were Selichot prayers being conducted, why hadn't he been informed about them?

He tried to open the door of the Beit Hakeneset, but to his absolute amazement it was locked. Since he had the key in his pocket, he opened the door. Once inside, he was shocked to find the place pitch dark. There was no light and no congregants. There was no one there.

He fled in panic. Later on, he was taken to the emergency room and hospitalized as a result of shock. (As heard).

A Miraculous Journey

One Friday in Elul 1999 (5759), a day before the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol in Morocco, a few people approached Moreinu, shlita, seeking his blessings for a Jew from Paris who was imprisoned. It was causing his family much untold suffering.

One of his friends turned to Moreinu and asked him, "Does the Rabbi recall that two weeks ago the mother of the prisoner visited the Rav in Paris, and the Rav promised her that with the help of Hashem her son would be released and would join the *hilula* in Morocco?"

Moreinu responded, "I do not remember this. But if I did say it, then in the merit of the tzaddik he will be released and come to the *hilula*."

As mentioned, this took place on Friday morning. In the afternoon, the friends of the prisoner approached Moreinu again and this time informed him that he had miraculously been released.

How did this happen? Suddenly, the judge entered the prisoner's cell and told him, "I have good news for you. Today you will be freed."

Even before he had time to digest the good news, the judge continued, "I have already sent an order to the police station to

return your passport and documents that were confiscated. You may leave the country whenever you please."

The prisoner could not believe his ears. He was actually free to go on his way. He immediately phoned Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and informed him about his release. Moreinu reminded him that he had given him a blessing that he would participate in the *hilula*. However, since it was Friday, and he could not arrive in Morocco before the commencement of Shabbat, he should make an effort to be there on Sunday.

On Sunday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the Jew arrived at the *hilula*. He had an amazing story to tell of how he had succeeded in arriving so quickly in Morocco:

I realized that I had to keep my promise and join the *hilula*, especially since the Rav had reminded me. However, I knew that if I would leave Paris on Friday, I would arrive in Morocco on Shabbat. Therefore, I ordered a ticket for Sunday morning at six o'clock, so that I would arrive in Morocco in the morning. After that, I arranged to have a private plane transport me from the airport in Casablanca to Mogador.

When I arrived at the airport in Paris this morning, I was told, to my dismay, that there were no flights going from Paris to Morocco

at six in the morning. I was taken aback, since I had purchased a ticket for such a flight. The clerks checked the list of flights on the computer, but nothing came up. There were no flights from Paris to Morocco at that time.

"I have an important meeting!" I argued. They responded, "We are sorry, but there are no flights leaving to Morocco right now."

Suddenly, one of the clerks turned to me and asked how it was possible that I had a ticket for a six a.m. flight from Paris to Morocco? Actually, there had been a plane from a Moroccan company that had arrived in Paris with passengers on the previous day. It was scheduled to fly back empty at six a.m. to Morocco without any passengers. Therefore, the flight did not appear on the computer screen. How was it possible to have a ticket for this flight? The clerk was astonished. The fact was that I had a ticket for a flight on an empty plane.

The clerks at the airport were stunned. They called the company, Air Morocco, and checked with the Moroccan police. In the end, they permitted me to fly on the flight alone with the pilot.

One of the pilots took a picture of me flying on the plane. The pilot quipped, "See, the plane is all yours! I cannot understand how they allowed you to fly on this flight. It was supposed to return empty, as usual, and this is the first time I am carrying a passenger on such a flight. How did you manage to get on this plane? Also, how did this flight appear on-line when you purchased the ticket, especially since it is a state-owned airplane?"

"I cannot explain how I managed to get a ticket for this flight," the Jew concluded his amazing account. "It is all Hashem's doing. He arranged that just then the flight should appear on the computer screen. In Heaven it was ordained that only I, who needed to arrive at the *hilula*, would purchase a ticket for this flight; and no one else. This corresponds to the saying, 'Many designs are in man's heart, but the counsel of Hashem – only it will prevail.'"

In the merit of his faith and his yearning to join the *hilula*, he was

worthy of Hashem's assistance. A chain of events were divinely orchestrated, in order that he should be able to participate in the *hilula* of the tzaddik.

"How abundant are your works, Hashem, with wisdom You made them all."

As a token of appreciation, in honor of the tzaddik, the man donated a Beit Hamidrash in memory of his father in the Yeshiva Nefesh Hachaim in Yerushalayim.

The Lottery

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, makes sure to conduct a *hilula* in honor of the tzaddikim of the Pinto lineage each year each year, to tell of their greatness and relate the wonders that they performed, strengthening faith in Hashem.

One year, an extraordinary incident occurred, which we heard from him directly:

Approximately thirty years ago when I was in France, my father, who was in Eretz Yisrael at that time, called me and requested that I fly to Morocco for the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol.

I did as my father said, and I traveled to Morocco. The date of the *hilula* was approaching, and I did not have any money to cover the expenses of the *hilula*. I turned to R' Yosef Knafo and confided my problem to him.

He asked me, "How much money do you need for the *hilula*?" I told him that I expected the expenses to total five thousand dollars.

R' Yosef made an offer, which I had reservations about, and I was unsure if I should take his advice. In the end, I begged Hashem that in the merit of my holy grandfather we should obtain the money necessary to conduct the *hilula*.

R' Yosef informed me that later that evening there would be a drawing for a lottery to win ten thousand dollars. "Come, let's

buy a lottery ticket together, and we will split the profits if we win. This way each of us will receive five thousand dollars, and you will have enough money for the *hilula*."

I wrote down five numbers on a piece of paper and handed it to R' Yosef. He promptly filled out a ticket using the numbers that I had written. When he returned and showed me what he had done, I noticed that he had not filled in the numbers in the correct order. I asked him to buy another ticket and to make sure to fill in the numbers in the same order that I had written them on the paper.

R' Yosef bought another ticket, and this time he wrote the numbers accurately, in the right order. In the evening, we were informed that the ticket we had bought together was drawn, and we had won the sum of ten thousand dollars. Ultimately, with Divine Providence we merited conducting the *hilula* festively, befitting the honor of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu states openly that although he won the lottery, he is not pleased with this method of gaining wealth. From that time until today he never again tested his luck through lottery tickets. He explains, "The moment that Hashem wishes to grant a person wealth, He has enough means with which to do so, even without him buying a lottery ticket."

Waters of Life

The following miracle that happened to R' Ishua Deri was told by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu:

R' Deri was diagnosed with cancer. He turned to doctors for a cure, to no avail. None of the treatments brought him any relief.

Since he firmly believed in the power of tzaddikim, he decided to go to the cemetery in Mogador. He stayed there for twenty-one days consecutively. Day after day, he sat near the grave, praying for a complete recovery in the merit of the tzaddik.

One night, he dreamed that Rabbi Chaim and his wife came to

him and gave him water to drink, blessing him with a complete recovery.

A few days later, he went again to his doctor for tests in the hope of finding a cure for his illness. When the results came in, they discovered that he had no signs of his former illness.

"A great miracle took place here," the doctors informed R' Deri. "The cancer disappeared as if it had never existed."

"When I heard this story," said Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, "I thought to myself that it is very difficult to find a person in our times who is capable of going to the cemetery for such an extended period of time, praying there every day with great faith that he would be healed in the merit of the tzaddik."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu on his way to the grave

In the Merit of the Tzaddik

Sara Agopyan and her husband, righteous converts from Grenoble, France, discovered the light of Torah and Judaism on their own. Together they began their journey which ultimately led them to rest under the wings of the *Shechinah*.

Their efforts succeeded. The Rabbis, sensing their true motives and integrity, eventually converted them according to Jewish law.

A few weeks before she succumbed to death from cancer, Sara

traveled with her husband to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol with an organized tour.

While walking through rows of graves, Sara tripped over a tombstone and got a deep gash in her foot. The flow of blood did not stop. Furthermore, a piece of flesh had nearly become detached from her leg.

In agony, Sara began to cry and scream by the grave of Rabbi Chaim, wailing, "For this I came all the way from France to Morocco to visit the grave of the tzaddik?"

When she calmed down a bit, she tied a cloth around the wound and immediately felt great relief. She felt as if someone was treating her leg, and suddenly the blood stopped flowing. The flesh that had almost been severed became reattached. In the end, she returned to France safe and sound.

This incident was truly an obvious miracle, taking place before the eyes of many people, who traveled together for the *hilula*. As a result, the Name of Heaven was sanctified in public.

The tombstone of the tzaddik

A few weeks later,
Sara departed from this world. She merited having Moreinu v'Rabbeinu eulogize her lengthily, describing her outstanding righteousness, love of Hashem, and dedication to Him until the last moments of her life. May her *neshamah* reside in Gan Eden.

In his eulogy, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu stated:

This couple came to me almost every week for many years. Once I asked them, "Are you undergoing conversion?" They told me

that they were observing almost all the mitzvot, but they had not yet undergone conversion, since they feared that they would not be accepted. That is when I intervened. I encouraged them that they had nothing to fear, and after a short time they were converted according to Jewish law.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu describes the self-sacrifice of the deceased in performing mitzvot:

I remember the year 1994 (5754), when Sara was already suffering from her fatal illness, and it was the first Pesach after her conversion. She was hovering between life and death. She prayed to Hashem with all her strength to give her the stamina and ability to eat a *kezayit* of matzah, so that she would be able to fulfill this mitzvah as a Jew.

Due to her grave condition, she was not able to put food into her mouth. However, summoning all her strength, she struggled to perform this mitzvah and succeeded with *siyata di'Shemaya*. Then she noticed that the candle which she had lit in honor of the *chag* had fallen onto the floor next to the bed where she was lying.

She took this as a sign that her prayers were accepted, and before the flame of her *neshamah* would die out, Hashem had granted her the merit of such a significant mitzvah of eating matzah on the *Leil Haseder*.

The Great King Healed Me

R' Massoud Levi, one of the loyal followers of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, earned a livelihood as a goldsmith. The older he became, the worse e his vision became, until he became blind.

For more than ten years, R' Massoud remained blind. The greatest specialists could not restore his vision.

R' Massoud had only one objective in mind: to regain his vision. He decided to go to the grave of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim and plead that in the merit of the tzaddik he should recover his sight.

He asked his son to help him get to the grave of the tzaddik. His son agreed, but for unknown reasons, when they arrived, the son fled the graveyard, and his father was left alone.

R' Massoud began to cry, "Who will lead me? Who will help me back?"

Suddenly he fell into a deep slumber. In his dream he saw two people standing in front of him, asking loudly, "Why are you crying?"

R' Massoud answered, "I am blind and my son ran away from me."

The people standing opposite him in his dream told him, "We will wait until the great king, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, appears, and he will tell us what to do, since it is prohibited to remain here alone." (Tzaddikim are referred to as kings, as it says "Who are my kings? Rabbanim.")

Suddenly, R' Massoud saw Rabbi Chaim coming toward him. Rabbi Chaim passed his hand over both of his eyes, and R' Massoud began to see once more. This was after ten years of being blind!

Astonished, he woke up from his sleep. He could not believe his eyes. He began to walk around the cemetery, completely amazed by the powers of the tzaddikim and the miracles that they perform.

Meanwhile, his son returned to the cemetery. When he spotted his father wandering among the tombs, he called to him, "Father! Be careful not to stumble."

"In the merit of the great king, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, who came here, Hashem healed me. I can see well already," his father answered. When he returned to the city, everyone was amazed by the miracle that Hashem had done for him in the merit of the tzaddik. His sight had finally been restored.

From then on, R' Massoud visited the grave of Rabbi Chaim at

frequent intervals, reciting Tehillim there, just as he had done the first time. He continued with this custom until the end of his days (*Shenot Chaim*).

The Healing Waters

A woman who was completely blind came to Mogador in order to pray at the grave of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, begging that her eyes be healed and that she should see once more.

The blind woman's son told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that when his mother arrived at the tzaddik's grave, she asked him to bring her some water so that she could wash the grave of the tzaddik and also wet her eyes.

He went to fulfill his mother's request; he searched, but could not find any water. "Mother," he called from afar, "there is no water here in the cemetery."

The woman placed her hand on the tombstone and suddenly she felt the stone getting wet. It had not been so beforehand. With each passing moment, the stone became increasingly wet, until it was full of water. She called to her son, exclaiming in wonder, "There is a lot of water here."

Suddenly, the non-Jewish caretaker of the cemetery came over to the woman and her son, carrying water. They asked him why he was bringing them water when they had not asked him for it.

"I thought that you might need water," the caretaker answered. When he noticed the streaming water on the grave, he asked them, "From where did this water come?"

They could not explain it, since it was an absolute mystery. They realized that a miracle had been performed for them in the merit of the tzaddik.

Then, they all drew from the miraculous waters, which gushed from the stone. Immediately after wetting her eyes with the water, an extraordinary miracle occurred: the woman was cured and began to see once again.

The White Pigeons

Dr. Lawrence Lugasi, a native Moroccan who currently lives in Marseille, asked to speak with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu shlita, and tell him his personal story.

Dr. Lawrence is a doctor in Marseille, who was previously estranged from Torah and mitzvot. As a result of the following event, he returned to Judaism wholeheartedly.

Once, Dr. Lawrence traveled to Mogador in order to visit the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Meir Lugasi, who is buried there. Before leaving Marseille, he promised his father that he would visit his grandfather's grave and even take a picture of it for him.

Upon arriving at the cemetery, Dr. Lawrence set out in search of his grandfather's grave. For hours he walked around the graveyard, and even enlisted the help of the caretaker, but could not find the grave.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu with important government ministers of Morocco

During his frantic search among the thousands of graves located in the cemetery, Dr. Lawrence stopped to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. While standing at the holy site, he expressed his wish to locate his grandfather's grave and promised

that if he would, he would recognize Hashem's existence and do complete *teshuvah*.

When he finished his prayers, Dr. Lawrence looked up and noticed a large flock of pigeons in the distance landing on a certain grave. The unusual sight drew his attention, and he followed the birds to the grave. To his great surprise, as he approached the grave, the pigeons circling overhead flew away, except for one pigeon that remained perched on the tombstone.

As he strode toward the grave, the last pigeon also flew off. To his amazement, he found what he was looking for. It was the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Meir Lugasi.

He realized that the tzaddik had helped him find his grandfather's grave, and as a result vowed to do complete *teshuvah*. He also promised himself that every year he would come to Mogador to the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim.

Dr. Lawrence was true to his word. He returned to his heritage and embraced Torah and mitzvot wholeheartedly. Every year he travels to Mogador for the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

When Dr. Lawrence first met Moreinu v'Rabbeinu in Marseille, he prepared to tell him about the flock of pigeons descending over the grave of his grandfather in Mogador. However, before he had a chance to speak, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu noticed a huge flock of pigeons circling in the sky overhead…

Moreinu was very surprised and commented, "How wondrous are Hashem's ways. Hundreds of pigeons are flying in unison to satisfy the will of Hashem."

Dr. Lawrence was rendered speechless. He turned to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and asked incredulously, "How did the Rabbi know that the pigeons directed me to my grandfather's grave in Mogador?"

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, who knew nothing about the pigeons in Mogador, did not understand what Dr. Lawrence was referring

to. The wondrous ways of Hashem were impressed upon him by the good doctor's story.

As a postscript to this amazing story, Dr. Lawrence experienced another miracle. He was having an exceptionally hard time finding his match. In the merit of the tzaddik, on the day of the *hilula*, he found his true match in Mogador, ultimately, having the good fortune of marrying a religious, modest wife.

We can see from this how the tzaddikim are even more powerful in death than in their lifetime. Even after they pass away, they are capable of bringing people back to their heritage.

Every year on the *hilula*, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu asks Dr. Lawrence to repeat his amazing story, in order to arouse people to *teshuvah*. His story demonstrates that Hashem listens to the supplications of His people and does not disregard their pleas. Those who seek to be purified are assisted from Heaven. This story serves as proof, since as a result of these events Dr. Lawrence returned wholeheartedly to his Father in Heaven.

Take My Daughter for a Wife

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol's daughter, Sara, was modest and righteous. She was well-known for her virtuousness. When she came of age, she married and had many children. But to her great sorrow, her husband died suddenly, leaving her with young children and without a source of income.

Sara became worn out from the burden of caring for her children while trying to provide their sustenance. She could not bear the hardship any longer. One day, it occurred to her to pray to Hashem for salvation in the merit of her righteous father. She lit a candle in his memory and, shedding many tears, prayed from the depth of her heart that her father intercede on her behalf before Hashem.

She beseeched Hashem for a wealthy husband, who would have the means to support her and her children comfortably,

and that after her marriage, they would emigrate to the holy city of Yerushalayim. She also begged to give birth to more children.

Family members shook their heads, as if to say that her prayers were in vain. First of all, they argued that no one would want to marry a woman of her age, and it was extremely unlikely that she would be able to have more children. Despite everything, Sara did not despair.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu with the governor of Mogador

After two months, her prayers were finally answered. A wealthy elderly bachelor from Portugal decided to sell all his assets there and live in the holy city of Yerushalayim for his remaining years.

One night, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol appeared to him in a dream and told him, "I order you to go to the city of Mogador and take my daughter Sara for a wife. Emigrate with her to the holy city of Yerushalayim, and there you will be blessed with sons and future generations of offspring."

The Jew, who possessed faith in Torah scholars, heeded the words of the tzaddik. He sold all his assets and properties and

traveled to Mogador. There he sought the house of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto. He revealed his dream to the family members and expressed his wish to fulfill the request of Rabbi Chaim to marry his widowed daughter, Sara, and emigrate with her to Eretz Yisrael.

The family recognized the Divine intervention orchestrated to fulfill their sister's wish. Shortly after, they celebrated the wedding of the overjoyed bride and groom.

Following the wedding, the couple ascended to the Holy Land, and just as they had been promised, they merited having several children there.

The story spread all over the city, and everyone realized how righteous Sara was, since she experienced miraculous salvation, and had children in her old age. Furthermore, people were impressed by Rabbi Chaim's greatness, whose merit had stood in her stead.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu adds, "Once, I became acquainted with an outstanding Torah scholar, who told me that he was the grandson of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto through his daughter Sara, who had children born to her in Yerushalayim."

Reconciling with Her Husband

R' Ishua Deri came to Mogador in 1999 (5759), together with his wife, in order to join in the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol.

Before joining the *hilula*, R' Deri decided to visit Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, in order to receive his blessings. However, he did not have money to offer the Rav for charity, as was customary. He only had some savings, which he had put away for his personal needs.

His wife sensed his hesitation and warned him, "Do not approach the Rav, since you do not have money to donate for charity." However, R' Deri did not agree with his wife and told her, "We do have savings, and I can offer them to the Rav."

His wife argued against this plan, "If you give away all our savings to the Rav, from where will we have money for the approaching holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot?"

He responded simply, "May Hashem have mercy on us."

His wife attempted to dissuade him from going to speak to the Rav, but he walked into his office and placed an envelope on the table containing one thousand francs. When he left the room, his wife wailed, "How could you give the Rav all our savings?"

The Rav, shlita, delivering a lecture by telephone from the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol to the kollel Orot Chaim U'Moshe in Ashdod

R' Deri stood his ground, "How is it possible to go to the *hilula* of a tzaddik and not give his descendant money for *tzedakah*?"

"In that case, you could have donated a quarter of the amount and not given away all

the money we had saved!" His wife continued to protest and grumble.

R' Deri calmed her down and asserted, "In this merit, Hashem will perform miracles for us, so that we will be able to celebrate the holidays joyously."

After the *hilula*, the couple returned to their home in Casablanca. On their way, a stranger approached them and asked R' Deri, "Do you have money to buy provisions to celebrate the festivals properly?"

"No," he answered. The man took out a sum of one thousand francs from his pocket and handed it to him.

Who was the strange Jew? Only Hashem knows. R' Deri's wife was flabbergasted. She saw the tremendous miracle with her own eyes: the entire sum which they had donated in honor of the tzaddik was returned to them. She made peace with her husband. The entire night they sat and discussed the holiness of the tzaddik, zy"a, and how they had received all the money which they needed for the holiday expenses in his merit. In addition, they had given *tzedakah*, for which they would be rewarded eternally.

The Arab's Salvation

Next to the city of Mogador there was a hotel owned by an Arab from Algeria. It provided him with a profitable income. Later, when relations between Morocco and Algeria became strained, suspicions were raised about the loyalty of the owner of the hotel. Ultimately, the authorities ordered him to close it, and they withdrew their license, prohibiting him from operating his business.

The Algerian Arab, who recognized the extraordinary holiness of the tzaddik, came with his wife on the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol to pray at his grave. He begged that his license be returned so that he could operate the hotel, which provided him with his livelihood. He did not suffice with his own prayers, but

asked the Jews visiting the holy grave to pray for him as well. He begged that just as Hashem performs miracles for the Jews, He should also perform a miracle for the Arabs.

The very next day, he received a telegram from the government informing him that he had been chosen exclusively to operate a hotel in the area. Enclosed was an official license granting him the right to continue running his hotel business.

The Arab's house filled with joyous celebration and boundless exhilaration and the Name of Hashem was sanctified among all the Arabs in the entire area.

For Free

Rabbi Yaakov Pinto, shlita, once traveled with his friend to Mogador, in order to prostrate himself on the grave of his forefather, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. When he arrived at the cemetery, he noticed an elderly gentile cleaning the tombstone.

Rabbi Chaim's chair in Mogador

The friend introduced Rabbi Yaakov Pinto to the gentile, and told him: "This is Rabbi Yaakov, shlita, the descendant of Rabbi Chaim Pinto."

The gentile was very moved by the meeting. He turned to Rabbi Yaakov and told him, "I must tell you a story about your holy forefather. Once I needed a large amount of money in order to buy a lamb for a feast that I was celebrating in my house. I did not have a penny with which to buy the lamb. Furthermore, my wife warned me that if I didn't buy the lamb, it would be better for me not to come home…

"Frantically, I went to the grave of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim, and

I cried at the grave, until I fell asleep. In my dream, I saw Rabbi Chaim telling me, 'Do not worry. Go to the market and select a lamb of your choice; no one will ask you for any money. In addition, go to the clothing store and buy freely whatever you and your family need. No one will charge you for the clothes; I will pay for whatever you take.'

"When I woke up," the gentile continued, "I was frightened and did not know what to do. Who knows what they would do to me if I followed these instructions? I related the dream to my wife, but she just laughed at me, saying that ever since I had begun to take care of the Jewish cemetery, I had lost my mind.

"In the end, I decided to follow the Rav's instructions, despite my fears. I went to the marketplace and found a choice lamb. Indeed, no one asked me for money. Afterward, I went to the clothing store and fitted myself with a new suit and selected clothing for the children. The owners did not ask me to pay for what I bought. I arrived home joyful. Because of that incident, my wife now honors me and appreciates the exceptional holiness of tzaddikim."

These are the deeds of tzaddikim, whose merits are held in high esteem by Hashem.

Appreciating Zechut Avot

The great tzaddik, Rabbi Yosef Benvenisti, zt"l, from the holy city of Yerushalayim, scion of the *gaon* who authored the sefer *Knesset Hagedolah*, traveled to Morocco several times as a messenger of the Kollel HaSefaradim in Yerushalayim, in order to collect money from the Jews of Morocco.

While in Morocco, he was careful to pray each day at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. Moreover, when he returned to Yerushalayim, every month, he would send a letter to his grandson who lived in Morocco with a sum of money so that he should pray for his welfare at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. He continued to do so until the end of his life.

Once, several Yerushalmi people asked Rabbi Yosef why he troubled himself so much to honor the memory of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. What was the reason for his behavior?

Rabbi Yosef answered, "One who possesses *zechut avot* appreciates its enormous value. Since I have *zechut avot*, I recognize its great worth. Therefore, I send money as a *pidyon* in order that people should pray for me by the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto" (*Shenot Chaim*).

Taking Stock

There was a wealthy Jew from France who owned a thriving clothing shop and lived a peaceful life. His business prospered and flourished, until one bitter day masked thieves entered his shop. They beat him mercilessly with a hammer, and he bled profusely. They stole a large stock of clothing and fled.

He was brought to the hospital in severely critical condition, and the doctors did not give him any chance to live. His head was badly injured, and there was nothing they could do to remedy the situation. His heart had failed; it would be a matter of moments before it would cease beating forever.

The doctors connected him to a respirator as a last resort. They told the family members to remain with him, since he would certainly die within the next few minutes.

Nevertheless, more than a few hours later the wounded man still showed signs of life. However, the doctors maintained that he was hovering between life and death.

The family members standing around his bed prayed to Hashem that the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol should protect him, and he should live and be well. In addition, some of the family members came to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to ask for a blessing for his speedy recovery. The Rav told them that they must do complete *teshuvah*, take stock of their deeds and strengthen their commitment to Torah and mitzvot.

The brothers of the wounded man traveled from Miami to see Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and begged him to go to the hospital to visit their brother. However, Moreinu refused to do so.

Later, he explained to us the reason why he refused their request: "I questioned what purpose there was in going to him. I was also worried that it might result in a *chillul Hashem*. If, G-d forbid, the man would die, the family members would say, 'Look, the son of the tzaddik visited him and he did not heal him.' Therefore, I told them to wait another week or two, and see how things would develop."

A month passed, and the man was still hooked up to the respirator. Then Moreinu v'Rabbeinu decided to go visit him in the hospital. A group of people joined the Rav. Among them was R' Avraham Knafo. The group recited several verses of Tehillim near the sick man's bed. Afterward, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu encouraged the family members, telling them, "If after a month he is still alive, despite the doctors' prognosis that he would not live, it is a sign that it is still possible to remedy the situation."

The Rav instructed them in which areas of their lives to improve, such as *taharat hamishpachah*, etc. These were changes that would benefit the family members, and especially the sick man himself.

"If you will truly accept upon yourselves to strengthen your mitzvah observance, the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim will protect you, and the patient will improve."

Several doctors were conferring near the man's bed, and they overheard the discussion between the Rav and the family. One of the senior doctors approached Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and asked him, "Does the Rabbi really believe that prayers can effect a change?"

"Why do you ask?"

The professor explained, "Look, Rabbi, according to medical diagnosis and speculations, this patient should have died many

days ago. His condition has been critical from the day that he was wounded."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu seemed pleased with the doctor's comment and said, "This is proof that one's cure is not dependent upon the doctors at all, but only on Hashem. Only if He wills, are the doctors able to cure the patient; if He does not will, then the doctors cannot effect any improvement. Since the sick man has remained alive until now, it is a sign that Hashem wishes him to live. If the family members will correct their ways, then you doctors will become good emissaries of Hashem."

One of the doctors, who was Jewish, heartily responded, "Amen!"

In fact, two weeks later, the sick man opened his eyes through *siyata di'Shemaya*. The doctors began to treat him. They ordered additional tests and discovered that his brain had remained undamaged. On the eve of the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, on the twenty-fifth of Elul, the family members called Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to happily inform him that the sick man had already been discharged from the hospital.

The miracle was magnified by the fact that the doctors had clearly written in the medical reports that the sick man had come to the hospital in critical condition. They determined that he had been clinically dead. The doctors had administered no treatment at all, only connecting him to a respirator. What a surprise! Despite it all, he left the hospital alive and completely healthy. This was something that until today the doctors cannot comprehend.

Teshuvah, coupled with the merit of Rabbi Chaim protected him, saving him from sure death.

The Disappearing Coin

The Asseraf family from Agadir holds the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto in high esteem. They never miss an opportunity to join in the annual *hilula* celebrated in Mogador. They also voluntarily

bring a rich variety of refreshments for the *hilula*, gladdening the crowd gathered in honor of the tzaddik.

A few years ago, the family could not join the *hilula* of the tzaddik as usual, because their young daughter had been playing with a coin and had swallowed it.

The x-rays clearly showed that the coin was stuck in her lungs. It could be removed only by surgery, which would necessitate them flying immediately to France. Before doing so, they called Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, in order to ask whether he agreed that they should fly to France with their daughter instead of joining the *hilula*.

He instructed the family members to ask the doctors to order another x-ray. If the coin was still lodged in her lung, they should travel to France for surgery. However, if the coin had moved to a different location, they should come to the *hilula*.

The Asserafs had an additional x-ray done for their daughter, as Moreinu v'Rabbeinu had directed, and to their amazement, the coin was gone. Her lungs were absolutely clear.

They did not tell anyone about the results of the x-ray, but immediately set out to Mogador, in order to arrive in time for the *hilula* celebration.

In the early morning hours, the Asserafs arrived in Mogador. In the plaza near the grave, they began to sing and praise, glorify and exalt the Name of Hashem because of the great miracle that He had performed for their daughter.

All the participants of the *hilula* heard over and over again about the miracle that occurred in the merit of the Asserafs' strong desire to join in the *hilula* of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. No one had a doubt as to the reason for the miracle.

On the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, there lay a silver coin, one that resembled the coin that the little girl had played with and swallowed.

I Don't Need You

Mrs. Georgette Elkayam, tichyeh, traveled to Morocco in order to pray at the graves of the tzaddikim. Her taxi driver mocked her, "Why are you going to visit dead people? You don't have anything better to do? Go visit living people!"

Mrs. Elkayam responded, "In that case, I do not need your services anymore."

"Why?" asked the driver.

"Because tomorrow I plan to travel to Mogador to the grave of the saintly Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, and I see that you do not appreciate going to such places. So, I prefer taking a different driver, who appreciates and respects tzaddikim, since even in their deaths they are considered living."

The Moroccan driver continued scorning Mrs. Elkayam for wasting her time and money by visiting graves. While he was speaking, his face suddenly became paralyzed. His features became distorted, and he could not utter a single word.

He realized that he had done something wrong by degrading Torah scholars and showing contempt for tzaddikim, who even in their deaths are considered living.

The driver regretted his inappropriate behavior and immediately gave Mrs. Elkayam candles to light at the grave of the tzaddik, begging her to ask for his forgiveness. Mrs. Elkayam quickly traveled to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, in order to sanctify Hashem's Name in public. She was successful in achieving her goal.

While at the grave of the tzaddik, she called the cell phone of the driver and informed him that she was praying for him there. A miracle occurred. At that moment, the paralysis that had struck him vanished completely, as if it had never occurred, and he began to speak normally. He, of course, thanked Mrs. Elkayam for her prayers on his behalf. He thanked Hashem and the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. He took upon himself to be careful from

that time on to honor the tzaddikim, who are more powerful in their deaths than in their lives.

This Son Shall Surely Live

A woman from the Ochayon family related the following story:

Her mother always experienced early labor, and her children would die shortly after birth. When her third son was born, the couple went to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol to pray and made a vow: If this son would survive, they would take him to Rabbi Chaim's grave when he turned three years old and cut his hair there, as is customary at the age of three. Moreover, they would arrange a feast of thanksgiving there as well.

The third boy did stay alive. However, when he reached the age of three, they forgot the pledge that they had made at the grave of the tzaddik.

One morning, they heard knocking on their door. Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, stood at the door and asked the family members, "Does family Moyal live here?" They confirmed that he had arrived at the correct address.

"My grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, came to me in a dream at night and told me to come to this house, because there was a pledge made here to cut the child's hair by his grave when he turned three years old. But, the pledge was forgotten. Therefore, he requests that you go today to his grave to fulfill your vow."

It is interesting to note that Rabbi Chaim Hakatan concluded emphatically with a blessing: "This son shall surely live."

The couple recalled their pledge, and on that same day, they went to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol to cut the child's hair. As an appendix to the story, it is told that this man is alive today, enjoying ripe old age. He is in good health and has a large, extended family.

The Plane Crash

Through both the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and the blessings of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, who emphatically stated that the child would "surely live," not only was his life lengthened, but his descendants also benefited longevity.

The following story bears testimony to this:

Mrs. Moyal, a niece of the child who was blessed, once flew with her daughter from Lyon to Strasbourg. She sat down in her designated seat on the plane next to her daughter, when suddenly a stewardess approached her and demanded, "Why are you sitting in the front row? You should be sitting in the back!"

Mrs. Moyal did not get fazed and calmly informed her, "This is my place."

The stewardess did not pay attention to her arguments and forcefully moved the woman and her daughter to a seat in the back.

Moments later the plane crashed. All eighty passengers who were sitting in the front seats were killed, while this woman and her daughter remained alive.

It was a miracle from Heaven. Yes, this was the power of the tzaddik who blessed the son to "surely live." He probably intended that the blessing should extend to the entire family. They would all live long and beget sons and daughters. The effects of the blessing are felt until this day.

Lowering Oneself

In his eulogy for the Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, Rabbi Shalom Messas, zt"l, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu told the following story:

On Pesach, a few years ago, I was in Morocco with my family and stayed in the house of R' Ishua Dahan. On Chol Hamoed, I received a call from France, from a great Rabbi, a well-known *dayan* from Eretz Yisrael, none other than the tzaddik, the beloved friend of the Pinto family, Rabbi Shalom Messas, zy"a,

who was one of the heads of the Beit Din of Yerushalayim. He wished to speak to me urgently.

I took the receiver and greeted him. He begged me to bless his wife, who was in the hospital, to be cured. The doctors had diagnosed her with cancer, and she was scheduled to undergo surgery the following day.

The gaon Rabbi Shalom Messas, zt"l, with
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita

I expressed surprise, "Honorable Rabbi, I am a small person, while your honor is a grand Rabbi, loftier than the rest of the people. Who am I to bless your eminent Honor?"

Rav Messas responded, "It is true that I am considered honorable, but you possess the merits of your holy ancestors. We all know who Rabbi Chaim Pinto was. Therefore, I would like you to arouse Heavenly Mercy upon my wife. We believe in the extraordinary merits of Rabbi Chaim Pinto and the merits of your holy forefathers, so please pray for my wife's health in their merit."

I answered him simply, "Since the honorable Rabbi is substantially older than me, and yet lowered his honor before me, it is a sign that his greatness in Torah exceeds mine. Therefore, in the merit of this exceptional conduct Hashem will heal your wife speedily."

I added, "There is an example of this in the Torah. Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu, 'Descend to the nation,' which was a descent for the purpose of eventual ascent. So too, the esteemed, honorable Rabbi is lowering himself and turning to people who are inferior to his Torah level. In this merit, Hashem should grant you success."

Later on, R' Dahan affirmed that he had also heard about the fatal illness plaguing Rav Messas's wife. Yet, a great miracle occurred! The following day, the doctors operated on her, and to their amazement, they did not find anything! This happened after all the tests clearly showed that she suffered from the dreaded disease. Then everyone realized how salvation comes in the merit of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

Faith in the Tzaddik

A woman in Paris discovered that she had a malignant tumor. She turned to the top doctors and experts in the field, but after examining her medical records, they despaired of treating her. They told her unequivocally that they had no cure for her fatal illness.

The woman did not give up. She decided to go to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and to beseech Hashem for salvation in the merit of the tzaddik. In the very month that she visited his grave, the growth disappeared. Following this incident, she and her whole family did complete *teshuvah* and merited becoming religious Jews, faithful to Hashem.

He Will Answer You

Mrs. Miriam Chazan from Mogador, the daughter of R' Simon and Lillian Amar, who lives today in Kiryat Bialik in Israel, tells an amazing story about the miracle that took place before her eyes in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol:

Her oldest son, Yosef, who was fifteen at the time, complained to her about sharp pains in his back. She took him to two doctors, who did not detect anything unusual. However, his pain

increased with each passing day and began radiating to his right leg, making it difficult for him to walk.

Mrs. Chazan took her son to a children's' orthopedic specialist. The doctor urgently ordered several x-rays. When he received the results, he confirmed that Yosef suffered from cancer in his spine. In order to verify his speculation, the doctor asked them to perform a bone scan.

Mrs. Chazan felt the ground crumbling beneath her. The news hit her like thunder on a clear day. When she noticed her son's ashen face and his eyes streaming with tears, she realized that one cannot hide the truth from a child who is fifteen years old. However, she knew that she must compose herself and be strong.

Mrs. Chazan began to encourage her son, telling him that Hashem is merciful and compassionate to all His people. In the merit of the tzaddikim, Hashem would send him a complete recovery. After all, miracles happen every day.

In addition, Mrs. Chazan lit candles each day *l'iluy nishmat* tzaddikim, believing sincerely that her prayers would be accepted on High, and the salvation of Hashem would come speedily.

Three days before receiving the results of the bone scan, Mrs. Chazan had a frightening dream about Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. In her dream, she told her son, "We heard what the doctors said, but the doctors do not determine the future. I would like to take you to the exalted doctor who lives in Morocco, but we do not have time to order passports. Therefore, let us go with a taxi on a lengthy trip that will take twelve hours."

In the taxi, the mother fell into a deep sleep. She felt as if she was floating. Suddenly, she heard the screech of brakes and woke up to see what was going on around her. She found herself sitting with her son in a coach, and she was telling him, "Here, we arrived in Morocco."

Mrs. Chazan asked the driver of the coach to take them immediately to the cemetery where Rabbi Chaim Pinto was

buried. But suddenly her son got an attack of strong, sharp pains. They could not continue to the cemetery. Instead, she asked the driver to take them first to the hospital and afterward continue to the cemetery.

When they arrived at the hospital, the doctor received them immediately, and ushered her son into one of the rooms. After a few minutes, Mrs. Chazan opened the door to the room where her son had lain, in order to see what was going on. To her astonishment, she found the room empty…

She immediately began to search for her son in all of the rooms, to no avail. Suddenly, two doors opened in front of her and strong spotlights blinded her. She noticed that in the brightly lit room there were two Arabs dressed in white jellabiya with white head-coverings. In the center of the room there was a bed with a sick person laying in it. There was a doctor standing at the side of the bed treating the patient, but she could not identify him.

One of the Arabs approached her and asked what she wanted. She told him that she was looking for her son, Yosef. "You have nothing to worry about," the Arab said to her in a soothing tone, "you just have to call the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, three times, and he will answer you."

Mrs. Chazan covered her head and called the name of the tzaddik, as the Arab had instructed her. When she finished, she turned around and there, facing her was a Rabbi with a shining countenance and snow-white beard. His face radiated like a beam of light, and his two eyes were shining brightly like two torches. Mrs. Chazan began to tremble, and she lowered her eyes.

Then, the Rav turned to her and said softly, "Do not be alarmed, my daughter. I will dab some of my oil on your son's back, and also on the foot that hurts him. I know that you intended to come to me, and that is why I sent a coach, shortening your journey, so that you could arrive quickly in Morocco."

While still enthralled by the awesome sight, all of a sudden Rabbi

Pinto vanished. Mrs. Chazan quickly ran to her mother's house to tell her everything that had happened. She entered the special room in her house, which was called the Aron Hakodesh room, because there her family stored the Sifrei Torah of her father, R' Simon Amar. Then she encountered another surprise.

Rabbi Chaim was standing in the room speaking to her deceased father. When she entered the room, the tzaddik turned to her again and said, "My daughter, I knew that you would come to your mother's house to tell her about your salvation. That is why I passed by through the Beit Hakeneset Attiya, and summoned your father from there. In this way, he too could see that everything is alright, since your father was also aware of your suffering."

Mrs. Chazan was speechless. She began to cry and said to the tzaddik, "What am I, and who am I? I am nothing more than a lowly worm and certainly not worthy of your honor." However, the tzaddik calmly said, "All this occurred in the merit of your intense faith. Your faith is what opened all the gates of Mercy for you. In the merit of your faith, I came to heal your son." When he finished speaking, the tzaddik vanished.

Mrs. Chazan awoke from her awe-inspiring dream at three a.m. She wished to verify if her dream was indeed true. Fatigue overcame her and she fell asleep. Once again the tzaddik appeared to her and said, "Everything that you dreamed is true! I myself came to you. As proof, you will see that when you arise in the morning, you will remember every detail of your dream."

In the morning, Mrs. Chazan thanked Hashem that she, a simple woman, had been worthy of having the tzaddik come to heal her son and allow her to behold extraordinary revelations.

Afterward, she lit a candle with oil for three consecutive days. On the third day, she returned to her house after taking her son for the bone scan and noticed that the candle was dying out. When it went out, her heart began to pound strongly, sensing that something extraordinary was about to occur.

A few moments later, she heard the telephone ring. On the line was the attending physician. He officially informed her that the results of the bone scan were satisfactory, and there were no pathological findings.

Then Mrs. Chazan raised her hands to Heaven and said, "Blessed is He and blessed is His Name. Miracles definitely occur, and one actually took place before my eyes."

When she recuperated from her traumatic experience, she felt that she had to find a member of the holy Pinto family and pledge *tzedakah l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik. After searching, she made contact by phone with Rabbanit Pinto, tichyeh, the wife of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zy"a.

On the phone, she told the entire story to the Rabbanit, who was understandably very moved. At the end, they made up to meet each other one day.

Let the Scarf Blow Away

One year, when Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, was in Morocco for Pesach, Mrs. Asseraf, the wife of R' Yichye Asseraf, z"l, from Agadir, Morocco, declared, "Whoever believes in the holy powers of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and whoever lights a candle or gives *tzedakah* or learns Torah *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik, not only can the tzaddik assist him from Heaven, but he can also physically assist him in this world, even after his passing."

This declaration was made due to a miracle that occurred with her daughter Mrs. Chana Myara, the mother of the famous singer, Chaim Myara, from Paris.

(As a footnote to this story, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu writes that as he was reviewing the final copy of this story on Motza'ei Shabbat of parashat *Shemot*, 2001 (5761), he was informed that the late R' Yichye Asseraf, z"l, passed away exactly that week, and he was being brought from France to his resting place in Eretz Yisrael. "It is amazing that just at that time I was reading this story.")

Mrs. Asseraf begins her account by stating, "The story that I am about to relate is not a dream, and is not imagination, but is a story that truly happened to me and to my daughter Chana, shetichye.

Mrs. Myara became sick with a difficult illness. She went to the best doctors to help find a cure. She tried doctors not only in Morocco, but also traveled to France to consult specialists. However, no one was able to assist her.

Mrs. Myara began to weep and lament, "What will be with my children? What will be with my husband?"

Her mother, Mrs. Asseraf, told her, "Look, my daughter, these doctors have not succeeded in healing you. We only have one doctor left to go to. Come travel with me to the grave of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. Just as he helped others who prayed to Hashem by his grave, he will help you as well."

They agreed that they would stay near his grave for seven days, until their prayers were answered. It was seven p.m. when the two of them got on a bus from Casablanca to Mogador. They arrived in Mogador at twelve p.m., but at that late hour it was not possible to go to the cemetery. They decided to walk to the hotel and go to sleep.

It was a cold, wintry night, and the two were making their way to the hotel. Suddenly, they saw an old man with a white beard and wearing white clothes coming toward them. He asked them, "Why are you walking alone at night? It is dangerous to go out at night without an escort."

"We are going to spend the night in the hotel," the two answered him. The old man turned to them and offered, as a compassionate father, "I will escort you to the hotel. I have already reserved a room for you and paid for it, as well."

Mrs. Asseraf and her daughter did not say a word. They were frozen from the cold and overwhelmed by the turn of events. The old man walked with them to the hotel and then told the clerk

at admissions, "I reserved a room for these guests." The clerk nodded in confirmation.

Before parting from them, the old man turned to the two women and told Mrs. Myara, "My daughter, I know that you are ill. Tomorrow, go to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. However, do not stay there for seven days, as you had planned. Be there only for a few minutes, since you have a bus back to Agadir in the morning."

The stranger continued instructing Mrs. Myara, "The moment you descend from the bus in Agadir, there will be a strong gust of wind, and it will blow your kerchief away. Do not try to grab hold of it. Let the scarf blow away, and take with you another scarf to cover your head in place of the first one that will fly off.

"The moment that you will place the second scarf on your head," the old man promised, "the illness will leave you, and you will suffer no more pain!"

The women were stunned and could not utter a word. The two slept at the hotel, and early in the morning they went to the cemetery to pray at the grave of the tzaddik, so that in his merit, Hashem would send Mrs. Chana Myara a complete recovery. From there they quickly made their way to the bus station to go to Agadir.

When Mrs. Myara got off the bus in Agadir, a strong gust of wind blew, as anticipated, and her scarf flew off her head. She was prepared, holding an additional scarf in her hands, and she immediately covered her head. Through Divine Providence, there were no men in the immediate area who could have seen her hair exposed. Otherwise, it would have been considered a mitzvah done at the expense of a transgression, which is forbidden. At that moment, Mrs. Myara felt a pleasant warmth spread through her body, and, *Baruch Hashem*, she completely recovered from her illness.

Who was the old man who escorted them, reserved a room for

them in the hotel, paid for their expenses, and instructed them correctly? The hidden secrets are known only to Hashem.

Sent by Heaven

On Sunday, the tenth of Adar, 1995 (5755), Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, served as *sandak* at a *brit milah* in Paris, invited by Mr. David Cohen, a prominent member of the community. In middle of the *seudah*, one of the participants, Mr. Ben-Shushan, stood up and told the following inspirational story:

On the previous *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto (twenty-sixth of Elul, 1994), he traveled to Mogador in order to participate in the *hilula* of the tzaddik. He suffered from severe pain in his legs, with multiple complications, until he could no longer walk on his feet alone, and he required two people to support him.

When he arrived at the cemetery, he decided that he would sleep by the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, and perhaps, Hashem would grant him a complete recovery in the merit of the holy tzaddik. Thus, he remained by the grave throughout the night.

That night, he dreamed that Rabbi Chaim himself began to operate on his foot. After he concluded the surgery, the tzaddik told him, "In the merit of your faith in Hashem and in tzaddikim, I was sent from Heaven especially in order to heal you. Now you may rise, because you are cured. You may return to France without anyone's help! Awaken from your slumber!"

Mr. Ben-Shushan immediately woke up and began to deliberate whether the dream was mere fantasy or reality. After all, he had slept the entire night by the grave, hoping for salvation in the merit of the tzaddik. Perhaps the dream had just been wishful thinking.

He suddenly felt his legs move. He tried to stand up without any help, and to his absolute amazement, he succeeded in getting up and walking around on his own!

His friends were amazed and asked him, "What happened to

you? Were you putting on a show until now that you could not walk by yourself?"

Mr. Ben-Shushan dismissed their accusations and told them of his awesome dream. Everyone present celebrated joyously. A great *kiddush Hashem* was made on the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. May his merits protect us.

Absolutely Impossible

On one of the days of the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, a woman came and told this amazing story:

A year earlier, she encountered a serious problem in her eyes, which could cause her to eventually become blind. She visited a top ophthalmologist, who told her that he suspected that she was suffering from a particular medical problem, which could be remedied only through surgery.

The woman was extremely alarmed and decided to go to Moreinu, Rabbi David Pinto, in order to receive a blessing. Rabbi David told her to begin observing mitzvot, and in this way the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim would protect her, and she would be healed.

She followed his suggestion and began to scrupulously observe the Torah and mitzvot, believing in the merit of the tzaddik with all her heart. On the day of her surgery, the doctor ordered preliminary testing. The unbelievable occurred. The tests confirmed that she did not require surgery. This was something extraordinary and absolutely impossible under normal circumstances.

Rabbi David declared, "We see from this that Hashem can change the order of nature. All troubles come upon a person only to bring him to do *teshuvah*. When he ultimately does *teshuvah*, Hashem removes his troubles and suffering from him in a way that is beyond the laws of nature."

The Merit of Tefillin

There was a man from New York who was on the brink of turning blind. The doctors did not know how to assist him with the medical crisis which he faced. Therefore, he came to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to receive his blessings.

When he was asked if he put on tefillin regularly, he replied in the negative, "No, I do not lay tefillin at all."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu advised, "Begin putting on tefillin every day, and thus the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto will protect you and heal you entirely."

Later on, the man recounted that indeed, from the day that he began to lay tefillin, his vision began to improve. He saw better and better each day, until he was able to see normally.

When he returned to the doctors for follow-up examinations, they could not understand what had happened. "Which doctor treated you?" they asked him. "Under normal circumstances you should have remained blind."

His response to the doctors surprised them no less: "The merit of laying tefillin, which Rabbi Pinto ordered me to do each day is what healed me."

Why Get Angry?

One of the grandchildren of Rabbi Chaim Pinto once traveled to Morocco in order to reprint the sefer *Mekor Chaim* about his grandfather Rabbi Chaim. However, he encountered many obstacles, making it difficult for him to print the sefer.

With the help of Hashem, in the merit of his holy grandfather, he found some charitable people in Morocco, willing to donate money for the worthy cause.

One of the people in Morocco, who originally offered to pay for the printing of the sefer, suddenly began to give the grandson of the tzaddik a hard time, ultimately refusing to pay for the

printing. After a while, the grandson met again with the man who had evaded him.

It was on the day of the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi David Ben Baruch. The grandson asked him again if he would agree to help with the printing of the sefer. The man refused, and in addition, he publicly kicked the floor three times in the direction of the grandson in a humiliating way and shouted loudly, "I refuse! I refuse!" He continued disgracing the grandson of the tzaddik in public.

This man's punishment did not take long in coming. That night, he was struck with paralysis in his feet, *rachmana litzlan*, and was taken to the hospital. He remained paralyzed for a long time, despite the fact that he subsequently begged the tzaddik's grandson's forgiveness for refusing to assist in the printing of the holy sefer and humiliating him.

We may infer from this that one should not make pledges or promise money for *tzedakah* if he cannot keep his word. Also, why get angry? Perhaps this man became paralyzed because of his anger. Or, perhaps it is because he did not want to keep his promise, and therefore was punished from Heaven.

A Tzaddik's Decree

R' Yichye Hakohen, z"l, from Casablanca, who was active in promoting Torah and charity, offered to drive the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen, who was a descendant of Rabbi David Ben Baruch, to pray at the grave of the tzaddik Rabbi Khalifa Malka.

During the ride to Agadir, something went wrong with their car and it swung out of control. The car turned over three times and veered dangerously from the road, heading toward a steep cliff. It would be a matter of seconds before the car would plunge over it.

Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen, who was aware of the danger, screamed in panic, "May the merits of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto save

us so that we should not perish down in the valley." At that moment, the two men felt as if some hidden power stopped the car and shifted it back onto the road.

Tombstone of Rabbi Pinchas Khalifa Hakohen

After a few minutes, when the two tzaddikim recovered from their trauma, they realized what an immense miracle they had experienced. Rabbi Yichye turned to Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen and asked him, "Why did you prefer addressing the merits of Rabbi Chaim Pinto in your prayers, as opposed to the merits of your illustrious grandfather, Rabbi David Ben Baruch?"

Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen was a bit surprised by the question, but provided a ready explanation, "It is important to note that the sons of tzaddikim must also believe in the powers of other tzaddikim, who are not directly related to them. Not always are one's righteous ancestors available to assist him."

"When we were in danger," the tzaddik continued, "I wanted, of course, to mention the merits of my grandfather, Rabbi David Ben Baruch. However, I perceived that he was busy finding merits for a woman who had turned to him in prayer. Therefore, I beseeched that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto we should be

saved. He sprang into action and righted the vehicle. Moreover, his intervention saved us from the terrible decree, since 'the will of those who fear Him, He will do; and their cry He will hear, and save them.' A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills his will."

A Precious Find

Rabbi Yaakov Odis was about to marry off his son. On the day of the chuppah, Rabbi Odis gave his son, the *chatan*, a golden bracelet, with the name of the *chatan* engraved on it. The *chatan* was delighted with the gift, but on that very day, while running an errand he lost the bracelet. He returned home downcast and despondent over losing this valuable gift such a short time after receiving it.

The *chatan* did not reveal to his father what had happened, but immediately went to the police station to file a report about the missing chain. In addition, he pledged a large amount of money to the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, in order that he should find the bracelet that he had received.

The day after the wedding, the *chatan* returned to the same spot where he had lost the bracelet. To his amazement, he found it lying on the floor, exactly where he had lost it. When the owner of the property heard about it, he exclaimed, "I can't understand how it is possible! We cleaned the entire area yesterday four times, and we gathered all the garbage, but we did not see the bracelet."

How can it be? It is only possible that in the merit of the pledge of *tzedakah* for the merit of the tzaddik, the bracelet was found (*Shenot Chaim*).

Sacrificing for Life

The daughter of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, Bébéh, married Rabbi Chaim Ifergan, zt"l, who served as a *dayan* in his city. They had two children, a son by the name of Meir and a daughter called Taneh (Sultana).

Mrs. Mira Moyal, the daughter of Rabbanit Taneh, who was the granddaughter of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, testifies that whenever Rabbanit Taneh would leave her house, the entire street would be vacated because of her tremendous holiness. All the men and women feared looking at her face, since it shone as brightly as the radiant sun.

Mrs. Moyal further adds that when she was a young girl, she became sick with a life-threatening illness and was on the brink of death. The doctors predicted that she would undoubtedly die that day.

Rabbanit Taneh quickly set out to the cemetery, in order to pray at the grave of her righteous grandfather, Rabbi Chaim, and beg him to intervene on her daughter Mira's behalf.

When she arrived at the grave, she encountered all her holy ancestors, who had already perished, greeting her. Suddenly, she spotted her illustrious grandfather, Rabbi Chaim, and he informed her, "Today a decree was issued upon your daughter Mira that she will die."

Rabbanit Taneh lamented, "This is not possible." Rabbi Chaim repeated once again, "The decree was already issued, and there is nothing to do."

Rabbanit Taneh questioned, "Grandfather, is there really nothing left to do?" Rabbi Chaim responded, "Do you have any suggestions?"

"Yes!" answered Rabbanit Taneh. "My daughter has a lot of silver and gold coins saved for her wedding expenses. I ask that all the coins disappear, and in return, she should live and be spared from death."

Rabbi Chaim agreed to this offer; and so it was. On that very day, all the coins disappeared, and Mrs. Moyal began to recover.

In the evening, the doctor visited the house, expecting to see Mrs. Moyal already deceased, as he had predicted. He was absolutely amazed to see her alive and well, as healthy as before.

When Mira grew up, she married an illustrious Torah scholar, Rabbi Avraham Moyal, who had true fear of Heaven and refrained from all evil.

Prove Your Powers Once More

One of the grandsons of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol once traveled to Alexandria, in order to collect money for *tzedakah*. He made his rounds among the rich people. Among them, he also approached the famous, wealthy man, Mr. Zuaretz, to ask him for a donation.

Mr. Zuaretz gave the grandson of the tzaddik a measly sum of only half a lira of gold. The grandson refused to accept the donation and told Mr. Zuaretz, "I will not accept less than ten lira from you!"

Mr. Zuaretz immediately summoned one of his guards and ordered, "Remove this man quickly from here!" The guard pushed the grandson of the tzaddik out in disgrace. Greatly humiliated, he cried out, "My grandfather, the tzaddik, will yet show you his powers."

Upon exiting, he met his friend, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Rav Chaim Ibn Walid, zt"l, and told him what had happened.

Less than an hour after being evicted from the wealthy man's office, Mr. Zuaretz gave a scream and fell faint to the ground. It was impossible to revive him. The city was in turmoil, and many doctors were summoned to assist the wealthy man. But no one was able to help him.

Rabbi Eliyahu ben Rav Chaim Ibn Walid also heard what had happened. He quickly ran to Mr. Zuaretz's house and informed his sons, "Your father will not recuperate from his attack unless you summon the grandson of the tzaddik, whom your father disgraced, and beg his forgiveness."

Mr. Zuaretz's sons rushed to find the tzaddik's grandson. They brought him to their father's house, and with tears streaming

down their faces, they begged forgiveness, pleading that he pray for their father's recovery. The grandson agreed and asked them to bring him a glass of water. Then he declared, "Grandfather, reveal your powers once again!"

The grandson of the tzaddik blessed Mr. Zuaretz and gave him some of the water to drink. Miraculously, Mr. Zuaretz recuperated immediately. Afterward, the merchant gave the grandson of the tzaddik a donation of twenty Egyptian lira (*Shenot Chaim*).

I Will Pressure Him

On one of his trips to Mogador, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and his family members stood at the gravesite of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol to pray. His host, R' Mordechai Knafo, was also present.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu noticed that R' Knafo was praying with intense concentration and banging his hand on the tombstone. He pleaded and beseeched Rabbi Chaim Pinto to heal a very sick young man from Strasbourg, who was lying unconscious.

R' Knafo continued praying and declared, "I request that by next week this young man should recover completely and get up from his bed."

The young man had been lying unconscious for three months. His liver and kidneys were malfunctioning; the doctors were not giving him any chance to live.

"I observed R' Knafo's behavior," Moreinu v'Rabbeinu continued, "and I told him to stop banging on the tombstone of the tzaddik. However, he ignored me and declared with great fervor: 'I will pressure him.'

"What transpired after the visit to the gravesite is truly amazing. That week, the young man opened his eyes. The doctors were stunned at the miracle unfolding before them."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu concluded his extraordinary tale, "I would never dare bang on the tombstone of my grandfather. However, R' Mordechai did it naturally, and he was answered immediately!"

A Full Blessing

Mr. Sammy Gabey from Casablanca made sure to come each year to the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. In 2003 (5763), he stood by the tombstone crying bitterly, since he had been married many years but did not have children.

The participants of the *hilula*, who sympathized with his agony, blessed him that he should merit having a healthy child, and in the following year, he should come to the *hilula* a father.

The following year, he joined the *hilula* as usual, and when he exited the cemetery, he turned to Rabbeinu, shlita, to ask for his blessings. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu responded cheerfully, "So, your wife is pregnant, and the blessing that the participants blessed you with at the gravesite of the tzaddik was fulfilled."

Mr. Gabey confirmed his statement, but wanted to know, "Why wasn't the entire blessing fulfilled, since the congregants had declared that I would come here as a father, and this has not yet materialized. After all, I am here in Mogador, and my wife is in Casablanca, approximately 500 kilometers away."

"You know what the Jewish date is today?"

"Yes, today is Shabbat, the twenty-fifth of Elul."

"If so," Moreinu v'Rabbeinu responded, "who knows? Maybe your wife is giving birth now, but since it is Shabbat, she cannot inform you. I am sure that the prayers of the congregants by the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto will be fully fulfilled."

Meanwhile, the congregants at the *hilula* proceeded to eat the *seudah shlishit* meal. Mr. Gabey's friends asked him what he had discussed with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, and upon hearing that his wife was due to give birth, they blessed him heartily with "Mazal Tov!"

At the conclusion of the Shabbat, the joyous news spread like wildfire. Mr. Gabey's wife had given birth to a boy exactly at three p.m., the very moment when all the congregants had blessed him with a hearty "Mazal Tov."

This caused a great *kiddush Hashem*, since many Jews witnessed how the blessings at the grave of the tzaddik resulted in a wonderful miracle.

Call Him Chaim

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu relates another extraordinary story on this topic:

One of my students, Shimon Illuz, was anguished over his doctors' diagnosis that he would not be able to have children. All his brothers and sisters, as well as his wife's brothers and sisters already had children; only they did not have any. He suffered immensely, and each year he would go to Morocco to join in the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, on the twenty-sixth of Elul, prostrating himself over the grave of the tzaddik, shedding many tears, begging Hashem to grant him holy children. This issue pained him greatly.

In 2003 (5763), he arrived as usual at the *hilula* in Morocco, and again shed many tears by the grave. All the participants prayed for him and his wife that they should merit children and blessed him, "May it be Hashem's will that next year you should return to this place with your wife and baby boy, whom you should name Chaim after the tzaddik." Then everyone concluded with a thunderous "Amen".

To their immense joy, nine months later his wife gave birth to a boy. They made a *brit milah* on Sunday, parashat *Balak*, 2004 (5764), and I was supposed to serve as the *sandak*. However, since at that time I was out of the country, I gave the honor to Shimon's brother. The story of Shimon's salvation is truly amazing.

A Sensitive Security Situation

The following is another remarkable story that Moreinu v'Rabbeinu told about the *hilula* of the tzaddik:

The security situation in Morocco in 2003 (5763) was sensitive. Many suicide bombers tried to target crowded Jewish centers, and the Al-Qaeda terror organization was threatening.

In fact, on one Shabbat evening in Sivan, ten suicide bombers schemed to blow themselves up in various Jewish locations. They planned to detonate the bombs near the Jews after the Shabbat meal. This is in itself a miracle, since they did not set off the bombs in the middle of the meal.

They also conspired to blow themselves up in the Jewish cemetery of Casablanca. This was very unusual; what purpose could they have in blowing themselves up in a cemetery? Miraculously, the suicide bombers blew themselves up in Jewish locations which were empty of people. In the end, approximately fifty citizens were killed, but not one Jew was even hurt, *Baruch Hashem*.

Because of the unstable situation, the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was almost cancelled. Many people were frightened to attend because of the dangerous situation. I myself did not know what to do. Should I continue with the preparations for the *hilula*? Finally, I decided to travel to Morocco and celebrate as usual, come what may.

The *hilula* that year was so extraordinary that it is difficult to describe it in words. Many Jews came to pray at the grave of the holy tzaddik. There were almost more soldiers and policemen than people in the cemetery. For every Jewish participant, there were three policemen, guarding him.

It is interesting to note that when Selichot were recited near the grave on Motza'ei Shabbat, at a time when Morocco was teaming with suicide bombers, the sounds of the prayers carried through the entire area. Who would believe that such an event would be possible in Morocco, considering that the Islam movement had become substantially strengthened over the last few years? The *hilula* caused a tremendous *kiddush Hashem*.

Furthermore, in the great merit of the tzaddik, all government employees, among them, the mayor of Mogador, who assisted the Jews participating in the *hilula*, were rewarded by the king of Morocco and were raised in rank.

They themselves admitted that this had never happened before. Because they helped the Jews who had come to pray at the grave of the tzaddik, Hashem caused them all to be raised in rank. It was obviously only due to the merits of the tzaddik.

Another exceptional facet of this event was the special arrangement at the airport. Because of the instability in Mogador, it had been shut down. Only at the onset of the *hilula* was it opened so that the flights coming from all over the world, bringing hundreds of Jews, would be able to land. The project of hosting all the Jewish people coming to the *hilula* cost the Moroccan government an enormous sum of money, and we are grateful to them. May it be His Will that they continue in their good deeds, honoring Am Yisrael wherever they are.

The Arabs themselves frankly declare that from the time that the Jews left Mogador, the status of the city declined, and the blessings that they had previously enjoyed ceased. When they saw the Jews coming back to the city on the *hilula*, they exclaimed, "Here is the blessing returning!"

May we sanctify Hashem's Name in public by going in His ways. Then, all the nations of the world will respect us, hastening the coming of Mashiach, who will redeem us speedily, may it be in our days.

Faith in Our Leaders

Don't Do It

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's brother, Rabbi Avraham, experienced an obvious miracle at the grave of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

He and some of his friends were involved in a fatal car accident, as was described earlier. His friends were killed, and through Hashem's mercy only he remained alive. His condition was critical.

Rabbi Avraham promised that if he would survive the accident, he would go to Morocco to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, as well as by the graves of other tzaddikim there.

A few years later, when he had recuperated sufficiently, with *siyata di'Shemaya*, and wished to keep his promise, he and his family embarked on the journey to Morocco. His mother, tichyeh, joined the other four members traveling by car, making it altogether a group of five passengers.

Before Rabbi Avraham crossed the border into Morocco, his friends warned him, "You will not be permitted to enter Morocco because you have only an Israeli passport, and relations between the two countries are strained. Even a visa would not be sufficient in the present situation." However, Avraham insisted on proceeding.

"I want to go to Morocco as I promised and pray by the graves of my ancestors, come what may."

The family took the risk and arrived at the Moroccan border. The border police stopped them and asked them for their passports. All the passengers handed over their passports, except for Avraham, who did not have a Moroccan passport. The police peered into the car and said, "We have four passports, and see four passengers. All is in order; you may enter." This was a

fulfillment of the verse "They have eyes, but cannot see," since there were five passengers in the car, but miraculously, one was not seen…

Everyone entered Morocco, even Avraham, who did not have a passport. This was an obvious miracle, in the merit of the tzaddik, and in the merit of Rabbi Avraham's resolve to pray at the graves of his holy ancestors. Once in Morocco, Avraham was able to arrange a new passport, since he was a native Moroccan.

After the accident, Rabbi Avraham was left limping, and he had to use a cane. Every day he would go to the grave of Rabbi Chaim and cry out, begging the great tzaddik to help reverse the situation, until even the local Arabs became accustomed to his howling at the cemetery.

One day, Rabbi Avraham pleaded at the grave desperately, "Rabbi Chaim! I am taking my cane and throwing it away for good, and I want you to perform a miracle for me."

The guard of the cemetery heard Rabbi Avraham's brave petition and warned, "Don't do it! You need the cane in order to walk; how can you discard it?"

However, Rabbi Avraham did not heed the advice of the guard. His faith in the tzaddik was firm, "I am surprised at you. You have been working here for many years; certainly you have heard stories of extraordinary miracles occurring in the merit of the tzaddik. Today you will have another story to tell all those visiting the grave."

This is exactly what happened. After Rabbi Avraham concluded his prayers, he threw the cane far away and began to walk on his legs, unaided. Thus, he continues to walk normally until today.

The Return of the Passport

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu tells an unbelievable story:

My host in Morocco, R' Mordechai Knafo, has strong faith in

Hashem and an unshakable faith in the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

A few years ago, he told me that his daughter arranged to go to France in order to take an important exam. However, she suddenly discovered that her passport was lost.

R' Knafo was very troubled by the loss, because making a new passport in Morocco was a complex bureaucratic procedure.

Rabbi Mordechai Knafo is standing on the right of Rabbeinu, shlita

Ultimately, he knew what to do: He began to pray to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik, he should find the passport. Throughout the night, he lit candles, while praying fervently to Hashem, until he was sure that during the night "someone" would deliver the passport to their house.

His wife begged him to get some sleep, but he refused, saying, "I will not sleep until the passport arrives at our house."

"How will the passport get to our house in middle of the night?" his wife argued.

"I believe that in the merit of the tzaddikim it will arrive," he

answered. At three a.m., R' Knafo heard knocking on his door. He opened the door and saw a Moroccan man in the entrance holding a case in his hand. R' Knafo grabbed the case from him.

"Why are you taking the case away?"

Instead of answering, R' Knafo opened it up and took out his daughter's passport. When the passport was safely in his hands, he asked the man, "Where did you find the case?"

"Near the French Embassy."

"Why did you come to return it?"

"The truth is, I did not want to return the passport, and I was planning to rip it up. But, my mother came to me in a dream and told me to hurry and return the passport to its owner. 'If you want to honor your elders,' she advised, 'go assist the owners by returning the passport to them.'"

The Arabs of Morocco are known for honoring their parents. Thus, he proceeded to fulfill his mother's request by returning the lost property to its owner. R' Knafo handed the man a sum of money to compensate him for his troubles, and bade him farewell.

This story teaches us the power of faith in tzaddikim. This is not a story that happened hundreds of years ago. The truth is that any person can reach this level of faith, as the *Navi*, Chavakuk, says, "But the righteous person shall live though his faith." Even a simple person can be considered a righteous person, if he possesses faith.

Through faith, every person can merit wondrous miracles, just like great tzaddikim. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the miracle that occurred. However, it is not easy to achieve such a level of faith. One must work hard to acquire it, strengthening himself constantly.

Earning a Profitable Income

R' Mordechai Knafo told the following miracle that happened in the merit of the tzaddik:

He had a wine shop in the city of Tiznit. It was risky business to sell wine in Morocco, since Arabs were prohibited by their religion to drink alcohol. Therefore, the only customers were the French, and there were not many French people around.

Fights erupted frequently between the drunks at the shop, causing R' Knafo a lot of problems. He was so troubled that he decided to go Mogador with his friend, R' Yisrael Cohen, to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and pray that in his merit, the police should somehow close the store.

His prayers were fully answered. That week, the police announced that they would close the store, since the French people had already left the city, and there was no one left to buy wine…

When the police arrived with a warrant, R' Knafo fell to his knees in front of them and pleaded, "You are taking away my livelihood! Why are you closing my shop? How will I earn an income?"

R' Yisrael Cohen, who was present at the time, expressed his surprise, "Why are you crying? After all, you yourself prayed that the police should come and close the store. Since you prayed for it, your prayers were accepted!"

Afterward, R' Knafo moved to Casablanca, where he established another business. *Baruch Hashem*, he was very successful in his new venture.

Meeting an Angel

R' Shimon Cohen, the son of R' Yichye Cohen, who was a good friend of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu the following story:

Once he was traveling with his father through a barren desert to

a distant village in Morocco. The purpose of the journey was to meet with an Arab who owed him a sum of money.

On the way, in middle of the night, the car got stuck, and the two men found themselves in a barren wilderness, a dark and dangerous place, with no phone, no electricity, and without any help.

They were alarmed and feared for their lives, since bands of thieves commonly scoured the area, and wolves, scorpions, and foxes roamed freely in the desert. They did not know their exact location. All they saw in front of their eyes was an endless, vast expanse. They were overcome with fear and could bear the tension no longer. When R' Yichye Cohen realized their grim predicament, he prayed that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto they should be protected.

The unbelievable occurred! They experienced a miracle similar to that of Yishmael, the son of Avraham Avinu, when he was dying of thirst in the desert. As they were praying, they noticed from afar a motorcyclist coming in their direction. He stopped next to them and asked R' Yichye Cohen, "What are you doing in a barren desert in middle of the night?"

"My car broke down," R' Yichye Cohen explained. The motorcyclist checked the car, took out the necessary equipment from his case, and began to fix the engine. After a few minutes, he said, "Get into the car and try to start it."

R' Yichye Cohen turned the ignition, and the car started. He stepped out of the car to thank the man who had saved their lives, but he could not find a trace of him. He had vanished as quickly as he had appeared.

There were two important things that they gained from this incident: One, their prayers were accepted and brought fruit immediately. Second, they merited seeing an angel.

Who was this person? Certainly, he was an angel from heaven sent by the tzaddik to save them. After all, the desert is a vast

area, stretching for hundreds of kilometers, far from civilization. Where could the motorcyclist equipped with all the necessary tools have come from?

When Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard this amazing story, he said to R' Shimon Cohen, his student, "You were privileged to see an angel of G-d! Because you merited this revelation, you should be strengthened in your faith in Hashem's existence and be careful to fulfill all the mitzvot."

Wake Up

Mrs. Esther Buzaglo got very sick. Her condition deteriorated until she was wavering between life and death. She went to Ashkelon for Shabbat, and during her stay, she fell into a coma. The doctor attending her declared that there was nothing left to do but to prepare for her imminent death.

Esther and her husband believed strongly in Hashem and in tzaddikim. Before she slipped into a coma, she prayed to Hashem from the depths of her heart that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol she be cured from her illness and recover completely.

The following is her account of what transpired:

After she went into a coma, she dreamed a vivid dream. She saw herself in a large room resembling an auditorium. She saw hundreds of people there, all wearing white clothes. Suddenly, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto entered. He approached her and said, "Prostrate yourself before your Creator and begin serving him faithfully, thanking Him for all the kindness that he has bestowed upon you." Afterward, he repeated three times, "Wake up, wake up, wake up."

At that moment, she opened her eyes. She saw her whole family standing at her bedside, expecting her to take her final breath. However, to everyone's surprise, she began to repeat her dream.

The doctors do not understand how this great miracle occurred.

In truth, salvation came in the merit of the great tzaddik and because of her deep faith in their powers.

Accepting the Judgment

There was a family in Morocco whose son was very sick. All the efforts of the doctors to cure him were to no avail. What did they do? They took their son to Mogador, to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol's house. The family stayed there for several days, praying and pleading to Hashem to cure their son.

During their stay at the tzaddik's house, the boy's condition deteriorated. When the family members saw the child's unbearable suffering and witnessed his body slowly being consumed by illness, they prayed desperately that if there was a cure for him, he should recover; and if there was no cure, then he should be spared from further suffering and die.

Their prayers were answered, and within a few days the child died.

Still Living

Approximately twenty years ago, a man joined in the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol in Morocco, and tearfully told the assembled people his heartbreaking story:

Following medical tests, his doctor discovered that he was suffering from an advanced stage of cancer, *rachmana litzlan*. The doctors did not give him more than six months to live. They informed him, "There is nothing left to do, since there is no cure for your illness. Go enjoy yourself for the remaining six months of your life."

The participants of the *hilula* told him encouragingly, "Here lies the great doctor, Rabbi Chaim Pinto. Pray to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik you should have a complete recovery."

Bitterly, the sick man countered, "None of the best doctors could assist me; how, then, will being at this grave help me?"

"In that case, why did you come here?"

The man answered simply, "I heard that people were celebrating a *hilula* with a lavish feast. That is why I came."

The assembled people insisted, "If you came to this holy place, it is a sign from Heaven that you were granted a chance to be cured." A few people proceeded to lay the sick man on the grave of the tzaddik, and they blessed him, saying, "We shall meet next year, with the help of G-d, and find you alive and well."

Six months passed, and the man visited his doctor to monitor his condition. The doctor asked him in surprise, "How are you still alive and functioning? We must examine you." He had extensive tests done, and found no trace of the disease.

This story was told directly by the man himself at the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, on the fifth of Elul, 2004 (5764). Hundreds of people, among them, notable leaders and Rabbis, heard the story. On that occasion, important Rabbanim were present, including Rabbi David Refael Banon, shlita, Rosh Av Beit Din of Montreal, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, and others as well. Many cried tears of joy for the miracle that was performed for him.

Just Retribution

In conclusion of this chapter, we include an excerpt from a lecture delivered by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu on Motza'ei Shabbat Kodesh, parashat *Chukat*, 2006 (5766), describing the preparation of the universe for the future redemption, may it come speedily and in our days. He also mentions this astonishing story that happened not so long ago.

The words of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu are quoted verbatim:

I wish to relate a story that happened six months ago. Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol's house was in desperate need of repairs, since it was close to 220 years old. Many adjacent houses had already collapsed, and it was dangerous to even approach

his house. We proceeded to collect donations, and when we obtained the necessary funds, we hired an Arab contractor to do the renovations.

Upon further consideration, we decided that in order to reduce the costs, we would provide the contractor with the necessary building materials, and we found someone to sponsor it. We placed R' Avraham Knafo in charge of the project.

During the renovations, he realized that a lot of the construction material was missing. This aroused his suspicions. He approached the Arab contractor and demanded an explanation. The contractor denied all accusations and pretended that he was insulted for being suspected of stealing.

During their verbal exchange, the contractor declared that he would never steal, and especially not from the tzaddik's family. He swore that if he had a hand in the theft, he would pay with his life.

The incredible happened. On that day, he joined a party at his friend's house, and a fight broke out. One member became enraged at the contractor and killed him.

The whole city was in turmoil, since everyone clearly saw that the tzaddik had brought retribution upon the guilty party.

All the workers came running to R' Avraham Knafo's house, falling to their knees. They admitted that they too had participated in the theft, but only by the orders of the contractor. Now they feared for their lives, since they could also be struck by G-d's vengeance.

During the next few months, this story spread all over Morocco. One Arab, not believing the story, began to ridicule its source. The hand of Hashem struck him as well, and his mouth became distorted. For two weeks he visited countless doctors, but no one could assist him. Finally, his friends advised him to go beg forgiveness for slighting the honor of the tzaddik.

To everyone's astonishment, after receiving pardon, his mouth

functioned normally again. Concerning this, Chazal state, "Tzaddikim are more powerful in their deaths than in their lives." Their power stems from the holy Torah, and that is why their influence affects even inanimate objects, including the house of the tzaddik. Rabbi Chaim Pinto's house, like the pans of the Mishkan, became sanctified.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Rabbi Yehuda Pinto – Hadan 1800's - died 1881

The tremendous void left by Rabbi Chaim Hagadol's passing was soon filled by his righteous son, the tzaddik Rabbi Yehuda Pinto – known as Rabbi Hadan, zy"a. He was famous for his swiftness in performing mitzvot, fulfilling Chazal's dictum, "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven."

Rabbi Hadan was particularly well-known for his vast knowledge of Torah and Kabbalah. He would diligently study *sifrei kodesh*, day and night. He was an outstanding tzaddik and *chassid*, and performed many wondrous miracles. Many people flocked to him in order to receive his blessings.

Because of his wisdom and sagacity in all areas of life, the leaders of the city and state would consult with him. Foreign diplomats and representatives of various countries made their way to him, standing in line by his door to receive advice and assistance in pressing issues.

Correspondence directed to him from foreign countries passed through the various consulates that were situated in Mogador. He shared his wisdom generously, giving beneficial advice to every individual, both in spiritual and physical matters. This was in addition to praying for each member of Am Yisrael to merit salvation and mercy.

Abundant Charity

Rabbi Hadan inherited from his father the virtue of generosity

and kindness. It was rooted in the very fiber of his being. It is told about him that he would distribute all his funds for charity. Rabbi Hadan was very careful not to go to sleep at night if he still had a coin remaining in his pocket. He would hurry to donate it to the poor.

When poor children reached the age of thirteen, Rabbi Hadan would purchase tallitot, tefillin, clothing, and other provisions, so that they would be able to celebrate their Bar Mitzvah with complete joy.

A few years later, when these boys grew of age to marry and build a Jewish home, Rabbi Hadan would undertake the important mitzvah of *hachnasat kallah*.

Sir Montefiore's Visit

Sir. Moshe Montifiore, z"l

Expensive carpets were laid from the port of Mogador, leading to the house of Rabbi Hadan, in the Mellah. The luxurious carpets were spread in honor of Sir Moses Montefiore, who came from England in 1863 (5623) to intercede with the governor of the city, in order to gain better treatment for the Jews and prevent anticipated pogroms following the blood libel in the nearby city of Safi.

Sir Moses stayed in Rabbi Hadan's house for a few days and merited receiving his blessings and counsel. Since the weather was so pleasant, Sir Moses extended his visit longer than planned.

During his stay, Sir Moses donated money to the Jews and generously dealt with the needs of the people. The main purpose of his visit was considered to be most successful when he procured

a statement of defense and equal rights for the Jews of Morocco (*Shenot Chaim*).

This visit encouraged other philanthropic organizations to initiate welfare programs aimed at restoring the stability of the Mellah, and arranging for assistance during the periods of hunger and plague that occasionally occurred.

Rays of Splendor

It is said about the tzaddik Rabbi Hadan, that when he was a young boy, a gentile attacked him and began beating him mercilessly. Rabbi Hadan followed the advice of the Sages, who say "If one comes to kill you, rise and strike him dead." He picked up a stone and threw it at his attacker, who was injured and bled.

When the governor of the city heard about this, he got very angry at the audacity of the Jewish boy, and ordered his father, Rabbi Chaim, to appear before him. When he arrived at the threshold of the palace, the governor became frightened; Rabbi Chaim's face radiated with rays of splendor and shone like beams of fire.

In great fear, the governor pleaded before Rabbi Chaim not to come any closer to him. Realizing that the person standing in front of him was a saintly and holy man, the governor apologized for daring to disturb Rabbi Chaim from his holy service. As compensation for his troubles, he offered to punish the gentile who had struck his son Rabbi Hadan.

Rabbi Chaim had pity on this gentile and refused to have him punished. After this incident, the prestige of the tzaddik increased in the eyes of the people, and the governor honored Rabbi Chaim greatly (*Shevach Chaim*).

Do Not Worry

Famine struck Morocco. It took a great toll on the farmers, as well as on all the people. There was not one drop of water to wet the earth. The people were miserable and beside themselves with grief and worry.

Rabbi Hadan was extremely concerned. The *chagim* were quickly approaching, and he did not have any money to purchase clothing and provisions for the poor people of his city, as he generally did each year.

One night, his father, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, appeared to him in a dream and told him, "My son! Do not worry. There is no need to be concerned. Tomorrow, with Hashem's help, your family will receive new clothes as usual."

At dawn, when Rabbi Hadan prepared to go to the Beit Hakeneset for the Shacharit prayers, the butler of the wealthy man, Moshe Aflalo, came to him. He informed him that the wealthy man wished to see Rabbi Hadan.

Moshe Aflalo was waiting at the entrance of his house and greeted Rabbi Hadan warmly and exuberantly. He began to relate what had transpired: At night, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to him and asked, "How is it possible for you to wear new clothing for the *chag*, while my son Hadan wears old clothing? I order you to provide my son Hadan and his family with new clothing."

"I called you at daybreak," the rich man continued, "in order to fulfill your righteous father's wishes." He immediately handed Rav Hadan a large sum of money, intended for new clothing. In addition, he gave him a watch and a chain made of pure gold.

Rabbi Hadan blessed the rich man for his generosity and returned home in great spirits. He purchased clothing for the poor people of the city, and with the money that remained, he bought clothing for himself and his family members (*Shenot Chaim*).

Up in Flames

Every year, Rabbi Hadan would bake matzot for Pesach on the day before Erev Pesach. The Rav would bake the matzot himself, not relying on anyone else. He customarily practiced an additional stringency of bringing his own utensils for the baking of the matzot, since the kashrut of the matzot was his top priority.

As in every year, Rabbi Hadan arranged with the owner of the matzah bakery, called Ben Uchata, that he would come to bake matzot there a day before Erev Pesach.

On the designated day, Rabbi Hadan arrived with the flour, water, rolling pin, and other necessary equipment for baking matzot. However, he noticed to his surprise, that the oven was already occupied by matzot being baked by someone else.

He was very distressed that the owner of the bakery had violated his agreement allowing him to use the bakery on that day. He was even more disturbed by the fact that his extended family, as well as countless poor people, were depending on him to provide them with matzot for the *Leil Haseder*, which would commence the following evening.

The Rav approached the owner of the bakery and complained to him. However, Ben Uchata answered him indifferently, "Today it's very busy here. Maybe the honored Rabbi could come back a different day to bake matzot."

The building where the bakery had been

Rabbi Hadan left the bakery without responding. He had not gone far when, all of a sudden, a fire broke out in the bakery, causing it to go up in flames. The oven, utensils, and all the matzot were burned entirely to the ground.

The order of events made it clear to the owner of the bakery that his offensive treatment of the Torah scholar had cost him dearly. He ran after the Rav and

begged forgiveness. In addition, he promised him that from that day on he would always keep his word, no matter what.

After Rabbi Hadan pardoned the owner of the bakery, the flames immediately subsided, without leaving any trace of damage at all.

According to eye-witnesses, even the matzot in the oven were not burnt. Such is the power of tzaddikim, the servants of Hashem (*Shenot Chaim*).

When Moreinu v'Rabbeinu told the story to his students, he added, "Every time we pass by this bakery, we recall the miracle that took place there."

Better Not to Promise

One of the Jewish merchants in the city of Mogador, Mr. Musen Bochbot, traveled one year to a neighboring city, in order to purchase a stock of *etrogim* and sell them in Mogador for the festival of Sukkot.

On his way home to Mogador, he was ambushed by an organized band of thieves, who planned to kill him and take all his possessions. At that fateful moment, he prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto he should be saved from their hands. He pledged that if he would survive, he would give Rabbi Hadan the sum of five hundred duro that was concealed in his pocket.

The merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto stood in his stead and, in the end, he was miraculously saved.

Once home in Mogador, Mr. Bochbot regretted making the pledge. The sum of money that he had promised to give to Rabbi Hadan seemed exorbitant. He decided to give Rabbi Hadan a smaller amount.

That night, Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to Rabbi Hadan in a dream and revealed to him everything that had happened to the merchant, Musen Bochbot. He instructed him not to accept from

him less than five hundred duro, which he had pledged to give when his life was in danger.

When the merchant arrived at Rav Hadan's house, he presented him with one hundred duro and five *etrogim*. Rav Hadan thanked him for the nice *etrogim* that he had given him, but upon seeing the money, he told the merchant in no uncertain terms, "I will not take from you less than five hundred duro, since this is the amount that you vowed to give me."

The merchant could not believe what he was hearing. "How does the Rav know what happened to me, and what I pledged to give?"

Rabbi Hadan recounted to the merchant in exact detail everything that had happened to him on his journey, describing his desperate prayers to be saved in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and the pledge that he had made. He also reminded him how in the end he was saved from the cruel bandits. Rabbi Hadan looked at the merchant and stated emphatically, "My father, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, appeared to me at night and told me everything. Accordingly, you are obligated to give me the full five hundred duro."

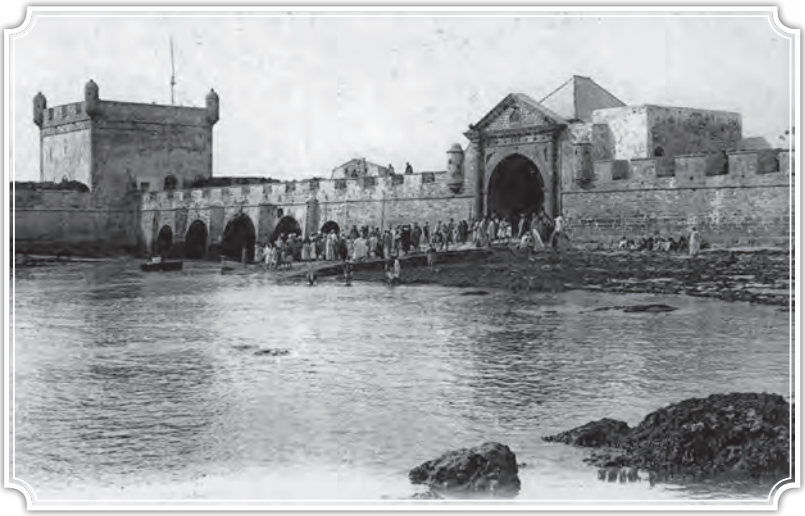
Shamefacedly, the merchant rummaged through his pockets and pulled out another four hundred duro, placing it on the table of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Hadan did not touch the cash, since he did not wish to take the merchant's money. He returned the entire sum to him and admonished him sternly, "It says in *Kohelet*, 'Better that you do not vow at all than that you vow and not pay.' If you make a pledge, you are obligated to fulfill exactly what you promised. And if you do not truly desire to give, one should use the word *nedavah*, which is not binding when making a pledge, and not *neder*, which is a vow" (*Shenot Chaim, Mekor Chaim*).

Fulfilling a Promise

Rabbi Hadan enjoyed an excellent reputation among his people. His kind heart and commendable character traits served as

shining jewels in his splendid crown of glory. One of his worthy customs, for which he was well-known, was to escort each person who left the city, whether for business or for health purposes or for any other reason.



The port of Mogador

Our story begins with two merchants, Chacham Bihu and Rabbi Yosef Elmaliach, who set out for England by sea for business purposes. Thus, Rabbi Hadan followed the two to escort them to the port.

When Chacham Bihu noticed Rabbi Hadan's shining countenance, the thought crossed his mind that perhaps the saintly tzaddik's intentions were to request that they donate some of their profits for charity. Somehow, he uttered scornful words to Rabbi Hadan. Rabbi Hadan heard the insults and suffered his humiliation in silence. He did not respond, but the disparaging words caused him much pain. "Why? For what reason did Chacham Bihu embarrass me?" he agonized.

Rabbi Hadan returned home humiliated. In his anguish, he fell ill and began to vomit blood. His attendant advised him to ascend to the roof of the house and breathe fresh air, so that perhaps he would feel a little better.

On the roof of the house overlooking the ocean, they spotted two commercial ships sailing at sea. "Whose ships are these?" Rabbi Hadan asked his attendant. The attendant replied that these were Chacham Bihu's ships. One ship was carrying all the merchandise, and the other ship carried the passengers.

As a result of the agonizing humiliation that the tzaddik had suffered, causing him to fall ill, Hashem brought calamity upon the ship. Soon after setting sail, the ship carrying the merchandise caught fire and sank to the bottom of the ocean.

The attendant, who witnessed the event, ran frantically to Chacham Bihu's house and told his wife what had happened. He described how Rabbi Hadan had vomited blood because of the humiliation that he had suffered from her husband, and what had eventually happened to the ship.

Chacham Bihu's wife hurried to the Rav's house and begged the Rav to spare her husband's life. Rabbi Hadan consoled her, saying that the most important thing was that the ship that her husband was sailing on would not suffer any damage.

Approximately one month later, Chacham Bihu set out on his return voyage to Mogador with a fleet of five ships. He longed to see his family, and dreamed of meeting them soon.

But alas! Suddenly a storm struck at sea, which threatened to capsize the ships with all its passengers. The winds were so strong that everyone was sure that the ship would sink to the bottom of the ocean.

At this critical time, Chacham Bihu remembered the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto. He prayed from the depths of his heart to Hashem that if He would save him in the merit of the tzaddik, he would give his son Rabbi Hadan fifty royal, in addition to a watch and chain made of pure gold.

His prayers were answered. The ships were saved, and Chacham Bihu arrived home safely. Many people came to greet him, happy to see him home. Amidst all the fanfare of his homecoming, Chacham Bihu forgot about the vow that he had made when his life had been in danger.

That night, when Rabbi Hadan went to sleep, his father, Rabbi Chaim, appeared to him in a dream and told him, "Wake up, my son, and go quickly to the house of Chacham Bihu. Remind him of the vow that he made during the storm at sea, since he is obligated to keep his promise."

When Rabbi Hadan awoke from his sleep, he hurried to Chacham Bihu's house. Upon entering, Rabbi Hadan began to recount all the miracles that had happened to Chacham Bihu at sea. It was as if he himself had been present at the time.

When he finished describing the events, Rabbi Hadan turned to Chacham Bihu and told him, "You made a promise and now you must fulfill it."

Chacham Bihu, who had completely forgotten his vow, was absolutely amazed. How did the Rav know exactly what had occurred? He turned to Rabbi Hadan and asked him, "Honorable Rabbi, who revealed all this to you?"

"My esteemed father, Rabbi Chaim," answered Rabbi Hadan. "He came to me in a dream and told me everything. Now, please fulfill the promise that you made."

Chacham Bihu immediately rose from his seat and with great admiration excitedly kissed the Rav with respect. On the spot, he fulfilled his pledge and gave the Rav the money that he had promised to pay (*Shevach Chaim*).

Returning the Pledge

A similar story happened to another merchant from Mogador, who traveled to London on business. On his way back to Mogador, he returned with a fleet of ships laden with merchandise, which he had purchased in England. All of a sudden, a storm developed at sea, and he was in danger of sinking together with all his merchandise.

The wealthy merchant did as his ancestors did in time of trouble, and began to pray to be saved in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. He vowed that if he would escape danger, he would give all his possessions, including the clothes that he was wearing, to the tzaddik's son Rabbi Hadan.

The merit of the tzaddik stood in his stead. The storm abated, and the ship docked safely at the shores of Mogador.

When the wealthy man was settled comfortably at home, he began to have misgivings about the vow. It seemed too much to give all his possessions to the tzaddik.

To resolve his predicament, he decided to do *hatarat nedarim*, in order to annul the vow. He did not intend to completely back down from his pledge, but he would not give Rabbi Hadan all of his possessions, as he had originally promised. Instead, he would offer him a small gift.

While mulling over his thoughts, messengers arrived from Rabbi Hadan and informed him, "The Rav wishes to see you immediately."

Seated next to the saintly tzaddik, he was surprised to hear him declare, "All your possessions, including the ships that you

brought from England belong to me. Even the clothes which you are wearing belong to me and are not yours!"

"How does the Rav know this? I am sure that I did not tell a soul about my vow."

"My father appeared to me in a dream and revealed everything." Rav Hadan continued, "In order not to break your vow, since you really do not wish to fulfill it, I am returning everything to you as a gift. You may keep your possessions" (*Shenot Chaim*).

Salvation Is in Hashem's Hands

After the Sultan Muhammad died in 1874 (5634), a group of rebels in Morocco tried to seize the reins of government. Some of the brigades camped near the city of Mogador and stormed the fortified city walls. They burned the gates at the entrance and prepared to invade, in order to loot and kill the residents.

The governor of the city, realizing the danger, immediately dispatched his troops to the Beit Hakeneset named after Rabbi Chaim Pinto and beseeched the congregants to pray, begging Hashem for mercy that the enemies should not invade the city.

The congregants began to pray, crying to Hashem to save them from the dangers of the sword, death, and loss.

Salvation is in Hashem's hands, and He accepted their prayers in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. The watchmen of the city gates testified that immediately at the conclusion of the prayers, horsemen appeared clothed in white garments, galloping on white horses, emerging from the tomb of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and headed toward the city walls.

The horsemen fought mightily against the rebels and drove them far away. Later on, when the residents ventured outside, they saw the corpses of most of the rebels, who were killed in battle near the wall.

After the miraculous salvation and *kiddush Hashem* which resulted, the governor approached the tzaddik Rabbi Hadan,

Rabbi Chaim's son, and requested that from then on he should regularly pray for the government.

As a token of appreciation for the prayers that the Jews had conducted to save the city, the governor vowed to protect them. As a gesture of good will, he released from prison many Jews who had been arrested for no reason. In addition, he granted a tax rebate for the Jewish citizens. From then on, the governor knew exactly who to turn to in time of trouble to intervene for Heavenly protection (*Shenot Chaim*).

Give Birth in Peace

Mrs. Simcha Elkeslasy, a"h, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's grandmother, related that once while traveling from Mogador to Marrakesh, Rabbi Hadan chanced upon a large frog advancing slowly.

Rabbi Hadan began to conduct a special *tikkun* for the frog, and among other things told it, "May it be Hashem's will that you should give birth in peace."

Afterward, the tzaddik rose and continued on his journey. The secrets are known only to Hashem…

May He Rest in Peace

The *gaon*, tzaddik, and *mekubal*, Rabbi Hadan, passed on to the Heavenly Yeshiva on the sixteenth of Av, 1881 (5641). His grave is situated in the new cemetery in Mogador, and on his holy tomb, the following words are engraved:

"Here is the grave of the perfect all-encompassing Chacham, who brought merit to the public and was swift to perform mitzvot, stemming from holy ancestry, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi Yehuda Pinto. He passed away on the sixteenth of Av *Rachaman*, in the year 5641."

It is important to note that due to his great humility, no lengthy praise about him was written on his tombstone. However, the simple words engraved are sufficient, stating that he brought

merit to the public and was swift to perform mitzvot, since they reflect his tremendous love of Torah and mitzvot. This is as Chazal state, "Not study, but practice is the main thing."

The old tombstone

On the day when his holy father, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, passed away, on the twenty-sixth of Elul, at night, while he was sleeping on the floor, he envisioned a bright light. When he opened his eyes, he saw his father, who had already gone to the Heavenly Yeshiva, standing before him. Fortunate was he, and fortunate was his lot.

The holy tzaddik, Rabbi Yehuda Pinto (Rabbi Hadan) was unique. He was known

The new tombstone

for his benevolence in dispensing charity, for bringing merit to the public, and being swift to perform mitzvot. He exemplified the words of the *Tanna*: "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion, to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven." May his memory be blessed, Amen.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan 1865-1937

Foreword

The following are the words of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"a, written as an introduction to the sefer *Mekor Chaim*:

Blessed is Hashem, our G-d, Who created us for His glory, separated us from those who stray, and gave us His Torah of truth. All those who engage in the study of Torah that was hidden for 974 generations until it was given to Am Yisrael, the Chosen nation, will merit much abundance. The holy Torah is comprised of Hashem's Names with which He created the world.

Especially blessed are the prominent scholars of the generation, who merit reveling in the light of Torah, thereby bringing the eternal world closer to our lowly world. In the merit of their holy Torah, the words of Chazal are fulfilled, "The tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills their wish."

Blessed is Hashem for giving Morocco the privilege of boasting many great and holy tzaddikim, some of whom wrote sefarim which were printed, while others composed sefarim which have been lost. The common denominator among them is that they were all tzaddikim.

Therefore, I, the lowly, am printing stories about the Admor, the highest authority, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim, zy"a, to transmit to future generations the wondrous ways of Hashem. Included are stories that were already printed in Arabic, and some that I heard

from reliable sources, which they either experienced, or heard from their ancestors who lived in Mogador.

I must admit that I used a lot of the stories taken from the manuscripts of the *gaon* and *chassid*, the humble scholar researching the past, Rabbi Avraham Attar, the son of the Admor and tzaddik, Rabbi Yosef Ben Attar, z"l, a descendant of the Admor and highest authority, the famous leader and *mekubal*, Rabbi Avraham Ben Attar, z"l. May Hashem repay him kindly for his work. "Do good, Hashem, to good people, and to the upright in their hearts."

In the merit of my holy forefathers, and in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim, I trust that there will be no faults found in anything written. My sole intention in writing this book is to increase Hashem's honor, especially among my fellow Sefardim. They should know that Am Yisrael has not been abandoned. We had great Rabbanim even in recent times.

The Servant of Hashem, **Moshe Pinto,**

The son of the holy tzaddik, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu **Chaim Pinto,** zy"a

His Name Shall Be Known in the Gates

An extensive line of scholars and great Torah Sages stemmed from the glorious Pinto dynasty. They contributed to Am Yisrael spiritual leaders and miracle workers, generation after generation, son after son, until ultimately the words of the *Navi* were fulfilled that the Torah "will not be withdrawn from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring, said Hashem, from this moment and forever."

The *gaon* and tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan was the grandson of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. In order to differentiate between them, people called the grandfather "Rabbi Chaim Hagadol" and the grandson "Rabbi Chaim Hakatan." He was a link in the glorious chain of the Pinto dynasty, well-known for excelling in Torah and in true fear of Heaven. He merited

achieving lofty levels in the Written and Oral Torah and in its hidden realms, ultimately attaining the level of learning together with Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory.

The following story illustrates this fact:

Early one morning, when most people had not yet awakened from their sleep, a small group of congregants made their way to the Beit Hakeneset, wrapped in their tallit and tefillin.

R' Yonah Ibn Chaim, zt"l, who was one of the early risers, discovered upon reaching the entrance to the Beit Hakeneset, that he was not the first one there. Through the wall, he heard two voices engaged in the study of Torah inside.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zy"a

The sweet voice of one of the people learning Torah was familiar to him. It was none other than the voice of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

Rabbi Yonah lingered a bit outside the Beit Hakeneset, in order not to disturb the two from their study. When the sounds of the voices subsided, he entered the Beit

Hakeneset, but was met with a surprise. Inside, Rabbi Chaim was sitting alone.

Since R' Yonah had clearly heard two voices studying, he approached Rabbi Chaim and asked him, "Where is your *chavruta* with whom you were learning?"

"Did you see him?" Rabbi Chaim inquired. "Yes!" answered R' Yonah. "Fortunate are you that you merited seeing the face of Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory," Rabbi Chaim told him. "Eliyahu Hanavi is the one who was learning with me in the Beit Hakeneset."

During their discussion, Rabbi Chaim made R' Yonah promise that he would not reveal to anyone what he had seen as long as Rabbi Chaim lived. R' Yonah kept his word, and only after Rabbi Chaim passed away, did he reveal the secret.

Dedication to Torah

The tzaddik and *mekubal* Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, the son of the well-known tzaddik Rabbi Hadan, was born in 1865 (5625), in the city of Mogador. Already at a young age, he dedicated himself to learning Torah and Avodat Hashem, which was his sole aspiration and joy. He became known as an outstanding *gaon*, well versed in all the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*. He was likened to "a cemented cistern that loses not a drop."

Rabbi Chaim labored diligently to draw from the Torah of the *Rishonim* and clarify the Torah of the *Acharonim*, in order to understand the *halachah* to the utmost. He rejected all worldly vanities and sat in the halls of Torah. With great effort and diligence he learned *Shas* and *Poskim* and was fluent in all areas of the Torah. In addition, he devoted a substantial amount of time, despite his tight learning schedule, to doing acts of charity and kindness, as will be described below.

You Are Still Young

An interesting testimony was given by R' Ishua, the attendant of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, about the daily schedule of the tzaddik. This is what he said:

I would go to his house early in the morning and already find him praying in the Beit Hakeneset, on the top floor. After praying, Rabbi Chaim went downstairs to his wife and asked her what she planned to cook that day. He would give her a sum of money to purchase the necessary provisions and then, immediately went on his way, going from house to house to collect money to distribute to the poor people of the city.

His feet literally led him to the houses of the sick, poor, and needy. He shopped for them himself. In every home that he visited, he would be offered some food, and he would make sure to always taste a bit. He told me to eat in every place.

I asked him, "Harav, how much can I eat?" He answered me, "You are still young; you can eat. If they offer you food, you may not humiliate them by refusing to eat in their home."

In this manner, the tzaddik would walk for hours, going from one end of the city to the other, in order to practice kindness and charity. This was his custom in his young years, and he continued doing so until old age.

At night, the tzaddik would engage in *tikkunim* and in the study of the holy Torah. "Who may ascend the mountain of Hashem, and who may stand in the place of His sanctity? One with clean hands and a pure heart."

Rabbi Chaim's extraordinary efforts to assist the poor and needy made him popular among the people. They sensed that all his actions were entirely for the sake of Heaven. Whoever searched for the tzaddik knew that he would be found among the poor and wretched people. He would spend time talking to them, offering words of encouragement so that they would not become depressed, but continue serving Hashem joyously.

In Prayer

It is fitting to devote a chapter describing the productive life of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan to his heartfelt prayers.

Every detail of how he prayed is worthy of thorough review, since all his prayers and blessings were said with intense concentration, as one who counts precious jewels, with pleasure and precision. This exemplified the statement, "All my limbs will say, Hashem, who is like You?"

It was not surprising that Rabbi Chaim merited that his pure prayers penetrated the Heavens and bore fruit, and his blessings came true, one by one. The many stories of miracles effected by his prayers, recounted by the subjects of the incidents, attest to this.

The words of Chazal were fulfilled through him: "A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills his wish."

Through all his prayers and supplications, for the general public as well as for the individual, he would beg for mercy in the merit of the saintly *Tanna* Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, zy"a.

Rabbi Chaim would often refer to himself as "the lowly servant of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai." He would utter this frequently, and it was often heard by many of his close relatives, whether he was in the middle of learning the secrets of the Zohar Hakadosh, or supplicating Hashem.

He Guards the Steps of His Devout Ones

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan customarily fasted from Motza'ei Shabbat Kodesh until the following Erev Shabbat. He neither ate bread nor drank water.

Every Erev Shabbat, his wife, the Rabbanit, a"h, would prepare for him some hot soup with meatballs for the Friday night meal, in order to revive his soul and strengthen his weakened body for the service of Hashem.

Take the Soup Away

On this matter, we recall the amazing account of Rabbi Moshe Benisti, the principal of a school in Nice, France, that he had

heard from his mother, Mrs. Chanina, tichyeh, which he told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu.

Once, the Rabbanit went to the butcher to buy meat, as usual, in order to prepare the meal for the night of Shabbat Kodesh. That day, the butcher deviated from his regular habit and gave her meat which was kosher but not *chalak* (*glatt*), as she generally bought each week.

The Rabbanit, who was not aware of the change, brought the meat home and prepared the soup and meatballs for the Rav as usual in honor of Shabbat, to revive the tzaddik's spirit after fasting the whole week. When the Rabbanit placed the plate of soup on the table, Rabbi Chaim suddenly called to her, "Take the soup away! It is prohibited to eat it; it contains worms…"

The Rabbanit glanced at the soup and saw that it was clear, with no worms. She innocently assumed that the Rav did not like her soup and just mentioned the worms as a joke. The Rabbanit went to the kitchen and brought her husband the second course, the meatballs.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto's dishes

The Rav again called out to her, declaring that there were worms crawling in his plate. "Do you want to feed me food that is prohibited? The Torah states that whoever eats worms transgresses five prohibitions. Why then did you serve me meatballs with live worms crawling in them?"

Rabbi Chaim took the whole pot of soup with the meatballs and threw it in the garbage. Consequently, after a week of fasting, he ate only bread and water for his meal, without tasting the meat at all.

Immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbat, the Rabbanit hurried to the butcher and inquired about the meat that she had bought from him. Where did it come from, and who was the *shochet*?

The butcher explained that the *shochet* was a G-d fearing Jew; however the meat that she had bought that week had not been *chalak*, as she usually bought. It was considered just kosher, since there was a question of *sircha* concerning the animal's lungs, which rendered it kosher, but not *chalak*.

Then, the Rabbanit understood that Hashem had prevented her husband form eating meat whose kashrut was questionable. This story illustrates the importance of Sefardim adhering to the ruling of Maran Beit Yosef, zy"a, to only eat meat which is *chalak*. Furthermore, we see that when a person guards himself from eating prohibited foods, Hashem protects him from stumbling unintentionally, as it says, "He guards the steps of his devout ones."

Serving the Tzaddik

There was a constant turnover of the *gabbaim* who served the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. So many people wanted to serve the tzaddik that they had to take turns. One shift left, and the next one entered.

There were two main reasons that Rabbi Chaim preferred this method: The first was that the tzaddik refused to have a Jew attend him for an extended period of time without paying him for his service in any way. Even when a wealthy person would attend him, Rabbi Chaim would make sure to give him something that he would appreciate in return.

The second reason was that the tzaddik feared that if he would become accustomed to a specific person assisting him, he might begin to slight his honor by viewing him as his servant. Therefore, he preferred to constantly change his attendants and *gabbaim*.

As expected, many people sought the honor of serving the tzaddik and personally observe his praiseworthy conduct. They enjoyed basking in his impressive presence. There was a waiting list of months to gain the privilege of serving Rabbi Chaim.

We are told that anyone who served the tzaddik was blessed with great wealth. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu testifies to this and says, "I know many Jews who became rich in this merit, and even their children became very wealthy."

You Will Yet Be Wealthy

It is told that once someone by the name of Ochana attended Rabbi Chaim for an extended time. One day, Rabbi Chaim called him and said, "That's it! The time has come for you to quit."

Rabbi Chaim gave him a modest sum of money at the conclusion of his services, emphatically blessing him, "Do not worry about your future. From this small amount, you will yet become wealthy…"

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu commented, "I heard from a trustworthy source that Mr. Ochana became very rich and also merited long life."

The Power Struggle

Once, R' Ishua Deri's turn came to serve the tzaddik. Rabbi Deri merited long life, and he personally told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu the following story:

After Rabbi Chaim notified him about his turn to serve him during the next few days, a wealthy man suddenly approached R' Deri and informed him, "I want to serve the Rav now. You stay at home, and I will attend him."

R' Deri was surprised and argued, "I waited a long time for my turn to attend the Rav. How can you take this privilege away from me at a moment's notice?"

The rich man threatened, "If you do not allow me to serve the Rav, you will regret it." R' Deri was scared of the wealthy man's threats and reluctantly agreed to his demands.

Rabbi Ishua Deri with the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon

The next day, the rich man returned to R' Ishua and begged forgiveness. "I cannot continue serving the Rav. It is much too difficult," he said.

"Why?" asked R' Deri. The rich man admitted the true reason for his change of heart. "When I showed up to serve the Rav, he asked me, 'Why do you want to serve me? Is it in order to meet a lot of people, or in order to eat a lot of food. (As we mentioned, Rabbi Chaim would visit many houses in order to collect money for the poor and in each place his hosts would serve him food. Rabbi Chaim would taste a bit and then he would order his attendant to eat the rest). I told him that I did not want to eat at all."

He continued to relate that the entire day, he rich encountered many difficulties, and he became extremely fatigued. It was an unnatural lethargy that Hashem had brought upon him because he had forcefully taken the place of another man. In the evening, Rabbi Chaim turned to him and said, "Hashem has granted you strength in order to serve Him, not in order to push others around. Return to your home and do not dare serve me again by taking the place of someone else."

In Casablanca

The Jewish population in Casablanca increased extensively after

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan moved there from Mogador in the last years of his life. He lived in Casablanca for over three years, and there he accomplished his main achievements, becoming famous worldwide for his righteousness, benevolence, and holiness. He was eventually buried in Casablanca, and his grave is in the Jewish cemetery there.

The thriving Jewish community of Casablanca boasted a population of over 200,000 Jews. They received Rabbi Chaim Hakatan with great ceremony and honor. The Jewish congregation, who recognized his worthiness and wished to have him come live among them, provided him with an apartment, so that he should be able to engage in Torah without worrying about the cost of rent.

From a spiritual aspect, these were tremendously successful years for Rabbi Chaim. During this period, he influenced thousands of Jews and fortified their adherence to religion in a time when the Enlightenment was penetrating the modern city.

You Should Bless Me

It was common that when Rabbi Chaim Hakatan would pass through the streets, everyone would crowd around him to kiss the hand of the tzaddik and request his blessings, since people knew that they would be fulfilled, as his prayers were accepted by Hashem.

Rabbi Pinchas Amos

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's brother-in-law, R' Pinchas Amos, relates an amazing story in connection to this:

It was the first time that his grandmother from Casablanca was going to request a blessing from Rabbi Chaim. She came to his house and asked him to give her a blessing. She also offered him a sum of money as a *pidyon nefesh*.

To her surprise, Rabbi Chaim refused to accept the money for the *pidyon*. "From you, I will not accept money," he told her.

"Why not?" she dared to ask.

"Because you fast from Motza'ei Shabbat until Erev Shabbat, and you are held in high esteem in Heaven. Therefore, I do not want to take money from you. On the contrary, I want you to bless me."

The words of the tzaddik, said in utmost modesty, greatly impressed the grandmother. She ventured to question the tzaddik, "From where does your honor know that I fast all week?"

"It was revealed to me by Heaven," Rabbi Chaim answered her, "and therefore I will bless you, but I request that you bless me as well."

Taking Pity on the Poor

Chazal warn, "Be careful with the children of the poor, because from them Torah will emerge." Rabbi Chaim would constantly repeat these words, not only uttering them, but truly living by them. He would always be found in the company of the poor and needy. He preferred sitting among them rather than sitting amidst the rich and prominent. He constantly offered his assistance to the poor people in every matter.

Every day, he would go visit poor families, who ate only vegetables or bread accompanied by a cup of beer. He would dine with them, partaking of their simple meals, in order to demonstrate that he preferred their meager portions to the delicacies and choice meat of the wealthy.

At the end of his visit, Rabbi Chaim would customarily bless the family members, especially the head of the household, and offer words of encouragement, declaring that he enjoyed his meals with them more than the banquets of the more affluent people. He would also add that fear of Heaven is acquired specifically through suffering, poverty, and pain. Moreover, it is known that

precisely from poor people, great Torah scholars emerge, as is told about the *Tanna*, Rabbi Yehuda bar Ila'i, that six of his students would share one tallit.

Rabbeinu adds, "Many people have told me that this was his custom; to always eat among the poor people, sitting on the floor as they did."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Engaging in Charity

Performing Acts of Kindness

Thousands of people benefitted from the charitable activities of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. Some were those who donated charity, and some were the recipients of charity. Rabbi Chaim vigorously engaged in *gemilut chassadim*, one of the pillars that support the world.

He invested great efforts to increase the income of the poor and needy of his city. His daily schedule began after the Shacharit prayers, when he would visit the grave of his grandfather the tzaddik and *mekubal* Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, in the old cemetery. He would always mention his name while blessing people, saying, "The merit of the honorable, holy forefather, my grandfather, should protect you."

Afterward, he would go to the new cemetery and prostrate himself over the grave of his father, the holy tzaddik Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan). Then, he would set out in the direction of the shops, in order to purchase the necessary provisions for the poor.

He would instruct his attendant to visit a needy widow or underprivileged family, in order to deliver the food. For some, he would instruct his attendant to deliver meat and pastries, and to others, fruits and vegetables. In this way the attendant shared in the mitzvah of distributing food among the needy, preventing the poor people of the city from starving.

A Segulah for Success

The impressive image and shining countenance of the tzaddik made a lasting impression on each and every Jew who visited Mogador. Rabbi Chaim Hakatan would sit at the gates of the city and wait for guests arriving from other cities, in order to grant them the opportunity of sharing in the mitzvah of *tzedakah*.

There were those who actively searched for Rabbi Chaim, passing in front of him intentionally, in order that he should request of them to donate a specific sum of money for *tzedakah*. They believed that if they would fulfill the request of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, they would meet success and thereafter experience good fortune in all their endeavors.

It was a known fact among the Moroccan Jews that if Rabbi Chaim would bless them for their donation, everything would go well for them that day. Furthermore, they would see wondrous miracles in the coming week.

Complete Joy

During the *chagim*, and especially before Pesach, when expenses were greater than usual, Rabbi Chaim did not hesitate to burden the wealthy people with supporting the impoverished people. Prior to Pesach, Rabbi Chaim Pinto would go from house to house, asking everyone to open their hearts and pockets to give charity and gladden the hearts of the poor people, widows, and orphans for the upcoming *chag*. In this way, they could also rejoice during the festival, and the happiness of Am Yisrael would be complete.

Anyone who donated money for charity merited the blessings of the tzaddik, issued from his holy mouth and from the depths of his pure heart.

More than I Received

Because of his responsibility in shouldering the tremendous expenses incurred when providing for the poor, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan suffered a financial crisis. What did the tzaddik do?

He went to prostrate himself over the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. Rabbi Chaim Hakatan took his attendant, R' Yehuda Ben Ezer, with him. When they finished praying at the grave, the Rav said to R' Yehuda, "Let us set out to the city of Safi."

On the way, they noticed a group of people approaching. The Rav turned to R' Yehuda and asked him if he saw the group. He answered in the affirmative, but was not sure if it was a group of Jews or not. The Rav told him, "It is a group of Jews, and one of them is bringing me a sum of seventy-five royal."

When the group came closer, Rabbi Chaim approached them and asked, "Who is Refael Lalush?"

"I am," answered one of the men.

"Give me the seventy-five royal that you pledged in honor of my grandfather the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim," the tzaddik demanded.

Refael Lalush took out of his pocket the entire sum and happily gave it to Rabbi Chaim. When the group left, R' Yehuda Ben Ezer asked Rabbi Chaim to allocate to him some of the money that he had received.

Rabbi Chaim told him, "I hereby bless you that you shall receive today more than I did." The blessing was fulfilled. R' Yehuda miraculously discovered a large sum of money in his horses' stable.

R' Yehuda Ben Ezer lived a long life, and he was honored by all the people of his city until his last day, just as the Rav had blessed him (*Shenot Chaim*).

Helped by His Grandmother

When the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan encountered economic hardships, he would borrow money from his acquaintances so that he should be able to continue providing for the poor and needy. When his financial situation would improve, he would return the loan.

Once, Rabbi Chaim borrowed a substantial sum of money from a fowl merchant by the name of Chasan Zafrani. However, when the time came to return the money, Rabbi Chaim did not have from where to obtain it.

The lender, who was not Jewish, threatened the Rav, "If you will not pay me back the money that I lent you, I will not hesitate to kill you!"

At that time, the tzaddik was still young and did not recognize his extraordinary powers, which stemmed from his exceptional holiness. In all innocence, he truly believed that the non-Jew would kill him if he did not return the money.

Rabbi Chaim requested that the non-Jew go with him to the cemetery and wait for him at the gate, until he would come to give him his money. The man indeed accompanied Rabbi Chaim to the cemetery. When he arrived there, Rabbi Chaim approached the grave of his grandmother, Rabbanit Miriam, a"h, the wife of his holy grandfather, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. He prostrated himself over her grave and cried to his grandmother, "Rise and see your pitiful grandson, who does not have a way to repay his debt."

When Rabbi Chaim finished praying for salvation, he noticed a woman standing in front of him, dressed in splendid clothing, commanding respect.

"Why are you crying?" she asked the tzaddik. Rabbi Chaim confided his troubles to her, explaining that he did not have a way to repay his debt to the non-Jew, who was waiting for him at the gates of the cemetery.

The strange woman took out a red kerchief from her pocket and placed a substantial sum of money in it. Then, she disappeared without a trace.

Rabbi Chaim fingered the money, totally amazed by the tremendous miracle that had occurred. He then repaid the fowl merchant, Chasan, in full.

Rabbi Chaim returned to the house of his father Rabbi Hadan, who was nearing death at the time, and recounted the whole episode to him. Rabbi Hadan told him, "Know, my son, that the woman you met was none other than your grandmother, Miriam, a"h. She perceived your intense distress. When you told her, 'Rise and see your grandson,' she immediately descended from the heavens in order to save your life."

One who fulfills the verse "You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d" and trusts in Him merits seeing much Divine assistance. He will ultimately succeed in all his endeavors (*Shenot Chaim*).

Washing off Impurity

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan used to bundle the money he collected for charitable purposes in a handkerchief that was specifically designated for this mitzvah. After the stars came out, even before Rabbi Chaim began to learn Torah, he would ritually wash the kerchief that held the money.

When questioned about this custom, the tzaddik explained, "I wash the kerchief from the *kelippot* and contamination of this world. The greatest filth in this world is money. Therefore, after distributing the funds for *tzedakah*, I wash the kerchief."

Rabbi Chaim Pinto's pouch where he kept the tzedakah money

Sanctified for the Poor

One night, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan could not fall asleep. He immediately rose from his bed and approached his wife, asking her, "Did you perhaps take some of the money that I collected?"

"Yes," answered his righteous wife. "I took some money in order to purchase provisions in honor of Shabbat."

Rabbi Chaim explained to her in no uncertain terms that he was not pleased. He told her, "Since you took money that was sanctified for the poor, a foul odor of this world entered our home and I could not sleep because of it."

The tzaddik quickly took the money and set it aside for the poor.

Physically Engaging in Charity

R' Itzchak Abisror relates that Rabbi Chaim Hakatan called him several times to accompany him on his rounds of collecting money from the people of the city and distributing the charity among the poor. Not everyone merited accompanying Rabbi Chaim when he collected money, since it was a special privilege. However, R' Itzchak was chosen for the mission.

R' Itzchak Abisror, z"l, on the left

Every Friday, Rabbi Chaim would go and gather food from people so that he could distribute it among the poor in honor of Shabbat Kodesh. He would not collect money on Fridays, since he knew that time was limited, and the poor would not have sufficient time to buy provisions for Shabbat. Conversely, on other days, he would collect money and distribute it to the poor.

When Rabbi Chaim would visit the houses of the people to ask them to contribute some of their food, he would reveal to them in a supernatural manner how much food they required for that day, and how much they would need to eat that week.

Consequently, he would be able to inform them how much they could spare for *tzedakah*.

R' Itzchak Abisror expressed his amazement at the conduct of Rabbi Chaim: "It is amazing that a Jewish leader, who was immersed in Torah and mitzvot in utmost holiness, interrupted his studies in order to care for the needs of his fellow Jews. Rabbi Chaim would humbly go from house to house in order to gather food to provide for the poor people of the city."

When R' Abisror told this to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, he asked him, "Did you yourself go around together with Rabbi Chaim?"

"Yes," answered R' Abisror. "I went with him from house to house, and he would fill whole wagons with food and provisions."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu exclaimed, "Alas! I still do not reach the toes of my grandfather in his greatness. When did I ever perform such an act? When did I ever offer a portion of food to a poor man? I always excuse myself by giving money. However, my grandfather humbled himself to assist others all his life. This is why he merited Divine inspiration. When a person humbles himself in order to help his fellow, Hashem opens all the gates of Heaven for him. Hashem loves a person who devotes himself to helping others, and consequently fills him with wisdom and understanding, with holiness and purity, in order that he should continue in his holy service of helping the needy.

"Today, unfortunately, there are Rabbis who seek their own honor and are not prepared to dirty their hands with meat or other messy foods, which are practical forms of support for the poor families and Torah scholars, who do not have ample income to feed their families. The wealthy people sit in their comfortable offices and wait for others to do the work for them. On the contrary, Rabbanim of previous generations did not consider it to be a slight to their honor to personally provide necessary assistance. Fortunate are they and fortunate is their lot.

"This was the conduct of many tzaddikim, such as the Ba'al Shem Tov, zy"a, Rabbi Moshe Leib MiSassov, zy"a, Rabbi Levi

Yitzchak MiBerdichev, zy"a, and many other tzaddikim, who waived their personal honor when it came to assisting the poor and underprivileged, in order to raise their morale."

These words are befitting for the person who said them, as it says, "The words of a wise man's mouth win favor."

The Loan

Once, while Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was walking through the streets collecting alms for the poor, he noticed R' Avraham Amar in the distance, looking extremely embarrassed. This was because he was in terrible financial straits. He did not even have a single coin in his pocket.

R' Avraham Amar was worried that Rabbi Chaim would approach him and ask him to donate money for the poor. Consequently, he quickly darted into one of the yards behind the houses.

Rabbi Chaim observed his actions from afar and followed him to the back yard. When he met him, he told him, "I know you don't have any money in your pocket. However, I would like to help you." While talking to him, Rabbi Chaim removed some coins from his kerchief and gave them to him. He told him, "Come to me on Sunday and return the coins that I am lending you. Then, you will have money to repay me."

R' Avraham's son, R' David Amar, personally describes what transpired. His father was worried that he would not be able to repay the loan, but Rabbi Chaim convinced him to take the money.

In the end, R' Avraham took the money from the benevolent tzaddik and went to the marketplace. There he purchased fish, meat, and other provisions in honor of Shabbat Kodesh.

The day after Shabbat, R' Avraham hesitated to leave his house. He did not have any money on him. He was worried about meeting Rabbi Chaim, since he did not have a way to

repay the loan. After considering his predicament, R' Avraham strengthened his trust in Hashem and went out in the street.

While walking, an Arab, whom he had never seen before, approached him with an offer. He told him that he was a jeweler and was looking for people to market his merchandise. He proposed that R' Avraham should sell gold jewelry for him, and he would pay him handsomely for it. Moreover, he offered R' Avraham a substantial sum of money up front.

Immediately after handing him the money and jewels, the Arab disappeared without a trace. Just then, Rabbi Chaim appeared with a shining countenance and informed him, "Your eyes have beheld the fulfillment of my blessing to you. It is Sunday today, and now you can repay my loan. Do not give me one cent more."

R' Avraham repaid the exact sum that Rabbi Chaim had loaned him and was left with a large sum of money for himself as well.

I Don't Have Money

On one of Rabbi Chaim's excursions to make an appeal for a poor *kallah*, fulfilling the mitzvah of *hachnasat kallah*, he entered the store of a Jewish silversmith. He asked him to donate *tzedakah* to participate in this precious mitzvah.

The silversmith greatly desired to fulfill the mitzvah and comply with the tzaddik's request. However, he did not have any cash on him. He told Rabbi Chaim, "I have no money to give the honorable Rabbi."

Upon hearing these words, Rabbi Chaim immediately admonished him, "You do not have? You are not allowed to say that you do not have!" He added, "I will wait here until a woman will come and buy from you all the jewelry that you have in your store. Then, from the money that you will earn, you will give me *tzedakah*."

Just as the tzaddik had predicted, a few minutes later, a prominent looking woman entered the store and bought his entire stock at full price.

When the woman left, Rabbi Chaim told the silversmith, "Now you have money to give me for the mitzvah of *hachnasat kallah*."

Hashem Will Provide for Me

An amazing story, similar to the previous one, happened to Mr. Ben-Simon, whose daughter was married to Rabbi Chaim's grandson. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard this story personally from Mr. Ben-Simon.

Mr. Ben-Simon was a gold jeweler by profession. Once, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan entered his shop and requested, "Give me such and such amount of money for *tzedakah*." (Many times Rabbi Chaim would name a specific sum of money, and no one dared refuse him, since they knew that he could tell each person exactly how much money he was carrying in his pocket. For this reason, they always handed over the sum he requested without a word.)

The jeweler responded, "I have no money." This answer did not please the tzaddik, and he told the jeweler the following, "A Jew should never say, 'I do not have.' Instead, he should say, 'With the help of G-d, Hashem will provide me with the means and then I will be able to give you.' This is because if a person says, 'I do not have,' he draws evil upon himself."

The jeweler listened attentively to the Rav's advice. He immediately corrected himself and said, "With Hashem's help, Hashem will provide me with money, and then I will give the Rav as much as he requests!"

Then, Rabbi Chaim told the jeweler, "If so, I will wait a bit, and in a short while a woman will come who needs to marry off her daughter and will want to purchase gold. Sell her as much as she wishes to buy."

Rabbi Chaim lingered in the store. After a while, a woman entered. She was dressed very simply. She inquired of the jeweler about a piece of jewelry which she liked, "How much does this cost?"

The jeweler named a relatively high price, since he was sure that this woman was poor and she would surely not buy the

expensive jewelry. The woman was very taken with the jewelry and said, "I have never seen such skillful work."

Afterward, she began to inquire about a number of items that she saw in the store, asking the price of each one. Again, the jeweler named exorbitant prices, surprised by the turn of events.

The woman neither disputed the price nor tried to bargain for a reduction. She quickly took out her purse and paid with cash the entire sum that the jeweler had named. Then, she left the store.

The jeweler looked at Rabbi Chaim incredulously. He raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "*Ribbono shel Olam*! How unbelievable! This woman looked like a simple pauper, and yet she bought all the jewelry…"

Rabbi Chaim explained, "This woman never gave money for *tzedakah*. Therefore, I did not say a word to you about the inflated prices. Now, take for yourself the exact amount of money for the cost of the gold that you sold, according to the price that you would usually charge, and give me the difference so that I can distribute it for *tzedakah*."

The jeweler did as the Rav said. Afterward, Rabbi Chaim hurried after the woman and told her, "Madame! You paid too much for the gold, and this is the difference that I am returning to you. Would you prefer to keep the difference, or could it be donated for *tzedakah*?"

The woman responded, "Rabbi! I have never given money for *tzedakah*. I want to donate the entire sum to charity."

One Chicken for Tzedakah

A person by the name of Akiva from Nice in France told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that when he was young, he had lived in Mogador in Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's neighborhood. Once, his turn came to attend the Rav, and he witnessed the following incident.

As the Rav was sitting in front of his house, a Jew who was holding a few chickens passed by. The Rav stopped him and

asked him to make a donation for charity. The Jew responded by saying, "I have nothing to give you."

Rabbi Chaim did not back down. "You have a few chickens in your hand. Give me one of them for the poor."

The owner continued to persist in his refusal, when all of a sudden, the chickens in his possession died.

The man immediately begged the Rav's forgiveness and pleaded, "I am on my way to a feast, and now I do not have what to serve the people!"

Rabbi Chaim calmed him down, "Continue to the *shochet's* house. There, all of the chickens will come back to life!"

Every word of the tzaddik came true. The chickens came back to life when he reached the *shochet's* house. It was a truly wondrous miracle.

A similar story is told about Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. This corresponds to what Chazal say, "The deeds of the fathers are portent for their children." Ultimately, if the fathers were able to perform such acts, then their righteous offspring will be able to do the same.

Paying for His Life

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan once met a person by the name of Chaim Cohen in the street. He promptly warned him, "I know that you plan to travel today by bus. Your bus will encounter a fatal accident and all the passengers will be killed. I advise you to donate some of your money for *tzedakah*, since '*tzedakah* saves one from death.' In this way your life will be spared."

"If what you say is true, then why doesn't the honorable Rav warn all the passengers of the bus, so that everyone should be saved?" Chaim inquired of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Chaim explained, "None of the other passengers will believe me. Therefore, I am only telling this to you and offering you a way to save yourself."

This is exactly what occurred on that day. The bus veered off a high cliff, and all the passengers were killed on the spot, except for Chaim Cohen, who was saved from death in the merit of the money that he gave for *tzedakah*.

What Will Be Left for Me?

The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan once met a Jew called Yichye Cohen. Rabbi Chaim informed him, "I know that you have in your pocket such and such an amount of money. Give me money for *tzedakah*, and you will still have a certain sum left." Rabbi Chaim named the exact amount that would be left for him.

Yichye questioned, "If I give the honorable Rabbi so much money, I will not have enough left for all my needs."

R' Yichye Cohen, a"h

The Rav promised him, "A blessing will rest on the money that will remain, which will benefit you and all your descendants."

Yichye Cohn did as the Rav requested. Ultimately, the blessing of the tzaddik was fulfilled. Yichye Cohn died as a wealthy man at a very old age, and merited that his descendants were wealthy as well.

This is the reward for placing one's trust in a tzaddik, as it says, "And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant."

Helping Himself

A Moroccan Jew purchased a bus in order to earn an income and provide a livelihood for his family. However, to his distress,

the government rejected his request for a license to operate the bus.

One day, he met Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in the street. The man kissed Rabbi Chaim's hand in respect, and tearfully poured out his heart: "I bought a bus in order to earn a livelihood, and I invested all my money to pay for it. But now, the government does not allow me to operate it. If I will not be able to use it, I will be destitute. I've lost all my money. What should I do?"

Rabbi Chaim suggested, "It says, '*Tzedakah* saves one from death.' Chazal explain that 'a poor person is considered dead.' Donate money for the poor, and with Hashem's help and mercy you will receive a license to drive the bus."

The Jew accepted the tzaddik's advice and gave Rabbi Chaim a sum of money for *tzedakah*. Then, he went on his way.

The next day, he received a message from the Motor Vehicle's Department that he should appear at the office. When he arrived, the officers welcomed him pleasantly and informed him that his request had been approved. They issued him an authorized license on the spot.

This incident proves that "the will of those who fear Him He will do; and their cry He will hear, and He will save them."

A Faithful Guardian

Once, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan met Mr. Kadosh in the street and asked him to donate some of his money for *tzedakah*. Mr. Kadosh told him that he did not have any money in his pocket. This was not true; he was carrying a wallet full of money.

Not long after, Mr. Kadosh lost his wallet with all his money. All efforts to locate the wallet were to no avail. Tearfully, he approached Rabbi Chaim and asked him to help him out.

Rabbi Chaim gazed at him and said, "Hashem gives a person money so that he should be a guardian over it and utilize it for mitzvot and good deeds. However, if he is not a faithful guardian,

then Hashem takes the money away from him and gives it to another person who is more faithful."

Ultimately, Mr. Kadosh never found his wallet.

Helping Out

One Friday, Mrs. Chana Lankry was walking home from the marketplace, carrying heavy baskets laden with food for the holy Shabbat. Her steps were measured and slow, since at that time she was expecting a child, and the added load weighed her down considerably.

Just then, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan passed by and noticed Mrs. Lankry straining under her burden. He hurried over to her and said, "With your permission, we will carry the baskets to your house."

The tzaddik took one basket and handed the other one to his attendant. Mrs. Lankry was very touched by the sensitivity of the tzaddik, and she burst into tears, saying, "I must beg forgiveness from your honor. I am but dust and ashes beside you. I cannot permit your honor to carry my baskets as a common porter."

"Madame," the tzaddik addressed her and declared with delight, "You are the one who is actually doing us a favor. You are giving us the privilege of fulfilling the important mitzvah of 'You shall help repeatedly with him.' Our reward is reserved for us in the World to Come, and we are grateful to you for granting us the opportunity to fulfill this exceptional mitzvah."

Upon arriving at Mrs. Lankry's house, Rabbi Chaim took out a substantial sum of money from his pocket and handed it to her to cover the expenses of new clothing and provisions required for the baby's imminent birth.

Loving and Pursuing Peace

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was a disciple of Aharon Hakohen, "loving peace and pursuing peace." At every opportunity, he

made an effort to bring peace and harmony between man and his fellow, as well as between husband and wife.

It is told that once, Rabbi Chaim came to a place, where he heard with great sorrow about a couple who did not enjoy marital peace and harmony. The woman nagged her husband about everything. The husband, on the other hand, did not complain about his bitter fate, but accepted it with love.

When Rabbi Chaim heard about this, he was horrified by the woman's behavior. Moreover, he was impressed by the righteousness of the husband. He told his attendant, "Such a righteous man is assured of meriting a portion in the World to Come."

In order that the husband's life should not be a virtual Gehinnom, Rabbi Chaim went together with his attendant to visit his home. He spoke to the woman about her harsh conduct and convinced her not to behave arrogantly but improve her relationship with her husband. He spoke patiently and pleasantly, with warmth and dignity.

Rabbi Chaim continued to visit the couple several more times, since he truly loved peace and pursued it. In the end, his words penetrated the woman's heart. She began to conduct herself appropriately, according her husband his rightful honor, and from then on, they enjoyed peace and harmony in their home.

One Mitzvah Leads to Another

Heated dispute burned between a husband and wife. The Satan succeeded in fanning the flames, until, in the end, the two got divorced according to Jewish law.

After delivering the *get*, the husband turned to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in order to receive his blessings for the future.

The Rav spoke to him warmly and told him, "You have merited performing the mitzvah of divorce, which is one of the mitzvot written in the holy Torah. But Chazal teach us that 'one mitzvah

leads to another.' Therefore, I am sure that you will merit fulfilling the mitzvah of supporting a family, and in a short while you will return to your wife and children. Remarry your wife and resume your life with renewed resolve."

Rabbi Chaim added, "As you know, Amram divorced his wife and later remarried her."

The words of the tzaddik fell upon the man as thunder on a sunny day. The fresh ink on the *get* was not yet dry, and here the tzaddik was informing him that soon he would remarry his divorcee…

Rabbi Chaim continued to lavish praise upon this man's ex-wife, emphasizing how good she was for him, possessing just the right temperament, as "*Invei hagefen b'invei hagefen*," a perfect match!"

Slowly his words penetrated the husband's heart. He began to comprehend the error he had made and how he really could have worked things out with his wife, without resorting to divorce.

Basking in the presence of the tzaddik, the man realized that he had to change his attitude and conduct himself courteously, with patience and tolerance. He should cease venting his rage, as he had done in the past. Suddenly, the man burst out crying and told the Rav that he wished to remarry his divorcee.

Just as the tzaddik had suggested, after a few short weeks, the husband stood under the chuppah with his ex-wife. From then on, they lived in peace and harmony and raised their children to observe Torah and mitzvot in a pleasant manner and in holiness.

A Second Chance

Once, when Rabbi Chaim was busy learning the Zohar Hakadosh during his fixed schedule, he suddenly sensed that the holy atmosphere that had enveloped him was gone.

When the tzaddik raised his eyes, he noticed a woman from his community, waiting to see him. She begged the Rav to instruct

her how to do *teshuvah* for the grave sin of adultery which she had committed. The woman spoke sincerely, with tears of remorse, and the tzaddik was convinced that she truly wished to do *teshuvah*.

Rabbi Chaim voiced stern words of rebuke regarding the sanctity of the Jewish home and family purity. Then he instructed her exactly how to do *teshuvah* if she wished to merit eternal life. Among other things, she would have to fast regularly, move to a different location, and invest in many prayers.

The woman accepted upon herself all the terms of the Rav. She agreed to mend her ways completely. Upon hearing this, the Rav blessed her and promised, "With the help of Hashem, after you will mend your ways and do complete *teshuvah*, you will merit getting married and building a true Jewish home."

A few years later, a Jew from Agadir came to Rabbi Chaim's house in order to receive his blessings. Rabbi Chaim inquired about his personal status, and when he heard that he was widowed, he asked the man if he was interested in beginning a new chapter in married life.

When the man replied that he indeed wished to remarry, Rabbi Chaim quickly inquired of his family members about the woman who had previously come to him. They informed him that they had heard that she had done complete *teshuvah*, following all the instructions that Rabbi Chaim had given her. They also lavished praise upon her for fasting regularly every Monday and Thursday to atone for her great sin.

Rabbi Chaim realized that this was an excellent opportunity to help establish a Jewish home, and he proposed a match between the two. They eventually married and built a house on the foundations of holiness and purity. According to reliable sources, the couple went to live in Eretz Yisrael and established a wonderful family.

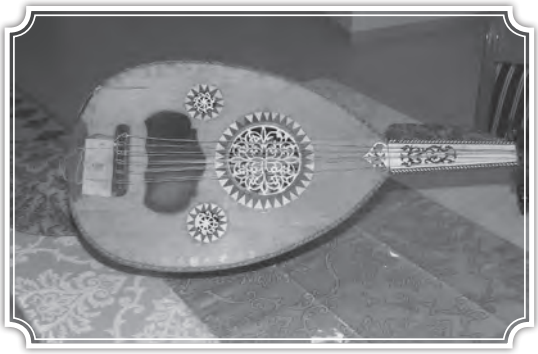
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Song and Praise to the Eternal King

Holy Fervor

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan had the custom of arranging a *melaveh malkah* feast in his house every Motza'ei Shabbat. The people of his community would gather in his house to pray Ma'ariv at the conclusion of Shabbat and afterward participate in the feast referred to as "*melaveh malkah d'David Mashicha*" with great celebration, singing and praising Hashem.

Rabbi Chaim would play enjoyable and moving music on his fiddle, which added a special touch when he sang the *piyutim* that his holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, had composed. For many hours, Rabbi Chaim would sing and play the fiddle with holy fervor, enabling the crowd to experience the spiritual ecstasy of the departing Shabbat, which they escorted happily with music and *piyutim*.



It is told that during one *melaveh malkah* feast, the tzaddik felt an especially lofty spiritual sensation. He continued playing the same tune over and over again, until he was

exhausted. Then, he turned to the crowd and told them, "I am too tired to continue playing music. It's a good idea to get some rest and gather strength for the coming six days of work."

Since it was already early morning, the participants of the *melaveh malkah* realized that it was time to recite the *Kriyat Shema* of Shacharit.

After praying with the congregation, they asked Rabbi Chaim why he had repeated the same tune the whole night. Rabbi Chaim did not respond.

After the people entreated him over and over again to reveal the reason for his behavior, he told them, "If you will ask me once more, I will not allow you to congregate in my house on Motza'ei Shabbat again."

The people begged the Rav's forgiveness and did not persist in their inquiries. They realized that the Rav could not divulge his reasons because he conducted himself in a lofty manner that was way beyond their comprehension.

The Tzaddik's Violin

The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy"a, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, that Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol wrote 150 supplications, corresponding to the 150 psalms in Sefer Tehillim. He added that Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan had a musical instrument resembling a violin, which had four chords, corresponding to the four categories of Creation: inanimate, vegetable, living things, and man. Each chord in the violin produced seven different sounds, corresponding to the seven *sefirot*.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu explained that when the tzaddik would play the instrument, through his music he would connect all the worlds, referred

to as *abiya* (an acronym for: *atzilut*, *briyah*, *yetzirah*, and *asiyah*). It is common knowledge in the field of Kabbalah that man serves as a conduit to connect all the worlds to their Source. This is further explained in the sefer *Chessed l'Avraham*, by Rabbi Avraham Azulai, zt"l.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu added, "It seems to me, but a humble servant of my Master, and grandson of my holy grandfather Rabbi Chaim Pinto, that this is the reason why Divine inspiration does not reside upon a prophet unless he is joyful. This is illustrated by Elisha Hanavi and Shaul Hamelech, among others, who merited Divine inspiration only when they were serenaded by the music played by a violin. Only through joyfulness, is the prophet able to connect all the worlds and consequently have Divine inspiration or prophecy rest upon him."

The Healing Music

One Motza'ei Shabbat, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan left his house with his attendant. On his way he met Mr. Karutshy, and Rabbi Chaim requested that he join them.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto's banjo

The three entered the house of a certain Jew. There, they found all the relatives standing around his bed, tearfully reciting Tehillim, as the man was in the throes of death. When Rabbi Chaim asked what was happening, the family members explained that the man had swallowed a bone, and it had become lodged in his throat, causing him to choke to death.

Mr. Karutshy's son told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that Rabbi Chaim

did not get alarmed by the traumatic situation. He informed the family decisively, "The man's final hour has not yet arrived. He is not destined to die now."

Rabbi Chaim requested that Mr. Karutshy sit by his side and accompany him in singing the holy *piyutim*. As soon as they began to sing together, the sick man began to vomit. He vomited considerably until the bone came out of his throat.

Praise and Glorify Him

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was blessed with musical talent, as well as a talent for composing *piyutim*. In this area, he was similar to his grandfather, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, as mentioned earlier.

Rabbi Chaim composed many melodies and lyrics while Divine inspiration rested upon him. His songs express his deep longing and love for Hashem, love of the Torah, fear of Heaven, and yearning for the final Redemption.

Unfortunately, almost all the *piyutim* were lost, and only two *piyutim* from all that were composed by the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan remain with us today. They are included at the end of the book (Chapter Twenty-five).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Effecting Salvation

A Tzaddik Decrees

Torah scholars in every generation, whose fear of Hashem is even greater than their wisdom and who are meticulous in performing His will, resemble Kohanim, who were the guardians of the Sanctuary. Since they are so beloved by Hashem, He protects them and shields them in every perilous situation. They can cancel harsh and terrible decrees endangering Bnei Yisrael, as it says, "A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills his wish."

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's door was open to everyone, without exception. During all hours of the day and night, people would come to his house pleading for assistance, requesting advice, blessings, and deliverance.

Many people would visit Rabbi Chaim's house so that he would pray for them and bless them. Those who merited salvation following his blessings returned to his house in order to thank him. But he would immediately set the record straight by stating simply, "Thank only the Master of the World."

Restoring Sensation

One night, when Rabbi Chaim Hakatan arrived at the Beit Hakeneset to recite the *tikkun chatzot* as usual, he stumbled over a man sitting on the steps of the entrance in the dark.

"What are you doing here at this hour?" Rabbi Chaim asked him.

"All my limbs are paralyzed!" the man answered. Tearfully, he pleaded before the tzaddik, "I came here especially for the Rav to notice me and take pity. I beg the honorable Rav to pray for me and beseech that in the merit of his holy forefathers, I should be healed from the terrible illness that has stricken me."

Rabbi Chaim helped him into a prone position, and while holding him, brought him into the Beit Hakeneset to join him in reciting the *tikkun chatzot*. Afterward, Rabbi Chaim called to a few of the congregants and asked them to take the paralyzed man to the old cemetery where his grandfather, the holy tzaddik and *mekubal*, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, was buried.

When they came to the cemetery, Rabbi Chaim approached the grave of his holy grandfather and cried out, "Grandfather, Grandfather, pray to Hashem that He should have mercy upon this man. Neither I nor he will budge from this place until he is healed from his illness."

An unbelievable miracle occurred. The moment that Rabbi Chaim concluded his prayers, the paralyzed man began to experience sensation in all his limbs. A few minutes later, he was able to stand on his feet normally.

Eventually the man married a righteous wife, and they had many children. He made sure to relate to all his descendants the story of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's greatness and the extraordinary merits of his holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. (Heard from Rav Hillel Ben Chaim, who lives in Be'er Sheva and was the *shamash* of the Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.)

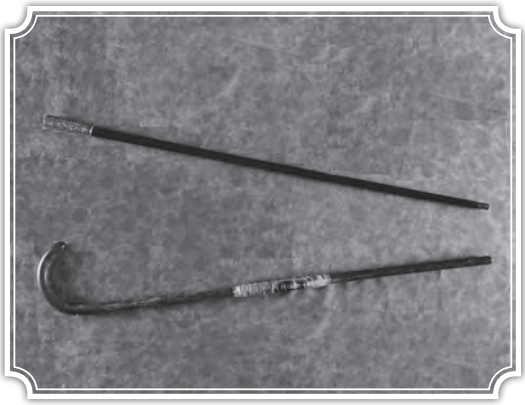
Running on Beer

Mr. Avraham Ali's son told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that once his father was traveling with Rabbi Chaim Hakatan on a bus. Suddenly, in middle of the way, the engine stalled. After two hours of waiting, Rabbi Chaim asked, "Why are we standing still and not moving?"

"By mistake the gas tank was filled with beer instead of fuel. That is why the engine is not functioning," the passengers explained.

Rabbi Chaim did not seem troubled by the turn of events. He handed his cane to Avraham Ali and told him, "Tap the engine with my cane, and everything will be in order."

Avraham fulfilled the tzaddik's request with unquestioning faith. He tapped the engine of the bus with Rabbi Chaim's cane and to the amazement of all the passengers, the engine immediately sputtered back to life.



Rabbi Chaim Pinto's cane

The Chase

One of the members of the Ochana family hid a large sum of money in his car, since it was illegal to possess large sums of money. He stashed the money under a layer of wax to hide it. His non-Jewish neighbors, who envied his business success, reported him to the government officials. Thus, one sunny day, the police stopped him and demanded that he open his car so that they could search it.

Mr. Ochana quickly grabbed the money and began to run. The police were at an advantage, chasing him with top of the line French cars that sped at 110 kilometers an hour, whereas, Mr. Ochana was fleeing on foot, weighed down with gold and silver coins. Nevertheless, he managed to escape and avoid being caught. The police officers were mystified by the fact that they had not succeeded in catching him.

The next day, when the police met him (of course, without the

money on him), they asked him, "Tell us, how did you succeed in escaping us? Which Rabbi did you call on to assist you?"

"I prayed in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto to be saved!" he answered simply. When the police heard this, they understood how he had managed to elude them. In the end, they dropped all charges against him.

Blessing on the Fish

The blessings of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan were renowned throughout Morocco. Amram Zenou's mother relates that her father worked as a fisherman for his livelihood. There was a period of time when he could not catch any fish, and he had no income. In his intense grief he fell ill.

Imbued with faith, his wife went to Rabbi Chaim to request his blessings for success in their livelihood. Rabbi Chaim asked her, "What does your husband do?" She answered, "He is a fisherman."

Rabbi Chaim blessed her that within the week, her husband would succeed in catching more fish than he had ever caught in his life. This is exactly what happened. Precisely in the place that he began to fish, he managed to catch a large amount, while his fellow fishermen had no luck. In this way he became considerably wealthy.

Wise Advice

R' Yosef Asseraf told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that he once traveled from the city of Aka to Mogador with eight camels laden with furs. As was his custom, he first went to visit Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in order to receive his blessings and guidance.

R' Yosef deliberated how he would be able to sell the merchandise which he had bought, since he had invested all his money in the furs, but there was no market for them.

The Rav advised him not to sell his merchandise immediately, but to rent a storage place for the furs. Only in another two

months, should he begin to market his stock. Rabbi Chaim explained to the merchant that then the price of the fur would go up. If he would wait a while, he would be able to gain a larger profit.

R' Yosef Asseraf did as Rav Chaim instructed and consequently gained an enormous profit from the sale of his furs.

In addition, Rabbi Chaim also blessed him that he and his descendants should continue enjoying wealth, which should

Tombstone of Rabbi David Ben Baruch

not cease for generations to come. This blessing was fulfilled, and until today, his sons and grandsons support many Torah institutions.

Ironing it Out

Rabbi Shimon Hakohen, the grandson of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi David Ben Baruch, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that once he traveled with his wife from Mogador to Marrakesh. In middle of the way, his wife began to worry. She told her husband, "I suspect that I left the iron on, and it may cause a fire."

Rabbi Shimon immediately phoned his neighbor in Mogador and asked him to go into his house to turn off the iron. To his

great surprise, his neighbor informed him that there was no need to do so. "Why not?" Rabbi Shimon asked.

"This morning, Rabbi Chaim already came to our house and asked us to disconnect the electricity in your house, since you went to Marrakesh and forgot to turn off the iron."

Knocking out the Toothache

One of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's students told the following story:

When his grandfather Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was in Morocco, an unusual incident occurred. One of the members of the community suffered from a terrible toothache. The whole night, he tossed and turned in his bed but could not sleep. He prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, Hashem should send him relief.

Suddenly, he heard knocking on his door. His family members went to open it, and to their surprise they saw Rabbi Chaim Hakatan standing in the entrance. He told them, "For the last several hours, I have not been able to sleep, since the head of your house has been praying to Hashem to send him relief in the merit of my holy fathers."

Rabbi Chaim approached him and touched his tooth, and the pain subsided immediately.

Safeguarding the Money

Mr. Pinchas Avitan told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, that his father related an amazing story about his grandfather. His grandfather owned a bakery, which was unfortunately not successful. Discouraged, he sought out Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and asked him for a blessing to earn a profitable income.

Rabbi Chaim asked him, "Do you have some money on you?"

"Yes, I have."

"Take the money that you have, invest it in making pastries and continue selling the products in your bakery."

My grandfather was taken aback. "Rabbi! I cannot even sell the pastries that I have in stock now. How can I invest more money in the goods?"

Rabbi Chaim was adamant and repeated, "Listen to what I tell you and you will have success."

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zy"a

The man was permeated with faith in tzaddikim and did exactly as Rabbi Chaim instructed. He bought flour and baked cakes. Indeed, he sold all the cakes and earned a large profit from them.

However, on his way home, he lost the wallet containing all his money. He was extremely distressed. While outside, my grandfather met Rabbi Chaim again.

"Nu, how were the sales today?"

"Although I sold all the pastries and earned a large profit, I lost my wallet with all the money in it. I am devastated."

Rabbi Chaim gave him a penetrating glance, "It is true that the wallet with all your money got lost, leaving you destitute. However, since a poor person is considered dead, perhaps in this way the decree against you will now be cancelled."

Upon hearing this, the man burst out crying bitterly.

"What should I do now? I don't have a penny to live on."

Rabbi Chaim gazed at him again and told him, "Go to a certain place and you will find your wallet there with all the money. Not one cent will be missing."

Astounded, he asked the Rav, "How can I possibly find the wallet in that place? Hundreds of people pass by there. How is it possible that no one took it, and I will still find it?"

Rabbi Chaim repeated firmly, "Do exactly as I told you."

Quickly, he went to the location that Rabbi Chaim described and found the wallet exactly where the Rav had told him to look. In the evening, when the man returned to Rabbi Chaim, the Rav asked him, "Did you find the wallet?"

"Yes!" he answered. "I found the wallet exactly where the Rav had said it would be. Bit, I still don't understand how it's possible! Thousands of people pass by there; how could it be that no one took it?"

"These things are ordained by Heaven," Rabbi Chaim explained. "It is from Hashem. It may be that a certain fellow found the wallet, but when I gave you the blessing, he lost it. It was orchestrated by Heaven that, in the end, the wallet would be returned to you."

This teaches us that the prayers of tzaddikim are not in vain.

Inquiring through a Dream

The brother of Mrs. Levi from Lyon lost his wallet, which contained many important documents and records, including an enormous amount of cash, totaling five thousand francs.

He approached Rabbi Chaim Pinto and tearfully told him that he had lost all his money.

"Go home and come back tomorrow, the tzaddik told him. "Tonight I will inquire of my holy grandfather through a dream about the location of your wallet."

The next morning, the Rav went to his house. He reassured him, "Do not worry, your wallet is presently in the police station. Go and claim it." The man did so immediately and retrieved his wallet with all its contents.

From this we can perceive the infinite holiness of the tzaddik, and

also his humility, since he went personally to the man and did not ask the man to come to him. It is also amazing how neither the person who had found the wallet, nor the police, had stolen the large amount of money.

Saving the Finger

One of the people of Mogador cut his finger. The cut was so deep that the finger was hanging on a thread, and it looked like it would be completely severed at any minute. The doctors decided that the finger could not be reconnected, and it should be amputated as soon as possible.

As a Jew who trusts in the guidance of tzaddikim, the injured man hurried to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's house for advice. Then, the unbelievable happened. Rabbi Chaim touched the cut finger with his hand, and it became reattached, as if it had never been severed.

The Missing Bracelet

One day, when Mrs. Rachel Deri returned to her house, she was met with calamity. Her golden bracelet, which was worth fifty thousand francs, had been stolen. She had hidden it in a safe place, but it was gone.

From bits and pieces of information which she gathered from her acquaintances, she discovered that it was her neighbor who had stolen her bracelet.

Despairingly, Mrs. Deri turned to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and asked him for advice how to get her bracelet back. She gave the Rav a sum of money for *tzedakah* and in addition donated oil for the Rav's lamp and requested a blessing.

"Go home," the Rav instructed her, "and tell all your neighbors that you were by me, and that I told you that the one who stole the bracelet will not live out this year. He will die within the year, and then his heirs will have to return the stolen object."

Mrs. Deri went home and did just as the Rav instructed her.

She told her neighbors exactly what Rabbi Chaim had said. The words, naturally, reached the ears of the neighbor who had stolen the bracelet. The woman feared for her life and hurried to return the stolen bracelet to its owner. Cunningly, she threw the bracelet into Mrs. Deri's room and then exclaimed, "Look! The bracelet is there in your room…"

After she returned the bracelet, the neighbor did *teshuvah*. She left her errant ways and became a faithful Jew.

The Returned Dowry

There was great excitement in the Loyb household when their dear daughter became engaged. The wedding preparations began in a flurry. R' Avraham Loyb, the father of the *kallah* took care of all the chuppah and *kiddushin* matters. The mother shouldered the responsibility for purchasing the dowry with dedication and joy.

A few weeks before the wedding, a thief broke into their house and stole the entire dowry of the *kallah*. Mrs. Loyb despaired. Their financial situation was very strained, and it was only through great effort that they had managed to save enough money to procure a dowry for their daughter. If their situation would become known to the *chatan*, he might break off the engagement.

Anxiously, Mrs. Loyb turned to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and asked him to pray for their salvation and that the dowry should be returned to them. Rabbi Chaim reassured her that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol the thief would be caught, and the entire dowry would be returned to her.

Every day, the tzaddik would reassure Mrs. Loyb that the thief would be caught and the entire dowry would be returned. Several days passed, and the family despaired of finding the dowry.

The thief himself would come each day to Rabbi Chaim, offering him money that he should pray for his "success." Rabbi Chaim would take his money, which came from an impure source, and

would place it in a separate bundle, waiting to return it to its owner when the right time came.

Several days later, the thief was caught red-handed. He was trying to leave the city with all the goods that he had stolen. He was sent to prison, and the entire dowry was returned to the Loyb family. The preparations for the wedding resumed with great joy.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Chaim met with the prison wardens and interceded on the thief's behalf, negotiating for his release. After the thief promised to change his evil ways and do complete *teshuvah*, Rabbi Chaim even signed as a guarantor that he would never steal again. In the end, the thief was released from prison.

Buried in the Ashes

Shlomo Afriat was the son of the wealthy Rabbi Yaakov Afriat. He possessed large sums of money, golden ornaments, and other valuable jewelry. In order to protect them from thieves, he hid his treasures in a special chest.

Only his immediate family members and their trusted gentile maid knew the location of the treasure chest. However, the maid was not loyal to the family, and she constantly sought ways to steal the precious treasures.

Every six months, the maid would travel to her parents' house, in a nearby village. At every opportunity, she plotted to transfer the riches hidden in the chest to her possession.

Once, before leaving to her parents' house, the maid decided to seize the contents of the treasure chest. She took all the jewels from the chest and hid them in a barrel filled with ashes. Shlomo Afriat immediately became aware that his treasures were missing and began to search for them all over.

While the wealthy man was out in search of the treasures, Rabbi Chaim passed by. Mr. Afriat hurried over to him to ask him for his advice and blessings. After thinking deeply for several minutes,

Rabbi Chaim told him, "In the merit of my grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, I advise you to search in the place where you store ashes. That is where you will find the treasures that were stolen."

A few members of the family scorned the tzaddik's advice and argued vehemently, "Who would steal such expensive jewels and hide them among soot and ashes?"

However, on the verge of despair, the family members decided that they had nothing to lose by looking in the place where they stored the ashes, as Rabbi Chaim had suggested.

They began an extensive search. Not long after, they found all the treasures in the barrel of ashes, where the maid had hidden them. They returned to Rabbi Chaim and declared, "Since at first we doubted the Rav's advice to search among the ashes, we are hereby consecrating all these items for the Rav!"

Rabbi Chaim refused to accept even one item. However, after much continued pleading, he agreed that they should show him what was in the chest. Rabbi Chaim noticed a thin bracelet, and told them that he would take only the bracelet, which he gave his daughter Simcha as a gift when she went to live in Eretz Yisrael in the city of Tiveria.

Arrack that Turned into Water

One year, when Rabbi Chaim Hakatan lived in Casablanca, the customary drink of arrack usually served to the participants of the *hilula* of his grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was missing. According to the law, it was absolutely forbidden to manufacture or purchase alcoholic beverages.

The day of the *hilula* was approaching, and one of the members of the community decided to travel to the distant city of Safi to purchase several bottles of arrack, despite the risk of being caught.

Rabbi Chaim instructed the volunteer, telling him whom to

contact upon arriving in Safi, and to inform him that Rav Chaim Pinto had sent him. The man set out to Safi and arrived safely. Soon after, he returned to Casablanca.

The *hilula* was conducted with much fanfare and celebration. The participants felt tremendous spiritual elevation. They also enjoyed getting a taste of the arrack. However, the ploys of the Satan succeeded, and one of the neighbors complained to the authorities that prohibited beverages were being served at the *hilula*. A police unit was immediately dispatched to the place, and they began searching for the arrack being served.

Rabbi Chaim approached them and asked, "What are you searching for?"

"We received information indicating that the participants of the celebration have violated the law and are drinking alcoholic beverages."

"Please," said Rabbi Chaim, "search as much as you wish. However, you will find that there are only bottles of water here. You will not find any arrack."

The police quickly spotted the bottles labeled as arrack, and they turned to Rabbi Chaim triumphantly. The Rav requested that they open the bottles and taste the liquid inside to see whether it was arrack or only water.

The police tested the liquid and admitted that it was only water and not alcohol, as they had suspected. They had no choice but to leave in disgrace. They vented their anger on the neighbor who had given them false information.

The guests who had remained were awed by the tremendous miracle which they had experienced and continued with the celebration. However, they voiced their disappointment over the lack of arrack, since it had turned to water. Rabbi Chaim reassured them, "The one who traveled all the way to Safi did not bring water, but arrack. Taste it, and see for yourselves."

One of the guests later testified before Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that

everyone drank from the bottles again, and lo and behold, the liquid had turned back into arrack.

A Shoe-in

The following story was told by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu:

A person told me this fantastic story that happened to his grandfather, who was a fisherman. Once, he went to the river and did not succeed in catching any fish. Frustrated, he came to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and worriedly related how he had not succeeded in catching any fish.

The tzaddik sympathetically gazed at him for a moment. Then he removed his shoes and handed them to the fisherman, instructing him, "Take these shoes and place them in the water. In this way, you will succeed in catching many fish."

The fisherman left with the tzaddik's shoes in his hands and did as he was told. An amazing thing occurred. After placing the tzaddik's shoes in the water, the fish swarmed toward them and filled his nets until he could barely lift them up.

Toward evening, the fisherman went to the tzaddik with a basket full of fish as a gift. He recounted in awe the events of the day. The tzaddik refused to accept any gifts. He returned his basket to him and said, "These fish are yours. I do not want to take anything from you."

There is much to be learned from this incredible story. Rabbi Chaim was like a father to each and every person. The tzaddik took everyone's problems personally, as if they were his own.

Let us imagine a fisherman experiencing a similar dilemma, who pours out his heart to his neighbor in grief. How would the neighbor react? He might tell him, "What do you expect of me? How can I help you catch fish?"

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was different. He acted toward each person like a father to his son. Everyone would come and pour their hearts out to him when faced by trouble or difficulty.

If such a story would happen today, perhaps people would wonder, how could the shoes possibly help? Did anyone ever hear of shoes attracting fish?

This teaches us the power of simple faith that people once possessed. The tzaddik took off his shoes and gave them to the fisherman, and the man did not doubt for a moment that this could help him. His faith in tzaddikim was rock-solid. He knew that whatever the tzaddik advised would ultimately bring salvation.

Chazal say (*Ta'anit* 25a), "Whoever commanded the oil to burn will command the vinegar to burn." Jews once lived with this simple faith. This story always bolsters my faith.

Merits in Mogador

Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen would customarily travel every year to pray at the grave of his grandfather, Rabbeinu David Ben Baruch, zt"l, on his *hilula*. He would arrange to meet with a group of people in Mogador, and together they would journey to the holy site.

One year, the group boarded the car waiting to take them, but suddenly it stalled. No one was able to get the engine to start. They all got out of the car and began to pray to Hashem to help them in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbeinu David Ben Baruch, so that they would arrive at the *hilula* on time.

While the group was praying, they noticed the figure of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan making his way toward them. He had just concluded his morning prayers by the grave of his grandfather, the venerable, revered, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol.

Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen sent his attendant to approach Rabbi Chaim and tell him that their car had stalled and they were now unable to travel to the *hilula* of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Chaim approached the group and turned to Rabbi Pinchas in surprise, "Why did you not inform me that you were here?"

Usually, every year when Rav Pinchas would come to Mogador, he would visit Rabbi Chaim.

"We arrived late at night," Rabbi Pinchas explained, "and I was not able to inform his honor. What shall we do now, since the car won't budge?"

Rabbi Chaim told Rabbi Pinchas to join him in his prayers by the grave of his grandfather Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. They both went to his grave and prayed there. Rabbi Pinchas stood outside the cemetery, since it is forbidden for a Kohen to enter the grounds. When they finished praying, they returned to the car. Rabbi Chaim picked up a stone, threw it at the car and declared, "May Hashem denounce you, O Satan!"

At that moment, a miracle occurred. The driver succeeded in starting the engine, and the car drove smoothly.

Before starting on their trip to the grave of Rabbeinu David Ben Baruch, Rabbi Pinchas Hakohen asked Rabbi Chaim in wonder, "How is it that I did not succeed in starting the car in the merit of my grandfather whose *hilula* is today, while you succeeded in the merit of your forefathers?"

"Heaven Forbid!" answered Rabbi Chaim. "We both have merits, but I aroused the merits in this place, in Mogador, while your merits lie in your area in Marrakesh and not here…"

Saved by the Caftan

Once, when Rabbi Aminadav Krispin, shlita, the Rav of Kiryat Bialik, rode on a bus from Haifa to Tel Aviv, a senior officer of the police force sat beside him. In the course of their conversation, they discovered that they both originated from Mogador.

Inevitably, Rabbi Krispin asked the police officer, "Did you know Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan?"

"Of course!" answered the officer. "Who did not know him?" He continued to surprise Rabbi Krispin, saying, "I am alive only in his merit." He began to relate his incredible story.

When he was young, he decided to work as a truck driver for a French transportation company, running a route from Morocco to Mauritania. Since at that time there was a war raging between the French rebels and the Moslems, his mother advised him to get a blessing from Rabbi Chaim Pinto before investing in a truck.

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan blessed the young man with a safe journey, and added that he advised his mother to buy him a white caftan, which he should keep next to the driver's seat.

The suggestion did not find favor in the eyes of the young fellow. "Honorable Rabbi, in our days, only the Arabs wear caftans. The modern European style has already replaced the caftans. Why should I buy one?!"

The Rav just repeated his advice, "Do as I say. The time will come when the caftan will save your life." He did not elaborate any further.

The young man relented to the Rav's request. The caftan was bought for him as the tzaddik suggested and placed near the driver's seat. The words of the tzaddik rang in his ears, "The time will come when the caftan will save your life."

Four months passed since he had begun his new job working for the transportation company. One night, he parked in a place where drivers found shelter from the rebels. Due to the cold night, he put on the caftan that his mother had bought him on the advice of Rabbi Chaim Pinto and fell asleep.

At sunrise, the driver awoke from his deep sleep refreshed and full of energy, ready to continue on his route. However, when he looked out of the window, he was horrified at the sight that met his eyes. The decapitated heads of the drivers were hanging from the trucks that had stopped at the stopover…

Later, he realized that on that very night, the rebels had struck the parking area. They had methodically passed from truck to truck, inspecting the sleeping drivers, and concluded that anyone dressed in European attire was French, promptly cutting

off his head. However, the drivers dressed in traditional white caftans were not harmed, since the rebels figured that these were Moroccan Arabs.

"This is how I was saved in the merit of the tzaddik's blessings and advice," the officer explained.

When the driver returned home, he told his mother what had occurred and then hurried to Rabbi Chaim's house to thank him and recite the *Bircat Hagomel*, thanking Hashem for saving him from death.

Why Are You Sad?

The Buganim family was very close with the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. Many times, Rabbi Chaim would visit their house, usually together with his son the tzaddik Refael, and they would stay there for a period of time.

Once, Rabbi Chaim sensed that his hostess was very sad. He asked her, "Why are you sad?"

"I lost my nose rings," she answered despondently. "It is a terrible loss and is bothering me greatly."

"Do not worry," Rav Chaim consoled her. "Raise the corner of your mattress and you will find the nose rings there."

Just as the Rav had suggested, Mrs. Buganim lifted her mattress and discovered all her nose rings there. (As heard from her son, Rabbi Chaim Buganim.)

A Pocketful of Blessing

R' Avraham Ali's aunt did not have any children for many years after her marriage. Broken in spirit, she came to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's house, in order to receive his blessings.

The Rav asked her, "What do you have in your pocket?"

"A coin," she answered. The Rav asked her to hand it to him. He took the coin and placed it between his teeth. After a few

moments, he told her, "Give this coin to *tzedakah*, and at this time next year you will have a son."

R' Avraham Ali relates that exactly one year afterward, his aunt gave birth to a boy, just as the Rav had blessed her.

Guarding the City

Mr. Pinchas Avitan's father relates his personal story:

Rabbi Chaim Pinto told me before he passed away, "I will guard this city and stretch my hands over it, protecting it with my garments. Just as garments protect the body, so too, my garments will protect this city."

The Avitan family testifies that they witnessed the fulfillment of these words with their own eyes, and how Rabbi Chaim protected them from Above even after his passing:

Mr. Pinchas Avitan's niece got sick with a deathly illness. She lay unconscious for a long time. The family members did everything in their power to hasten her recovery, but all their efforts were in vain.

The family members gathered to try to come up with an idea to facilitate her recovery. Someone suggested going to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan so that in his merit the sick girl should recover.

The family describes how salvation did not take long in coming. On the very day that they gathered to pray at the grave of the tzaddik, the girl recovered completely.

Preserving a Life

Morocco suffered badly from years of drought. Year after year, there was no rain. Consequently, there was a major shortage of wheat, fruit, vegetables, and other necessary staples.

The price of food rose sky high, and the Moroccans had to decrease their purchase of food products. Not only did the

supermarkets suffer, but other shops also felt the financial strain, which ultimately affected all the people.

In the winter of 1906 (5666), many businessmen lost their money and became impoverished. One of them, who was a jeweler by profession, was left without a penny in his pocket. He decided to sell his belongings and in exchange purchase essential foods so that his wife and eight children would not starve.

Several weeks passed, and the month of Nissan was approaching. The jeweler's house was entirely empty of furniture, clothing, and other belongings. Moreover, he had gone into debt, owing money to the suppliers of his raw material. He did not have from where to repay his debts, which grew from day to day.

The faith imbued in his heart slowly gave way to despair, which increased with the approaching festival of Pesach. His creditors hounded him, pursuing him relentlessly. Reflecting on his seemingly hopeless situation, the jeweler decided to kill himself by drowning himself in the ocean. He figured that this way he would not have to witness the anguish of his wife and eight children, whom he dearly loved.

On the night of *bedikat chametz*, the jeweler gathered his wife and children in order to part from them. "I cannot remain here in the city," he explained to them tearfully. "My creditors are pursuing me relentlessly. I am afraid that they will throw me into prison during Pesach. I am running away from the city for several weeks, or perhaps several months, until the danger passes. Perhaps Hashem will have mercy on me, and when my situation improves, I will be able to return."

Tears were streaming from his eyes as he spoke. In his heart he was sure that this was the last time that he would see his beloved family. He hugged and kissed them and parted from them, one by one.

On his way to the seashore, the jeweler first stopped at Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's house to pray. It was a custom that when anyone encountered trouble, he would come to Rabbi Chaim's

house, or just stand at the entrance and pray there. The jeweler recited *Kriyat Shema* and *viduy* to atone for all his sins.

Then, he began to walk toward the shore near the cemetery, where the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol was buried. That part of the shore was particularly dangerous, since anyone who drowned there sank into the depths of the ocean and was never washed ashore.

In those critical moments, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was just exiting the cemetery, where he had gone as usual to pray by his grandfather's grave. Rabbi Chaim saw the jeweler and called him. The jeweler approached Rabbi Chaim and greeted him with respect, kissing his hand.

"I command you," ordered the tzaddik even before he could open his mouth and relate his sorrows, "that you return to your house immediately. Return exactly on the same route that you came. When you reach the gates of the city, enter through the entrance of Bab Esbeh. If you will follow my instructions, I promise you that you and your family will celebrate this Pesach with much joy and happiness."

The jeweler, who had already despaired of all hope of salvation, did not believe Rabbi Chaim's promises. He told him, "If only it would be as you say… But, before returning home, I want to pray at the grave of your grandfather, and then I will do as you say."

Deep in his heart, he did not intend to go home. However, to get Rabbi Chaim to leave him alone, he declared that he wished to pray at his grandfather's grave, so that really he could head toward the ocean and drown himself.

Rabbi Chaim sensed through Divine inspiration that the jeweler was not speaking sincerely, and that he intended to kill himself. "I will accompany you and not leave you until you finish praying by my grandfather's grave. Afterward, I will walk you home," the tzaddik told him.

Rabbi Chaim did as he said. He accompanied the jeweler and waited for him to finish praying at Rabbi Chaim Hagadol's grave. Rabbi Chaim Hakatan blessed him that Hashem should salvage him from his troubles, and he should have much success in all his endeavors.

The blessings of the tzaddik left the jeweler feeling calm and restored his spirit. He began to regret his rash decision and changed his mind. Right then and there, he decided to return home.

On his way home, a miracle occurred. A strange man, whom he had never before seen, suddenly appeared before him. He turned to him and said, "Take these gold dinarim and buy yourself all your Pesach provisions. You will have enough to repay all your debts. Whatever will be left, keep in your house. I will come to you after Pesach and order some jewelry in exchange for this money."

This turn of events aroused great excitement in the heart of the jeweler. He was witnessing with his own eyes the infinite mercy of Hashem, and how He can salvage one from his troubles in the blink of an eye.

Taking rapid strides, he hurried home. He related to his wife and children with great excitement the salvation that Hashem had sent them.

Afterward, he went to the market and bought provisions for the holiday, including new clothes for his family. With the money that was left, he paid all the creditors who were hounding him. In this way, the Festival of Freedom passed in delight.

The jeweler went back to Rabbi Chaim's house and thanked him for saving his life. The Rav asked him if his promise had been fulfilled. The jeweler answered, "Yes, indeed! The blessings of the Rav were fulfilled in full."

He offered the Rav a fitting gift to thank him for being an agent in his salvation, but Rabbi Chaim refused to take it, saying, "It

is rewarding enough for me to witness your deliverance and see you alive and well."

At the conclusion of Pesach, the jeweler anticipated the visit of the man who had entrusted him with the gold dinarim. However, many weeks passed and there was no sign of him. Not a trace of the man was ever discovered (*Shenot Chaim*, in the name of the jeweler's sister-in-law, who later went to live in Eretz Yisrael).

The entrance to Rabbi Chaim Pinto's house in Casablanca

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Foresight

The Order to Stop Learning Kabbalah

The leaders of the Meknes community, one of the most prominent communities in Morocco, prepared a festive welcome for Rabbi Chaim Hakatan upon his arrival with his righteous son, Rabbi Meir.

A lavish feast was served in honor of the tzaddikim in the house of Rabbi Yehoshua Bardugo, Rosh Av Beit Din of the city. Many leaders and prominent members of the community joined as well.

Following the meal and the Torah speeches delivered by Rabbanim, the guests approached Rabbi Chaim to receive his blessings. One by one, they offered the Rav donations, each one according to his ability.

Rabbi Chaim took advantage of the opportunity to speak with each person. One, he reminded to set aside *ma'aser* from the sum of money which he was carrying in his pocket. Another, he admonished for his inconsiderate conduct toward his family members, and lack of concern for his children's education. He demanded that a third person increase his Torah study. In this way, through Divine inspiration, he raised issues that needed reinforcement.

When an elderly, dignified man passed before him, the tzaddik gazed at him and feigned an angry expression. "Why do you

engage in the study of Kabbalah? You are not qualified for it and risk losing your life."

The old man began to cry. His secret had been revealed in public. He promised the Rav that he would take his advice and stop studying Kabbalah.

Afterward, the tzaddik explained to the people present that this elderly man was straining himself beyond his capacity to learn Kabbalah and was in danger of dying. Therefore, he had ordered him to stop, so that he could live a lengthy and peaceful life.

A Holy and Awesome Man

Meknes was a city full of learned, scholarly people. The Rav of the city was not pleased with many of the community members, since the scholars of the city considered themselves superior in authority to him and argued with him on every possible occasion. There was often controversy between the Rabbi and other scholars.

Once, when Rabbi Chaim Hakatan came to visit the city, the Rav of Meknes conveyed his displeasure with the scholars of his city, since they did not accord him sufficient honor and disputed his *halachic* rulings.

Rabbi Chaim told him sympathetically, "This generation does not want to accept the truth. Therefore, many disputes arise that are not for the sake of Heaven. However, as the Rabbi of the city, you must always conduct yourself with integrity and try to minimize dissent as much as possible. Your appointment as Rav by the Beit Din below was preceded by your appointment by the Beit Din Above. Therefore, everyone is obligated to honor this appointment."

On one occasion, when Rabbi Chaim met one of the scholars who did not accord honor to the Rav of the city, he admonished him and told him that this behavior did not reflect the ways of the Torah. On the contrary, he was desecrating the honor of the

Torah in this way. He added that anyone who showed contempt for the Torah will ultimately be held in contempt by others.

Evidently, this man was no real scholar. He responded with audacity and ridiculed the tzaddik, "Who are you? Is it not enough that you came to collect alms, but you also dare to rebuke me? Take your coins and return to your home town. Do not dictate to us how to live our lives."

Rabbi Chaim wisely remained silent, not responding to the tirade. He attempted to get the man to go into an empty side room with him so he could explain to him his error. Since the rude man would not budge, Rabbi Chaim turned to all the people in the room and asked them to leave.

When everyone had left the room, Rabbi Chaim gently rebuked him, "Your words are not at all correct. In fact, I can prove your false ways to you."

"How?" asked the man.

"On *Ta'anit Esther*, you did not feel well, and you took a slice of cake to eat. However, at that moment, you heard someone knocking on your door, and since you were worried that someone would see you eating on a fast day, you quickly took the cake and hid it in the pocket of your caftan…"

The tzaddik continued revealing the man's hidden deeds. "After they knocked on the door, you went into a side room in order to eat the cake, which you did without first reciting a blessing, since you were afraid of being seen and wanted to hurry. When you finished eating the cake, you drank water from a jug, and washed your entire head with the water. Since then, you suffer from headaches."

The scholar realized that a holy, awesome man, who perceived the absolute truth, was standing before him. There was no point in denying his words or contradicting them. He fell to the tzaddik's feet and kissed his hand, tearfully begging his forgiveness.

The congregants, who were waiting outside, were invited to the

seudat mitzvah that the contrite scholar arranged in honor of Rabbi Chaim. Facing the Rabbi of the city and all the people, he expressed his regret and begged forgiveness for all his misdeeds. He solemnly resolved to be careful to protect the honor of Torah leaders.

Rabbi Aharon Chassin, zt"l, author of the sefer *Mateh Aharon*, who served as Rosh Av Beit Din in Mogador, was an eye witness to this event.

I Am Fasting on Your Account

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was especially famous for his devotion to each member of Klal Yisrael. Once, while walking outside, Rabbi Chaim met Aharon Buganim. The Rav turned to him and declared, "Today I am fasting on your account, since I sense that a fatal decree was issued against you."

In the afternoon, Aharon Buganim went to the market to trade goods as usual. Suddenly, a large wall came crashing down precisely near the spot where he was standing. Miraculously, he escaped unharmed.

In the merit of the tzaddik, the decree was cancelled. (*Shevach Chaim*, heard from Mr. Yitzchak Buganim, the son of Rav Aharon Buganim.)

Take the Longer Route

One of the residents of Mogador would go out of town each day to work. One morning, Rabbi Chaim met him and asked, "Where are you going?" The man answered that he was going to work as usual.

"Do you have an alternative route to take to work?" Rav Chaim asked him.

"Yes, I have another option, but I prefer going this way because it is shorter and easier for me," he answered.

"If so," Rabbi Chaim told him, "I forbid you to go to work today in this way. You must take the longer route."

The man was a G-d fearing Jew and heeded the tzaddik's advice. He immediately changed directions and took the longer route to work.

Several days later, the man came to the Rav. In a choked voice, he sought to thank him for saving his life from imminent danger, as the Rav had perceived through Divine inspiration.

He related what had happened on that fateful day. A freight truck driving on the same road that he usually used to get to work swerved off the road and hit pedestrians nearby. All the victims, he said, were his colleagues, who had taken the shorter route as usual. Some of them were killed, and others were badly injured.

Had he been on that road as usual, and not listened to the tzaddik's advice, he may have lost his life, G-d forbid!

Protecting the Honor of the Torah

Rabbi Yaish Krispin, zt"l, one of the most prominent scholars in the village Wald-Rahil, engaged in a trade for a living. Rabbi Krispin would travel all over Morocco, going from city to city and village to village buying and selling goods.

When the people of the village heard that he was planning a trip to Mogador, his neighbors requested that he take alms and money which they had vowed to donate to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in Mogador, to distribute to charity. Rabbi Yaish agreed and took with him all the envelopes intended for the tzaddik.

Just as he had stepped out of his village, he heard a loud voice calling, "Rabbi Yaish, Rabbi Yaish!"

It was Mrs. Massouda Vitzman, begging him to deliver money which she had vowed to give the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim. Rabbi Yaish took the money from her, stuffed it in his pocket and continued on his way to Mogador.

Since Rabbi Krispin was not familiar with Mogador and had never seen Rabbi Chaim's holy countenance, he asked the first Jew that he met in Mogador to instruct him how to get to the Rav's house.

On his way to Rabbi Chaim's house, a venerable Jew approached him and asked, "Are you Rabbi Yaish Krispin from the village of Wald-Rahil?"

Rav Krispin answered in the affirmative.

"I am Rabbi Chaim Pinto!"

Rabbi Yaish was slightly taken aback by the unexpected encounter, and Rabbi Chaim continued, "Pesach is drawing close and many Jews are turning to me for assistance to obtain the necessary provisions for the *chag*. Time is short, and there is a lot of work to be done. I would greatly appreciate it if you could give me the money that people vowed and donated now."

"The money is packed among my belongings," Rabbi Krispin explained. "I would like to first go to the hotel and unpack my bags. Then, I will be able to locate the money and give it to the Rav."

Rabbi Chaim persisted, "You may not move from here until I receive the money. The needs are pressing and there is no time to waste."

Rabbi Krispin relented and unloaded his bags. He took out the money and handed it to Rabbi Chaim.

"You have something else as well," Rabbi Chaim commented. Rabbi Yaish told him confidently, "I gave everything to the honorable Rabbi."

"When you left the city," the Rav reminded him, "Mrs. Massouda Vitzman asked you to deliver the money that she had pledged. You placed the donation in the pocket of your overcoat. Probably after your difficult journey you forgot about it."

Rabbi Krispin was astounded by the tzaddik's ability to perceive distant events through Divine inspiration. He commented in awe, "I've heard about the Rav's honorable reputation in the past, but now, I have witnessed it." He immediately took the money from the pocket of his overcoat and gave it to the Rav.

Rabbi Chaim hurried to distribute the money among the poor, and Rabbi Krispin proceeded with his business in the city.

For the Honor of the Torah

When Rabbi Krispin entered the Beit Hakeneset, the local Torah scholars were in the midst of learning *Masechet Pesachim*, as Chazal instituted (*Pesachim*, 6a), "One must begin studying the laws of Pesach thirty days prior to the festival."

Rabbi Krispin sat observing the scene. In the midst of the session, one of the scholars asked a sharp question which contradicted the entire concept under discussion.

Rabbi Krispin began to clarify the issue according to his understanding, until the entire matter was resolved.

Everyone agreed with Rabbi Krispin's explanation, except for one of the scholars, who did not look upon him favorably. He grumbled out loud, "Has our yeshiva become a city of refuge? Foreigners disturb us!"

Rabbi Krispin understood well to whom the man was referring, but preferred to remain silent and be considered like "those who are humiliated but do not respond in kind; they hear others embarrassing them, but do not answer back." The other students present also remained silent, and no one stood up to defend the honor of the scholarly guest.

There was one who did rally to defend the honor of Torah. This was none other than Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. While sitting in his house, he perceived through Divine inspiration all that transpired. He immediately called his attendant R' Yehuda Ben Ezer and asked him to come with him.

"I sense that Rabbi Krispin is being disgraced, and he is a Torah scholar whom I met this morning. One of the students of the yeshiva humiliated him."

Rabbi Chaim and his attendant hurried to the Beit Hakeneset. When the students saw the tzaddik, they rose before him and offered him a place to sit. Rabbi Chaim ignored their honorable gestures and addressed them sternly, "I will not sit amongst scoffers, who do not honor important guests and Torah scholars like Rabbi Krispin. This yeshiva is a city of refuge for people like you, and not for brilliant and worthy guests like Rabbi Yaish Krispin, who graced our city."

The students listened to the tzaddik's rebuke and realized that they must make amends. Everyone, without exception, begged Rav Krispin's forgiveness for not defending the honor of the Torah and protesting their friend's disparagement of him. They also expressed their regret for not having welcomed him cordially, as befitting a scholarly guest coming from a distant city.

Rabbi Krispin accepted their apologies, and after declaring that he wholeheartedly forgave them, continued elucidating the issue at hand until it was clear to all.

After the incident, the scholars learning in the yeshiva of Mogador took upon themselves to be extra careful in the future to welcome every guest and to fulfill the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim* with joy, according honor to every person, especially Torah scholars.

Something Will Happen

Rabbi Shimon Cohen, the grandson of the tzaddik Rabbi David Ben Baruch, zt"l, told the following story:

Rabbi Cohen built a building in Mogador. During the process, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan came to the site and told him, "Something is due to happen here, but in the merit of my holy forefathers, in the end, it will not happen."

Indeed, the blessings of the Rav in the merit of these tzaddikim

came to light a short while later. One of the workers fell from above and miraculously did not get hurt, since Rabbi Chaim had prayed for him that nothing should happen.

The worker got up on his feet, unharmed. Rabbi Shimon Cohen took him to Rabbi Chaim to let him know of the wondrous miracle that occurred and to give praise to Hashem.

Seven Bracelets

Mrs. Altit's young son, Chaim, was very sick. Suddenly he turned deathly ill and was hovering between life and death. When his mother realized how serious the situation was, she raised her hands to Hashem and cried, "*Elokim*! I have only one son!"

Afterward, she removed the seven bracelets from her hand and resolved to present them as a gift to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, since she knew that he would use them to assist poor people. In this merit she begged Hashem to help her son recover.

A short while later, the doctor arrived at her house and checked the boy. He said, "Mrs. Altit! Your son has only one more hour to live."

The mother, however, was fortified with staunch faith in Hashem. "Your job," she told the doctor, "is to heal the sick and save their lives. You cannot determine who will live and who will die. It is only Hashem who does the wondrous miracles of granting life, as well as taking it away, in due time."

Not long after, the child started sweating profusely. Then, he began to move his limbs and even asked for a drink of water. In the end, he rose from his bed and began to walk. Everyone clearly saw the miracle in his recovery, and there was great rejoicing.

Early the next morning, at six o'clock, there was knocking on the door. At the entrance, Rabbi Chaim stood together with his attendant. He asked, "Is everything alright?

"Yes, everything is fine," answered Mrs. Altit.

"If so," the tzaddik reminded her, "give me the seven bracelets that belong to me."

Mrs. Altit was amazed…

The Tzaddik's Warning

Mr. Mordechai Cohen embarked on his business at the young age of eighteen. He would travel from city to city, buying merchandise and selling it for a profit. Mordechai was a good soul and he had a partner whom he trusted implicitly. He spent much of his time in assisting others and doing acts of charity.

One day, when Mordechai came to Mogador, he heard a voice behind him calling his name. He looked back and saw a young man.

"Who are you and what do you want?"

"You don't recognize me?"

"No! I do not recognize you at all!"

"You may not recognize me, but I am Chaim Pinto, the grandson of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol."

The chance meeting filled Mordechai with joy. The youth standing before him was the grandson of the tzaddik buried in the city. In appreciation, he kissed the young Rabbi Chaim's hand and gave him a gift as a gesture of admiration.

Rabbi Chaim parted from him, wishing him well.

Less than half an hour later, Rabbi Chaim returned to the spot where they had met. He searched for Mordechai, asking all the people around him for a clue to his whereabouts. In the end, Rabbi Chaim found Mordechai loading his wagons with merchandise in preparation for his journey home.

"Be aware," warned Rabbi Chaim, "that your partner has betrayed you. He sold all the merchandise which you had in stock and plans to rob you of your share. Do not let him get

away with it. Bring witnesses to prove your case, since you did not receive a penny from him. Pray that the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto should stand in your stead and save you from the evil schemes of your partner."

At first, Mordechai did not take the tzaddik's warning seriously, since he enjoyed a solid partnership with his friend, trusting him completely. "How could it be that he had behaved in such a low way?" Mordechai wondered in his heart.

However, since the information had come from a reliable source, he decided to investigate the matter. He waited for an opportunity to verify the accusation.

When Mordechai got home, he set out immediately to his partner's house. After the formal greetings, Mordechai asked him, "How did our business fare while I was away?" His "partner" answered him brazenly, "What business? We are not partners at all! What are you talking about?"

At that moment, Mordechai recalled the words of Rabbi Chaim, including his advice. At first, he called two witnesses to the Beit Din to testify that there had been no dissolution of the partnership and that he had not received a single penny of his share.

Mordechai also remembered the rest of Rabbi Chaim's advice, and he began to cry, "The G-d of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, answer me! The G-d of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, answer me!"

The partner became paralyzed with fear when he heard the name that Mordechai Cohen uttered. He shamefacedly admitted his evil scheme. Hiss disgrace was revealed in court, and his credibility was damaged. Mordechai legally terminated their partnership.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu added the following:

"Dear reader! I heard this story from the son of Rabbi Mordechai Cohen. I am absolutely amazed how Rabbi Chaim Hakatan possessed Divine inspiration already at such a young age. The city in which the partner of Rav Mordechai lived was approximately

one thousand kilometers from Mogador. How did Rabbi Chaim have such far-reaching vision?"

Our House Is Our Best Shelter

The Myara family and the Zerbib family were neighbors, living in the city of Mogador side by side, in peace and harmony.

The taiva in the Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Chaim in Mogador

While the Myara family was imbued with unquestioning faith in tzaddikim, following their direction implicitly, their neighbors, the Zerbib family, were not infused with such faith.

The incident began following a busy day full of bustling activity. On that day, the daughter of the Myara family gave birth to a boy. At the end of the exciting day, the family went to sleep exhausted.

At night, Rabbi Chaim had a dream and immediately woke up, washed his hands according to *halachah*, and hurried over to the Myara family's house. The tzaddik knocked on their door, but there was no answer.

They were all in a deep sleep and did not hear anything. Rabbi

Chaim did not give up. He knocked on the door repeatedly until someone responded.

Without wasting a moment, the Rav ordered the family to grab a number of essential items and get out of the house immediately. Even the day-old baby had to be evacuated.

Then, Rabbi Chaim hurried to the Zerbib family and ordered them to leave their house as well. However, the family members did not listen to the Rav.

"What is this dream that you dreamed? Why should we leave our house? Is it safer outside? Dreams are deceiving! Our house is our best shelter and we refuse to leave."

Rabbi Chaim begged them repeatedly, but to no avail.

When he saw that his words were falling on deaf ears, he left them and returned to the Myara family, helping them get organized to vacate their house. He even remained outside with them the entire night, until sunrise.

In the morning, the tzaddik returned with the Myara family to their house. When they got close, they saw a crowd gathered in front of the Zerbib's house. That is when everything became clear.

The entire building had collapsed late that night. Everyone inside was badly hurt. A terrible tragedy struck the Zerbib family. The father of the house was killed and lay buried under the wreckage.

When Rabbi Chaim heard of the great tragedy, he regretted that he had not persisted in evacuating the Zerbib family from their home. The widow, who sensed the tzaddik's anguish, told him that he was not to blame at all, since he had done all that he could. Her husband was at fault for not having believed the tzaddik's warning following his dream about the impending tragedy.

Rabbi Chaim stood by the Zerbib family in their difficult moments, consoling them and assisting them financially for a few years, until they recovered sufficiently to be able to live independently.

After a while, the family moved away from Mogador to live near the deceased father's cousin in Algiers.

Hitting the Nail on the Head

Mr. Nachmani worked in the ports of Morocco and earned a profitable income. One day, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan met him in the street and asked him to contribute a specific amount of money for *tzedakah*. He told the Rav that he did not have the money. The Rav repeated his request and told him, "How can you insist that you do not have the money when you have the exact sum in your pocket?"

Mr. Nachmani shamefacedly took out of his pocket the sum that the tzaddik requested and gave it to him.

Then, Rabbi Chaim warned him, "Your job is in the port. When you go to work, beware! Several Arabs in the port will throw rocks at you, attempting to kill you. The stones will fall near you, but none will hit you."

Rabbi Chaim continued to give him precise instructions.

"Leave your job in the port and go out in the street. Take the first job offer that you receive."

That is exactly what happened. After his miraculous escape at the port, Mr. Nachmani went out in the street and met a gentile, who offered him a job.

"I have a storage room full of nails. I must empty it within the next few days, since someone wants to rent it empty of all contents. You can buy all the nails from me, if you want."

Mr. Nachmani was surprised by this unusual offer. "Why should I pay you for the nails which I will empty from your storage room? You should pay me, since I will be removing them. What can I do with such a huge quantity of nails, anyway?"

The gentile thought a bit and then told Mr. Nachmani, "Okay,

tell me how much you want to get paid for emptying the storage room."

Mr. Nachmani named a sum of money, which the gentile agreed to pay. Mr. Nachmani proceeded to empty the storage room, and he took the nails to his house.

At home, Mr. Nachmani inspected the nails and noticed that they were produced by a well-known company. He hurried over to the local shoemaker and asked him, "How much are these brand name nails worth?" The shoemaker was taken aback and exclaimed, "Nails from this company are scarce! If you possess such nails, I will buy your entire stock."

The shoemaker signed a contract with Mr. Nachmani on the spot. He paid for the entire stock of nails, and Mr. Nachmani received a huge amount of money.

Mr. Nachmani, who was only sixteen years old at the time, went home and showed his father all the money that he had received.

"Where did you get all this money from?" his father asked him.

Mr. Nachmani told his father the whole story, beginning with his encounter with Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, and how in the end he had earned a huge sum of money. When his father heard the amazing account, he told his son, "Let us go to Rabbi Chaim Pinto, since the money really belongs to him."

When the two arrived at the tzaddik's house, even before crossing the threshold, Rabbi Chaim called to them, "Come in."

The father went in and declared, "Rabbi, all the money here belongs to you."

Rabbi Chaim answered, "Take all the money, since I already took from your son the sum that I needed for *tzedakah*…"

Your Luck Will Increase Exceedingly

Rabbi Pinchas Amos, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's brother-in-law,

portrayed the greatness of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan through the following story:

Rabbi Shimon Amos, z"l

Once Rabbi Amos approached his father and asked him, "Father, I see that every time you encounter a difficulty, you light a candle in the memory of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and pray to Hashem to help you in the merit of the tzaddik. Are you really confident that Hashem will assist you in his merit? Why do you do this?"

His father proceeded to relate to him an incredible story from which he would comprehend the greatness of tzaddikim:

My father earned his livelihood by raising cows. One year, there was a drought throughout southern Morocco, and most of the cows died. Consequently, he had no income. He could not buy any food for his family.

When his wife pressured him about his obligation to provide food for his children, who were liable to perish from starvation, he left his house and headed toward the shore, several kilometers away from the Mellah of the Jews. Facing the raging ocean waves, he began to consider his future, but could find no way out of his predicament.

Suddenly, he saw the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan from afar, running toward him together with his attendant.

My father was uncomfortable. On the one hand, he did not have money to contribute to the funds that Rabbi Chaim collected for charity. He knew that the tzaddik always asked people for money

to distribute to the poor. On the other hand, he thought to himself that certainly Rabbi Chaim knew through Divine inspiration that he did not have money to buy food for his family. Perhaps he even intended to offer him some money.

Either way, he decided to run away. Rabbi Chaim sensed his intentions and yelled to him from a distance to wait for him and not move.

Rabbi Chaim caught up to him, huffing and puffing from the strain of running (after all, he was already over seventy years old at the time). Rabbi Chaim told him, "I came from far away only in order to encourage you that you have nothing to worry about, since Hashem will help you."

Rabbi Chaim added, "I am bringing you some good tidings. Your wife is pregnant, and when she will give birth to a son, he will bring you good fortune and prosperity. Regarding your lack of funds, here is a sum of money with which you can go buy food and clothing for your children. Hashem will help you that from now on you will encounter success, and your luck will increase exceedingly."

My father was joyful over the good news and kissed Rabbi Chaim's hands. At first he refused to accept the money, because he did not feel comfortable taking it. In the end, he took the money, bought food and provisions and went home. He told his wife about his encounter with Rabbi Chaim and the news that she was pregnant. When his son was born, his luck began to improve, and eventually he became exceeding wealthy.

Rabbi Amos's father concluded the story and told his son, "Thus, you understand why I love the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim so much. This is why in every difficult situation I cry to Hashem that He should assist me in his merit."

Do Not Be Stringent

There is another story that Rabbi Pinchas Amos tells regarding Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's Divine inspiration:

At that time in Morocco, it was customary for women to prepare their own yeast for baking bread. One year, chemical yeast appeared on the market. Rabbi Pinchas Amos's grandfather was meticulous in keeping kosher. He adamantly refused to eat bread baked with the chemical yeast.

The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, who knew him well, became aware of his stringency through Divine inspiration and came to visit him. During their conversation, the host divulged that he refused to eat bread containing the chemical yeast.

Rabbi Chaim turned to him and said, "The yeast was deemed kosher by the *Va'ad Hakashrut* of the community. Please, do not create dissent among the people by refusing to accept their authority."

Rabbi Amos's grandfather, who relied implicitly on the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim in all matters, accepted his reproof. From then on, he agreed to eat bread baked with chemical yeast.

We may add that this matter is discussed in the Torah. It clearly states that one must accept the decisions rendered by the Torah Sages, "And you shall be careful to do according to everything that they will teach you… you shall not turn from the word that they will tell you, right or left." If, G-d forbid, a person will doubt the decisions of the Sages, there is no limit to where they may stray. Therefore, Rabbi Chaim instructed Rabbi Pinchas' grandfather to abide by the Sages who permitted the yeast, and not take a stringent stand.

From this story we see the efforts that the tzaddik invested in order to avoid dissent between the people and the Rabbanim of his time.

A Complete Recovery

One of the righteous Pinto family members once came to Casablanca in order to print his sefer with the publishing company owned by R' David Amar. While the tzaddik stayed in his house, R' Amar told his guest that a dangerous plague had struck the

city and three of his brothers were deathly ill. Many top doctors tried to cure them, but in the end despaired of their recovery.

The tzaddik listened to R' Amar but did not respond. One day, the tzaddik went as usual around the Mellah to bless the people there. Suddenly, he heard screams coming from the Amar family's house. He entered the house and the family members beseeched him to bless the three sick brothers with a complete recovery.

He asked them, "Is it only after you have turned to the doctors and they all despaired that you turn to me for help?" Nevertheless, without delay, he entered the room where the three sick brothers lay, touched them with his cane, and declared, "Rise! You are healthy!" Promptly, the three stood up on their feet. (Heard by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, who heard the story from R' David Amar.)

Return Home

Mr. Yosef Shushan's grandson relates:

My grandfather was a businessman. He would leave his house the entire week and return only for Shabbat. As soon as Shabbat was over, he would already be on his way.

Once on Motza'ei Shabbat, he stepped out and found Rabbi Chaim Hakatan coming toward him. The Rav asked, "Where are you going?" He answered, "To my business." The tzaddik told him simply, "You have nothing to look for outside. Go home." My grandfather listened to him and returned home.

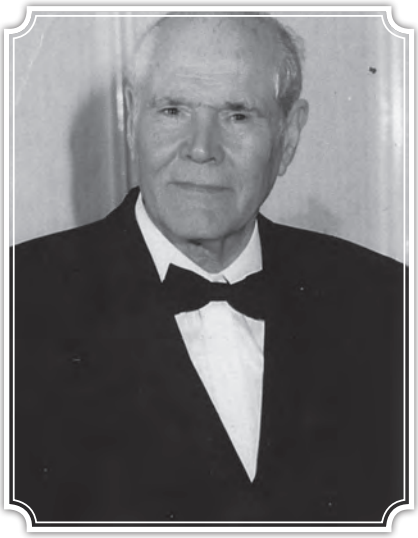
However, the next morning at sunrise, my grandfather took his horse and wagon and left the house. On the way, a car struck his horse, and my grandfather fell to the ground, breaking his leg. He lay in agony for two months and then died.

The Rabbi Chaim perceived through Divine inspiration what was going to happen, and wanted to spare his life. However, Mr. Shushan did not heed the tzaddik's warning and consequently lost his life.

Welcome

R' Avraham Moyal told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu a story that happened to him:

Once, I arrived in Mogador at six a.m. No one knew of my arrival. Suddenly, I heard knocking on the door. I opened it, and there was Rabbi Chaim's attendant. He told me, "The Rav sent me to call Avraham Moyal, who just arrived from Tiznit."



R' Avraham Moyal

R' Moyal was very surprised. How did the Rav know that he had arrived in the city? Without delay, he immediately set out to the Rav's house with the attendant.

When I entered the room, the Rav greeted me, "Welcome to Mogador." He continued heaping blessings upon me.

Afterward, Rabbi Chaim told me, "You should know that my grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, immediately notifies me of the arrival of every Jew who visits the city…"

Three Cigarettes

There was a constant turnover of the attendants and *gabbaim* who served Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, because many people wanted to serve the tzaddik. It is common knowledge that everyone who attended the tzaddik became wealthy.

On one occasion, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu told us, "I know many people who became wealthy through serving him; some of them became exceedingly wealthy."

Regarding this, the following story is told about a man who was privileged to serve Rabbi Chaim. Once, the two arrived in a certain place. A stranger approached the attendant and asked him for a cigarette. While he was deliberating how to respond, Rabbi Chaim turned to the stranger and told him, "Why do you ask him for a cigarette? He has only three cigarettes left in his pocket. How will he make it through the day without enough cigarettes?"

The attendant was stunned. He asked Rabbi Chaim, "How does the honorable Rav know exactly how many cigarettes I have left? The Rav did not check my pockets."

Appropriate Blessings

As mentioned, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan would often walk through the streets, and people passing by would come to kiss his hands and receive his blessings. The women, on the other hand, would stand on the side and cover their faces in a fitting manner when coming in proximity with the holy tzaddik. They, too, would merit blessings.

One woman came with her young daughter to receive the blessings of the Rav. The mother covered her face, and Rabbi Chaim pointed at her young daughter and declared, "She will grow up, get married, and become wealthy."

The blessings of the tzaddik were fulfilled in their entirety.

At the same time, another woman approached the Rav to receive his blessings. However, Rabbi Chaim looked at the girl and told the mother, "I cannot bless your daughter, since I foresee that she will marry a gentile." Rabbi Chaim added, "If you will make sure to provide her with a proper Jewish education immediately, the situation will be reversed, and she will be blessed."

Unfortunately, the situation did not improve, and Rabbi Chaim's predictions materialized. The girl married a gentile, *rachmana litzlan*. (Heard from the daughter who received the blessings, now living in Paris.)

Nothing Good

There is a similar tragic story that Mrs. Esther Peretz told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu:

When she was four or five years old, she was strolling through the streets of Casablanca with her grandmother. Suddenly, they spotted Rabbi Chaim Hakatan walking toward them with his attendant. All the people passing by came over to him to receive his blessings. She also went with her grandmother to be blessed.

Rabbi Chaim placed his hand over Mrs. Peretz's head (without touching her), and blessed her with a complete recovery and to merit getting married and become wealthy. All these blessings were fulfilled.

Although we see that Rabbi Chaim Hakatan often blessed people with wealth, it is only because he wished them to use their money for doing kindness and charity with their brethren. Otherwise, what is money worth? One who does not benefit the poor and Torah scholars with his money will be damaged by it, as it says, "There is wealth reserved for its owners for his detriment."

A woman approached the Rav with her daughter to receive his blessings. The Rav looked at the girl and refused to bless her. The mother burst into tears and begged the Rav, "Please bless my daughter as well!"

The Rav persisted in his refusal, explaining, "I can already see that she wishes to behave improperly. Why, then, should I bless her? She will only use the blessings for bad things." He did not bless her.

In the end, Mrs. Peretz testifies, the girl married a gentile, *rachmana litzlan*.

We see from this the extraordinary powers and Divine inspiration of the tzaddik. This corresponds to what it says about Moshe Rabbeinu: "He turned this way and that and saw that there was no man." He understood that there was no good man destined to descend from the Egyptian and therefore killed him. Similarly in

this case, Rabbi Chaim Pinto saw that nothing good would come from the girl. Therefore, he did not bestow any blessings upon her. It is common knowledge that anyone who would receive his blessings would become rich and live long. Until today, all those who were blessed enjoy the fruits of his blessings. Therefore, the tzaddik refused to bless this girl, in order that she should not use the blessings improperly.

The Tzaddik's Reproof

On a winding and twisting mountainous road, a truck driver traveled with his friend from Agadir to Mogador.

The brakes of his truck were worn and not functioning properly. This was very dangerous, since if the truck would fall from the edge of the road, it would plunge into a deep chasm from a height of approximately five hundred meters.

Before the two set out on their way, they vowed that if the trip would go well, they would give *tzedakah* to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan.

In middle of the way, the driver lost control of the truck, and it plunged into the deep gulf. At the moment that they went over the edge, which spelled certain death, the two reiterated their vow that they had made, adding that if they would survive the fall they would bestow all their possessions to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

A miracle occurred. The truck plunged over the edge and went crashing down into the abyss, but did not turn over. No harm befell the two passengers, and they emerged from the truck alive and intact.

The local Arabs who had witnessed the scene came running toward them and kissed their hands in absolute wonder because of the extraordinary miracle that had occurred. "You must be angels! How did you emerge alive from such a steep fall?"

The Arabs helped the two climb out of the valley and salvage their possessions from the truck. The two then continued on their way to Mogador.

When they arrived in Mogador, the two regretted the vow that they had made to give all their possessions to Rabbi Chaim. They decided to suffice by giving him just a small sum.

One of them voiced his concern that perhaps Rabbi Chaim would perceive through Divine inspiration that they had vowed all their possessions to him. His friend reassured him saying, "If the tzaddik will reveal through Divine inspiration that we made a vow, then we will give him everything. However, if he is not aware of it, then we will not give him all our wealth."

In Mogador, the two met with Rabbi Chaim, and he greeted them, "Peace and blessings." They responded in kind. They gave him a small amount of money for *tzedakah* and continued on their way, winking to each other. They breathed a sigh of relief, "*Baruch Hashem*, Rabbi Chaim did not perceive the truth through Divine inspiration."

Suddenly Rabbi Chaim turned to them and called reprovingly, "Are you not ashamed of yourselves? You bothered my grandfather to descend from the World of Truth to come save you! Instead of giving thanks and reciting the blessing of *hagomel*, you steal and refuse to keep your vow. Have you forgotten how the truck fell off the cliff, yet not one wheel was broken?"

When the two heard the tzaddik's reproof, they began to tremble in fear. They approached Rabbi Chaim in awe and humbly kissed his hands, begging his forgiveness.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu commented about this incident, "The Rambam says that when Hashem spoke through the prophets, He would admonish the people through their own actions and words. Then they understood that it was Hashem speaking to them. Here, too, we can say that Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol was speaking through the mouth of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan."

Time to Divorce

There was a man from Morocco who had been married for many years but had no children. He tried many different treatments, to

no avail. In great despair, he came to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and asked him for his blessings.

Rabbi Chaim perceived his grief and told him, "You and your wife are not compatible, since you do not share the same *mazal*. You cannot have children with her, and she cannot have children with you.

"What shall I do?" asked the man.

"You must divorce your wife. Afterward, marry a different woman and you will have eight children with her," Rabbi Chaim instructed.

Then, Rabbi Chaim called this man's wife and patiently explained to her with sensitivity and compassion the unfortunate situation. He bolstered her faith with words of encouragement. He explained that Hashem's ways are mysterious and we may not question them. "You must get divorced from your husband, since you will not have any children from him," Rabbi Chaim instructed. He blessed her warmly, "After you will remarry, you will merit having many children."

The couple recognized the lofty spiritual status of the tzaddik and followed his advice. They did exactly as he instructed them. After the woman remarried, she had many children. Her husband, as well, had children after marrying a different woman. One of his grandchildren is married to a member of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's family.

Rachel

A woman came from Toronto to Lyon in order to discuss with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu her son's complicated medical issues. On the same occasion, she related the following amazing story:

Moments after she was born in Mogador, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan left his house and headed directly toward her house. When he reached the entrance, he quickly called one of the family members and told him, "Hurry and bring me the baby that was just born."

Upon hearing the unusual request, the family member explained politely, "Rabbi! The baby was just born a few minutes ago and we have not yet washed her. She is still all dirty from the birth."

Rabbi Chaim stood firm. He told the family member, "It does not matter what the baby looks like. Bring her to me at once, before she dies…"

When the parents heard Rabbi Chaim's warning, they knew that it was not a trivial matter. Obviously, something serious was about to occur which they did not know about. Frightened, they brought the child to the Rav.

The Rav blessed the baby, and at the same time, gave her the name Rachel. *Baruch Hashem*, she was saved and lived a splendid life. Everyone realized that Rabbi Chaim was blessed with Divine inspiration, since he perceived the exact moment of the birth and saw the danger that lay in wait. Therefore, he immediately came to bless the newly-born child.

When Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard this story, he was surprised. Why? It is common knowledge that when one changes a person's name, the name Rachel is not given (see *Devash L'fi* of the Chida, *Ma'arechet* 300, letter 14. In the *Shut*, *V'haya Haolam*, page 277). But in this case, Rabbi Chaim deliberately gave the name Rachel. What was the reason for this?

This is to illustrate the extraordinary powers of a tzaddik. He is able to transform the Attribute of Justice inherent in the name Rachel to mercy and compassion, ensuring that she would live.

How Does the Rav Know?

The holy tzaddik Rabbi David Ifergan, zt"l, appeared twice in the same night to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in a dream and told him:

"Rabbi Chaim, please rise immediately and go to the house of my granddaughter, who just gave birth to a daughter. Bless the baby and name her Chanina."

Rabbi Chaim quickly got out of bed and washed his hands

as required by *halachah*. He took his attendant with him and hurried to the Ifergan family's house. When he got there, he loudly knocked on the door. Upon opening the door, the family members were astonished to see Rabbi Chaim standing before them so late at night.

Rabbi Chaim did not delay. He immediately got to the point and said, "Hurry and bring the baby girl that was just born."

The father was amazed. "How does the Rav know that we just had a baby girl? The birth took place only a few moments ago."

"Your grandfather, Rabbi David Ifergan, came to me from the World of Truth and asked me to bless the child and also to name her Chanina," the tzaddik explained.

The message sent chills through the young couple. "Does the Rav know that last year we had a daughter and we named her Chanina, but she died a short while later?"

"You have nothing to fear," Rav Chaim soothed them. "Bring the girl to me and I will bless her and call her Chanina. She will live a long life, and you will derive much happiness from her and her offspring."

Rabbi Moshe Benistil

The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim took the baby in his holy hands and blessed her, naming her Chanina. His blessings were fully realized, and the girl grew up, married, and merited long life. (Heard from Rav Moshe Benisti, son of Mrs. Chanina Benisti, and principal of a school in Nice.)

Time to Go Home

At the *chanukat habayit* of one of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's students

living in Ashdod, someone got up and told the following unbelievable story that happened to her mother when she was living in Casablanca:

My mother would go out every day to the market to do her shopping. On the way, she would stop at the house of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in order to receive his blessings.

Once, the tzaddik asked her, "Where are you going?"

"To the market to do my shopping as usual," she answered.

"Do not go to the market," the Rav instructed her. "Go back home and stay there. You can do your shopping in the afternoon or even tomorrow."

The woman did not ask any questions. If the tzaddik said so, certainly there was a good reason for it. Without a word, she returned to her house. When her husband saw her, he asked why she had returned home before getting her shopping done.

"That is what the tzaddik told me to do," she answered.

"Didn't the tzaddik tell you why you should go home?" asked the husband.

"The tzaddik did not give any reason, and I also did not ask. Since he advised me to go home, I did exactly as he said."

A few minutes later, one of the neighbors knocked on the door and told her, "Hurry over to your daughter's house. She asked me to notify you that her husband suffered a stroke, and he is in critical condition."

Only then did she understand the reason why Rabbi Chaim had told her to hurry home. It was in order that she should be available for her daughter in time. She rushed to her daughter's house and her daughter informed her weakly, "Mamma! My husband is dying." After a few minutes, her husband returned his soul to his Creator.

When Rabbi Chaim came to console them during the *shivah*, the

mother asked him, "Rabbi! Why didn't you tell me that my son-in-law was about to die? Why did you just tell me to go home without giving any reason?"

The tzaddik answered, "Did you want me to cause you grief earlier? It is enough to suffer the anguish now!"

From this we can perceive the greatness of the tzaddik. Rabbi Chaim knew through Divine inspiration everything that would happen. But, even so, he did not want to cause another Jew any additional pain. He felt their distress. Because of his exceptionally kind heart, he did all he could to reduce their suffering.

A Blessing for Long Life

Mrs. Levi from Lyon, a very righteous woman who merited long life, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, that she arrived in Morocco at the age of fifteen. When she reached her apartment in Casablanca, nobody knew of her arrival.

At that time, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan was in the middle of a feast in honor of his grandfather Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and perceived through Divine inspiration that this young girl had arrived in the city.

Rabbi Chaim asked his *gabbai*, "Go to this specific house, and there you will find a young girl who just arrived from a distant country. Tell her to come here right away."

When the girl arrived at the Rav's house, there were crowds of people, and everyone cleared a path for her to get to the Rav. The Rav greeted her with a hearty "Welcome," and instructed her to join the women in the women's section.

After the feast, the tzaddik called her and blessed her with long life. We are witness to the fulfillment of the tzaddik's blessings, since Mrs. Levi, tichyeh, ultimately merited long life.

Breaking the Fast

Rabbi Reuven Amar, the *shochet* of Casablanca, did his work

faithfully each day. Already at sunrise, he would begin his work slaughtering fowl for the Jewish community. Often, it happened that he was so involved in his work that he did not eat or drink anything all day.

Once, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan met the *shochet* leaving the yeshiva of Casablanca. Rabbi Chaim gave him a scrutinizing look and called him over, informing him that he wished to escort him to his house. The tzaddik requested of the *shochet's* wife to prepare for her husband a nourishing meal, since he had not eaten for two days.

That is exactly what had happened. Rabbi Reuven had been without food for two days, and Rabbi Chaim perceived it through Divine inspiration. In this way, he saved him from starvation.

Bring Me the Wallet

The following story was told by Mrs. Gabey, tichyeh:

My father was living in Casablanca close to Rabbi Chaim's house. It was 1937 (5697), and the date of his wedding was drawing close. He had only one dirham in his pocket for the wedding expenses. This was not enough to purchase anything.

One day, he passed through Rabbi Chaim's street, and the Rav was sitting at the entrance of his house as usual. He called my father over and asked him why he looked downcast. My father told him that his wedding date was approaching, and he did not have money to buy a suit or other provisions for his wedding.

Rabbi Chaim instructed him to go to a certain spot in the market, where someone had dropped their wallet full of money. "Bring me the wallet," the tzaddik ordered. "Half the money in it will be for your wedding expenses, and the other half will go to needy people."

My father was overjoyed. He trusted Rabbi Chaim completely and immediately ran to the market. There he found the wallet, exactly in the spot that Rabbi Chaim had told him. The wedding

took place with great celebration, and the money that was left was distributed among the poor, as the tzaddik had instructed.

They Have Eyes, but Cannot See

A few years preceding the Second World War, anti-Semitism began to wreak havoc on the Jews around the world. Governments enacted various laws whose sole purpose was to harm the Jews. For example, whoever was caught with foreign currency in his possession was arrested immediately.

R' Avraham Moyal had on him a large sum of foreign currency at that time. Naturally, he was very afraid. On one of his trips from a distant country back to Morocco, he smuggled sacks full of foreign currency among his luggage. However, the police tracked him down. Trembling, R' Moyal began to pray that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, who was still alive at the time, he would be saved.

The police began to search R' Moyal's luggage, and they even touched his sacks full of foreign currency, but they did not notice anything at all, as it says, "They have eyes but cannot see."

When he arrived in Mogador, he met Rabbi Chaim Pinto, who told him, "You prayed in the merit of my ancestors, and the tzaddikim saved you from their hands."

The Invisible Crates

This is another story that R' Avraham Moyal told on this matter:

Once, he was traveling by bus, transporting several crates full of foreign currency. Some people who were jealous of him denounced him to the authorities for smuggling foreign currency, saying that he was about to arrive in Mogador with five crates of money.

Somehow, R' Moyal found out that people had informed on him, and in a flash got off the bus and ran for his life, leaving all the money behind. He reached Mogador in a mysterious manner without getting caught.

Meanwhile, the bus reached its final station in Mogador, and R' Moyal decided to try his luck in retrieving the crates of money. He prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto he should succeed in finding the crates with all his money, even though chances were that the local Arabs riding on the bus had already helped themselves to his treasures.

Moreover, station-workers would routinely board the buses at the terminal and clean them in preparation for the next trip. R' Moyal was sure that the station-workers had already claimed the crates of money for themselves.

Nevertheless, he tried his luck. He arrived at the terminal and found the station-workers cleaning the bus. He inquired if they had already cleaned inside the bus and was told that they had. R' Moyal did not despair. He turned to one of the workers and asked him, "May I get on the bus for a minute? I left something there."

"What did you leave there?" asked the station-worker. "We already cleaned the bus and there was nothing left inside."

All the same, R' Moyal got on the bus. He was astonished to find the five crates untouched, lying in the exact spot where he had left them. The station-workers had cleaned the bus thoroughly, but had simply not seen the crates full of money.

Once again the words of the pasuk were fulfilled, "They have eyes but cannot see…"

R' Moyal got off the bus and asked the workers to help him carry all the crates to a car waiting nearby. One of them asked in amazement, "How is it possible that we did not see the crates? We cleaned the entire bus thoroughly. How did we miss them?"

R' Moyal replied in a tone of confidence, "Of course you could not see the crates, because I prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto no one should touch them, and I should get back all the money. These crates hold my livelihood, and I thank Hashem that my treasures were returned to me intact."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

With a Strong Hand and an Outstretched Arm

Beware of Their Glowing Coals

In his youth, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan once went to the port in order to observe the ships coming in and unloading their cargo. One of the workers at the port, who was not Jewish, got annoyed and began screaming at him, "Jew! Why are you standing and watching? Don't you have a better place to be?"

The audacious worker did not suffice only with scornful taunts; he walked over to the young Rabbi Chaim and smacked him hard across his face.

Tears sprung to Rabbi Chaim's eyes from the force of the blow, and he exclaimed, "I will not leave this place until I see how the merits of my holy forefathers avenge this wicked man."

Rabbi Chaim had three friends with him, and they begged him to leave the place immediately, before he suffered more abuse from the worker's brazen violence. But he refused to leave and told them, "Stay here with me, since it is time to pray Minchah now."

Before they finished their prayers, the hand of Hashem struck the vicious worker. Suddenly he was heard screaming in agony, while writhing in pain. In a few minutes, a wagon came to take him to the hospital.

The young Rabbi Chaim and his friends approached the spot where the worker had been and asked the people there what had happened. They explained that when the worker was pulling the rope tied around his hand, suddenly the cargo that was tied

to the rope loosened and went crashing down, jerking the rope with great force. His hand was torn off from the force of the pull.

After a few weeks, the worker recuperated and immediately came to beg Rabbi Chaim's forgiveness for slapping and humiliating him at the port. While lying in the hospital, he thought a lot about what had occurred that day, and realized that because he had smacked the Rav with his hand, it was torn away from him.

A Steep Fall

When Rabbi Chaim Hakatan traveled for the first time around the cities of Morocco, one of the wealthiest people begged to host him in his house so that blessing should shine on his business in this merit. The rich man went out to greet the Rav and brought him to his home, according him great honor.

Every day, people came streaming to the rich man's house to bring their donations to the Rav. Many days passed in this way, until Rabbi Chaim had to continue on his journey. He cordially parted from his host, thanking him for his benevolence and for fulfilling the mitzvah of hosting guests so graciously. He always cherished pleasant memories of him.

A few years later, Rabbi Chaim had to pass through the city again. He remembered the wealthy man and the wonderful hospitality he had displayed on his previous visit. He decided to again stay in his house for a few days. Rabbi Chaim arrived at his house and knocked on the door. He was surprised that the landlord did not allow him to stay at his house, and even prohibited him from crossing his threshold.

Not long after, the wealthy man's fortune changed and he became bankrupt. He became so poor that he was on the brink of starvation and was compelled to collect alms in order to support himself.

Change of Fortune

A similar story happened to another rich man who did not

display proper respect for Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. His business went bankrupt, and he became impoverished, having to collect alms for his sustenance.

A few years later, one of the royal ministers came to the city and visited the man. On this occasion, the man requested that the minister ask Rabbi Chaim to beg mercy for him, so that he should return to his former status. The minister advised him to first receive Rabbi Chaim's forgiveness. Ultimately, Rabbi Chaim did forgive him, and from then on his fortune took a change for the better. Once again, he enjoyed great wealth and prominence.

After this incident, the rich man would regularly send expensive gifts to the illustrious Pinto family.

Like Fiery Coals

Shmuel Aberty, the grandfather of Rav Muzino, once entered a café in Casablanca with his wife. A few minutes later, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan came into the café, in order to collect alms for the poor.

The owner of the café noticed the tzaddik entering. He thought to himself that surely the Rav was coming to disturb people and lecture them to improve their actions and lifestyle. He began to curse and degrade the tzaddik, "Here is the Rabbi again, coming to my café to collect alms…"

Rabbi Chaim, who was deep in thought, did not notice the owner's impudence and did not hear his insults. However, Mr. Shmuel Aberty's wife heard what he said and was shocked by the affront to the honor of the Torah.

Mrs. Aberty turned to her husband and asked him, "How can a person dare to curse and degrade the tzaddik? Is he not afraid?"

Her husband did not know how to protest the insult of the tzaddik. Instead he emphatically stated, "I do not think that he will live through the week, since whoever insults a tzaddik does not remain alive, as it says in Avot (2:10) "Beware of their

glowing coal lest you be burnt – for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like fiery coals."

That week the owner of the café died suddenly. This incident became the talk of the town and is still remembered.

Scorning the Blessings

The following story is told by Mrs. Amoyal, tichyeh. We learn from it how much one should respect the lofty greatness of tzaddikim.

When she was young, she once passed near the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim while walking with a group of friends. One of the girls, who was an exceptionally smart student and always received top grades, regarded the tzaddik's blessings with condescension.

Rabbi Chaim heard her derisive remarks and told her, "Since you scorned the blessings, you will not succeed in your studies."

Eventually, the student forgot everything that she had learned and received very poor grades on her tests.

This is an illustration of the words, "The will of those who fear Him He will do." Since the statement was uttered by the tzaddik, it came true.

It is worthwhile to recall the lesson of the *Chofetz Chaim*, based on the pasuk (*Shemot*, 19:2), "Guard yourself from ascending the mountain or touching its edge." He explains, "If the mountain, which does not possess intelligence, and does not sense anything, became holy through *Matan Torah*, to the extent that Bnei Yisrael were warned not to touch its edge, how much more careful should one be not to strike or insult the honor of a Torah scholar, who learns the Torah, possesses intelligence, and senses his humiliation. Anyone who harms him is as if he strikes the apple of Hashem's eye."

We must be extremely cautious in guarding the honor of tzaddikim and Torah scholars!

Rabbi Pinchas Abisror

During the times of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, there lived in Morocco an outstandingly righteous Rabbi, the *gaon* Rabbi Pinchas Abisror, zt"l. Rabbi Abisror once had a dispute with a gentile who sold fish. The non-Jew humiliated and scorned the Rabbi during their argument.

Rabbi Pinchas Abisror, zy"a

Rabbi Abisror gave him a piercing look and told him, "For my personal humiliation, I bear no resentment. However, for humiliating the honor of the Torah, I cannot forgive you."

It is told that the moment Rabbi Abisror turned to leave, the gentile dropped dead on the spot.

Rabbi David Refael Banon, shlita, relates that this story caused a tremendous *kiddush Hashem* throughout Mogador. Everyone witnessed the great holiness of Rabbi Abisror. Until then, people had considered him to be a simple person, since he had always lived in utmost modesty. Only after this event, was his exalted stature recognized.

Flowers for Shabbat

There is another incredible story told by Rabbi David Refael Banon about Rabbi Pinchas Abisror, zt"l:

Before Rabbi Abisror became known as an outstanding Torah scholar, he lived in abject poverty. His house was entirely empty. Every Friday, he would go to some abandoned field and gather wild flowers. He would tie them together in a bouquet and walk through the Jewish Mellah.

Once, his wife noticed him going through the streets of the Mellah

holding a bouquet of flowers. "Why are you walking around with these flowers?" she asked him.

The tzaddik's response was an illustration of his outstanding piety and righteousness. He told her, "Because I am impoverished and the people do not care enough to investigate my dire situation, this may, *chas v'chalilah*, cause Hashem to be angry with them. I go around with these flowers, in order that they should think that I am well-to-do. Anyone who sees me walking around with flowers will assume that if I can afford flowers for Shabbat, my situation cannot be so desperate, and I certainly can afford food. In this way, there will be no accusation in Heaven against the people for not supporting me."

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zy"a

From this account, we can perceive Rabbi Abisror's exalted piety and modesty. He did not want anyone to know how poor he was, so that he should not become dependent on their help. On the other hand, he feared that their indifference would cause Heavenly retribution, since the people did not sustain him while he was dedicating his time to studying Torah in the Beit Hamidrash. This is why he went around with a bouquet of flowers in his hand. He preferred fulfilling the words of Chazal, "Make your Shabbat simple, so you should not become dependent on others." He trusted only in Hashem's kindness and not in the benevolence of people.

In truth, if he possessed the power to cause the gentile to drop dead, as in the story above, how much more so could he have arranged a comfortable income for himself. However, he preferred emulating Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, about whom it is said, "He suffices with a small measure of carob from one Shabbat to the next."

Rabbi Pinchas Abisror is buried in the Mogador cemetery, and a shelter was built above his grave, may his merit protect us, Amen.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Passing of the Tzaddik

Twenty-six More Years

The following story illustrates the extent to which Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's actions and conduct were held in high esteem by the Heavenly Court.

It is told that once, Rabbi Chaim came down with a severe case of typhus and was at the brink of death. The members of the *Chevrah Kadisha* assembled around his bed, and when they saw him taking his last breath, they began to recite Tehillim by his side.

Suddenly, Rabbi Chaim opened his eyes and raised himself slightly. He told the members of the *Chevrah Kadisha*, "You can leave now. I am fine. I was granted by Heaven another twenty-six years of life."

The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy"a

After everyone recovered from their shock, the tzaddik explained to them that just as he was about to die, his grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, suddenly came from Gan Eden to stand before the Heavenly Court. He tearfully pleaded, "You must add more years to Rabbi Chaim's life, since he has not yet accomplished all that he has to. He must live longer in order to increase people's faith in Hashem."

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol continued pleading his grandson's case and advocating for him. In the end, the Heavenly Court accepted his appeal and added another twenty-six years to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's life. During these years, he dedicated himself to strengthening his brethren with faith in the Master of the World.

Better I Should Die

Although Rabbi Chaim Hakatan died approximately two years before the outbreak of World War II, he predicted what would transpire prior to his death. Through Divine inspiration, Rabbi Chaim perceived the approaching Holocaust, whereby six million *kedoshim* would be massacred. He described the impending events to his son the holy tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto.

The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Pinto, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's uncle, testifies that he personally heard the following from his father. A few days before his death, Rabbi Chaim summoned all his sons and family, and blessed them. He said, "There are days coming in which an evil gentile will rise and cruelly destroy half of Hashem's vineyard. If my merits are not able to cancel this decree, then it is better that I should die than live to see my nation's suffering. However, if I will be in the Upper Spheres, I will attempt to cancel the decree from there."

As he predicted, on the seventeenth of Elul, 1939 (5699), the dreadful war broke out. Six million Jews from communities in Europe and Poland were tortured and burned to death. On account of this, Rabbi Moshe Aharon donned sackcloth and ashes for five years, until the terrible war ended.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon also talked about the events of the

Holocaust and the days of the Mashiach on several occasions. He tried hard to mitigate the suffering. This will be discussed, with Hashem's help, later on.

The Prophet

Toward the end of his life, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan lost his sight and became blind. Yet, even then he could clearly perceive, in an uncanny way, what was going on around him, who was standing next to him, and who was approaching him.

Also, those who came to receive his advice and blessings were surprised to hear him accurately describe their state of health and financial situation.

It is not surprising that during the period in which he was blind, the Torah scholars called him "The Prophet."

A Sacrifice for Klal Yisrael

Early in the morning, several days before his passing, the family members were awakened by the sound of a loud thud. They got up quickly and found that Rabbi Chaim had collapsed on the floor. He was wrapped in tallit and tefillin and had obviously been in the midst of his Shacharit prayers.

The family rushed to his aid and lifted him onto a bed. The tzaddik called his sons and told them, "My time has come to die, and I wish to bless you."

It was an emotional scene. Rabbi Chaim blessed his sons and those who were standing at his side. When he blessed his son Refael, he cried bitterly and later explained, "I am crying about the way that he will die, since he will be taken as a sacrifice for Klal Yisrael."

Decades later, on the twelfth of Shevat, 1980 (5740), a criminal entered Rabbi Refael's house in the middle of the night and beat him cruelly to death with an iron rod while he was lying in bed, may Hashem avenge his blood.

Storming the Heavens

For three days, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan lay in his bed in agony, until his soul departed and rose to the Heavens on the fifteenth of Cheshvan, 1937 (5698). He was seventy-three years old.

His son, the tzaddik, well-known for performing miracles, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, hurried to the funeral of his father in Casablanca. Those who traveled with him testified that the journey was miraculously shortened for him. At the end of the *shivah*, he returned home to Mogador, continuing his self-imposed confinement in his house.

When the dreadful news of Rabbi Chaim's passing spread throughout Casablanca, all the yeshivot and Torah institutions shut down, and all the students followed with their leaders to bestow their last honors upon the tzaddik. All the shopkeepers, Jewish as well as non-Jewish, closed their shops and joined the funeral procession, without any official order to do so, but because Rabbi Chaim was admired by everyone.

Sadness and grief were palpable in the streets of the city; everyone felt the great loss incurred by the tzaddik's passing. In every Beit Hakeneset, the *gabbaim* removed the *parochet* from the Aron Hakodesh, and the city mourned as on the day of Tishah B'Av.

A tremendous crowd followed the funeral procession of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim from his house until the old cemetery in Casablanca, where he was laid to rest, until the coming of Mashiach, may it be speedily and in our days.

The Rain Stopped

"…When [Metushelach] died, a loud thunder was heard in the Heavens, since they were eulogizing him and tears flowed from the eyes of the animals onto the place of his passing. When they saw this, they eulogized him below…" (*Yalkut Shimoni, Bereishit* 5:42).

It is told that at the funeral, intense rain and lightning lit up the

sky. Even the skies were shedding tears over the tzaddik's passing. Chazal say (*Sanhedrin*, 47a) "When rain falls on the coffin, it is a good sign for the deceased."

Nevertheless, during the eulogy delivered by Rabbi Shimon Abukasis, zt"l, bemoaning the loss of the distinguished tzaddik, who had protected the generation with his prayers and righteousness, he begged Hashem to stop the rain for an hour, so that they would be able to bring the tzaddik to his resting place with due honor.

The tzaddik's request was granted, and the rain suddenly stopped falling. Thus, the eulogies continued, delivered by the great luminaries of the generation, who cried bitterly over the great loss incurred by all of Am Yisrael.

Protecting the City

In truth, Rabbi Chaim's sons wanted to bury their father in Mogador near his grandfather, the holy Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. Rabbi Chaim himself had expressed his wish several times before his passing to be buried in his hometown of Mogador. However, the leaders of the city, among them the Rosh Av Beit Din of Casablanca, Rabbi Moshe Chai Elkayam, zt"l, (also joined by the leader, Mr. Yichye Zaguri), begged that Rabbi Chaim Hakatan be buried in Casablanca, since Mogador already had his grandfather the tzaddik there. They wished to have the merits of the tzaddik protect Casablanca.

In the end, the tzaddik was buried in Casablanca in the plot of Rabbi Chaim Dahan, who gave him his place.

May his merit protect us and all of Am Yisrael, Amen.

Arriving from the World of Truth

On the eve of the tzaddik's passing, his holy body was placed in his room, and a large crowd gathered in his house to recite Tehillim next to his bed.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu describes the events, as heard from his father:

In the middle of the night, a man entered the house of the tzaddik, dressed in white. No one knew who he was or anything about him. The man walked to where the body lay and asked to speak with the family members. "Please allow me to sit near the deceased. I would like to remain here tonight and recite Tehillim for the elevation of the deceased person's soul."

The stranger had another two requests, "In the morning," he asked, "I wish to assist the *Chevrah Kadisha* when they do the *taharah* on the tzaddik's body." He also requested to wear the clothes of the deceased at the funeral, so that he would not look strange with his white clothes, which resembled shrouds.

The stranger noticed the confused expression of the family members, who did not know how to react, and he promised them that he would return the clothes of the deceased immediately after the funeral.

The tzaddik's sons conferred among themselves and then handed the stranger their father's attire. After donning the clothes, the stranger stood by the tzaddik's bed reciting Tehillim throughout the night. At daybreak, he joined the *Chevrah Kadisha*, assisting them in their holy work.

At the funeral, the stranger stuck out among the tremendous crowd of people accompanying the tzaddik to his grave. Everyone wondered about his identity, but no one knew who he was, where he came from, and why he cried so bitterly over the death of the tzaddik.

When the family members returned from the cemetery, following the burial, they searched for the stranger in vain. He had disappeared just as suddenly as he had come. No one knew of his whereabouts.

They found the tzaddik's clothes folded neatly in the closet. This was astonishing. Rumors about the stranger spread among the

family and the mystery increased. The story reached the ears of the Rabbanit, the widow of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, who had not gone to the cemetery, in keeping with the custom that women do not go to the cemetery for the burial, and she was questioned by her sons. They asked her if she had noticed the stranger wearing the clothes of the tzaddik return to the house after the funeral in order to bring back their father's clothing and take his own clothes, which he had deposited in their possession.

To their amazement, the Rabbanit replied that from the time that the funeral had begun, until then, she had not left the house for a moment, and no one had come to their house to return the tzaddik's clothes or take anything.

The amazing thing, the Rabbanit added, was that the clothes of the tzaddik were locked in the closet, and she had the key. It was not possible to take the clothes and return them without going into her room.

The only one who was able to shed light on the matter was her son, the tzaddik Rabbi Meir. According to his opinion, the stranger was none other than his holy grandfather, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, who had come from the World of Truth in order to assist in the *taharah* of his grandson and participate in his funeral.

Here Will Be Your Burial

During the burial of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, the privilege of lowering the body into the grave was offered to the highest bidder, as customary. Two generous men merited performing this great mitzvah. One of them was Mr. Yaish Bitton.

His grandson told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that while his grandfather was lowering the body into the grave, he suddenly realized that his wallet was missing. He was caught by surprise. He searched and searched for the missing wallet, unsuccessfully.

When he finished his holy mission, he got up from the grave and prayed: "*Ribbono shel Olam*, in my wallet that got lost, I had all

my money. Please, for the sake of your Exalted Name, help me, and let my wallet be returned to me intact."

Mr. Yaish Bitton began walking away from the grave. While anticipating how he would be assisted by Heaven, a flustered person approached him holding the wallet. The man recognized Mr. Yaish and handed him his wallet with a bewildered expression.

When he regained his composure, he explained what had happened, "I found the wallet on the ground during the funeral. I picked it up and opened it to find a huge sum of money in it. I was glad for the great find. I decided to leave the funeral and started walking in the opposite direction of the streaming crowds. But, then I felt as if a hidden hand was grabbing me, not allowing me to continue. It was the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, commanding me to return the wallet to you with all the money, immediately. He also warned me that if I did not return the money to its owner, he would take me along with him to Heaven, and I would remain buried here! I felt him prodding me, until I met you and returned your money."

Too Late

Before his death, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan met an old man in Morocco called Moshe and told him, "You have four coins in your pocket. Give me one coin, and with the remaining coins go buy a lottery ticket today and you will win 900 pesos."

Armed with the blessings of the tzaddik and with the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, which he readily performed, Moshe approached the lottery booth and bought tickets with his three remaining coins. He, indeed, won the huge amount of 900 pesos.

A few days later, Moshe met the Rav again. After inquiring if he had bought the ticket, Moshe answered in the positive.

"Did you win money?" the Rav asked.

"I did," answered Moshe, without elaborating in detail.

"How much did you win?" asked the Rav.

"A large amount," he replied.

Rabbi Chaim told him, "You don't want to tell me how much you received! You won 900 pesos. May you have much success!"

Days passed, and Moshe overheard that Rabbi Chaim Pinto had died. Since he strongly desired to merit the holy mitzvah of lowering the body of the tzaddik into the grave, he hurried to the cemetery in order to place his bid for the precious mitzvah. But it was already too late, and two other people had merited performing this mitzvah.

Moshe was crestfallen about the missed opportunity and began to cry. That night, he dreamed that he was standing on the roof, and Rabbi Chaim was consoling him, "Moshe, do not be sad! The mitzvah is all yours. Hashem considers a good intention as if it was actually performed."

CHAPTER TWENTY

Tzaddikim Are Greater in Their Death

Stuck to the Seat

Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zy"a, told the following story portraying the extraordinary holiness of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, zy"a:

We went to live in Casablanca for a period of time. After finding an apartment to rent, we made sure to light a *ner neshamah* for the elevation of the soul of my righteous father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. My wife would light the candle, which would burn for five days straight.

A week before Rosh Hashanah, my wife planned our return to Mogador in order to participate in the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. She gave the keys of the house in Casablanca to her brother, Massoud, so that he should continue lighting the candle for the elevation of my father the tzaddik's soul.

Massoud lived in Marrakesh. He earned his livelihood by buying merchandise wholesale and marketing it to stores. He would travel daily with his truck from Marrakesh to Casablanca. This is why my wife figured that he would be able to light the candle in our house each day while we were gone.

One day, when Massoud came to our apartment in Casablanca in order to light the candle, he remembered that he had left his pouch full of money in his truck. He feared that someone would break into his truck and steal the money, which amounted to three and a half million francs.

Nonetheless, Massoud did not neglect his duty. He lit the candle and prayed in the merit of the tzaddik, "Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, I beg that in your merit Hashem should guard my pouch, since I am lighting a candle for you." Afterward, he immediately returned to his truck.

When he drew close to the truck, to his surprise, he found a non-Jew sitting at the wheel, holding the pouch in his hand. Massoud asked him, "What are you doing here?" The non-Jew admitted abashedly, "I broke into your truck to steal. However, the moment I grabbed the pouch, I felt myself sticking to the seat, unable to move. That is why I cannot run away. Honest, I did not take any money out of the pouch."

Massoud told him to put the pouch back and get out of the truck. As soon as the thief put the pouch down, he succeeded in getting out of the truck. In this way, all the money was returned to Massoud intact.

It is obvious Who guarded the money, as it says in Tehillim, (121:4) "Behold, He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the Guardian of Israel." When the thief stole into the truck, Hashem protected Massoud in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, for whom he lit the candle, causing the thief to get stuck to the seat, preventing his escape. Regarding this it says, "Tzaddikim are greater in their death than in their lifetime" (*Shenot Chaim*).

A Speedy and Complete Recovery

Even after his passing, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan would advocate for his people. Many experienced salvation in his merit. The following are a few examples:

Yehoram Azran from Morocco had a sister who was very sick. She recovered completely from her illness on Rabbi Chaim's *hilula*, celebrated in Morocco.

The son of a doctor, who had became emotionally disturbed, was entirely healed on the eve of the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim. He began speaking and behaving normally once more.

Also, Mrs. Oppen from Morocco was once critically ill. However, on the eve of the *hilula*, she recovered completely and got out of her bed in good health.

The Name that Bestowed Life

Once, a baby who was born prematurely was diagnosed with a severe heart defect. The heart was as large as the entire chest, and the lungs were not developed. The child also suffered from a lack of oxygen to the brain, and his condition was critical.

All the top physicians summoned to diagnose the condition of the baby were of the opinion that he would not live for more than a few hours. They informed the parents, adding that they had nothing to hope for and they should accept this decree of G-d.

The aunt of the child heard that the merits of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan were extremely powerful. Therefore, she decided on her own to name the child after the tzaddik even before the *brit milah*. When the matter was discussed with the parents, they unanimously consented to name the child Chaim.

Then a miracle occurred. Within two days after naming the baby Chaim, things began to change in a way that until today the doctors cannot comprehend. They could not understand how their diagnosis was so mistaken.

The heart shrunk to a normal size, the lungs began to receive air, and pure oxygen began to flow to the brain. This was despite the fact that the parents had been warned that even if the child would live, he would be a vegetable all his life. With Hashem's help, the child grew completely healthy, without a trace of his former condition. (Heard from Nikol Kidron, the father of the child.)

I Promise You

Rabbi Atzraf Timsut, the Rosh Kollel of Zichron Shlomo v'Chaim, named after the tzaddikim Rabbi Shlomo Timsut, zt"l, and Rabbi

Chaim Atzraf, zt"l, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, the following story:

Rabbi Atzraf got married in 1966 (5726). After three years, he still did not have any children. He constantly prayed to Hashem for children and hoped for good news.

Beit Hakeneset that Rabbi Yehuda Pinto built in the name of his father Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol – on the first floor

In Tammuz 1969 (5729), while he was learning in kollel, he came across a difficult question which he could not resolve. He agonized over the issue until he fell asleep. In his dream, he saw Rabbi Chaim, who had come to resolve his question. Afterward, Rabbi Chaim informed him, "I promise that you will have a child."

On Pesach 1970 (5730), a son was born to him. He named him Chaim. From that time on, the merit of Rabbi Chaim has accompanied him.

Saved in the Merit of the Tzaddik

R' Shmuel Marciano once traveled to the tzaddikim Rabbi Meir Pinto and Rabbi Refael Pinto in Casablanca in order to receive their blessings. There was a woman in the house, who had also come to receive the blessings of the two righteous brothers.

Suddenly, the woman turned to Rabbi Shmuel Marciano and declared, "May it be Hashem's will that just as the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto wrought a tremendous miracle for me, so, too, Hashem should perform miracles for you."

When R' Shmuel asked her to tell him about the miracle which she had experienced, she told the following story:

For a living, I engage in the production of alcoholic beverages, such as wine and arrack, and sell them to the Jews, despite the fact that the sale of alcoholic beverages is against the law. The law forbids Jews to produce alcoholic beverages without a license. (Note that this business was a source of income for hundreds of Jews several decades ago in Morocco, and the government would deliberately close their eyes to those engaging in such business, knowing full well that this was their livelihood.)

R' Shmuel Marciano

One day, someone who was jealous of my thriving business informed on me to the authorities. All of a sudden, without any prior warning, the police raided my home and began to search the house. Of course, I was very frightened and did not have where to escape, since the whole house was surrounded by policemen.

Immediately, I cried out in prayer for the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto to protect me, and I begged the tzaddik to come to the aid of a poor widow, whose only source of income was the sale of alcoholic beverages and arrack.

Immediately afterward, I felt instant relief. With incomprehensible joy, I began to "help" the police search my house for the liquor and alcohol. The police were very surprised that I was helping them unlock doors and open the barrels full of wine and arrack.

I myself was surprised that I was helping the police search the house. But this is the way it was.

The police searched every room in the house, opening barrel after barrel, but did not notice anything amiss. When they finished going through the house, having searched in every corner, they told me that someone had tipped them off that I was selling alcoholic beverages without a license. They even apologized to me about the trouble and mess that they had caused during the search. They left the house empty-handed.

And this is how I was saved from slander in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan.

Saved by His Picture

Mrs. Amar, who lives in Guadeloupe, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that she always kept a leaflet of the *tefillat haderech* with a picture of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto printed on it, next to her in her car. Once, when she was on the road, the leaflet, which contained a *kamaya*, suddenly fell down, even though it was stuck firmly to the dashboard. Just as she bent her head down to pick up the *kamaya*, a miracle happened in front of her eyes.

It seems that by bending down while driving, her car had swerved off the road. Just at that moment, a truck loomed in front of her, driven by a drunk driver, who was speeding crazily. When she raised her head and realized that she had swerved off the road, she immediately turned the steering wheel around to straighten the car.

Suddenly, she heard a loud noise of a collision behind her. She pulled over to the side of the road and observed the scene. She realized that by swerving off the road she had avoided the oncoming truck, which was racing out of control toward her. Instead, the truck had collided head-on with the car behind her, killing or injuring all its passengers. By swerving out of its way, her life had been spared.

Chazal teach, "Your eyes shall see your teacher." Mrs. Amar did

not know what the *tefillat haderech* was and of its supernatural benefits, but she believed with complete faith in the tzaddik. Therefore, his picture protected her, causing her to swerve off the road and avoid the oncoming truck, saving her life.

Teshuvah Inspired by the Picture of the Tzaddik

A Jewish merchant from Paris engaged in buying and selling imported merchandise, without declaring them in customs. Fear and worry were his constant companions. He was terrified that at any given moment someone would inform on him, and he would be arrested for tax evasion.

Once, he received a truckload full of fabric, and he hurried to unload the goods, taking care to hide them in a secret place. However, his greatest fears were realized when his "friends" informed the authorities that he was selling merchandise which he had not declared for tax purposes.

The police quickly arrived at the scene in order to search the place and confiscate the merchandise. The merchant was afraid that the police would go up to the second floor, where there were hundreds of yards of fabric which he had not declared. He quickly hung a picture of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan on the staircase. He was confident in the power of the tzaddik and waited to see what would happen.

The police, equipped with accurate information, searched the ground floor, but found nothing. They decided to go to the second floor, but a miracle took place. Each policeman who started going up the stairs came down abruptly for no comprehensible reason. The police must have realized that the goods they were looking for were probably on the top floor, but for an inexplicable reason, they felt that they were being driven away.

In the end, they wrote a report stating that they had conducted a complete search of the place, but had not found any merchandise that had to be declared.

This was an extraordinary miracle, which occurred in the merit

of the merchant's faith in the tzaddik. The picture of the tzaddik, facing the police on the staircase, did not allow them to ascend, despite the fact that they clearly saw that the stairs led to another floor. Ultimately, they never found the merchandise.

The man continued to relate that because of this miracle, he donated a substantial sum of money to various charity organizations all over the world. Also, following his scare, he stopped this business.

The Hidden Door

R' Ishua Deri, a resident of Casablanca, had a small store selling French fries and franks in buns. One day, the oil ignited and a fire broke out in the store. His clothes caught fire, and in a panic, he began to scream. Suddenly he saw the image of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in front of his eyes. He feebly cried out that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim he should be rescued from death.

R' Ishua Deri

All of a sudden, a hidden door opened up behind him. He himself did not know that there was a door there, since it had been covered with mortar and cement. He escaped through the door and was saved.

Although a large part of R' Ishua's body had suffered third degree burns, for which he required lengthy hospitalization, the merit of his faith in the tzaddik protected him, and he eventually recovered.

His Speech Returned

There was a child who could not speak at all. All the efforts of his parents to cure him were to no avail. The parents were not yet

Torah observant, and as a significant step to help cure the child, the mother decided to start keeping Torah and mitzvot, including the laws of family purity.

She went to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and cried, "I am prepared to keep Torah and mitzvot with all my heart and soul. But please advocate for me that Hashem should perform a miracle in your merit."

When she began keeping Torah and mitzvot, the child's speech returned to him and he began to converse normally.

The challenges that Hashem brings upon a person are in order to arouse him to do *teshuvah*.

Healed from Diabetes

R' Yosef from Aix-les-Bains had a daughter who was diagnosed with diabetes. The sugar level in her blood was dangerously high, and she was bed-ridden. This caused her father much anguish. Not only was he distraught over his daughter's condition, he also lost many hours of precious Torah study, sitting by her side and nursing her.

R' Yosef prayed to Hashem to send her a complete recovery in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, so that his Torah study should not be disturbed.

A few days later, his daughter's sugar level was tested again. To his amazement, it was completely normal. The results of the test astounded all the medical staff members.

All this occurred in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan.

The Sale

A Moroccan Jew owed the government a large sum of money. After repeated warnings from the government to pay his debt immediately, it was decided to confiscate his house.

The foreclosure was scheduled for Friday. On Thursday, the man lit a candle for the elevation of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's soul and

prayed to Hashem from the depths of his heart that in the merit of the tzaddik, he should find a buyer for his house immediately, so that the government should not be able to confiscate it, since it would no longer belong to him.

The merit of Rabbi Chaim stood in his stead. Barely an hour afterward, a serious customer arrived at his house and ended up buying it for the full price. Thus, the government could not foreclose the house on Friday.

If the government would have seized possession of the house, they would have auctioned it off at a cheap price. It was a miracle that he was able to sell the house before the government seized it. This way he was able to receive the full value of the house. He quickly paid his debt, and was even left with a substantial amount of money for himself. This was all in the merit of the tzaddik.

Safe Landing

A man who was afraid of flying was once traveling by plane from Montreal to Miami on business. Suddenly, the pilot ordered all the passengers to buckle their seatbelts, since there was a storm in Miami with heavy rain, thunder, and strong winds. The situation was perilous.

The man was very frightened and began to pray to Hashem that the plane should land safely in the merit of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. In the end, the plane landed successfully.

The man relates that after the landing, the pilot announced in amazement, "I cannot understand how I managed to land safely. I was informed by the control tower that there was a problem, and I myself noticed the danger. However, suddenly all the danger signals disappeared, as if there had been no problem at all."

This is the power of faith. What a pilot cannot do, an ordinary Jew can accomplish with simple faith and prayer.

Even Without His Glasses

A man came to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. He

wanted to begin reciting Tehillim, but could not find his reading glasses in his pocket.

This caused him great anguish, since he could not read without his glasses. How then would he be able to recite the psalms at the holy site?

The closer he drew to the grave, the more his anguish grew. However, when he reached the grave, he suddenly heard the psalms being read aloud, and in this way, he was able to recite them by heart.

Regaining Vision

There is another story told about a man who became blind in both eyes, *rachmana litzlan*, and could neither learn nor pray properly. He asked his family members to lead him to Rabbi Chaim's grave to beseech Hashem that in the tzaddik's merit, he should regain his vision.

He shed many tears and, to his great delight, his prayers bore fruit. When he arose the next morning, he was able to see normally with both eyes.

In the Sandek's Seat

Rabbi Meir Afriat prayed and begged Hashem to grant him children, since many years had gone by and he had not merited offspring. One night, Rabbi Chaim appeared to him in a dream and informed him that with the help of Hashem, he would have a son, and that his grandson, Rabbi David Chananya, should sit in the *sandek's* seat at the *brit*.

The tzaddik's blessings were realized, and nine months later a son was born to Rabbi Meir. He honored Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to serve as the *sandek*, as his holy grandfather had directed in his dream.

Tied Up

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard a pitiful story from a family in Morocco:

There was a woman who went mad when her mother died. All efforts to cure her were to no avail. She underwent various medical treatments, but without success. When her condition worsened, the family decided to take her to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. They tied her with a rope to the grave, since she was out of control.

A miracle occurred right in front of their eyes. After a few minutes, they noticed a substantial change in her behavior. She recovered completely, mentally and physically, and returned to her previous healthy state.

Praying in the Merit of the Tzaddik

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan brought about many great miracles even after his passing.

Two people related that they were diagnosed with a malignant tumor in their brains. The doctors did not give them any chance to live. But, as believing Jews who turn to Hashem in times of trouble, they did not despair and constantly anticipated His salvation.

The two men prayed fervently and lit candles *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. That year, both men were completely cured.

Such is the power of faith in a tzaddik. When a person prays in the merit of the tzaddik, Hashem accepts his prayers, as it says, "And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant."

It is important to note that one may not pray to the tzaddik to perform miracles for him; he may pray only to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik, He should perform miracles for him. When a person has faith in the tzaddik, he attains complete faith in Hashem.

In the Merits of Our Forefathers

Once the tzaddik and *mekubal* Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto traveled from Morocco to Eretz Yisrael. At one point in middle

of the journey, Rabbi Moshe Aharon suddenly realized that the attaché case containing his passport and money was not with him.

He immediately cried out to Hashem and begged that in the merit of his holy father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, no one should touch his case, and nothing should happen to it. This is exactly what occurred.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon returned to the place where he had begun his journey and miraculously found the attaché case there intact.

Similarly, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu related the following story:

When I was on my way to Paris, there were throngs of people waiting for me at the station as I got off the train. Because of the crowding, my attaché case containing many *divrei Torah*, money, and passports disappeared.

I prayed to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, He should help me find my attaché case. When I returned to the train station, I noticed my attaché case lying on the sidewalk. Although thousands of people pass through the streets there, no one noticed it.

The people who came to greet me witnessed how I returned holding the attaché case in my hands.

We Guarded the Suitcase

Mr. Pinchas Avitan told the following story:

I once rode in a taxi to the airport carrying a suitcase containing a large sum of money and many important documents. When I arrived at the airport, I could not find my suitcase and became extremely distraught.

I ordered the taxi to return to my house in order to search there. On the way, I prayed that in Rabbi Chaim's merit I should find my suitcase quickly.

When I arrived at the spot where I had begun my trip, I saw

a number of non-Jewish people standing around the suitcase. When they saw me coming, they said, "We were guarding your property. Take it and go on your way…"

You Will Yet Hear

In 1962 (5722), a strong earthquake shook Agadir. Entire buildings collapsed, burying thousands of people. Many who tried to escape from under the rubble were electrocuted by the power cables strewn in the streets. The Jewish community lost whole families. All the yeshiva students and their teachers were buried alive under the ruins of the yeshiva's building. It was a terrible time of suffering for all the Jews.

What was the cause of this painful tragedy?

At that time, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto published the sefer *Shenot Chaim*, in which he related stories about his father, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. He sent the sefarim to all corners of the world so that people would read about his father and strengthen their faith in tzaddikim. He also sent a shipment of books to Agadir.

However, Rabbi Moshe Aharon experienced great disappointment. A short while later, all the sefarim that he sent were returned to him. He received a message from Agadir that no one wanted to buy the books, since they claimed that they were already familiar with stories about the tzaddik. Rabbi Moshe Aharon decided to send the sefarim again to Agadir and offer them free of charge.

But even that was met with opposition. Shortly later, the sefarim were sent back to his home. It turned out that the people of Agadir did not want to read and learn about the wonders of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan.

That night, Rabbi Moshe Aharon had a dream. He saw his father Rabbi Chaim sitting on the ground and crying bitterly.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked him, "Father, why are you crying?"

"You will yet hear," he answered him ominously.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon woke up to the tremors of a massive earthquake. A few days later, he heard about the tragic events that had taken place in Agadir. The city lay in shambles, and many Jews and precious yeshiva students had been killed, *rachmana litzlan*. This is probably the reason why Rabbi Moshe Aharon had sent the sefarim the second time. He tried his utmost to cancel the terrible decree, but the Satan's ploy succeeded. These were the consequences of refusing to purchase sefarim which would have strengthened people's faith in tzaddikim.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu added:

> *Dear Reader,*
>
> *I testify that this is the reason that my father traveled the following year to Los Angeles. Otherwise, the city would have been destroyed by an earthquake, rachmana litzlan. In order to reverse the decree, he went to Los Angeles to pray there.*
>
> *Furthermore, after I got married, my saintly father asked me to take him to the border of Italy. When I took him there, he began to pray with great concentration that the Roman Empire's influences still affecting us should be diminished. When he finished his prayers, he asked me to take him home.*

This is awesome and wondrous.

The Dream

Mr. Gad Bouskila related the following fascinating story to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu:

When I once traveled to the airport in Paris for a flight to Morocco, the taxi driver turned out to be an Algerian Jew. On the way, the driver turned to me and asked, "Did you hear of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto?"

I answered in the affirmative, "Of course! Who has not heard

about him? I know all about his greatness and the wondrous miracles that he performed."

"If so," the driver said, "let me tell you about an amazing miracle that I experienced in the merit of the tzaddik. It happened approximately twenty years ago."

This is his story:

Once, I came home after a very busy day of driving. I had a terrible headache; the pain was intolerable. I turned to my wife and told her, "I cannot eat anything. I must go lie down."

In the middle of the night, I woke up and was not able to see, even though my eyes were wide open. I had lost my vision. I woke up my wife in panic, and she immediately ordered an ambulance to take me to the hospital. I underwent extensive testing at the hospital, but the doctors could not figure out exactly what had happened to me.

Two weeks before this episode, I had been invited by my neighbors to the Beit Hakeneset for the *hilula* of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, despite the fact that I was not religious, did not keep kosher, and did not observe Shabbat. Nevertheless, I agreed wholeheartedly to join the *hilula*.

It was the first time in my life that I had heard of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and it was the first time in my life that I stepped foot in a Beit Hakeneset…

I was very impressed by the stories I heard of the miracles that occurred in the merit of the tzaddik, and I was amazed by the great faith of all the congregants, who sang and rejoiced in honor of the tzaddik and enthusiastically bought candles for the elevation of his soul.

On the night that I lay in the hospital unable to see, I fell asleep exhausted. In my dream, I recalled the evening of the *hilula* of the tzaddik which had taken place two weeks before. The memories filled me with spiritual ecstasy. I spontaneously called

out to the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan to rescue me from my troubles and help me see again.

My wish came true. Rabbi Chaim appeared to me in a dream. I begged the tzaddik to heal me, and I vowed that if I would be healed, I would travel to his grave and pray there. In addition, I promised that I would begin to observe Shabbat religiously.

When I awoke the next morning, I remembered my dream and the promise which I had made. I was imbued with renewed faith and hope after seeing the tzaddik in my dream.

Meanwhile, the doctors decided to keep me in the hospital under surveillance for several days to see how things would develop. Afterward, they would conduct a staff meeting to decide whether to operate or not.

Two days later, while sleeping at night, I once again saw Rabbi Chaim Pinto's dignified appearance in my dream. Rabbi Chaim encouraged me, informing me that I would get out of bed healthy on condition that I kept my promise to observe Shabbat.

The blessing of the tzaddik was fully realized. The next day, I felt a strong pain in my head. Afterward, my vision slowly began to return, until I could see as before.

From the day that I entered the hospital until my release, only ten days had passed. I had entered as a blind man and left the hospital with restored vision, healthy and strong, without undergoing any medical treatment.

I was overjoyed when I left the hospital and returned to my family. I even returned to my former job as a taxi driver.

Events unfolded according to what I had been told in the dream, except for one thing: I did not keep my promise to begin observing Shabbat.

Two weeks passed, and after retiring on the eve of Shabbat, having enjoyed a hearty, joyous meal with my family, Rabbi Chaim appeared to me in a dream, looking magnificent. He told

me firmly, "Beware! If you will not keep your vow to observe Shabbat, your illness will return!"

Fear gripped my heart. It gave me no rest. I woke up my wife and told her my dream. Because of her concern for my peace of mind, she reassured me and said, "Do not worry, it was just a dream."

After falling asleep the second time, Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to me once more and said, "Remember that when you were sick in the hospital, you dreamed that you would recover. Just as that dream came true, the words that I am telling you in this dream will also come true: You will become blind again if you do not keep your promise to observe Shabbat."

This time, I could not remain complacent. I tossed in bed restlessly, promising myself that from that day on I would begin to observe Shabbat, and that I would buy a ticket to Morocco, first thing Monday morning, in order to visit the grave of the tzaddik.

By Tuesday, I was already in Morocco. I set out to search for Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's grave. On the way, I stopped at a local restaurant to eat. I noticed that the place was not sanitary and not well kept, so I turned around and left in search of a different restaurant.

In the next place, the owner of the restaurant approached me and in perfect French asked, "What brings you here?"

"I arrived this morning from France in order to pray at the grave of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, and I am searching for his grave," I answered.

"You really want to go to pray by the grave of the tzaddik?" the owner asked incredulously. "I will take you there myself, since I am one of the few Jews who are still left here."

I could not refuse such a generous offer. The following offer of the restaurant owner was also too good to refuse. "The food served here in the restaurant is not kosher. I will serve you only cake and tea free of charge."

When we arrived at Rabbi Chaim's grave, I wept for a long time with great emotion. Then I lit candles in honor of the tzaddik, who had treated me with utmost kindness. I began to feel relieved, as if a stone had been removed from my chest. After fulfilling my promise to visit the tzaddik's grave, I left, accompanied by the restaurant owner, to the bus station to begin my return journey home.

From then on, I kept my promise to observe Shabbat. I also began to keep kosher and perform mitzvot. My wife began to observe the laws of family purity, and we registered our children in religious institutions. In this way, my daughters were raised with modesty, and my sons eventually learned in prominent yeshivot. Ultimately, I changed my whole life to one of Torah observance.

We can see from this the tremendous influence of the tzaddik, who helped heal a Jew, in order that his whole family would do complete *teshuvah*.

He Could Not Believe His Eyes

Mr. Yehuda Fahima of Paris tells a similar story. On his return from Eretz Yisrael to Paris, he took a taxi from the airport to his home. He began to converse with the driver, discussing various topics. The driver asked him if he had ever visited the graves of tzaddikim in Eretz Yisrael. Yehuda answered, "Yes. In Ashdod, I visited the grave of the renowned tzaddik, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto."

Upon hearing the name Pinto, the driver jumped up and exclaimed, "I want to tell you about the incredible miracle that happened to me in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan."

The driver began to relate about a sudden bout of blindness that had struck him many years earlier. His condition began to affect the harmony in his home, and his wife wanted to divorce him. In addition, he lost his job as a taxi driver, and the company revoked his driver's registration number. The doctors had no clue as to the source of his ailment and told him that perhaps

his vision would return as suddenly as it had departed. All their efforts on his behalf were to no avail.

A few years passed, and one day, as he was passing a Beit Hakeneset with his blind man's walking stick, a Tunisian Jew called to him and asked him to join the Shacharit prayers.

After they finished praying, the man walked over to him and began telling him about the exalted level and outstanding holiness of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. He added, "I have a good idea for you. Light a candle *l'iluy nishmat* Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and perhaps in his merit your vision will be restored."

The man's obvious concern and compassion made an impact on the driver. When he arrived home, he lit a candle *l'iluy nishmat* Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and he prayed that his vision should be restored completely. His wife observed her husband and scoffed at him.

That night, Rabbi Chaim appeared to him in a dream and told him, "Because you lit a candle for me, I promise you that tomorrow morning your vision will be restored and you will see normally. Furthermore, you will regain your livelihood, and your driver's registration number will be returned to you. However, all this is on condition that you observe Shabbat, put on tefillin, keep kosher, observe the laws of family purity, and perform mitzvot. If you do not agree to these conditions, your illness will return and you will become blind again!"

At sunrise, the man woke up and could not believe his eyes. He rubbed his eyes incredulously. His dream had come true, and he could see once more. He immediately woke up his wife and exclaimed, "I can see!"

His wife did not believe him. But her husband truly saw normally once again.

Because of the miracle that he had experienced, the man began to adhere to the conditions in which merit his vision had been restored. However, a few days later, a family member began to

mock his mitzvah observance, taunting him that he had turned "Chareidi."

This ridicule succeeded in unnerving him and cooled off his commitment. Consequently, he began to neglect his religion, and failed to keep the conditions that he had accepted upon himself in his dream.

One night, Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to him in another dream and warned him, "You should know that your vision was restored to you by Heaven on condition that you keep Torah and mitzvot. However, if you think that your recovery was just a coincidence, then you will revert to being blind."

The driver concluded his story and told Yehuda Fahima, "After the second dream, I refused to neglect my duty anymore. Today, I am a Chareidi Jew in every sense of the word!"

Yehuda listened to the story attentively, and then told the driver with emotion, "I am on my way to meet Rabbi Chaim's grandson, Rabbi David, shlita, right now."

"If so," the driver requested of Yehuda, "please tell the Rabbi my story and how we clearly saw that 'tzaddikim in their death are considered living.' Truly, 'tzaddikim are greater in their death than in their lifetime.'"

I Am Chaim Pinto

Mr. Daniel Knafo related the following story:

I dreamed that I was in the old cemetery of Casablanca and saw a dignified man looking at me. He told me, "Your wife will bear a son and you must give him my name."

I asked him, "Who are you?" And he answered, "I am Chaim Pinto."

When I woke up in the morning, I asked my wife to test to see if she was pregnant. The result was positive. Six months later, after doing an ultrasound, she was told that she would have a girl.

When my wife went to give birth, to everyone's surprise, a boy was born. That day was Rabbi Chaim Pinto's birthday, and the baby's *brit milah* came out on the day of Rabbi Chaim's *hilula*. We kept our word and named our son Chaim David.

The Prayers of a Non-Jew Are Answered Immediately

R' Refael Amar, a disciple of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, relates that once he traveled to Morocco with his business partner. He was a pilot in the Israeli Defense Forces and had begun to take an interest in Judaism. The two went to Morocco to pray at the grave of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan.

When they arrived at the cemetery, an Arab caretaker showed them to the tzaddik's grave and handed them *sifrei* Tehillim.

The pilot noticed that the caretaker was holding something in his hand, and he asked him what it was. The Arab told him that he had a picture of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, which he had once received from a tzaddik who was Rabbi Chaim's grandson.

The pilot, who was not accustomed to such reverence, told R' Refael Amar in Hebrew, so that the Arab would not understand him, "Let's buy the picture from the Arab. We will offer him some money, and maybe he will agree to sell it."

The pilot offered the Arab a sum of money, but the Arab caretaker was not prepared to sell the picture under any circumstances. The pilot raised the price to one thousand dollars, but the Arab still refused. The pilot offered to buy it for a sum of over four thousand dollars, and even for this exorbitant sum (an amount of money with which one could buy a house in Morocco) the Arab was not prepared to negotiate at all.

The pilot was very moved and told R' Refael Amar, "See how much faith the Arab has in the tzaddik. His faith is deeply engrained in his very being. Although the picture in his hand is already old and torn, he will not part from it for all the money in the world. This is because he witnessed wondrous miracles

wrought by the tzaddik. For him, the picture is his whole life. And if a non-Jewish Arab has such faith in the tzaddik, how much more so should we."

When Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard this account, he commented, "It is important to note that faith without Torah is not complete, since they are interconnected. For this Shlomo Hamelech prayed to Hashem (*Melachim* I 8:41) that when a non-Jew will pray to Him, He would immediately accept his prayer. However when a Jew prays, He should not accept his prayer immediately. Why?

For a Jew, a single prayer is not sufficient to bring miraculous salvation. Simple faith is not enough, since a Jew is also required to be a bastion of Torah and observe the mitzvot with fervor. This is not so regarding non-Jews, since they have no connection to Torah. Therefore, if a gentile exhibits faith, Hashem suffices with his prayers and answers him immediately.

A Jew must bask in the light of Torah, engaging in mitzvot and good deeds. Only then will Hashem perform miraculous wonders for him.

Regaining Consciousness

A woman patiently waited her turn to see Moreinu v'Rabbeinu during receiving hours. When she entered his room, she asked, "Does the Rabbi recognize me?"

"No."

"A few years ago, on the day that you arrived in Canada, you came to visit me in the hospital, since I had been lying in a coma for a long time. When you came, you declared that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan everything would be alright, and I would be able to get out of bed.

"After the doctors had already given up on me, a miracle occurred. On the day that you visited, I regained consciousness and returned to my usual self. This was obviously in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. Therefore, I came to thank you and tell you

that in the merit of your holy forefathers a great *kiddush Hashem* was made in the entire hospital. As a result, many people did *teshuvah*."

I Was Waiting to Come to the Rav

In 1991 (5751), a young man got sick with cancer in the blood. His life hung in the balance. The doctors did not give him a chance to live, and his family was broken over it.

One day, the parents of the young man asked Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to come visit their son in the hospital. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu agreed. When he saw the man's pitiful condition, he blessed him and said, "In the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto you will be healthy and live, and you will even come to visit me."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu repeated this blessing several times during his visit.

Four years passed, and on the eighteenth of Adar Beit 1995 (5755), the young man came to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and began telling his story, describing what had happened in the hospital.

"I came to thank the Rav for the wondrous miracles that I experienced. *Baruch Hashem*, since the Rav blessed me in the merit of his holy forefathers, I began to recover. My health improved daily. I always anticipated the day that I would be able to come to the Rav, in order to thank Hashem for all the kindnesses that He has shown me."

In a Supernatural Manner

There was a woman who could not conceive. However, she did not fall into despair. She prayed to Hashem constantly that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, Hashem should help her to conceive and bear a child. Her prayers were accepted before the Heavenly Throne, and she ultimately gave birth to a daughter.

Similarly, another woman related how she and her husband were both barren. It was medically impossible for them to have

children. However, in the merit of the tzaddik, Hashem granted them a daughter.

Our *Chachamim* teach us that tzaddikim have the power to act in a supernatural manner. Through one's faith in the powers of the tzaddik, which goes beyond the laws of nature, he may merit miraculous salvation. How is this so?

A tzaddik serves Hashem in his lifetime modestly, without demanding much, as Chazal relate about Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who sufficed by eating only a measure of carobs from Erev Shabbat to Erev Shabbat. However, he would pray for his generation to enjoy an abundance of wealth.

Just as the tzaddik is capable of praying for others and performing wondrous salvations, he could also pray for his own success if he wished. Nevertheless, he does not ask much for himself, but suffices with whatever Hashem provides for him. Since he serves Hashem beyond the laws of nature, Hashem deals with him similarly, helping him perform acts beyond the laws of nature, actually changing nature in his merit.

Handing over the Pen

A person approached Moreinu v'Rabbeinu with his hand in a cast. He had experienced a devastating accident, and the doctors informed him that his hand must be amputated. He was miserable and poured out his heart before Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, crying bitterly. He moaned despairingly, "How will I be able to manage without a hand?"

When he calmed down somewhat, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu asked him, "How will I be able to change your situation through my blessings?"

"The Rav is a grandson of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto," he answered simply.

"True, but I am not Rabbi Chaim Pinto," Moreinu explained.

"In any case, you are the tzaddik's grandson, and I believe that

Hashem can perform miracles for me in his merit," he insisted sincerely.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu offered words of encouragement and told him, "If you believe so strongly, then with the help of Hashem, you will experience a miracle."

When they parted, the man said confidently, "I hope the next time we meet, my hand will be healed."

A year passed, and one time, when Moreinu v'Rabbeinu was delivering a lecture, he needed a pen to write out a pasuk for the people to see. He turned to the crowd and asked if anyone had a pen for him to use. A man came toward him and extended a badly scarred arm, handing him a pen.

"What happened to your hand?" Moreinu asked.

The man reminded him of his past, "Honorable Rav, do you recall how last year the doctors wanted to amputate my hand, and I came to receive a blessing in the merit of your grandfather? Here is my hand. It was not necessary to amputate it in the end. This is why I would like to give the Rav the pen as a souvenir specifically with this hand. I am sure that my hand was saved only in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. The doctors also cannot believe how the hand healed by itself."

There Is Nothing That Can Be Done

A man came to see Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and began to tell him of his sorrows:

A son was born to him severely brain damaged. The doctors declared that there was nothing that could be done to reverse the situation, and the baby would shortly die. The father of the child begged for a blessing in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu blessed him that the child should become healthy immediately in the merit of his grandfather.

Amazingly, two weeks later, the father returned to Moreinu

v'Rabbeinu joyfully and told him that the doctors tested the baby again and did not find any disorder. Unbelievable!

The Tzaddik Did the Surgery

An amazing incident occurred to R' David Loyb. He merited long life, reaching the ripe old age of ninety, in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

Rabbi David Loyb

While still young, R' Loyb lived in Mogador in the proximity of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, who lived in the house that had belonged to his grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. He merited praying in the Beit Hakeneset with the tzaddik, basking in his greatness and occasionally serving him.

He relates with emotion, "Too bad that I don't know anyone who could record for posterity all the many wondrous miracles that I experienced in the merit of the tzaddik. I would love to transmit them while I am still alive. It would be a pity if Am Yisrael would lose these stories. Through them, people are able to realize the great powers that a tzaddik possesses, even after he dies. Furthermore, Chazal say that whoever discusses stories of tzaddikim is considered as if he delved in the lofty *Ma'aseh Merkavah*."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu enjoyed hearing the following story first hand from R' David:

Approximately thirty years ago, R' David Loyb began to experience terrible pain, which later proved to be symptoms of cancer. His condition steadily worsened, until he had to leave Mogador and travel to Casablanca, where a French specialist, Professor Buton, treated him.

When he arrived in Casablanca, he went through a series of tests and was informed that unfortunately he had a malignant growth. Furthermore, he was told that the operation necessary to remove the growth was very complicated and dangerous.

R' Loyb began to tremble in fear. Worry filled his heart. "What will be? Will I recover from this illness?"

The doctor sensed R' Loyb's anxiety and told him, "We will not be able to operate on you like this. You must be more relaxed during surgery."

However, this remark did not help calm him at all.

That day, R' Loyb was hospitalized in Professor Buton's ward, in order to prepare him for the operation, which would take place the following day. At night, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan appeared to him in a dream. R' Loyb saw the shining countenance of the tzaddik facing him, his head wrapped in a white tallit.

Rabbi Chaim took his tallit and placed it around R' Loyb, and then smiled to him and said, "My son, I am Rabbi Chaim Pinto. Do not fear. Tomorrow I will stand alongside the doctor when he operates. The surgery will take an hour and a quarter, and it will be a success. You will be well and live long."

R' Loyb woke up and realized that it was a dream. A pleasant feeling spread over him as he recalled the encouraging words of the tzaddik. He calmed down, and slowly his fears evaporated entirely.

In the morning, Professor Buton entered his room in order to check the results of the most current tests, and to see if he was less anxious. To his surprise, he saw that R' Loyb was entirely relaxed, as if the operation had already been performed with success.

"Mr. Loyb," Professor Buton said to him, "what happened that you are so relaxed and calm?"

R' Loyb explained to him, "I am from Mogador. In that city, some years ago, there was a tzaddik, who abided by Hashem's will. He was like an angel from Heaven, a wise, virtuous, and honorable Rabbi, called Rabbi Chaim Pinto. He was a wondrous miracle worker. This tzaddik appeared to me last night in a dream and told me to calm down, since the operation will be successful and will not last longer than an hour and a quarter."

The professor frowned and said, "Mr. Loyb, what are you talking about? This is a very complicated operation, which takes a minimum of three hours. It is not a simple procedure at all."

The professor's argument did not shake R' Loyb's confidence, and he remained calm and relaxed. In this way, he was able to undergo surgery.

The surgery went well, in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto. When R' Loyb recovered, he opened his eyes and saw Professor Buton standing beside him. His face was wreathed in smiles. R' Loyb waited to hear the doctor's report. It did not take long in coming:

"Mr. Loyb, the operation succeeded beyond our expectations. However, I do not think that I am the one who performed it. The operation did take only an hour and a quarter, something which is impossible to imagine. I think that your tzaddik is the one who helped me, and he is the one who operated on you…"

They Searched but Did Not Find

R' David Loyb tells another story:

More than thirty years ago, he got sick with cancer and was hospitalized. At that time, there were no medicines to treat this illness. He called his wife from the hospital and asked her to bring him a picture of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. He prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik, Hashem would grant him a complete recovery.

The doctors advised him to undergo surgery to check if it was possible to save his life. R' Loyb turned to the doctors and

requested of them to leave the picture of Rabbi Chaim under his head even during surgery. "I have great faith that in his merit I will recover," he said. And he was right.

As soon as the anesthesia took effect, and he drifted off, Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to him and told him, "Do not be afraid! They will not find anything wrong."

When he woke up after surgery, he told his wife about Rabbi Chaim's appearance in his dream and his promise to him. His wife confirmed that this is exactly what happened. The doctors opened his stomach, but found no pathological findings.

The Laundered Suit

The following story is also told about R' David Loyb. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard this story from R' David Cohen, who heard it firsthand at the *hilula* of 1999 (5759). On a different occasion, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard it from R' David Loyb himself.

In the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim's house, there is an oil candle burning constantly for the elevation of the tzaddik's soul. It is in the room where Rabbi Chaim learned Torah together with Eliyahu Hanavi. Many people come to visit this room to study Torah or pray there. Whoever wishes can add oil to the burning candle. There are those who consider this a special *segulah*.

R' David Loyb wanted to add oil to the burning candle. He entered the room and filled the candle holder and prayed there. Meanwhile, one of the grandsons of the tzaddik, who lived in the house, came into the room. A petty argument erupted between the two, and in a fit of rage, the grandson took the cup full of oil and spilled it over R' Loyb's head.

R' Loyb was wearing a gray suit and a white shirt. He was drenched with oil, which stained his suit from top to bottom.

He stalked out of the room and headed straight to the police station. He intended to file a complaint against the grandson of the tzaddik. When he arrived at the station, he found the

policemen eating lunch. He approached one of the officers and requested to file a complaint. The policeman looked at him, surprised at his disheveled and dirty appearance. "Mr. Loyb, what happened to you?"

After R' Loyb finished describing what had occurred in the tzaddik's house, the policeman told him, "Look, we are in the middle of our break. Come back in an hour and then I will write a report about the incident."

When R' Loyb returned home, his wife could not believe her eyes. He told her what had happened, but despite his mortification, she advised him, "Forget about your complaints and go wash up."

R' Loyb took off his suit and shirt and draped them over a chair in the kitchen. He took a shower, prayed Ma'ariv, and before getting into bed, told his wife that early in the morning he would go to the police station to file a complaint.

That night, he dreamed that the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim appeared to him and told him, "My son, do not go tomorrow morning to file a complaint at the police station."

R' Loyb woke up with a start. However fatigue overcame him, and he fell back asleep. Again, Rabbi Chaim appeared to him in his dream and told him a second time, "My son, do not go tomorrow morning to the police station to file a complaint."

In the morning, R' Loyb prepared to go to the Beit Hakeneset to pray. He was taken completely by surprise by what he beheld in the kitchen. He could not believe his eyes and was convinced that he was still dreaming. He screamed to his wife to come at once. She came in alarm and asked her husband, "David, what happened?"

R' Loyb pointed at the chair, and then his wife, too, could not believe her eyes. The suit was draped over the chair clean and pressed, without a drop of oil on it. It looked brand new, as if it

had been bought on that day. On the table lay his shirt, folded and freshly starched.

R' Loyb witnessed the wonders before him and realized that they could have occurred only through the powers of the tzaddik.

The miracles did not end there. R' Loyb left his house. On the way to the Beit Hakeneset to pray, he met the cleaning lady who worked in the tzaddik's house. She told him, "Mr. Loyb, do not go to the police station to file a complaint. Last night I dreamed that the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to me and told me to approach you at this time, when you are going to the Beit Hakeneset to pray. This is a sign that his message to you is true."

R' Loyb understood that this was a sign from Heaven. After all, how could the cleaning lady have known the story?

R' Loyb realized that there was no point in filing a complaint with the police. There is only one thing he regrets until today: that he did not save his suit and shirt as evidence of the miracle.

Sanctifying Heaven

Hashem desires that His Name should be sanctified in public, especially before the nations of the world. The following story testifies to this:

A gentile once came to the yeshiva in Lyon. He was very worried, and he told a shocking tale. His daughter had been kidnapped. He did not know who had kidnapped her or where she was.

The gentile had strong faith in the blessings of tzaddikim. Furthermore, some of his closest friends had advised him to go to the Rav in the yeshiva in Lyon so that he would bless him to find the girl safe and sound.

When the gentile entered Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's room and told him what had happened, Moreinu told the man to light a candle every day that week *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto. The gentile did so faithfully.

On Motza'ei Shabbat, the abducted girl called her father and informed him exactly where she was being held. She explained, "Father! One of my friends (she specified his name) locked me in his house the entire week, not allowing me to leave or call out. He just left the house to buy some cigarettes, and I am able to quickly phone you to let you know where I am."

The family rejoiced to hear her voice. They immediately set out to the address that she had given them and found their daughter safe and sound. Just as they arrived, the "friend" who had abducted her also came back. When he saw her entire family there, he ran away.

When she had calmed down sufficiently, the girl told her parents everything that had happened to her. She expressed her amazement at the unfathomable miracle which had taken place. During the entire week, the man had not so much as touched her at all! It seemed as if someone was preventing him from executing his plans…

The next day, on Sunday, the family celebrated in the yeshiva with an elaborate feast, in order to give thanks for the tremendous miracle that they had experienced in the merit of the holy tzaddik. Just as they had lit the last candle on Motza'ei Shabbat, their daughter had succeeded in making contact with them.

In this way, Hashem's Name was sanctified in public before the gentiles.

The Mystery Remains

A teacher of a certain institution suddenly disappeared; no one knew of her whereabouts. One of the directors of the institution called Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and asked him what to do. The teacher's welfare was his responsibility and he was extremely worried.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu instructed him to light a candle *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. In this merit, the teacher would surely make contact with them.

On Friday of that week, the teacher returned to the institution, safe and sound, as if nothing had happened. The incident was and still remains a mystery. The director did not know where she had disappeared to, and how or why she had returned.

Regarding this it says, "Whoever trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by grace." Hashem will surely assist him.

Making the Match

There was a young man who searched for many years to find a suitable wife. He prayed to Hashem to help him find his proper match. However, every suggestion that arose did not materialize.

One day, the young man came to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and begged the honorable Rabbi to bless him that he should find his true mate quickly.

Rabbi David tells the rest of the story:

I made some inquiries on his behalf, and after a while, I suggested a match with a girl from Toronto. With the help of Hashem, I was able to organize all the arrangements for the young man to travel to Toronto in order to finalize their engagement. The families of the young man and the girl had already met, and the match would hopefully soon be concluded.

When the young man arrived in Toronto, he stayed with one of the members of the community. This man suggested a different girl for him as a wife, despite the fact that he had come specifically to see the girl that I had suggested. In the end, he got engaged to the girl whom his host had suggested.

Soon after, the family of the young man called to tell me the good news. At first, I was upset about the turn of events. After all, I had been convinced that his future lay in Toronto, and I had worked hard to organize all the arrangements. However, upon reflection, understanding that Hashem is the cause for everything that happens, I realized that He arranged that the young man should meet a different girl. This was the reason that he had

come to Toronto. It was ordained in Heaven that he should meet the second girl and get engaged to her.

A short while later, when I came to Toronto, my host told me that the family of the girl that I had originally intended for this young man was extremely upset, and the girl herself was distressed, since she did not end up getting engaged to him.

I arranged to visit the family and console them. I told them with conviction, "It is all from Heaven."

The family's sorrow tugged at my heart, and I beseeched Hashem that in the merit of my holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, a miracle should occur within the next two days, before I would leave Toronto, and the girl should find her true match.

That day, the father of the girl called excitedly to inform me that they had found a proper match for their daughter. She was scheduled to meet him in the evening.

Two days later, when I was in France, the parents called to let me know that the couple had gotten engaged, and were inviting me to their wedding, which would take place in three months.

All this was in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. How wonderful are the ways of Hashem.

The Ultimatum

One of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's students, R' Pinchas, was extremely troubled. He was constantly threatened by a senior employee in his workplace. He kept his worries to himself. His wife sensed his anxiety and very much wanted to help him, but he did not divulge his troubles to her.

From time to time, R' Pinchas prayed to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, he should not succumb to sin. Once, his wife heard him uttering this prayer, and she began to pressure him to reveal what was going on.

Since he realized that his wife knew that he was anxious, he agreed to tell her his story:

In his workplace, there was a woman who threatened to inform upon him to his superiors, telling them vicious lies and false charges about him. She was prepared to abandon her evil plans only on condition that he agreed to sin with her. On the previous day, she had given him an ultimatum of twenty-four hours to decide. What should he do?

His wife was extremely distressed, since she sympathized with her husband's plight. "Do you desire to fulfill her request?" she asked.

"No! G-d forbid!" her husband exclaimed emphatically. "I do not want to sin at all. However, she intends to accuse me of lies when in truth I did not do anything wrong. I am so afraid."

"If so," his wife advised him, "fortify yourself with faith, and in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto nothing bad will happen to you. Trust in Hashem and do not fear."

The next day, R' Pinchas received a message from the scheming employee's friend, "The woman who intended to slander you was suddenly struck by a stroke. She is now paralyzed."

Afterward, he told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that he had begged many times to be salvaged from his trouble in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and the tzaddik had come to his rescue. The proof to this is that precisely within those twenty-four hours, the woman had suffered a stroke. This testified to the fact that it was Hashem's hand that caused it, in order to save him from harm.

Tzaddikim Are Greater In Death than In Life

In 2003 (5763), on parashat *Vayeira*, when Moreinu v'Rabbeinu was staying in France, the following story took place:

A woman came to him in despair. She told him that she had been diagnosed with cancer in its progressive stages, *rachmana litzlan*. Tearfully, she poured out her heart in sorrow, bemoaning

that she had not yet married off any of her children, and she was on the brink of death.

Her dire situation touched Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's heart. Since that night was the fifteenth of Cheshvan, the *hilula* of his grandfather, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, he told her, "Go home, and the merit of the tzaddik will protect you. Tomorrow, on the day of the *hilula*, come to inform me of happy tidings."

The woman went home as instructed, and on the following day, after the Ma'ariv prayers, a *hilula* was celebrated in honor of Rabbi Elazar Menachem Mann Shach, zy"a, who passed away on the sixteenth of Cheshvan. The woman came to the Beit Hakeneset, and in the presence of an enormous crowd of people, including scholars such as Rabbi Bergman, shlita, (Rav Shach's grandson), she publicized the miracle she had experienced.

The doctors could not explain the strange turn of events. At the hospital that day, after taking an ultrasound and other tests, the doctors proclaimed that her illness had entirely disappeared. She was perfectly healthy and out of danger.

On the Books

One of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's close friends, who engages in many worthy and charitable deeds, was troubled by the income tax agency. Why?

His bookkeeper was not honest. He charged his clients, but he did not record their income properly. Consequently, the accounts were not in order. Ultimately, someone informed on Moreinu's friend to the income tax agency. The punishment for evading taxes could result in prolonged imprisonment.

The man had faith in Hashem. He knew that he had done no wrong and had paid his taxes promptly. He should have nothing to fear. He lit a candle *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and prayed that Hashem should help him in the merit of the tzaddik.

One day, the income tax agents arrived unexpectedly at his office in order to check his records. After auditing his accounts, they declared, "Everything is in perfect order! We have never seen such organized accounts anywhere."

In the merit of his abundant charity, Hashem had saved him from harm, rendering the income tax agents as "those who have eyes but cannot see." The merit of *tzedakah*, in addition to the merit of the tzaddik had protected him.

The Tzaddik's Belt

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's uncle, Rabbi Meir Pinto, was anguished over the pitiful plight of an acquaintance who had been in a coma for over a year and a half. His family was broken over the dreadful situation.

One day, the family members heard that the uncle's relatives possessed the belt of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto. They were advised to place the belt on the body of their ill father, since there was a chance that it would heal him.

Immediately after the belt was placed on the sick man's body, he woke up and regained consciousness. It was an unbelievable sight. Unfortunately, today no one knows where the belt is.

Instruments of Faith

This amazing story happened not long ago in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan:

On the nineteenth of Av, 2004 (5764), a grandson was born to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Rabbi David. It was the first son born to his oldest son, Rabbi Refael Meir Amram. The boy was called Chaim Gavriel Yonah.

The *brit milah* took place on Friday, parashat *Re'eh*, the twenty-sixth of Av, in New York. The *mohel* of the celebrated *brit* was Rabbi David Refael Banon, shlita, the Rosh Av Beit Din of Montreal, who had served formerly as the Chief Rabbi of Casablanca. He is known for his heroic efforts in bringing Jews

closer to Judaism in Montreal. He told the following story, which is most amazing:

After the *brit milah* in New York, he returned to Montreal, even though it was Friday, because he was scheduled to perform another *brit* on Shabbat in Montreal.

He had to prepare the instruments necessary to perform the *brit milah* in advance, because he would not be able to carry them to the Beit Hakeneset on Shabbat, since there was no *eiruv* in the city. He prepared to have his instruments taken on Friday to the Beit Hakeneset, so that he would be able to perform the *brit milah* on Shabbat as scheduled, at 3 p.m.

Usually, Rabbi Banon would personally take the instruments to the Beit Hakeneset, since he would then know exactly where to find them. However, on that busy Friday, he gave the instruments to Mrs. Maguy Lebée, tichyeh, the granddaughter of the holy Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and asked her to transport them to the Beit Hakeneset.

When Rabbi Banon arrived home, his wife asked him, "Did you already take your instruments to the Beit Hakeneset for the *brit* on Shabbat?"

"Yes, I gave them to Mrs. Lebée to put in the Beit Hakeneset."

His wife was surprised, "But you always take your instruments yourself and never use a messenger, so that you should know exactly where to find them. Why did you send them with someone else today?"

"Mrs. Lebée is known for her dedication to Avodat Hashem, and she is absolutely reliable," he responded confidently.

The next day, on Shabbat, Rabbi Banon arrived at the Beit Hakeneset in order to perform the *brit milah*. It was 2:45, a quarter of an hour before the scheduled time. Everyone was already gathered in preparation for the *brit*, and Rabbi Banon went to collect his instruments. He searched in the designated

spot, but they were not there. He looked all over, but could not find them. He then turned to the congregants and asked if anyone had seen Mrs. Lebée there on Friday bringing the instruments, but no one had seen her. The family members conducted an extensive and rigorous search all over the Beit Hakeneset, but there was no sign of the instruments for the *brit milah*.

It was already 2:55, and still there were no instruments with which to perform the *brit*. Rabbi Banon considered going home and bringing another set of instruments. But he realized that he could not possibly get back in time before sunset, since it would take him three hours to walk to and from his house, and he would have to find a non-Jew to carry the tools. What should he do?

Miserable, Rabbi Banon began to pray from the depths of his heart that Hashem should help him in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and he should find the expensive instruments that he had used the day before to perform the *brit* for the descendant of the tzaddik.

He prayed intensely, and wished desperately that a miracle would happen in the merit of the tzaddik so that he would be able to perform the *brit* on time.

Suddenly, at 2:58, a student of Rabbi Banon entered the Beit Hakeneset. He lived in Cleveland and had taken a six-hour flight to Montreal that week for a vacation. He was also a practicing *mohel*, and had learned his profession by Rabbi Banon.

Rabbi Banon welcomed him warmly and asked him, "What are you doing here?"

"I just heard that you are about to perform a *brit milah*, and I wanted to observe you. Although I am a practicing *mohel*, it is always beneficial to watch an expert *mohel* in order to perfect my techniques."

Rabbi Banon explained his dilemma to his student, and how he did not have the necessary tools with which to perform the *brit milah* for the baby…

The student did not waste any time. He cut off Rabbi Banon's explanations and immediately set out to save the situation.

"Rav Banon! May Hashem's name be blessed forever! Don't you see? There is really no valid reason that I should come here now, since I am already an experienced *mohel*. Why then did I come? It is only because your prayers have been answered. *Baruch Hashem*, I am staying close by, in the next building. I will go there at once and get a non-Jew to bring my instruments that I brought along with me from Cleveland."

Within moments, the instruments were brought to the Beit Hakeneset, and the *brit milah* was performed at exactly 3:05. In the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, Rabbi Banon's prayers bore fruit and the *brit* was performed on time.

After Rabbi Banon told Rabbi David this story, he added:

"There are those who may view this story as a mere coincidence, saying that his student just happened to be there with his tools at that time. But that is not so. One who sees events as coincidence does not want to believe and recognize Hashem. There is really no such thing as coincidence. Everything is orchestrated through Divine intervention."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu elaborates on this point with the following words:

Regarding the Splitting of the Sea, the nations of the world admit that the sea did split at that point, according to scientific evidence. But they do not admit that the sea split specifically to save the Jews, since they do not believe in Hashem and the Torah. If they would believe that Hashem orchestrated the events, they would be compelled to abandon their idols and convert. Since they do not want to change their decadent ways, they deny any Divine intervention and claim that although the sea split, it was a natural occurrence.

It is important to note that one can gain faith from science books. Sometimes, I look through them for the purpose of "knowing

how to respond to heretics." For example, I read that the Black Sea found in Turkey is a new sea, which was created as a result of the Great Deluge. It flooded the entire world, and the waters collected there, forming a sea. Furthermore, archeologists have uncovered incredible artifacts from under the sea, such as objects and fossils from the time of the Flood.

We know that Noach's Ark rested above the Ararat Mountains, which are located in Turkey. This lends credit to the fact that the Black Sea resulted from the Flood. However, the nations do not want to believe it. They claim that although there were floods, they were not divinely orchestrated (although one scientist did admit that the sea was formed by the waters of the Flood). The nations do not believe it because if they would believe in the Torah, it would obligate them to convert. They prefer to turn a blind eye to Divine intervention, fulfilling the pasuk, "They have a mouth, but cannot speak; they have eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear."

Every incident can be viewed as coincidence when taken out of context. However, anyone who is honest sees that there are no exaggerations in a particular story, but everything is clearly *hashgachah pratit*. If a person chooses to say that it is merely a coincidence, he is parting from the truth.

If a person opens his eyes, he will see how much Hashem showers him with loving kindness throughout his life.

Similarly, regarding the story with the instruments for the *brit milah*, it is clear that every detail was divinely orchestrated. After some investigation, the mystery of the missing tools unfolded. Mrs. Lebée, tichyeh, did deliver the instruments on Friday to the Beit Hakeneset. However, she mistakenly took them to the Beit Hakeneset Ohr Hachaim, which is a different Beit Hakeneset in Montreal.

This was also an act of Divine intervention, since that Beit Hakeneset was established in memory of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, zy"a, and those very instruments were used to

perform the *brit* on the descendant of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, who was named after the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh. This is why they ended up specifically in that Beit Hakeneset.

Furthermore, the student who entered the Beit Hakeneset just at the right moment and saved the day, appeared immediately following Rabbi Banon's heartfelt prayer to miraculously procure instruments to perform the *brit* in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

The Moving Picture

In Kislev 2000 (5760), Moreinu v'Rabbeinu visited an elderly, G-d fearing man called R' Yitzchak Matzliach, who lived in Lyon and was close friends with the Pinto family. His close relatives begged the Rav to go visit him, since he was deathly ill and lay paralyzed, making it difficult for him to eat and drink.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu encouraged him and uplifted his spirits. At one point, he asked him to eat some food. Rabbi Yitzchak struggled to take a bite so as not to refuse the Rabbi's request, but it was terribly difficult for him. In the meantime, his condition worsened, and he was transferred to the hospital. Unfortunately, he died soon after.

The casket with the deceased arrived from the hospital to his house shortly before Shabbat. Then, the preparations began to transport the deceased to Eretz Yisrael for burial.

The following chain of events was described by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita:

On the following Sunday, I was supposed to travel to Morocco to participate in the wedding of the daughter of R' Mordechai Knafo, who usually hosts me when I go to Morocco. However, I promised the family of the deceased that I would return immediately after the wedding in order to join the funeral of their father.

In those days, there was no direct flight from Lyon to Eretz Yisrael. Consequently, the funeral was postponed. Meanwhile, the family

members took care of the final arrangements to transport the deceased to the Holy Land.

When I returned on Monday night, I went directly to the bereaved family, and they had an unbelievable story to tell me.

In the house of the deceased, there was a large picture of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto hanging on the wall. Facing it, there was a small picture of their father, R' Yitzchak Matzliach. On that day, Monday morning, when one of the sons woke up, he saw something incredible. The picture of Rabbi Chaim Pinto suddenly began to change position. It moved to the spot where the picture of R' Yitzchak Matzliach was hanging.

It was awesome. The son got very scared. He called his brother immediately and asked him if he had also noticed what happened. The brother noticed right away, and asked how it could be. The other brothers also came into the room and saw the picture of the tzaddik changing place in an unnatural way.

After hearing their account, they called someone who was staying in their house and asked him to verify if the story was true. The man, who usually did not believe supernatural tales, declared, "Honorable Rabbi, I am a scientist, and do not believe anything told to me. If the family would have related to me what they saw, I would not have believed them. But I saw with my very eyes what happened! Moreover, I later saw how the picture returned to its original form and position."

This amazing story spread all over the city and stirred the people. When the family members asked me to explain the mystery, I answered them clearly:

"This is a clear sign, and you must all take it to heart. It demonstrates that Hashem is in control of the world. He can change the position of a picture at will, because He is the Creator of the entire Universe."

I added, "It could be that your father had a very close relationship with the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, since he was his loyal

follower. Therefore, the tzaddik came to accompany him to his grave. This obligates all of you to strengthen yourselves in Torah and fear of Heaven."

Faith in the Words of the Tzaddik

A Jewish merchant was caught in a terrible situation. He purchased a large stock of merchandise, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. However, he did not know that the merchandise was actually stolen goods.

The police, who knew of the presence of the stolen goods, came unexpectedly to raid his house. They began conducting an extensive search for the merchandise.

The merchant's brother, who went to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to ask for his blessings and advice, related that the merchant was beside himself with worry. He knew that besides for the police confiscating all his goods, causing him a great loss, he would also have to face trial. Ultimately, he would have to pay a fortune in taxes, plus a heavy fine for purchasing stolen goods and storing them in his house.

"When the police come back to the house," Moreinu v'Rabbeinu instructed, "take salt and throw it on the ground. Then call out, "In the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, everyone should get out of here!" You will witness miracles, with the help of Hashem. However, it is only on the condition that the merchandise was truly purchased honestly, and you had no idea that it was stolen goods."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu clarifies that it is not a *segulah* to throw salt on the ground to avoid the law! On the contrary, when a person gets caught in a situation in which he sees no way out, precisely at that moment he should strengthen his faith in Hashem and realize that "my help is from Hashem, Maker of heaven and earth." As seen from our story, the *segulah* succeeded. However, it was not the *segulah* that caused the miracle, but the merchant's

faith to carry out what the tzaddik advised him to do, and his belief in Hashem.

The brother quickly went to the merchant's house and told him what the Rav had instructed him to do. The merchant began to scoff at his brother and screamed, "Are you crazy? The police want to take us to jail, and you want to add to their fury?"

The brother, who believed staunchly in the merits of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, did not pay attention to the tirade. He decided to take things into his own hands. When the police returned, accompanied by their commander, he took a large handful of salt, threw it on the ground and began calling loudly, "In the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, everyone should get out of here!"

The police gazed at him and then looked at one another, mutely. Suddenly, the commander said to his officers, "Okay, let's go. We did not find anything." He then turned to the merchant and warned, "Next time, be careful not to buy or deal in stolen merchandise."

A big *kiddush Hashem* resulted from the story among all the Jewish merchants.

A Free Ride

R' Shlomo, who is Rabbi David's secretary, witnessed great miracles in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. Among the many stories that he recorded is the following account:

One day, I was sent to Paris to bring a sum of money that had been pledged. I decided to travel by train instead of by car. Upon my return, I realized that I did not have enough money on me to buy a train ticket. I raised my eyes to Heaven and prayed that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and because of the mitzvah I was doing for his grandson's benefit, I should manage to travel without a ticket, and no *chillul Hashem* should result.

At that moment, all the coin operating machines for purchasing

train tickets stopped functioning due to some malfunction. The watchman shouted to the crowd of people, "Everyone can ride for free today."

Such is the power of simple faith in tzaddikim.

The Contrite Contractor

During the construction of the building in Ashdod named after the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, a certain contractor came in the middle of the night to the construction site and stole all the iron parts that he found there. It seems that he wanted to save himself the money he needed to buy iron parts for other buildings that he was constructing.

That night, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan appeared to him in a dream and admonished him, telling him that he was aware of what he had done. He ordered him to return all the stolen goods at once to his grandson, Rabbi Chaim, the brother of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu. If he would not do so promptly, he was playing with his life…

At sunrise, the contractor awoke from his dream, terrified. He quickly hurried to the house of Rabbi Chaim (the brother of Rabbi David) and told him, "I am about to reveal to you something important, but I beg you to promise me that you will not publicize my name and cause me shame, which will ruin my reputation."

Rabbi Chaim gave him his word. Then, the contractor told him about the dream and admitted stealing the iron parts from the construction site. He returned the stolen goods and, in addition, donated six hundred dollars toward the construction of the Beit Hakeneset. Two weeks later, the contractor returned to donate another six hundred dollars. Upon being asked why he was contributing so much money, he answered that the dream was still resounding in his mind.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto 1912-1985

Introduction

"One does not create a monument to memorialize a tzaddik; it is his actions that commemorate him." Thus, it is important to record a few of the great achievements of the pious tzaddik, known for performing miracles, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"a, in order to publicize his saintliness for posterity and so that people can learn from his ways.

His wondrous deeds were well-known throughout the world, but at the same time, they were hidden and concealed even from his close family members. This is because he practiced the injunction to "walk humbly with your G-d." He humbled himself before everyone, as will be illustrated in the following chapter. He also loved peace and pursued peace. It was not by coincidence that he was named Moshe Aharon by his illustrious father, since he embodied the virtues of both Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon Hakohen.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zt"l

Consequently, we are faced by a formidable task in displaying his greatness and illustrating even a small fraction of his great and wondrous deeds.

The tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto would always sympathize with other people's troubles, in line with the pasuk "In all their troubles, he was troubled." He would pray for others after lighting many candles *l'iluy nishmat* his holy father. He exemplified the pasuk "A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills his wish," proving that even in our generation, there are holy tzaddikim who can determine events.

The purpose of relating the following stories is to reveal his outstanding holiness.

His absence has been greatly felt throughout the world since his passing to the Heavenly Spheres, on the fifth of Elul, 1985 (5745). Everyone should learn from his worthy actions how to conduct himself properly, and how to strengthen himself in Torah, fear of Heaven, *teshuvah*, and in the performance of mitzvot, in order to draw closer to our Father in Heaven wholeheartedly. May his merits protect us.

From Essaouira to Casablanca

The following is what Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Rabbi David wrote, which is brought in the sefer *Shenot Chaim* written by his father:

His outstanding virtue of humility becomes apparent when reviewing his sefer *Shenot Chaim*, which he wrote by himself in Arabic, describing the history of his holy ancestors. A very small part of his lofty accounts were copied in this book.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon moved from Essaouira (formerly Mogador) to Casablanca, twenty years after the death of his father. He provided the following explanation for leaving his birthplace, where he had lived in seclusion for many years. The majority of the Jews living there had emigrated to Eretz Yisrael. Rabbi Moshe Aharon wished to memorialize his illustrious ancestors

and strengthen people's faith. Therefore, he moved to a place that had a larger Jewish population.

In addition, Rabbi Moshe Aharon wanted to provide his children with a proper Torah education and fulfill the words of Chazal, "Exile yourself to a place of Torah," as Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma says, "I would dwell nowhere but in a place of Torah." He lived in Essaouira after the demise of his father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, because he did not want to abandon the hometown of his holy father, leaving it empty of holiness. In this way, he fulfilled the mitzvah of honoring one's parents even after their death.

It is mistaken to assume that he desired to live in Casablanca in order to become wealthy, since in the period after his father's death, there were over one hundred thousand Jews living there. He really preferred living in a place with fewer, and even poorer, people. This is because he was content with very little. However, the reason that he decided to live in Casablanca was his wish to glorify Hashem's Name in public.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon wrote that he was grateful to every person who helped him. He would publicize every favor done for him, and sometimes he would even specify the address of the person, in order to make known the identity of his benefactor, who had done a mitzvah by helping him. He testifies about himself that he remained secluded in his house, without crossing its threshold, for twenty years after the death of his father, so that he would be available for anyone in need of a blessing or words of encouragement.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon did not leave the home town of his holy fathers until he was instructed to do so through a dream in which his exalted father appeared to him and told him, "Go for yourself from your land, from your birth-place, and from your father's house, so that your children can learn Torah in a different place." Only after receiving the permission of his father, did he leave his birthplace and move to Casablanca. But, even there, he continued living in seclusion, never leaving his house.

Furthermore, Rabbi Moshe Aharon testifies in his sefer, that despite the dream, he did not leave Essaouira until he also received a sign from Heaven that it was Hashem's will for him to move. He made several attempts to confirm that he was not doing anything wrong by leaving the place of his holy fathers, since his intentions were purely for the sake of Heaven.

In order that others would not suspect him of moving to Casablanca in order to gain wealth and fame, as it says, "You shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Israel," he publicized the reason for his move. He did so only to avert a *chillul Hashem*, so that people should not think that he moved there to obtain a higher salary. People flocked to him from all over Morocco, and he was famous. He did not desire money or wealth. He was satisfied with the bare minimum.

In the Merits of His Holy Ancestors

Rabbi Moshe Aharon was accustomed to lavishly celebrating the *hilula* of the *Tanna'im* Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Rabbi Meir Ba'al Haness, as well as the *hilula* of his holy ancestors, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol and Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

He believed strongly in the merits of his holy fathers. If anyone would come to seek his blessings, he would bless them only in the merits of his exalted fathers, not referring any greatness to himself, in complete humility and self-effacement.

Everything Is from Hashem

Rabbi Moshe Aharon never viewed anything as coincidence. He perceived the most ordinary events as divinely orchestrated. Chazal teach that even the mundane speech of Torah scholars needs to be studied, since their words are laden with wisdom. One should not ignore the underlying messages of everyday events. They may contain an implication from Heaven.

If one would examine the events that happen in his life, he would be able to reveal untold secrets of Hashem. However, Hashem reveals such secrets only to His devout ones. This is done

through hints and in the guise of everyday events, so that the tzaddikim alone should understand them and the Satan should not interfere.

The Outstanding Virtue of Tzedakah

It is well known that *tzedakah* is an outstanding virtue. Rabbi Moshe Aharon firmly believed in the power of *tzedakah*, as it says, "*Tzedakah* saves one from death." He would implore people to fulfill this mitzvah. He wrote in his sefer that anyone who loses something, or has any requests, should give *tzedakah*, and he will see wondrous miracles.

He taught that even if something terrible happens to a person, he should not assume that it was meant for his detriment. For example, if a person loses his wallet, it is a sign that he must remedy something. Everything that Hashem brings upon a person is ultimately for his good. Therefore, if something seemingly bad happens to a person, the first thing he should do is make an accounting of his deeds. He should then give *tzedakah*, in order to cancel the decree. The problem will surely be resolved, and his suffering will cease.

The Greatness of His Holy Forefathers

Rabbi Moshe Aharon related many wondrous miracles about his holy ancestors. Many of these stories appear in this book. Of note are the following incidents that Rabbi Moshe Aharon recorded, from which one can perceive how great the tzaddikim were during their lifetime, as well as after their death.

He wrote about his grandfather Rabbi Yehuda – Hadan that aside from being a tzaddik who pursued

charity and loving kindness (as described earlier in the book), he was also able to prophesy.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon related that once a man struck his great-grandfather, the tzaddik and *mekubal* Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, and at that moment, his hand withered (see earlier).

He also related that once, a tzaddik sent a sefer to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol through a messenger. Rabbi Chaim Hagadol saw this prophetically, and he immediately set out by himself to intercept the messenger, telling him, "Give me the sefer that was sent to me by the tzaddik (he specified his name), who lives in such and such a city."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon told about his great-grandfather Rabbi Chaim Hagadol that once he viewed an action of a certain tzaddik condemningly, and the tzaddik died that day. Thereafter, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol requested that when his time would come to die, he should be buried next to that tzaddik, in order that he should not be viewed unfavorably in the World of Truth. Also, in this way, he would make up with him after their death.

A Paragon of Humility

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived humbly and modestly. When Torah scholars would come to receive his blessings, he would stretch out his hand in greeting, but pull it back before they had a chance to kiss it. Afterward, he would try to evade being asked for his blessings, or to pray for them, saying, "Who am I to bless you? After all, you are sitting in the Beit Hamidrash elucidating the words of the holy Abaye and Rava. Blessed are you that you merit being involved in the study of the holy Torah."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived by the words of the Mishnah, "Be exceedingly humble in spirit." Every Shabbat, when he would arrive at the Beit Hakeneset to pray, he would hunch over at the entrance, as if trying to shrink, in order to be as inconspicuous as possible. He was appalled at all signs of respect directed to him and vehemently opposed any deference shown him in a self-deprecating manner.

When someone would approach him, whether rich or poor, prominent or destitute, he would stand up to honor him. When he was once asked about this behavior, he explained, "Every person possesses a spark of Hashem, and I stand up in honor of that spark… Do not look at the vessel, but what is in it."

One Shabbat, when he was on his way to pray, Rabbi Moshe Aharon saw a blind man, wrapped in his tallit, groping his way toward the Beit Hakeneset. Rabbi Moshe Aharon did not hesitate for a moment and took the blind man's hand and guided him to his destination. He made sure to escort him inside and help him to his place.

A short while later, when the blind man became aware of the identity of the one who had led him, he was aghast, and went to Rabbi Moshe Aharon's house to beg forgiveness. But his apologies made the Rav feel bad. He had hoped that his acts of loving kindness would remain between him and his Creator and would not trouble the blind man.

Years later, a similar story occurred to Rabbi Moshe Aharon, at the end of his days, when he got sick and had trouble walking. His son asked the congregants who were supposed to recite Kaddish to come stand beside his father, in order to save him the trouble of walking over to the Aron Hakodesh, as is customary. When Rabbi Moshe Aharon became aware of this, he was horrified at the thought. "This must not happen!" he said. "I will get up and go stand by the Aron Hakodesh together with the others. One may not change our fathers' customs."

This is the way Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived his life: with modesty and humility. It was a life of spiritual pursuits, without any emphasis on materialism. The words of Chazal, "Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation – but toil in the Torah!" was his way of life. He denied himself luxuries, to the extent that when he lost his teeth at an early age, he preferred to remain toothless.

The following is what happened. When he was forty-five years

old, he had already lost most of his teeth. His dentist offered to install dentures. Initially he agreed, and the dentist got to work. When the dentist had finished removing the rest of his shaking teeth and began taking measurements to fit the dentures, Rabbi Moshe Aharon refused to continue the treatment. He argued, "If Hashem took all my teeth away from me, I do not have permission to replace them."

Available to All

Rabbi Moshe Aharon writes in his sefer that he fought for the honor of Hashem after the demise of his father in Casablanca. His brothers remained living in that large metropolis, but Rabbi Moshe Aharon opted to reside in the birthplace of his father, the great tzaddik, in the city of Essaouira. He overcame the temptation to live in the comfort of the capital city, and instead chose to return to Essaouira to live in seclusion. He wanted to ensure that anyone searching for assistance, whether spiritual or physical, would find someone there for him to beg Hashem for mercy.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon relates that he personally witnessed many wondrous miracles in Essaouira. Sometimes, he literally had nothing to eat, until his father appeared to people in a dream, asking them to provide his son with food and clothing. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was embarrassed to ask people for assistance. Thus, they assumed that he had enough money. People would flock to him to receive his advice and blessings for free. They would sometimes offer to donate oil to light the many candles which Rabbi Moshe Aharon would light each day. His father helped him to survive and to support his family, in fulfillment of the pasuk "His righteousness is upon his children's children." (Thus, we conclude the testimony of Rabbeinu, shlita.)

His Marriage to Rabbanit Mazal

How did Rabbi Moshe Aharon find his match? Grandmother Simcha Elkeslasy, a"h, the mother of the Rabbanit Mazal, told her grandson, Rabbeinu, the amazing story.

Grandmother Simcha's daughters all died in infancy. She would go to the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, in order to receive his blessings. Once, the tzaddik told her, "I promise that you will have a daughter in the coming year, and you will call her Mazal. In this merit, she will live, and when she becomes of age, she will marry my son Moshe."

When Grandmother Simcha heard these words, she smiled inwardly. Although the Rav's son, Moshe, was still young at the time, he was already twelve years old. Until she would give birth and her daughter Mazal would be of marriageable age, Moshe would be too old for her. How could she be his match? However, she accepted what the Rav said.

A few months later, Grandmother Simcha was expecting a child, but she did not tell anyone. She remained in her house throughout her pregnancy. Immediately following the birth of her daughter, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan suddenly appeared at her house. He knocked on the door loudly, and called out repeatedly, "Bring me the girl who was just born."

The family members became alarmed, and told the tzaddik, "But Mrs. Simcha just gave birth!" The tzaddik countered, "I know, but I want to bless the baby." The family members argued, "But the baby is still grimy and needs to be cleaned." The tzaddik stood his ground firmly and said, "I know. Just wrap her in a blanket and bring her to me the way she is. I want to bless her."

The family members did as they were told. They brought the baby to the Rav, wrapped in a blanket, and the tzaddik blessed her and gave her the name Mazal. Afterward, the tzaddik added, "She is born under the *mazal* of my son Moshe." Then he left.

When Rabbi Chaim Pinto returned home, he called his son Moshe (the tzaddik Moshe Aharon), who was still young, and told him, "You should know that your destined match was born today, and her name is Mazal." The young Rabbi Moshe Aharon smiled and told his father, "Give me a sign that Mazal is truly my destined wife." Rabbi Chaim told him, "I do not have a sign for

you, but just know, that on the eve of your wedding, you will not eat from the food served at the wedding, but will buy food elsewhere. Furthermore, that night you will eat bread made of barley."

Rabbi Moshe smiled again, but his father, Rabbi Chaim, repeated, "The name of your destined bride is Mazal." Then Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked his father what her family name was, but his father refused to tell him.

Thereafter, Rabbi Chaim returned to the Elkeslasy family and told them again, "Do not forget! Your daughter Mazal is the destined bride of my son Moshe. You will not have to inform him of the match, since when the time comes, my son will come to you on his own accord, and Hashem will arrange their meeting. The following will be a sign: On the eve of the wedding, the couple will eat bread made of barley, and they will not partake of the wedding meal, but will eat food from somewhere else."

Years went by, and the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto passed away. Rabbi Moshe Aharon went to live in Essaouira, as discussed. There, he isolated himself in his house for many years, engaging in the study of Torah. He recalled the words of his father about his destined wife, whose name was Mazal.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Moshe Aharon was getting older, and he began inquiring about a match, but nothing materialized. Either he did not agree to the suggestion, or the other side did not want to meet. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was nearly thirty years old. He was very distressed, especially since his bachelor status made it difficult for him to bless others to find their proper match. His misery was noticeable.

Once, when he was feeling especially down about his situation, he wrote the following letter directed to his father, who had already passed away, "Many years ago, you promised me that I would marry a girl whose name is Mazal. Where is she? I am already thirty years old. I came here to preserve your house, maintaining the honor of our family. Thus, whoever wishes to

pray would find a place to pour out his heart. When will I build my own home? I am waiting another month! If by then I will not have met my match, I will have to leave the city, as Chazal say, 'One who changes his location, changes his fortune.'"

In the evening, Rabbi Moshe Aharon took the letter, went to the Beit Hakeneset, and placed it near the Sifrei Torah. At night, his father appeared to him in a dream and told him, "My son, do not fear. Within another month you will meet your destined partner, Mazal." The next morning, Rabbi Moshe Aharon got up happily with complete faith in Hashem that he would shortly meet his match.

In the morning, when he was praying, he was visited by his uncle Chananya, who was his mother's brother. He had a special request. A family, whose father had recently died, had arrived from Marrakesh. They had come to Essaouira for vacation, but did not have a place to stay. Since Moshe Aharon lived in the house alone, his uncle asked if he would allow them to use several rooms upstairs until they would find another dwelling.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked what the father's name had been, and his uncle told him: Rabbi Aharon Elkeslasy. Rabbi Moshe Aharon agreed, but cautioned, "I am about to get married shortly. I cannot allow them to live here for more than a month or two."

It was already September, which is the middle of the month of Elul. Thus, he agreed that they could stay in his house until after the Festivals. The uncle reassured Rabbi Moshe Aharon that the family would leave immediately after Sukkot. Meanwhile, they would try to find another apartment. The family arrived, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon prepared several rooms for them upstairs.

One day, while Rabbi Moshe Aharon was reciting Tehillim, he was disturbed by the incessant cries of a baby. He decided to go upstairs and offer the family some cookies, in case they were hungry. He saw a woman sitting with her children, and beside her there was a young lady standing and holding a small crying infant in her hands. Rabbi Moshe Aharon offered the young lady,

"Take some cookies and give it to your baby to eat." She told him, "This baby is not my son, but my brother."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon inquired a bit about their family, and asked what the baby's name was. "David," the young lady told him.

"And what is your name?"

"Mazal," she answered.

All of a sudden, Rabbi Moshe Aharon recalled what his father had told him fifteen years earlier. The name of his destined bride would be Mazal. Rabbi Moshe thought to himself: Now they are still mourning the death of their father. I will wait until the month of mourning is over, and then I will speak to the mother about arranging our match. We shall see if this was preordained from Heaven to help me find my wife.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon returned to his quarters in high spirits. He began to inquire more about the family, and found out that they were descendants of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, the *Rif*. He waited expectantly until the end of the month.

When the time came, Rabbi Moshe Aharon went upstairs and asked to speak to the mother. "Fifteen years ago, my father told me that my destined wife had just been born, and her name is Mazal. He also told me that he had specifically named her Mazal, since all the girls born in the family died in infancy. Two months ago, my father appeared to me in a dream and told me that shortly, my destined wife, Mazal, would arrive at my house. Since you came to my house, and your daughter's name is Mazal, I would like to know, if you had daughters who died in infancy."

"Yes."

"Did my father bless you with a daughter?"

The mother, Mrs. Simcha Elkeslasy nodded in the affirmative.

"Did my father tell you that Mazal is my destined wife?" The

mother again nodded in agreement. However, she seemed a bit hesitant.

She turned to Rabbi Moshe Aharon and asked, "What is the sign that your father gave me?" Rabbi Moshe Aharon answered, "If I am not mistaken, the sign is that on the eve of the wedding, we will not partake of the wedding meal, but eat from an outside source. We will also eat bread made of barley."

Mrs. Elkeslasy began to cry and trembled in fear. She was scared that her family members would not agree to the match. They would fear marrying into the Pinto dynasty. Furthermore, Rabbi Moshe Aharon was an older bachelor and an absolute pauper. Conversely, Mazal came from a wealthy home and was used to a more comfortable lifestyle. In the end, she told him, "Let us wait until after the *chagim*. Then I will return to Marrakesh, and I will consider the match."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon told her, "You do not have much to deliberate, since she is definitely my destined wife." But the mother insisted, "I want to discuss this with my family." Rabbi Moshe Aharon conceded to her wishes. Consequently, everything was delayed until after the *chagim*.

After the *chagim*, Mrs. Simcha Elkeslasy returned with her family to Marrakesh. She told her family members about the match, and as she had suspected, they vehemently opposed it. When Rabbi Moshe Aharon realized that they were not pursuing the suggestion seriously, he decided to travel to Marrakesh himself. In this way, the prophecy of his father materialized, since he had

told Mrs. Elkeslasy that his son Moshe Aharon would come to her himself. However, he was not welcomed cordially at all; the family opposed the match.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon was persistent. He informed the family, "If my father gave his blessings for this match, and she is truly my destined wife, then she is bound to me. Whoever tries to come between us, is putting himself in danger." The family members did not take him seriously, and two members took steps to delay the match. Soon after, they met with disaster.

The family was frightened, since they saw that Hashem had struck them. In the end, Rabbi Chaim's prediction was realized, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon married Rabbanit Mazal, may she live long.

Praiseworthy Are Those Who Dwell in Your House

Rabbi Moshe Aharon took upon himself to live in solitude for forty years by the command of his father, Rabbi Chaim, zt"l. During this time, a plague of tuberculosis broke out in Essaouira, claiming many casualties. There was no cure for the disease in those days, and the leaders of the community feared that remaining indoors would endanger the Rav's health.

They decided to force the Rav to leave his house for a few hours a day to breathe fresh air. But, they knew that Rabbi Moshe Aharon was determined not to leave his house until the end of his self-imposed seclusion.

The leaders took action. They asked the Beit Din to obligate the Rav to leave his house every day so as not to risk his life. At that time, Rabbi Aharon Chassin, zt"l, served as the head of the Beit Din. He offered to be the messenger to inform the Rav of the Beit Din's decision.

Rabbi Aharon Chassin visited Rabbi Moshe Aharon's house several times. Each time, they launched into a lengthy conversation about various topics, and he simply forgot the

reason for his visit. He did not remember that he was supposed to relate the message to the Rav.

When Rabbi Chassin was asked what he told the Rav, he apologized, "It is uncanny! Every time I come to the Rav's house, I forget to speak to him about the decision of the Beit Din. Before I leave my home, I prepare myself to inform him of his obligation to leave his house every day. But each time, this matter escapes me."

After Rabbi Chassin saw this trend, he understood that this was divinely ordained, and he should quit pursuing the mission. He realized that Rabbi Moshe Aharon was not an ordinary person, but a holy tzaddik, protected by his illustrious ancestors, and no one should interfere in his unique service of Hashem. Nevertheless, when Rabbi Aharon Chassin was asked to explain the reason for the Rav's seclusion… no answer seemed to satisfy him. (As heard.)

The Tzaddik's Children Do Not Beg for Bread

When Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan passed away, his son Rabbi Moshe Aharon remained destitute. He had no food to eat and was left absolutely penniless.

When he became of age to marry, he could not find someone who would agree to marry him since he had no money with which to establish a home. Therefore, two leaders of Mogador, the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim David Seriro and Rabbi Chaim David Ben Shushan gave him a letter of support with the heading "It is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and its supporters are praiseworthy." They wrote the following:

May an abundance of peace and blessings be showered upon the leaders of the holy nation, the nation of the G-d of Avraham, in every corner of the world; may they enjoy plenty and continue to blossom, Amen.

May everyone merit long life, as well as eternity, Amen.

This letter is to recommend the outstanding righteous young man, who is wise and virtuous, Rabbi Moshe, the son of the famous Rabbi Chaim Pinto, who brought merit to the public.

They then proceeded to list the illustrious family lineage, and outline his difficult predicament following the death of his righteous father. When his father was still alive, he had benefitted from the lavish support provided by his father's followers. However, after his father's death, this support had ceased, and now he was left without any means to sustain himself.

Therefore, the Rabbanim pleaded before the people: It is incumbent upon all to lend their support, especially since he has become of age to marry and has no means to establish a home. The value of the mitzvah is well-known, especially for a person of holy lineage. May the merits of his saintly ancestors stand in good stead for anyone who lends their support.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon never used the letter, relying only on the merits of his holy fathers, as it says, "I have never seen a righteous man forsaken, nor his children begging for bread." Eventually, salvation came to his home, as the following story illustrates.

The Coin of Fortune and Salt of Blessing

After Rabbi Moshe Aharon's marriage, poverty prevailed in his home. People did not recognize his lofty stature, and he barely received any support. He did not have the means to sustain his family.

The deprivation continued for two years, to the extent that Rabbanit Mazal wanted to run away. She had been raised in a wealthy environment and was used to comfort. Rabbi Moshe Aharon would appease her by saying, "Money is transient. Although your father was rich, he died suddenly. All his money disappeared with his passing, and ultimately your mother is forced to rely on the mercy of family members for her sustenance."

When Rabbanit Mazal was expecting her first child and she smelled food (something that could endanger a pregnant woman

if she does not satisfy her craving at once), he did not have what to offer her. Rabbi Moshe Aharon would tell her to go to the neighbors and ask for something to eat, so great was their poverty.

However, after a while, they experienced a turnaround. It began when Rabbanit Mazal entered a side room, where she suddenly found a coin. She thought that it belonged to her husband and he had inadvertently dropped it. She wondered where the coin could have come from. It was hard to believe that her husband possessed money, since all through her pregnancy he did not have a single coin to give her with which to buy food. He had sent her to the neighbors to satisfy her hunger. She could find no satisfactory explanation for the mysterious find.

To her surprise, from that day on, she found a coin in that room, every day. With this money, she would purchase food for her family. Their situation began to improve, and their dire poverty eased off.

One day, Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked his wife, "From where do you have the means to buy food? I haven't given you any money!" She began to tell him about the mysterious coin, which she had been sure he was leaving for her to buy necessary provisions.

At first, Rabbi Moshe Aharon did not believe his wife. He told her, "I hope you are not fabricating tales." He then pressed her again as to the source of the money. She admitted that she could not explain where the money was coming from, since she herself did not know. She then led him to the room where she had found a coin each day.

The Rav and the Rabbanit decided to lock the door to the room and see what would happen. The next morning, they opened the door, and… again, there was a coin in the room. Fear gripped Rabbi Moshe Aharon's heart upon seeing the coin. How did it get there? They realized that it was simply a miracle from Heaven.

Yet, from the day that the secret was uncovered, the blessing

came to a halt. The next morning, there was no coin in the room. It is not known how the coin entered the room and how it left… But the miracle ceased. At the same time, their situation began to improve. Blessing descended upon their home, and they began to enjoy a steady income.

Rabbanit Mazal relates that during the time that the coin had appeared in their home, another miracle occurred. The money enabled her to purchase salt for the first time, and the small container of it miraculously never emptied. They enjoyed the small quantity of salt for six months, until Pesach. But when Pesach arrived, Rabbi Moshe Aharon ruled that although the salt had miraculous origins, they were not permitted to use it on Pesach, since some *chametz* might have fallen into it. They ended up throwing the salt away. Nevertheless, their income continued to increase. This is because Rabbi Moshe Aharon's fame began to spread. Throngs of people began to flock to his house to receive his blessings.

He Guards the Steps of His Devout Ones

Rabbanit Mazal told her son, Rabbi David, an amazing story, illustrating the extent of his father, Rabbi Moshe Aharon's, holiness, and in particular how careful he was to guard his eyes.

Once, the Rabbanit wished to test her husband to see if he was truly careful with guarding his eyes. He was known for never glancing at the face of a woman who came to receive his blessings. The Rabbanit changed her clothes and her kerchief and even disguised her voice. She looked altogether different. Thus, she entered the Rabbi's house (which was her own home) in order to receive his blessings. No one recognized her, so they did not let the Rabbi know who she was. Eventually, she was ushered into the room of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked her, "What is your name?" She answered, "Mazal."

"Mazal, the daughter of… ?"

"Mazal the daughter of Simcha," the Rabbanit answered.

The Rav smiled and commented, "You have exactly the same name as my wife." He proceeded to bless her.

The Rabbanit persisted and asked him to also bless her children. The Rav asked her, "Do you have a husband?"

"Yes, I have a husband."

"What is his name?"

"His name is Moshe Aharon."

The Rav smiled again and said, "You have the same name as my wife, and your mother has the same name as her mother, and your husband has exactly the same name as me." He then showered her with additional blessings.

Afterward, the Rabbanit mentioned the names of all her children. The Rav heard how all the names of the children were identical to the names of his own children and commented, "Through Divine Providence, Hashem brought before me a woman whose name and the name of her mother and her husband and her children are identical to my own family members. It is truly incredible."

Then, suddenly, the Rabbanit burst out laughing and asked

her husband, "Did you forget who I am? Do you not recognize me?" The Rav immediately recognized his wife's voice, since she reverted back to her natural tone. He asked her, "Why did you do this?" She answered him, "I wanted to test you to see if you truly do not look at women. All along, when I listed the names of our family members, I suspected that out of curiosity you would look at me, but you did not glance in my direction. Now I am convinced that you are a true tzaddik."

Her husband admonished her sharply, "You should not have done what you did. I may have looked to see what was going on. Is this called curiosity, or is it the *Yetzer Hara*? I could have looked to see who it was that has a family with exactly the same names as my family members. But I am grateful to Hashem that I refrained and did not look. Even if I would have looked, it would have been alright, since you are my wife. But, it could have been a different woman."

This is a glimpse of the outstanding holiness of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon.

A Supernatural Salvation

For a number of years, war raged between Morocco and Algeria. Whoever crossed the borders between the two countries was immediately arrested.

Once, Rabbanit Mazal and her son traveled to Morocco with a group of people to pray at the grave of Rabbi Yissachar Ba'al Hamaayan. This tzaddik was one of the first Rabbanim to be buried in Morocco on the border near Algeria. Despite the danger, Rabbanit Mazal and her son went to pray there.

Upon their return from the cemetery, they were arrested by the Moroccan Army. The officers began to interrogate them, asking them many questions. Upon learning that Rabbanit Mazal and her son were Israeli citizens, they immediately suspected them of being spies. Thus, they found themselves imprisoned.

Their situation was extremely perilous, since they were far from

Casablanca, more than 2,000 kilometers away. If the soldiers would torture or even kill them, who would ever know about it? Who would be able intervene to secure their release?

Rabbanit Mazal and her son were taken into a side room, where a soldier was appointed to guard them. Rabbanit Mazal immediately began to pray that the merit of the tzaddik should protect them. Suddenly, the phone rang in the room. The soldier picked up the receiver. On the other side, a voice asked, "Is there a woman here by the name of Mazal Pinto with her son?" The soldier replied, "And who are you?" The voice responded, "I am the commander of the army. I want to speak to her."

Rabbanit Mazal took the phone and the voice informed her, "I am Refael Hakohen. Do not worry. I will speak to the army officials to secure your release." Then he asked to speak to the guard. Refael Hakohen commanded him, "I want you to release the woman and her son immediately and apologize to them. If not, you will live to regret it bitterly." The soldiers were terrified. They begged forgiveness from Rabbanit Mazal and apologized profusely. Then, they released her and her son and accorded them great honor as they left the place. They even had a guard escort them for their protection.

Wonder of wonders! No one even knew that Rabbanit Mazal was stuck in the desert. She had not told anyone where she was going. How was it possible that in a makeshift army tent in the middle of the desert there was a phone? How did it happen that just as she was arrested, someone promptly called to secure her release? Who was Refael Hakohen? And why did the soldiers accept orders from him?

In light of these questions, Rabbanit Mazal began to investigate the identity of Refael Hakohen. Perhaps he was an officer or general in the army. But no one had ever heard of such a person. His identity remained a mystery.

A year later, someone approached Rabbanit Mazal and asked her if she wanted to join a group going to pray at the grave

of an illustrious tzaddik, Rabbi Refael Hakohen, zt"l, who was buried in Marrakesh. Suddenly, she recalled the name; Refael Hakohen. She asked the man, "How long has he been buried in Marrakesh?"

"More than 900 years," he answered. Rabbanit Mazal remarked to her son, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, "Perhaps it is the same Refael Hakohen who saved me, and he wishes that his merits should serve to assist others, and they should come pray by his grave." Rabbanit Mazal recounts this story that took place in 1999 (5759).

The lesson of this story can be explained by the fact that even after their deaths, tzaddikim are considered living (*Berachot* 18b). Also, Hashem purposely reveals the magnificence of the tzaddikim only after their demise. In their merits, Hashem performs wondrous miracles for His people, as in the example of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Haness.

If this incident would have taken place in a European country, it could have been explained logically. However, since it took place in the primitive country of Morocco, in a desert, 2,000 kilometers from Casablanca, in a tent, which surprisingly included a phone, it is certainly an extraordinary miracle, as it says, "The hidden things are for Hashem, our G-d, but the revealed things are for us and for our children."

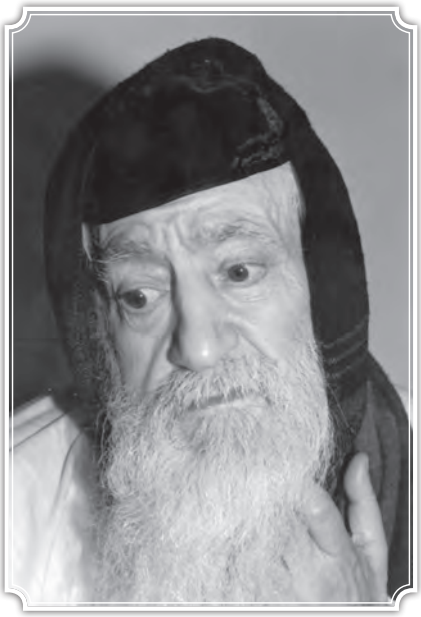
The Shortened Journey

On the 15th of Cheshvan, 1937 (5698), the day that the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan passed away, his son Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in the midst of his self-imposed confinement in Mogador. He was living in his illustrious ancestors' house, as his father had instructed.

Rabbi Chaim passed away in Casablanca. It was imperative to immediately inform his son, Rabbi Moshe Aharon about his father's demise, in order that he should have enough time to travel to the funeral. In those days, communication was difficult,

and only some wealthy merchants possessed a telephone. One such merchant was a man named Yaakov Maman, and he was the one who received the message about Rabbi Chaim's passing.

Yaakov Maman immediately set out to Rabbi Moshe Aharon's house to inform him about his father's death. But, Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in the middle of praying. Yaakov waited until the Rav finished his prayers, and only then broke the bitter news to him.



Rabbi Moshe Aharon was upset that he had waited to tell him. He had to start out to Casablanca as soon as possible, since it was at least an eight hour trip from Mogador. How could he be sure that he would arrive in time for the funeral?

When the devastating news of Rabbi Chaim's death spread, a group of people immediately organized transportation to Casablanca to participate in the funeral, and they informed Rabbi Moshe Aharon that he would be able to join them. However, the Rav rejected their offer and told them that they should set out without him, since he had to stay on to take care of some important matters.

Because of the vast distance, the passengers calculated that they would not arrive in time for the funeral. At best, they would arrive at Rabbi Chaim's house in time to fulfill the mitzvah of consoling the bereaved. If so, they realized that Rabbi Moshe Aharon certainly would not arrive in time for the funeral, since he was starting out after them.

After a long, arduous journey, the group arrived at the Rav's house in Casablanca and were surprised to find Rabbi Moshe Aharon already there, sitting *shivah* with his brothers. When they brought up the matter with him, they were even more shocked to hear that he had even been present at the funeral and burial.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon's son probed his father to learn how he had miraculously arrived in time, but his father told him, "There are matters which are better not discussed. What will you gain if you will know how I got from Mogador to Casablanca so quickly?" (Heard from the group of travelers who are still living: Yitzchak Asseraf, Yaakov Maman, Avraham Bitton, R' Moshe Levi, and Moshe Arama.)

Divine Assistance in Printing the Sefer

Rabbi Moshe Aharon placed his faith entirely in Hashem. The pasuk "Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you" was his guiding light and he did not take any interest in the vanities of this world.

During the years of his self-imposed isolation, he wrote his important sefer *Shenot Chaim*, in which he recounted stories that he heard from his holy ancestors about the renowned tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. He wrote in the introduction to the sefer that he wanted to print it in Hebrew and add some new insights which were revealed to him from Heaven in the merit of his holy fathers, however, the expense of printing was enormous, and he did not have the necessary funds to proceed.

One day his *shamash*, Nissim Ochayon, who sold lottery tickets, came to see him. The Rabbi took his packet of tickets and brought them next to the eternal flame, which burned constantly in his house *l'iluy nishmat* his father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. He pleaded, "If the contents of the sefer is acceptable in Heaven, let me choose the winning ticket, so that I will be able to pay for the printing of the book with the proceeds."

Then, the Rav pulled out one ticket from the pile. Wonder of

wonders, the ticket that he chose was the winning number. He received exactly the sum of money necessary in order to print the sefer. The Rav sent his wife to Casablanca to take care of the printing of the sefer, *Shenot Chaim*. This took place in 1958 (5718).

Three years later, he wanted to print the second sefer. He again chose a lottery ticket and won, thus paying for the printing of his second sefer.

"The Man Moshe Was Exceedingly Humble"

All his life, Rabbi Moshe Aharon blessed people. He did so with utmost humility. When Torah scholars would approach him to ask for his blessings, he would pull his hand away quickly so that they should not kiss it, telling them, "Who am I that I should bless you? After all, you sit all day in the Beit Hamidrash and merit engaging in the study of Torah." He would refuse to accept donations from Torah scholars.

Many times the yeshiva student or scholar would leave his house with a nice gift. Sometimes, the one who had come to receive a blessing would ultimately bestow his blessings. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was able to see to the core of each person, without the latter sensing anything at all. With his sharp intuition, he was able to perceive their essence. However, this was not obvious to the outsider.

He would refer all his blessings to the merits of his holy ancestors. As a well-known *segulah*, he would offer water to those seeking a blessing. They would recite the blessing over the water, and in this way would merit abundance.

He was the embodiment of the saying, "You are better to Israel than a father and a mother."

Most of his days and nights, Rabbi Moshe Aharon spent in his house, sitting next to the candles lit in the memory of his holy forefathers, and he would engage in Torah and kindness.

He would receive everyone who came to him for help, and would not close his doors to any person, whether man or woman, who wished to enter his home. He would barely lift his eyes to gaze at those who entered, but would sense their presence and the reason for their visit, whether to receive a blessing, advice, or for a prayer or cure.

He did not know the identity of the person coming in. Even when his wife or children would enter, he would begin to bless them traditionally with a "*Mi shebeirach*," until he would ask for their names, and then suddenly realize that they were his close family members.

Destroying the Evil Forces

The terrible news spread throughout the Diaspora that a wealthy man was offering to allocate a huge sum of money to terrorists, offering a great reward to anyone who would kill Jews. When the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon heard about this, he was pained by the knowledge that Jewish blood would be spilled by mercenaries.

He immediately asked someone to call the policeman, Morris Keriaf, now living in Ashdod, who was his neighbor and frequented his house. He requested that he buy him a sheep. Shortly after, the sheep was delivered to the tzaddik's house. Then, he called the *shochet*, Rabbi Avraham Bouskila, now living in Gan Yavneh, to slaughter the sheep. It was slaughtered precisely at the moment that Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked him to do so. Afterward, the tzaddik ordered the meat of the sheep to be thrown to the local dogs and cats.

This incident took place during the *chagim*, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in his house immersed in fasting and prayer. He begged Hashem that this act should serve to redeem Am Yisrael from their troubles.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon was tense and deep in thought. He sweated profusely, his whole body shaking. Suddenly, he shook

himself out of his reverie, and jumped up, exclaiming, "May all the enemies of G-d be destroyed!"

A few hours later, news spread worldwide that the wealthy man had been killed in a car accident. Only then were Rabbi Moshe Aharon's mysterious actions fully appreciated, and everyone realized that he had performed a supernatural act in order to save Am Yisrael from many harsh decrees.

This incident was soon forgotten, since Rabbi Moshe Aharon would always pray to Hashem that all the wondrous miracles he performed should not become publicized. Such were the ways of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon. Nevertheless, it is clear that this event took place in the merit of the tzaddik, in order to protect Am Yisrael.

Where Are the Shelters?

On the morning of Yom Kippur 1973 (5733), Am Yisrael was still unaware that in a few hours a terrible war would break out between the Arab countries and Israel, which would take a heavy toll on the lives of the people.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon was walking with his son Rabbi Chaim to the Beit Hakeneset in Ashdod. On his way, the tzaddik suddenly asked, "Is there a shelter in the area?" Rabbi Chaim was surprised at the question. He answered, "Yes, there is." Then, he asked his father, "Why do you want to know now about the location of the shelter?"

"Know, my son," answered his father, "that the holy day of Yom Kippur will be disrupted today. There will be sirens sounded throughout the land, and people will be frightened and run to the shelters. That is why I asked about the location of the shelter. Although it will be a dangerous war, in the merit of the holy day, and in the merit of the heartfelt prayers of all the people, Hashem will rescue His nation and help them overcome their enemies."

Several hours later, at 1:50 p.m., the sirens broke the silence of the day, and throngs of people scattered quickly to the shelters. The Yom Kippur war broke out.

"May Your Departure Be to Peace; May Your Coming Be for Peace"

It was in the middle of Shacharit on Shavuot 1981 (5741). According to the prevailing custom, the congregants stood in the Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Moshe Aharon next to the Aron Hakodesh and read the *Ketubah* (between Am Yisrael and Hashem).

Suddenly, the sound of Israeli aircraft carriers overhead disrupted the festive atmosphere and the chanting of the congregants. The planes circled over Ashdod and flew southward.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lifted his hands toward heaven and exclaimed, "May your departure be to peace, and may your coming be for peace. May you not be found at fault by any person, nor by G-d. Although you could have accomplished your operation on a weekday and not on Shavuot, you are presently fulfilling the mitzvah of 'Whoever saves the life of one Jew is considered as if he saved the entire world.' Who knows how many lives you are saving by your maneuver?" This justification was typical of Rabbi Moshe Aharon, because he always advocated for Am Yisrael, as all tzaddikim do.

The congregation was astonished. They did not understand what the Rav was hinting at, and why the planes were thundering overhead. At the conclusion of the festival, everyone found out what had happened. News spread that the Israeli Air Force jets had successfully bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor and returned safely to their bases in a daring and dangerous operation.

Only ten years later, was the full extent of Rabbi Moshe Aharon's remark fully understood. He said, "Who knows how many lives you are saving by your maneuver?" In the month of Shevat, 1991, when the Gulf war broke out, and the fanatical Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, bombed Israel with Scud missiles, people began to appreciate the previous Israeli initiative to destroy the Iraqi nuclear reactors.

Then, everyone realized how necessary this mission had been.

Even those who had initially criticized the operation were finally convinced of its importance. If not for the successful bombing of the nuclear reactors, who knows what the Iraqi dictator would have done to the Jews? Thanks to this daring maneuver, the Israeli Air Force saved many Jewish lives. Certainly, it was in the merit of the holy day, which is the day the Torah was given to the Jewish people, and in the merit of the prayers of all the tzaddikim. (As heard.)

Their Bloodshed I Will Not Cleanse

Rabbi Moshe Aharon placed himself in isolation for forty years, because his father instructed him to do so. Rabbi Chaim Hakatan revealed to him the horrors of the impending Holocaust, which would destroy a third of the Jewish nation. Therefore, he told him to seclude himself in his home and accept upon himself the yoke of Heaven, distancing himself from all worldly vanities.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon did as his father instructed. In 1939 (5699), the horrific war broke out, bringing the Holocaust in its wake, which claimed the lives of over six million Jews. Entire communities with their leaders, many Rebbes with their followers, and whole settlements were annihilated, may Hashem avenge their blood.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon only broke his seclusion to join the funeral of his father in Casablanca. Immediately afterward, he returned to Essaouira to continue his confinement. He sat in his father's house learning Torah, performing mitzvot, and perfecting his Avodat Hashem.

For five consecutive years during the war, Rabbi Moshe Aharon

sat in his house mourning. He did not change his clothes throughout those years. Before Shabbat, he would ascend to the loft and wash his clothes in honor of Shabbat. During this time, he ate only plain bread dipped in olive oil and bathed only once in six months.

After the war ended, Rabbi Chaim appeared to Rabbi Moshe Aharon in a dream and told him that he could change his clothes and stop his self affliction, since the war had ended. (As heard.)

Perfect Faith

Yitzchak Peretz of France was granted success by Heaven in all his endeavors. He owned a thriving chain of stores. His sons also joined his business, which contributed to its success. Along with this, they were meticulous in their observance of Torah and mitzvot and did many charitable deeds.

Their fame reached Rabbi Moshe Aharon. Consequently, on one of his trips to Morocco in 1980 (5740), to pray at the graves of his forefathers, he decided to stay in their house for a few days.

One day, Mrs. Peretz asked him if he could clarify when Mashiach would come and what would be the signs heralding the redemption. These are matters which occupy the minds of many faithful Jews.

The Rav responded with the following words, "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of Mashiach. Even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come," quoting the Twelfth Principle of Faith, as outlined by the Rambam.

Mrs. Peretz persisted, "I also believe in this, but could the Rav provide some sign when the era of the Mashiach will begin?"

"When all the nations of the world will gather and declare war on Iraq, this will be a sign that the era of Mashiach has begun. Many nations will join in this war, working together to eliminate the Iraqi dictator. When this will occur, you will know that Mashiach is near."

This sign in fact materialized in 1991, during the Gulf War. It happened twelve years after he predicted it. (As heard.)

Anticipating Mashiach

Rabbi Moshe Aharon experienced many extraordinary revelations concerning the coming of Mashiach. He once heard from his father, Rabbi Chaim that "a day will come when man will go to the moon, and there will be many great wars. The nations will want to destroy us, but Am Yisrael will always prevail. In the end, Mashiach will come, and we will be redeemed. Then, the House of Jacob will be saved from all their troubles."

The tzaddik constantly anticipated the coming of Mashiach. In addition, he actively sought to hasten his coming. He would tell everyone who came to see him that he should wait for and anticipate with complete faith the coming of Mashiach, who will redeem us. To this end, he boldly printed articles in the Moroccan newspaper about the redemption, without fear or trepidation, so that the world would know that Am Yisrael has not been abandoned. On the contrary, in the near future, they would merit the coming of Mashiach, may it be speedily and in our days.

He explained his move to live in Eretz Yisrael in the following way: The main purpose of establishing the Jewish State was so that Torah would flourish within it preceding the redemption. He would always say, "Too bad that the State was not established by Mashiach, bringing the world to its perfection under the Kingship of Hashem, following the devastating Holocaust."

He also added, "We live in the State of Israel, but the true State will be established only when everyone will coronate Hashem as their King and will engage in Torah and mitzvot. Then, Mashiach will come and bring the world to perfection.

"Meanwhile, it is preferable to live in Eretz Yisrael as it says, 'I am an alien and a resident among you.' Those living in Eretz Yisrael possess an added merit over those outside it. People living in the Diaspora are in a darker exile, as opposed to those residing

in Eretz Yisrael, who become imbued with its holiness. How fortunate are we, and how fortunate is our lot."

Rabbeinu added that his father would often repeat that if not for all the Torah learned in the yeshivot and *kollelim* in Eretz Yisrael, the State would not be able to exist. It is only the Torah that protects and rescues the Jewish people from all those who rise against them, especially in these days.

Only for the sake of Torah did Hashem grant Divine assistance for the establishment of the State. In fact, until today people come from all over the world to learn Torah in Eretz Yisrael and to settle on its holy soil. The State's existence is possible only through the mercy of Hashem, as it says, "The eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it [the Land], from the beginning of the year to the year's end."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon would always pray that Hashem would bring the leaders of the State to do *teshuvah*, since the redemption is so close, as it says, "He was standing behind our wall." He expressed, "If only everyone would advance a bit more in Torah, *teshuvah*, and good deeds, we would merit witnessing that which we so long to see."

Once, someone asked Rabbi Moshe Aharon, "Why did you send your wife with your oldest daughter to Eretz Yisrael precisely one week before the Six Day War broke out? Why didn't you advise her to leave before the war erupted, when the Arabs threatened to throw all the Jews into the ocean?"

Rabbi Moshe Aharon responded simply that he believed that the merit of his illustrious forefathers would protect all the Jews, including his wife and daughter. Therefore, despite the dire threats of the Arabs, he did not encourage his wife and daughter to return to Morocco until after the war. In this way they were able to personally testify to all the miracles that Hashem wrought for Bnei Yisrael.

Then the Jewish Nation Shall Rejoice

A few years after announcing his first revelation, Rabbi Moshe Aharon continued sharing more amazing information about the impending redemption. He knew that the generation might not be worthy of what was in store, and he was not sure how his words would be received by the public. Nevertheless, Rabbi Moshe Aharon requested that the revelations be recorded in his name, both during his lifetime and after his death. He wished to inform people that the year 1988 (5748) was the year when Mashiach was supposed to come. There were many great events pending upon this year. However, all matters concerning Mashiach's arrival were dependent upon the actions of the people.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon declared that it was imperative to travel to every city to arouse Am Yisrael to do *teshuvah* and mend their ways. His words are recorded here, as heard from his speech on tape, about the period preceding the coming of Mashiach.

At first, Rabbi Moshe Aharon recounts several stories about his father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, and describes his passing, as well as the funeral in Casablanca. He tells about the blessings that his father gave to all his sons, and about his son Rabbi Refael, may Hashem avenge his blood, who was later cruelly murdered by gentiles, just as his father had predicted through Divine inspiration.

He also recounts his father's request that he isolate himself, in order to mitigate the devastation of the impending Holocaust. He instructed him how to conduct himself during that time.

Afterward, Rabbi Moshe Aharon speaks about the coming of Mashiach. Most of what he stated is quoted from his father, Rabbi Chaim:

"For forty years I was angry with the generation; then I said, 'An errant-hearted people are they, and they know not My ways.' Therefore, I have sworn in My anger that they shall not enter My land of contentment." Those forty years in which they despised my chosen land must be repaired. This will occur when the *Eirev*

Rav will subjugate Bnei Yisrael for forty years before the coming of Mashiach (see *Hashmatot Hazohar Hakadosh* on Parashat *Shemot*).

In the fiftieth year of his passing (Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan), it will be the end of the Shemittah year, in 5748 (תשמ"ח). This is a reference to the pasuk "אז **תשמח** בתולה – Then the maiden shall rejoice." It is a time designated for the redemption of our nation. However, the redemption is conditional upon "אם זכו – if they will be worthy." The conduct of the Torah scholars will be scrutinized to see if they accord honor to each other, pursuing peace.

On the tape, someone asks Rabbi Moshe Aharon the following question: "What about the *reshaim*, who find it difficult to do *teshuvah*?" Rabbi Moshe Aharon answers: "First let us do *teshuvah*, since if one cuts into raw flesh, it hurts. However, cutting into dead meat does not hurt."

Later in the tape, Rabbi Moshe Aharon speaks about the destruction of Spain and the expulsion both from Spain and from Portugal, which was due to baseless hatred and disputes for the sake of Heaven. The Talmud was burned, and even the Rambam's sefarim were burned following disputes for the sake of Heaven… The destruction of Europe during the Holocaust was also caused by conflicts for the sake of Heaven. He ends by saying, "Therefore, I am warning and beseeching [tearfully]; the final redemption is destined to occur in the year 1988 (5748). For the sake of Hashem, for the sake of the *Shechinah*, do not forfeit this opportunity. Do not sleep through it. Make an effort to mend your ways, for Hashem's sake!"

Meeting the Baba Sali

The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Abuchatzeira, zt"l, once told his son-in-law Harav Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Pinto, shlita, Rabbi Moshe Aharon's son, what his father, the Admor, Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzeira said about Rabbi Moshe Aharon. He had heard about his years of seclusion and was impressed. He also felt that they shared a bond between them, especially since they were connected through the

marriage of their descendants. The Baba Sali expressed a desire to meet Rabbi Moshe Aharon.

Rabbi Chaim, shlita, repeated this to his father, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon guarded it in his heart.

One day, without Rabbi Chaim's knowledge, Rabbi Moshe Aharon set out by himself by public transportation to visit the Baba Sali in Netivot. There were many people waiting on line to see the Baba Sali and receive his blessings. He took his place on line and waited his turn. He did not reveal his identity to anyone.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"a, with the tzaddik the Baba Sali, zy"a

When his turn finally came to enter, he was regretfully informed that the tzaddik was too exhausted to receive people. The crowd began to disperse. Rabbi Moshe Aharon remained standing and tried to tell the attendant who he was and the reason for his visit. However, the attendant refused to listen to him.

Humbly, Rabbi Moshe Aharon turned back and left. He headed for the central bus station to make his way back to Ashdod. On the way, he met an old acquaintance, Rabbi Moshe Zaguri, zt"l, who lived in Netivot. He was overjoyed to meet Rabbi Moshe Aharon and invited him to his house. Rabbi Moshe Aharon did

not refuse. However, he made one condition: that he must not let anyone know that he had come to Netivot.

A few days later, Moshe Zaguri met Rabbi Meir Abuchatzeira, and while talking to him, he told him of Rabbi Moshe Aharon's visit to Netivot, and how his efforts to meet with the Baba Sali, had failed. Rabbi Meir was very surprised, and at the first opportunity, he asked his son-in-law Rabbi Chaim if he knew about his father's visit to Netivot and about the failed meeting with the Baba Sali.

Rabbi Chaim told him that he had not been informed about it, but he promised to ask his father what had happened. Upon being questioned, Rabbi Moshe Aharon chuckled and commented, "The birds of the sky carry messages, as it says, 'In the end, everything is revealed.'" Rabbi Chaim returned to his father-in-law and confirmed the incident.

Rabbi Meir Abuchatzeira was extremely distraught that Rabbi Moshe Aharon had invested such great efforts in vain. He immediately traveled to Netivot to investigate the matter. He discovered that there had been a misunderstanding, which ultimately foiled the meeting of the two tzaddikim. When the Baba Sali heard what had happened, he begged Rabbi Moshe Aharon and his son Rabbi Chaim to come again on the following Sunday and join him for lunch.

When Rabbi Moshe Aharon heard about the invitation, he was aghast, "Who am I? Why should the tzaddik be troubled on my account? After all, I do not seek honor. How many people did I trouble because of my visit?" However, when he was told that the Baba Sali would be pained if he refused to come, he finally agreed.

On the next Sunday, Rabbi Moshe Aharon traveled with his son to Netivot by public transportation to join the Baba Sali for his meal. He did not allow him to arrange for car service. During the meal, the Baba Sali asked his attendant not to allow anyone to disturb them.

The Baba Sali began to relate to Rabbi Moshe Aharon that many years ago, he had gone to pray by the grave of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol in Mogador. At that time, he had heard about Rabbi Moshe Aharon's self-imposed isolation and wished to meet him. For various reasons, the meeting never materialized. Now he was overjoyed that he was finally able to meet Rabbi Moshe Aharon, and that their families were bonded through the marriage of their descendants.

When they ended their discussion, they both got up to leave. Each one blessed the other, and then offered his fellow a sealed envelope. Neither one wanted to accept the envelope extended to them. Only after much coaxing, did the two tzaddikim agree to accept the envelopes, and they blessed one another.

When Rabbi Moshe Aharon arrived home, he opened the envelope. To his astonishment, he found 500 lira, which was the exact sum that he had given Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzeira, the Baba Sali, zy"a.

In the Merit of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

Rabbi Moshe Aharon's daughter, Dina, began to complain about a sharp ache in her leg. She was in terrible pain and could not walk unaided. Whenever she needed to get around, she had to call one of the family members to help her.

The doctors of Mogador could not find a cure for her ailment. They prescribed medicines and advised her, but she did not experience relief. The pain in her leg intensified, and Dina was losing hope.

During Sefirat Haomer, Rabbi Moshe Aharon began preparing as usual for the holy day of Lag B'Omer, the *hilula* of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. All the people of the city would join in his lavish celebration.

In the evening, a short time before the onset of the *hilula*, Dina approached her father and begged him to bless her to be cured. Her father told her, "In the merit of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai,

you will recover completely." As evening descended and the *hilula* began, Dina suddenly stood up on her feet and began to jump and dance. She cried out in delight, "I am cured, I am cured!"

When her father asked her to describe exactly what had happened, she said, "I felt as if someone was passing their hand over my leg, and then I got up on my feet." Rabbi Moshe Aharon told her, "Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai came to heal you on his *hilula* in the merit of your simple faith."

A Doctor in the House

The following is another story written in the sefer *Shenot Chaim* about his daughter:

My daughter suffered a blow to her head delivered by her Hebrew teacher. As a result of the trauma, her hands and feet began to go limp, until she was completely paralyzed. Her situation deteriorated from day to day.

We went to pray at the graves of tzaddikim, and even took her to many specialists. However, nothing helped. Who could heal her?

When the eve of the *hilula* of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai arrived, my wife (Rabbanit Mazal) stood near the candle lit *l'iluy nishmat* Rabbi Chaim Pinto and cried, "Honorable tzaddik, people come to pray near this candle lit for your *iluy neshamah*, and Hashem accepts their prayers. Now your own granddaughter is in critical condition and the doctors cannot heal her. Please, help."

I recited Tehillim until midnight. Then, suddenly, my daughter got up and began to walk around the house exclaiming, "Papa, look, I am alright!"

There was great rejoicing. My wife could not believe her eyes and said, "We have a doctor right here in the house; why did we go searching for a cure elsewhere? Blessed is the One Who heals for free!"

With My Staff, I Crossed Over

When Rabbi Moshe Aharon arrived in Eretz Yisrael for the first time, he asked to be taken to his close friend, R' Moshe Levi, who was paralyzed. He was very distressed to find his friend in such a dreadful condition and told him, "Do not despair. Even in dire straits, one should never despair of Hashem's infinite mercy." He did not leave until he had succeeded in infusing him with hope.

One night, R' Moshe Levi had a dream, and he sent for Rabbi Moshe Aharon to explain what it meant. Rabbi Moshe Aharon immediately summoned his son Rabbi Chaim and asked him to fetch the cane of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan and take R' Moshe Levi to the grave of Choni Hama'agal, who is buried in Chatzor Haglilit. He instructed the paralyzed man to hold the cane, so that he would be cured from his handicap.

Rabbi Chaim did exactly as he was instructed. R' Moshe Levi held the cane, and suddenly began to walk, dropping the cane. Then, to everyone's amazement, he began to run.

From then on, R' Moshe Levi invested great efforts to devote himself to the upkeep of the Beit Hakeneset named after Rabbi Chaim. Every year since then, the family prepares a thanksgiving dinner in memory of the holy *Tanna*, Choni Hama'agal, and in the memory of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

Eretz Yisrael Is Acquired Through Suffering

Rabbi Moshe Aharon visited R' Moshe Levi as soon as he arrived in the Holy Land, even before he managed to find lodgings. All the crates filled with his personal belongings had not yet been collected from the port.

While he was at R' Moshe Levi's house, his daughter came to give him the official confirmation from the port that his crates had arrived from Morocco and were ready to be released. He was requested to come claim his possessions. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was overjoyed and wished to go to the port immediately.

The tzaddik aspired to fulfill the mitzvah of settling the Land. Therefore, he insisted on personally making all the necessary

arrangements to settle in Eretz Yisrael, extending himself beyond his limits, since Eretz Yisrael can be acquired only through suffering.

R' Moshe Levi's son wanted to order a car to take the Rav to the port, but he refused. "I will go with you on your motorcycle." Anyone who saw him was amazed at his self-effacing conduct. His actions reflected his namesake, "Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person!"

"It is unbelievable!" Rabbi David, his son, comments, "Today we do not find important leaders and prominent people riding on motorcycles. I can testify about myself," says Rabbeinu, "that I, a simple person, lowlier than my illustrious ancestors, would be mortified just by the thought of traveling on a motorcycle. Yet, in previous generations, the tzaddikim were so humble that they avoided all honor. They knew that honor belongs only to Hashem."

Both Healing and Salvation

A young girl from the Nijer family of Toulouse got sick and was in critical condition. Worried, the family sought Rabbi Moshe Aharon to receive his blessings. Ultimately, a miracle occurred, and the girl recovered completely. Until today, they are overwhelmingly grateful.

The blessings of Rabbi Moshe Aharon helped them also in another difficult situation. There was a period when police officers would raid houses suddenly, without warning, and confiscate merchandise and other important documents. The Nijer family did not escape this harassment.

The officers once came to their house and seized important documents, lists, and other hidden files. The evidence was incriminating, and the family would face heavy fines, forcing them to go bankrupt if their case would be reviewed. They turned to Rabbi Moshe Aharon for help. He gave them his blessings that no harm would befall them. Ultimately after examining the documents, the police did not find anything out of the ordinary, as it says, "They have eyes but do not see…" A tremendous miracle took place in the merit of the family's staunch faith.

Twenty Full Years

The following story took place approximately thirty years ago. Amram Ben Chamu from France suffered a sudden heart attack and hovered between life and death. His family members turned to the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon and asked him to pray for his recovery. The tzaddik promised that he would recuperate from his illness.

A few months later, Mr. Ben Chamu suffered another severe heart attack. Again, Rabbi Moshe Aharon told the family not to worry because despite his weak heart, he would still live another twenty years. This is precisely what happened.

Year later, Mr. Ben Chamu suffered another attack. His family members called Rabbeinu, Rabbi David, shlita, in Lyon, France, and asked him to come visit him, since they realized that he was about to die. The twenty years which Rabbi Moshe Aharon had predicted that he would live were about to end. The blessing was fulfilled with precision. On the day that the twenty years were up, Mr. Amram Ben Chamu passed away.

Blessed are the tzaddikim whose words are fulfilled, as it says, "A tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills it."

Sanctifying the Name of Hashem

In 1978 (5738), three years before the onset of Rabbi Moshe Aharon's fatal illness, he traveled with his son Rabbi David, shlita, to visit several countries. Rabbi David was put in charge of all the arrangements.

The first time that Rabbi Moshe Aharon traveled to Morocco, Rabbi David was concerned about the trip. He felt a huge responsibility to guard his father's health, since he suffered from diabetes. For two whole months, Rabbi David escorted his father wherever he went.

While in Morocco, Rabbi David relates that he overheard all the problems that people came to discuss with his father. He noticed how his father was just as attentive to the downtrodden and poor as to the affluent people. He would encourage each person lovingly, infusing him with faith, telling him he had nothing to fear, and everything would turn out well.

Non-Jews also thronged to the tzaddik to receive his blessings and advice. Rabbi Moshe Aharon would preface his blessings with the prayer, "In the merit of my holy forefathers, may Hashem's Name be sanctified also before these gentiles." Then he would bless them and tell them not to worry, promising them that their requests would be fulfilled.

The following year, Rabbi Moshe Aharon and Rabbi David again visited Morocco. All the gentiles who had sought Rabbi Moshe Aharon's help previously, whether to have children, a cure, or salvation from other problems, returned to him to express thanks for the miracles that had occurred in the merit of his blessings.

The people recounted that their problems had been resolved within the month. They merited whatever they requested. Thus, Hashem's Name was greatly sanctified throughout Morocco, since even the gentiles demonstrated faith in tzaddikim. Many honorable and important ministers came to receive Rabbi Moshe Aharon's blessings for children, for promotions, or for their

daughters to get married, etc. In this way, the Name of Hashem became glorified among the nations.

Hovering Over His Young, Hastening the Recovery

One morning, when Rabbi Moshe Aharon and his son Rabbi David were in Casablanca, there was a fatal car accident in Eretz Yisrael, in which Rabbi Moshe Aharon's son, Avraham, was involved. Three people were killed in the accident, and two people were seriously injured. Avraham was in critical condition, hovering between life and death. He was rushed to Tel Hashomer hospital, and the news reached Morocco, notifying Rabbi Moshe Aharon to hurry back to Eretz Yisrael.

Even before the accident had occurred, early that morning, Rabbi David felt someone shaking him out of bed. He woke up and saw his father standing over him. Seeing that his son was awake, Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked Rabbi David urgently, "How long does it take to get to the cemetery? We must go there immediately, without wasting a moment."

Rabbi David asked his father groggily, "What's the rush? Isn't it preferable to wait until after Shacharit? Why do you have to be there at the crack of dawn?" Rabbi Moshe Aharon replied, "If we wait until after Shacharit, it will be too late. We must go immediately to the cemetery in Casablanca, to pray at the grave of my father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan."

A few minutes later, the two started out to the cemetery. Rabbi Moshe Aharon went directly to his father's grave and lifted his hands in prayer. First, he prayed for the welfare of the Moroccan kingdom, beseeching that they should continue to be kind to the Jews living there, then he prayed for the welfare of all Jews throughout the world.

Afterward, he raised his voice, crying and pleading for the recovery of his son Avraham, sheyichyeh. This greatly surprised everyone gathered there, especially Rabbi David. His father would always first bless the Rabbanit, and afterward the children,

according to their age. Why did he now first pray for Avraham, who was the eighth child in the family?

Rabbi Moshe Aharon praying at his grandfather's grave at that time

However, no one dared ask any questions. The whole time, he cried and begged for the recovery of his son. No one knew why he was praying so intensely for Avraham, because they had not yet heard what had happened.

When Rabbi Moshe Aharon returned to his lodging with his escorts, the news had already arrived. Half an hour earlier, a message had been sent from Eretz Yisrael via France about the terrible car accident in which Avraham had been critically injured.

Rabbi David rushed to phone his family in Eretz Yisrael to verify the story. He was told that he should hurry back to Eretz Yisrael because his brother Avraham was about to die.

Rabbi David related the message to his father, but he saw that his father was not surprised at all. "I know, my son. There was a terrible decree issued on your brother Avraham. That is why I rushed to pray for him even before the accident occurred. I am just sorry that only part of my prayers was accepted on High, since three people were unfortunately killed." He added, "We must stay in Morocco near the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto until Avraham recovers. If we go back to Eretz Yisrael now, Avraham will not live."

One morning, Rabbi Moshe Aharon called his son Rabbi David and told him, "David, with the help of G-d, we will leave to Eretz Yisrael on Thursday, and we will finally be able to talk to Avraham."

Throughout that period, the Rabbanit kept calling, begging them to return to Eretz Yisrael, since Avraham had been unconscious for two months. On the day that Rabbi Moshe Aharon informed Rabbi David that they were returning to Eretz Yisrael, the Rabbanit called again, and Rabbi David repeated to her what his father had said, predicting that they would be able to talk to Avraham, since the decree had been abolished.

The Rabbanit doubted what he told her, because the doctors had not given Avraham any chances of survival. However, on the Thursday when Rabbi Moshe Aharon and Rabbi David departed to return to Eretz Yisrael, an unbelievable miracle occurred. A large butterfly entered Avraham's room in the hospital and began to circle over his body, eventually landing on his head. Avraham's eyes fluttered open and he regained consciousness, asking for a drink. This was after being in a coma for two months and undergoing ten operations. Avraham was finally out of danger and began to recover.

Rabbanit Mazal witnessed the incredible miracle. She now understood why her husband had not been at her side during this difficult time. She realized that he had wrought a great miracle, and the decree threatening Avraham's life had been annulled. This took place precisely as the plane took off from Morocco via France to Eretz Yisrael.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon and Rabbi David arrived in Eretz Yisrael and went directly to Tel Hashomer hospital, where a big crowd had gathered to celebrate the miracle with them. They had all heard how Rabbi Moshe Aharon's son had miraculously come back to life in the merit of his father's intensive prayers.

Rabbi David concludes, "I saw many miracles in my life that were a result of my father's prayers for the salvation and recovery

of individuals, as well as for the public. He faithfully placed his trust in Hashem, believing that He would surely accept his supplications. Ultimately, his prayers penetrated the Heavens and bore fruit."

For Life, and Not For Death

Chaim, the son of Refael Azarzar, is named after the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. There are many people named after him, but Refael Azarzar had a special reason for naming his son after the tzaddik. It is because of a miracle that happened, in which the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon also played a big part. Ultimately, Refael Azarzar's life was saved. This is what happened:

In Elul 1973 (5733), Refael received an order to report for reserve duty for a period of forty-two days at the Bar-Lev line on the Suez Canal near Port Sa'id. Accordingly, Refael would celebrate there all the *chagim* during this period, including Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.

Before his service commenced, Refael joined the grand *hilula* in the memory of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, which was celebrated on the twenty-sixth of Elul in Ashdod, as usual. Although he was not very wealthy, he bought the second candle lit *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik.

The next day, Refael reported for duty near the border of Egypt. It was his first time ever on reserve duty, and Refael felt uncomfortable being so far from home. He waited impatiently for his service to end, so that he could return home and be with his family. Rosh Hashanah and the Asseret Yemei Teshuvah passed peacefully, but then Yom Kippur arrived. On that day, the famous Yom Kippur War broke out.

The Egyptians collaborated with the Syrians and attacked Israel. On the first day, there were many casualties, may Hashem avenge their blood. Whole army units were captured, and entire battalions were destroyed. Many soldiers were taken captive by the Egyptians.

It was the second day of fighting, the eleventh of Tishrei, 1973 (5734). Refael relates: On this day, at six in the evening, after heavy fighting, we had no choice but to surrender as captives to the Egyptians. Before I turned myself in, I prayed to Hashem to save me in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto. I cried in fear and wondered, "Why do I deserve this?" Then, I was taken captive together with three friends. A group of Egyptian soldiers took us, assigning two soldiers to guard each captive.

My captors began interrogating me right away, asking me where I was from. I informed them that I was originally from Morocco. Innocently, I thought this answer would be to my benefit. But, the opposite was true. Upon hearing this, the Egyptian began to beat me up and shout, "He is a traitor! This man was nurtured and educated by the Arabs, and now he has come to fight against the Arabs!"

I explained to them that this was the first time I was at the Bar-Lev border. I was not even a soldier, just an ordinary taxi driver. They smirked unsympathetically, "Everyone claims to be drivers or chefs. So, then, who are the soldiers?" They ordered me to show them where other soldiers were stationed in the area.

"I do not know; I have no idea where they are." They began to threaten me, "If you do not show us where other soldiers are stationed, we will kill you. I gathered my courage and told them, "If you want to kill me, go ahead." I envisioned myself dying, and I decided that if this is what had been decreed upon me, then I would accept it. There was nothing left to do.

One of the Egyptian soldiers ordered me to stand with my back to the wall of the fortress. It was a wall of rocks encased in a net of iron. He loaded his gun and shot a volley of twenty bullets at me. However, not one bullet hit me. I was only lightly injured by the flying shrapnel bouncing off the rocks from the force of the blast.

The Egyptian soldier was ashamed over his poor marksmanship in front of his friends. He quickly inserted another cartridge into

the rifle and shot again. This time, the bullet hit me straight in my leg. I fell down, writhing in pain, and was taken prisoner. No one administered any medical aid, and I lost a lot of blood.

I had time to reflect on the events, and I was confused. Why did only one soldier shoot at me, while the other soldiers next to him remained impassive? If they also would have shot, surely, I wouldn't be able to recount this story. I believe that it is only in the merit of my prayers and the intervention of Rabbi Chaim Pinto that I was saved from sure death.

Refael's sister, Esther, upon hearing that her brother had been taken prisoner in Egypt, came especially to Eretz Yisrael from France to be by his family's side during this difficult period. She testifies that one night, she dreamed that Rabbi Chaim Pinto appeared to her, emerging from his grave, and told her, "You have nothing to worry about. Hashem is with you."

At the same time, the Azarzar family was going through a challenging time in Eretz Yisrael. Until the Egyptians released a list of the prisoners, no one knew what had become of Refael. He was listed as missing. Throughout those difficult days, Refael's wife, Chana, kept going to Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, begging him to give his blessings. The Rav always repeated that he could envision Refael sitting on the chair in his house, just as he remembered him on the eve of the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, in which he participated the night before he left for reserve duty.

The family suffered the next few months, without knowing where Refael was. However, the blessings of Rabbi Moshe Aharon infused them with hope that one day Refael would return home alive and well.

There was also another family whose son was missing, but did not receive the blessings of Rabbi Moshe Aharon. The mother of the missing soldier also went frequently to Rabbi Moshe Aharon so that he should bless her son. However, Rabbi Moshe Aharon refused to bless him. One day, this mother approached Chana

Azarzar and asked her, "How come the Rav always blesses you that your husband will return alive and well, but refuses to bless me? Why does he not offer me encouragement? Please, I beg of you, go to the Rav and ask him to explain why."

Since Chana wanted to help the poor woman, she went to the tzaddik and asked him about it. The Rav told her, "I cannot bless her son, because I see that he is not alive anymore. My blessings will not help. Very shortly, this unfortunate woman will hear the news that her son was killed in the war, *rachmana litzlan*. Have pity on her and spare her unnecessary anguish. Do not repeat to her what I told you."

Just as Rabbi Moshe Aharon predicted, the unfortunate mother received the bad news that her son had been killed in the war. Three months later, the Azarzar family received word that Refael had been taken captive and was alive. Eventually, Refael was released from captivity and returned home. A son was born to him, and he named him Chaim, commemorating his salvation in the merit of the tzaddik, as it says, "Those redeemed by Hashem will say [it], those whom He redeemed from the hand of distress."

A Mighty Rescue

On Shabbat afternoons between Minchah and Ma'ariv, the people of Essaouira would go walking along the shore. One Shabbat, Rabbi Moshe Aharon's daughter, Dina, went for a walk with her friends as usual. She was only ten years old at the time, and she somehow got separated from her friends. Suddenly, a menacing Arab appeared in front

of the girls, and they fled for their lives. Dina did not manage to run away like the rest of her friends, and she stumbled, falling to the ground.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon, who was learning Torah in his house at the time, suddenly sensed that his daughter was in danger. He paused from his studies and placed his hand near the candle that burned constantly *l'iluy nishmat* his father Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and called loudly, "Father, Father, intervene for me."

Then, he resumed his learning, with a look of contentment on his face. The Rabbanit heard him calling out and asked what he had said.

"When the child comes home, she will tell you all about it."

Dina came home trembling and visibly shaken. Even before she could open her mouth, her father asked her, "My daughter, why did you wander from your friends?" The girl began to tell her story. When she had fallen on the ground, the Arab prepared to pounce on her. But at the last moment, a mighty warrior riding on a horse stopped near her. He dismounted, lifted her up and comforted her. He returned her to her friends, and then took out his whip and beat the Arab bloody.

Recalling the Merits of the Fathers

Once, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Rabbi David, shlita, had to travel from Eretz Yisrael to France. When he bade farewell to his father, Rabbi Moshe Aharon warned him, "Make sure to keep an eye on your passport and tickets, and also on your money. Guard them well. Do not take off your coat, because they may fall out of your pocket."

Rabbi David was taken aback by his father's words and asked, "Am I a little boy who loses money and passports? Have I ever lost such valuable items in the past?" Rabbi Moshe Aharon just repeated, "Pay attention to my words." But, Rabbi David did not heed his father…

It was very hot outside, and Rabbi David took off his coat, folding

it over his arm. He hurried about the streets, tending to many errands. Suddenly, Rabbi David recalled his father's warnings and quickly checked the pockets for their valuable contents. But, they were empty. There was no money, no tickets, and no passport.

Rabbi David was ashamed to face his father. He combed the streets looking for his lost items, but to no avail. At nightfall, he ruefully went home. As soon as he entered the house, his father inquired, "Do you have the money, tickets, and passport?" Rabbi David admitted the truth, and his father exclaimed, "Why didn't you listen to me?" Rabbi David begged, "Please forgive me."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon contemplated the situation and finally told his son, "Retrace your steps to a certain spot and there you will find your lost items." Rabbi David was incredulous.

"It is impossible! Hundreds of people pass by that place all the time. How can my money, tickets, and passport still be there? Surely someone already took them."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon did not waver, "Go back to that spot, since I already arranged that no one should touch what belongs to you." Rabbi David retraced his steps to the spot and found everything that he had lost. This was in fulfillment of the statement "The will of those who fear Him, He will do." Hundreds of thousands of people pass by the area, and no one had noticed the money, passport, or tickets.

Turning the Tide

The city of Essaouira is situated on the sea shore, and the Mellah overlooks the ocean. One day, the sea was especially turbulent, and the waves rose so high, they began to flood the city. The waters submerged the city, endangering the residents' safety. This caused great panic among the people.

Worriedly, they turned to Rabbi Moshe Aharon for help. The Rav's house was situated in the Mellah, and the entire community

gathered there, seeking salvation and mercy for themselves, their children, and their possessions.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon took his attendant, Nissim Ochayon, and set out toward the direction of the cemetery. The Rav instructed him to place a note which he had prepared on the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. Afterward, he told him to cast the note into the sea.

The moment that the note touched the waters, the waves died down, as if nothing had happened at all. (As heard.)

Let Not the Foot of Arrogance Come to Me

A group of poor people appeared at Rabbi Moshe Aharon's house in Essaouira, complaining against a member of the *Va'ad Hakehillah*. They poured out their hearts to the Rav that this person was harassing and humiliating them. His cruelty would climax when food staples were distributed. Then he would verbally offend the poor people, beating and kicking them violently.

At that time, Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in self-imposed seclusion. But, because of the severity of the situation, he departed from his routine and asked that the man should be summoned, in order to verify his complaints. However, the insolent board member was exceedingly arrogant and refused to come to the Rav's house. He sent a message, "If Rav Pinto wants to discuss something, let him come to me."

Word got back to the Rav that the man refused to come. He immediately responded with a sharp letter, warning him to cease harassing his poor brethren, ending the letter with the words, "If you continue this abominable behavior, the legs that kick the poor will be cut off."

The man did not heed the Rav's words, and a few days later he contracted a serious illness. His wife came to the Rav, asking him to pray for her husband. The Rav told her that first he must do complete *teshuvah* and repent for his cruel deeds, resolving

never to repeat them. However, the man refused to listen to the Rav's advice.

Soon after, the doctors were forced to amputate both legs. This was a fulfillment of Chazal's warning to be careful with Torah scholars, since "their sting is the sting of a scorpion."

Coming to the Aid of Their Father

Yitzchak Ochayon of Ashdod faced a severe problem. While serving in reserve duty, he lost his personal weapon. It seemed as if the earth had swallowed it up. He feared that the weapon would fall into the enemy's hands, and he would suffer a harsh sentence for losing it.

Worriedly, he went to Rabbi Moshe Aharon so seek his advice. The Rav told him that he should take his sons with him to the Beit Hakeneset and recite Tehillim together.

All the children came to the Beit Hakeneset and recited Tehillim. They also added various prayers on their father's behalf. Within twenty-four hours, Yitzchak Ochayon was informed that his weapon had been found.

When Yitzchak came to tell the Rav about this, the Rav told him, "I was not the cause for your salvation. It was in the merit of your sons' prayers." He added, "A son can bring merit to his father, not only after his death, but also in his lifetime."

Hanging on His Words

When Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Rabbi David, was eight years old, he once climbed up on the roof of the Beit Hakeneset in Essaouira, while playing with his friends. He did not notice that there was a glass skylight, and he jumped hard on it. All of a sudden, the glass cracked, and the young Rabbi David went falling through the roof.

At the last second, he succeeded in grabbing onto a fragment of the glass that was still attached to the roof. He was left hanging precariously between heaven and earth. His friends frantically sought help, but it would take a long time until they could find someone. How long could their friend hold on, suspended in midair?

Rabbi Moshe Aharon sensed that his son was in trouble. He immediately began to cry and pray near the light that always burned *l'iluy nishmat* his father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. He also began to recite *shnayim Mikrah v'echad Targum*. He continued doing so until he was sure that the danger had passed, and only then relaxed.

A few minutes later, a delegation of people who had managed to rescue Rabbi David, arrived at Rabbi Moshe Aharon's house. They excitedly recounted the miracle which had taken place; how the young boy had miraculously succeeded in hanging on to a fragment of the skylight for half an hour until help arrived. They also marveled how the glass did not break from his weight, and he did not fall from high up, *rachmana litzlan*.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon declared that it was surely the merits of his fathers and the merit of the Torah which had saved his son. These fortified him with superhuman strength to continue hanging on to the broken glass for such a long time, which miraculously did not crack under his weight.

Accepting the Yoke of Heaven Brings Healing

There was a woman who suffered from a serious illness. The

doctors decided to insert an instrument into her body which would help her function and regain her health.

The woman came to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to ask for his blessings. First, he advised her to accept upon herself to observe mitzvot. In the merit of the mitzvot, in addition to the merit of his exalted father, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, she would get well, and her illness would disappear without a trace.

After the woman agreed to observe mitzvot, Rabbi David told her to return to her doctor for a reevaluation. The woman went, and the doctor checked her again. To her surprise, he told her, "I do not understand. The previous tests clearly indicated a serious condition requiring the insertion of an instrument in your body. But now, I do not see any reason to do so. You are cured and do not require any medical intervention."

The woman returned home without any treatment in the merit of the tzaddik and in the merit of her commitment to observe Torah and mitzvot. (Heard from one of Rabbeinu David's followers.)

An Accurate Prediction

A man from Ashdod relates that when his wife was very ill, he came to Rabbi Moshe Aharon and asked for his blessings. The Rav told him, "Do not worry, you can go home. Tonight at 3:00 a.m. your wife will undergo surgery and with the help of Hashem she will recover." The man was very surprised, since the doctors had told him that his wife would be operated on in a day or two. However, at 3:00 a.m. the doctors informed him that they would operate immediately. The surgery was successful, and she recovered.

I Must Learn Torah

A sixty-year-old man approached Rabbi Moshe Aharon worriedly. He said, "I heard in a lecture that every Jew is obligated to set fixed times to study Torah. When a person dies, he is tried in the Heavenly Court and asked several questions, such as, whether he was honest in business, if he set fixed times for learning, and

so forth. Honorable Rabbi," the man cried, "I did not engage in the study of Torah, not in Mishnah, not in Gemara, and not in *halachah*. Now I try to set some time for learning Torah, but I do not understand anything. What will be with me after I depart from this world?"

The Rav answered him calmly, "It is never too late. I also experience this feeling at times when I engage in learning Torah, and do not understand the text. I simply raise my hands and say, '*Ribbono shel Olam*, whatever I did not understand in this world, I will understand in the World to Come, when I will learn in the Heavenly Yeshiva, in my designated place.'

"You, too," the Rav told the man, "can master the entire Talmud. Even if you do not understand a word of it at present, persevere in your studies, and Hashem will grant you your reward. Which reward? In the World to Come, Hashem will delegate a Torah scholar to sit with you and teach you everything that you did not comprehend in this world."

Waiting to Be Wed

Chazal state in Avot, "An eighteen-year-old goes to the marriage canopy." However, a young man from France, with Algerian roots, was already twenty years old and was still not married. He came to Rabbi Moshe Aharon to receive his blessings to find his proper match.

The Rav thought a bit and then declared, "My son, your destined wife has not yet been born. Only tomorrow will your true match be born, and in twenty years you will marry her."

The young man was inwardly amused, but took the prediction seriously. Over the years, he became a businessman and enjoyed success in all his endeavors. Yet, he remained unmarried. Twenty years after his visit to the Rav, he went to Mexico on a business trip, and finally found his match.

When he saw his wife's ID card, he was astonished to see that she had been born precisely one day after he had visited Rabbi

Moshe Aharon twenty years earlier. (Recounted by Rabbeinu, shlita, who heard it from the couple.)

A Match for the Maid

Rabbi Moshe Aharon once stayed at the home of R' Shlomo Asseraf near Agadir. One day, his hostess approached him and said, "We have a Moroccan maid working in our house, who has not yet gotten married. Her parents are very poor, and they do not have money for a dowry. Would you bless her that she find her proper match?"

Rabbi Moshe Aharon turned to the maid and said, "I am leaving shortly, but in a month you will get married. Your intended will come here from a distant place, and he will provide you with plenty of money for your dowry."

The blessings of the tzaddik were fulfilled right after he left the Asseraf house. On that day, the maid went to buy some provisions for her employer. A prominent woman met her on the way and asked her, "My daughter, are you married?" The maid answered, "No, I am not married."

"Where do you live?" she asked her. "I live with the Jews," she replied. The woman wanted to know if she worked for the Asseraf family, and the maid confirmed that she did.

In the afternoon, the woman came to the Asserafs and inquired about the maid and her family. Just as the Rav had predicted, she got married exactly a month later, and even received a large sum of money for her dowry.

From then on, the maid always visited the Asseraf family to thank them, since through them she had been blessed by the tzaddik. If not for his blessings, she might have remained single.

I Will Make Him a Helper against Him

On the Yamim Noraim of 1979 (5739), Rabbi Moshe Aharon stayed with his son Rabbeinu David, shlita, in Morocco. After

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, they decided to spend Sukkot with the Asseraf family living in Inezgane, near Agadir.

On Rosh Hashanah, in the middle of the meal, a young man came into the house and begged Rabbi Moshe Aharon for a blessing to find his proper match. Rabbi Moshe Aharon blessed the young man and told him, "In a short while, you will meet your true mate, with the help of Hashem."

Then, Moreinu suggested a match for the young man. He thought that one of the daughters of the Asseraf family would be suitable. The young man agreed to the suggestion, and soon after, they were engaged.

The engagement celebration was set for one of the days of Chol Hamoed Sukkot. But, just on that day, Rabbi Moshe Aharon and his son were scheduled to fly to Casablanca. Having no other choice, they left.

However, their flight did not take off as scheduled. There was a big rainstorm that day, and the airport was closed. Consequently, they returned to the Asseraf family, where to their surprise they met the young man who had just arrived for his engagement.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon declared, "The delay was orchestrated by Hashem so that we should be here in order to help finalize this

match." The parents had still not agreed wholeheartedly, and thanks to the intervention of Rabbi Moshe Aharon, everything worked out for the best. The match between the young man, Meir Assayag and Alice Asseraf was concluded. A few months later, they were married.

Until today, they fondly remember Rabbi Moshe Aharon, in whose merit their match was actualized, all because of the cancelled flight from Agadir to Casablanca.

The Prophetic Words of the Tzaddik

There was a woman who constantly came to Rabbi Moshe crying about her daughter who had still not found her proper match. Every time she would come to the tzaddik, he would sympathize with her sorrow, but he never said a word and did not give her his blessings.

Once, when she was crying to the tzaddik, he paused for a moment and then said, "In two days your daughter will find her match. Do not worry." Just as the Rav had predicted, she found her match two days later.

Your Destined Match Is Far From Here

There is a story about a girl who would often come to see Rabbi Moshe Aharon to receive his blessings to find her match. However, every time she came, the tzaddik would send her away without any promises or blessings.

The girl was disappointed, but did not relent. Again and again, she came to the Rav to receive his blessings, but the Rav did not bless her.

Once, she came, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon told her, "Your destined match does not live here, but in a distant country." He specified the place. The girl asked, "Why should I go so far? After all, I live in Morocco." The Rav just repeated, "Your destined match lives in the place that I specified."

The girl did not go to the place as the Rav advised, and she

returned to him again for his blessings. The Rav persisted, "Your destined match is found in the place that I told you. As long as you do not go there, you will not get married."

One day, she decided to test the Rav's words. She traveled to the place to which he had advised her to go. A few days later, she found her true match and was happily married. Thus, the prophecy and blessings of Rabbi Moshe Aharon were realized.

The Convert

The next amazing story was told by Mrs. Maguy Lebée, tichyeh, the daughter of Rabbi Avraham Moyal, z"l. She is a granddaughter (on her mother's side) of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

Thirty years ago, when Maguy became of marriageable age, a certain young man was suggested for her. She came to her uncle, Rabbi Moshe Aharon to receive his blessings for the match. Rabbi Moshe Aharon did not give her his blessings, but advised her, "You should check out the young man more extensively to see if this match is appropriate." However, she did not make any further investigations and got engaged.

Later, she came again to Rabbi Moshe Aharon, and he informed her, "This young man does not share your destiny, he is not your destined match." Maguy was dismayed and asked, "And who is my destined match?"

"He is still a gentile today. He will convert in the near future and become a righteous convert. He possesses a great soul." Rabbi Moshe Aharon added, "I know that your parents will not want to hear of this match, but this is what was ordained in Heaven. You can do whatever you want, but since this is your destiny, it cannot be changed."

(Of course, only a holy tzaddik can determine who someone's true match from Heaven is. If any other person would give such advice, it should not be relied upon, and one should only seek a *halachic* authority.)

Upon hearing this, Maguy was confused and did not know what to do. That day, an argument broke out between her and her *chatan*. He berated her for no reason, and nearly struck her. She recalled Rabbi Moshe Aharon's words and told her *chatan*, "If we disagree to such an extent, let us break up the relationship." The young man responded, "That is exactly what I intend to do; I do not think that we are suited to each other." They then parted ways.

Maguy returned to France to her parents' house. They took her broken engagement very hard. Maguy was also very distressed. At one point, her parents asked her, "Did you first go to Rabbi Moshe Aharon to ask his advice about the match?"

"Yes, I went to him, and he told me that I should check it out more thoroughly, but I did not do so and went ahead with the engagement. Afterward, he told me that this young man was not my destined mate, and he was right. He also added that my true match is presently a gentile, who will convert in the near future and become a righteous convert."

Her parents were outraged at the suggestion. "Why should you get married to a gentile, who will eventually be converted? Are there not enough Jews to marry? It is totally out of the question." They were filled with despair and did not know how to proceed.

Eventually, Maguy got engaged to a righteous convert, Yonatan, who had true fear of G-d. After investigating matters, it turned out that at the time that she had spoken to Rabbi Moshe Aharon, the young man had still been a gentile. Only afterward, had he converted, becoming a devout, G-d fearing Jew, devoting himself to learning Torah regularly.

Maguy presently lives in Montreal. She is constantly involved in performing mitzvot and doing *chessed*. She and her husband are active in helping others and supporting Torah institutions. They assisted greatly in building many Batei Midrashot and *mikvaot* in Montreal, Toronto, and in Eretz Yisrael.

Since Yonatan's conversion was mentioned, let us describe how it happened, because it is an amazing story in itself.

When Yonatan decided to convert, he first went to his brother, who was a Christian gentile, and told him about his decision. His brother tried to dissuade him, "It is hard to be a Jew. There are so many prohibitions. You will have to abstain from eating food that is not kosher and keep so many commandments."

Yonatan countered, "I want to observe them." His brother did not relent, "Think about it again and reconsider if you really want to go through with the conversion."

Yonatan thought about it again and finally told his brother, "I want you to prepare a steak tomorrow for me to eat as my last non-kosher meal." His brother agreed and the next day, Yonatan arrived at his brother's house for the meal. However, as soon as he smelled the meat roasting, he ran to the bathroom and began to vomit.

His brother asked worriedly, "Are you sick? Should I call a doctor?" Yonatan told him weakly, "No, I am not sick, but I simply cannot tolerate the smell of this steak." His brother argued, "But it is like all other meat, and you asked me to prepare it for you." However, Yonatan just repeated, "I simply cannot bear this horrible odor."

Later, Yonatan repeated the story to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Rabbi David, and said, "Honorable Rav, from the moment that I decided to convert, I could no longer tolerate the smell of non-kosher food." Rabbi David nodded in agreement, "Although you were still technically a gentile, you could no longer tolerate the odor of something non-kosher. This is similar to what happened to Reish Lakish."

He told Yonatan the story of Reish Lakish (see *Bava Metzia* 84a):

Reish Lakish was the leader of a gang of thieves and bandits. Once he saw Rabbi Yochanan on the opposite side of the river. He jumped over the river, since he mistook him for a woman, because of his outstandingly beauty. Rabbi Yochanan told him,

"Your strength should be for Torah." Reish Lakish retorted, "Your beauty should be for women." Rabbi Yochanan then offered, "If you repent and accept upon yourself the yoke of Torah, I will give you my sister as a bride. She is more beautiful than I."

Reish Lakish agreed. He wanted to return to the other side of the river to collect his weapons, but could not jump back over it. He asked Rabbi Yochanan, "Why can't I cross the river as I did before?" Rabbi Yochanan answered, "Your strength has now been consecrated for Torah. The moment that you accepted upon yourself the yoke of Torah, you became weak, since Torah weakens a person's physical strength."

Rabbi David continued, "This is what happened to you, Yonatan. The moment that you decided to convert, you accepted upon yourself the yoke of Heaven. You already merited Heavenly assistance to distance yourself from forbidden foods, to the extent that you could not tolerate the odor of non-kosher meat.

Eventually, Yonatan met Maguy, and they got married. When Maguy was about to give birth, something incredible happened. Right before she gave birth, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto arrived in France and announced, "Maguy is about to give birth, and she will have a son who will be called Avraham. Let us go visit her."

An amazing thing happened. Rabbi Moshe Aharon had never been to Paris before and was not familiar with the streets. But he walked straight to the hospital, as if he knew every street and corner of Paris. Also, when he arrived at the hospital, he went straight to Maguy's room, as if he was familiar with the hospital. He asked to see the baby and blessed the parents with a hearty "Mazal Tov." Then he told them to name the baby Avraham.

This illustrates the uncanny perception and extraordinary acuity of the tzaddik. He was able to determine the destiny of each person, as it says, "The will of those who fear Him He will do."

Worth Waiting For

A prominent man called Mr. Algazi came to Rabbi Moshe Aharon

with a plea. He had everything he wanted, including wealth, livelihood, and good health. But, there was one, most important thing, that he was denied; he did not have any children. He had been married for twenty years and still did not merit progeny. He beseeched the Rabbi Moshe Aharon to pray for him to have a son. He vowed that if Hashem would grant him a child, he would donate a large sum of money to the Rav.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon blessed him, and the following year, the man had a son. The jubilant father returned to the Rav holding his child. He handed the Rav a handsome sum of money in gratitude for his blessing and as fulfillment of his vow.

Next Year, at This Time

Menachem Amar, the vice president of the Ashdod branch of the Union Bank of Israel, yearned to have a son. Although he had daughters, *Baruch Hashem*, he very much wanted to have a son whom he could circumcise and call up to the Torah.

He went to Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto and told him of his overwhelming desire to have a son. The Rav spontaneously declared, "Next year at this time you will have a son, and he shall be called Chaim." This is exactly what transpired.

The Coin

In 1980 (5740), Rabbi Moshe Aharon traveled to Los Angeles, escorted by his esteemed son, Rabbi David. Once while riding in a taxi, the driver turned to Rabbi Moshe Aharon and asked him for a blessing to find his proper match.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon told him, "Stop your car, go outside and look under the wheels for a coin. Read carefully what it says on it. If your name appears on the coin, it is a sign that you will have good luck in all your endeavors. However, if you do not find a coin, we will nevertheless pray to Hashem for you."

The driver told him, "But I cannot stop the car now in the middle of the road. When we arrive at our destination, I will look under

the wheels for a coin, as the Rav instructed." Rabbi Moshe Aharon agreed to his suggestion.

When they arrived, the driver got out of the car and searched under the wheels. To his surprise, he spotted a coin, and his name was written on it. (His name cannot be publicized because he is a well-known person.) It was absolutely unbelievable. Where did the coin come from? How did it get to the right spot? Why was his name engraved on it? These are all mysteries from Heaven, which we cannot comprehend.

A Double Blessing

Mr. Nachmani from Nazareth was paralyzed for many years and had no children. Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto was a good friend of his and went to visit him. When Rabbi Moshe Aharon saw his friend sitting in a wheelchair, he began to cry, preparing to bless him with a complete recovery.

Mrs. Nachmani turned to the Rav and said, "Rabbi Moshe, please pray for me that I should have children." The Rav was surprised and asked, "How can I pray for you to have children when your husband is paralyzed? First I must pray that he gets cured, and then I will be able to bless you with children."

"Honorable Rav, Why give two blessings? Give one blessing and you will be spared from giving the other blessing." The Rav asked her how this was possible. She said, "If you pray for me to have children, then Hashem will surely grant my husband a complete recovery and he will be cured of his paralysis."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon gazed at Mr. Nachmani and blessed him, "In the merit of my holy ancestors, may Hashem grant you children, and next year at this time may you have a son."

A few months later, Mr. Nachmani got on his feet and was able to walk normally. His wife gave birth to a son, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon was honored to be the *sandek* at the *brit*. This is the power of tzaddikim, as our Sages say, "A tzaddik decrees, and

Hashem fulfills it." (Recounted by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, as heard from Mr. Nachmani himself.)

A Precious Daughter

Mr. Bitton's aunt from France did not have children after almost twenty years of marriage. She shed rivers of tears, to no avail.

When Refael Pinto, sheyichyeh, Rabbeinu's son was born, the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon came to France to serve as *sandek* at the *brit*. The childless woman came to see him and confided her troubles to him, begging that he bless her to have children.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon listened to the woman's woes and told her, "If you are barren, how can I help you?" The woman countered tearfully, "But the Rav is a tzaddik who can perform miracles which no doctor can do!"

Rav Moshe Aharon contemplated her pitiful situation in order to feel her pain. Then he told her, "I will pray for you that you should have a daughter. You cannot give birth to a son, since it has been decreed that you should not have children. But, if I pray for you, you can have a daughter."

Indeed, a year later, the woman gave birth to a girl. She is her

only child. This miracle occurred through Hashem's infinite compassion. (Told by Mr. Bitton, one of the followers of Rabbeinu, shlita. The mother also told this story to Rabbeinu several times.)

Salvation in the Merit of the Tzaddik

At the time that Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, began to celebrate the *hilula* in honor of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol in Essaouira, Rabbi Shlomo Asseraf and his family were the first ones to shoulder the burden of making all the arrangements. The family would come to Essaouira to dance and rejoice, following the many years that the *hilula* had been celebrated only in Casablanca.

We find regarding Elkanah, the father of Shmuel Hanavi, that he would ascend to the Beit Hamikdash and publicly proclaim the Name of Hashem. In this merit, he was found worthy of having a son: the prophet, Shmuel. The Asseraf family acted in a similar way. In their merit, many people began to attend the *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol in Essaouira, and for this reason their family members experienced many miracles, as will be discussed. Rabbeinu David personally testifies to the following miracle.

R' Shlomo Asseraf had only two sons. For many years, his wife had hoped to have a daughter. The tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto blessed her in Morocco, promising her that her wish would be fulfilled. In fact, a year later, her prayers were answered, and she gave birth to a girl.

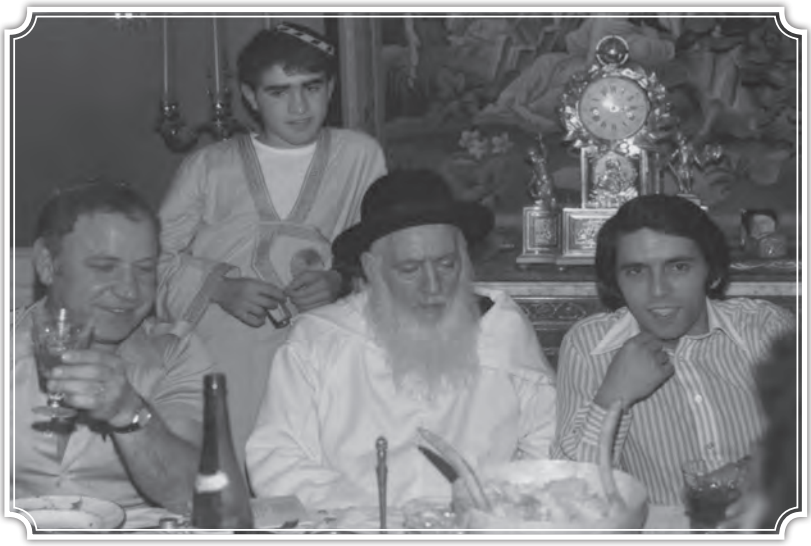
At the same time that Rabbi Moshe Aharon promised R' Shlomo Asseraf's wife that she would have a daughter, a miracle was wrought for the family maid, as related earlier. She was an older woman and had still not found her match. She received the tzaddik's blessings that she find her match.

Although this maid was a Christian Arab, she was imbued with faith in the powers of the Rav's blessings. If an Arab maid can be inspired to believe in a tzaddik's blessings, how much more so should a Jew, who possesses *zechut avot*, be aroused to believe.

Redeeming a Donkey

There was a man in Morocco who had a donkey that was due to give birth. He was aware of the fact that if the donkey would give birth to a male, he would be required to fulfill the mitzvah of *pidyon petter chamor* and redeem the donkey with a sheep.

He approached Rabbi Moshe Aharon and offered to sell him the donkey. At first Rabbi Moshe Aharon laughed and told the man, "What should I do with a donkey?" The man explained to him, "You can fulfill the mitzvah of *pidyon petter chamor*!" Rabbi Moshe Aharon was convinced and bought the donkey.



Eventually, the donkey gave birth to a male, and Rabbi Moshe Aharon fulfilled the mitzvah of *pidyon petter chamor* with great celebration, preparing a lavish feast. In the middle of the meal, Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked the man, "What do you desire?"

"I want to be blessed with children," the man confided. Rabbi Moshe Aharon blessed him that he should have ten sons. Indeed, the man had ten healthy sons. Today this man lives in Dimona in Eretz Yisrael. (Heard from the followers of Rabbeinu, Rabbi David, shlita.)

Living Waters

Mrs. Akun from Paris was childless for many years. She once went to see Rabbi Moshe Aharon on Motza'ei Shabbat, in order to receive his blessings. Rabbi Moshe Aharon told her to come back on the following Motza'ei Shabbat. She did.

On that occasion he gave her a bottle of water. He blessed her over the bottle of water that she merit having children. Indeed, the blessing was soon fulfilled.

Many years later, the son that was born to her also needed a blessing from the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon to have children. One day, Mrs. Akun met Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Rabbi David, and told him, "I heard that you are the son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon. This son was born to me from the blessings of your father. At present, he also needs a blessing to have children."

Incredibly, the son also experienced miraculous salvation and merited having a healthy child.

To Be Blessed with Mercy

Wondrous miracles are referred to Rabbi Moshe Aharon. The following accounts are a few examples:

There was a man from Bnei Brak who was unable to have children. He came to the Rav to receive his blessings. The Rav blessed him, and the following year he had a son. Similarly, a barren woman, who had already been to many tzaddikim to seek their blessings but had not yet conceived, once came to the *hilula* of the Rav on the fifth of Elul, and thereafter, she gave birth to a child.

We also heard of a woman whose son was paralyzed. After receiving the blessings of the Rav, her son got up and walked normally. Likewise, there is a story of a woman whose daughter got lost. She came to the Rav and he told her, "On Shabbat she will be found." On Shabbat, she returned safe and sound.

Moshe Lelouche relates that his sister's husband was unable to

have children. The doctors could do nothing to help him. His wife came to the Rav to receive his blessings. Miraculously, she gave birth to a child. Upon hearing this, the doctors were flabbergasted. They could not fathom how this was possible.

The Chair of Salvation

A certain couple had only one son. They decided to invite the tzaddik's son to their house for a meal. After he got up to leave, the woman quickly went over to his vacated chair and sat down. She began to recite Tehillim and prayed that she should have more children.

Indeed, her prayers bore fruit, and a while later she gave birth to a son. She called him after the tzaddik's son. This illustrates the power of faith in tzaddikim.

An Easy Birth

The following story was told by Mr. Eliyahu Mizrachi. His oldest daughter was expecting a child, and the time came to give birth. Since she had suffered very difficult births in the past, her close family members went to the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon for his blessings. He told them, "Do not remain here, but leave at once. The moment you reach her, she will give birth safely."

They did exactly as they were told, and the woman gave birth without any complications. This story illustrates the extent of their faith in tzaddikim. They could have argued, "Give us a blessing," or "Why should we leave now?" But they had implicit faith in the tzaddik and left at once. Precisely in this merit, their request was granted.

Sanctifying Hashem's Name Among the Nations

In 1980 (5740), when Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in Morocco, he stayed with his regular host, R' Mordechai Knafo. On one occasion, R' Mordechai Knafo asked his guest to do him a favor. Rabbi Moshe Aharon, of course, agreed, "What is your request?"

R' Mordechai told the tzaddik the following, "I know of a very

prominent Arab who is close to the king. He has been married for ten years, but still has no children. Therefore, he wants to divorce his wife, but she is a respectable woman and does not want him to divorce her. When she heard that the tzaddik was staying with me, she cried and pleaded to come and receive the blessings of the Rav to have children."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon told R' Mordechai, "If she truly possesses faith in the Creator of the World and in the blessings in the merits of my holy ancestors, she can come to me. But if she does not have faith, then it will not help her, and it is a waste of time."

On that day, the Arab woman came to the tzaddik, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, in order to receive his blessings. Moreinu, Rabbi David, was also present at the time. Immediately upon seeing the woman, the tzaddik asked her, "Do you have complete faith in the Creator of the World and in the power of blessings?" She answered, "Of course! Otherwise, I would not have come to see you."

Without wasting another moment, Rabbi Moshe Aharon asked for a cup of oil and water and told her to drink it. Then he told her, "Next year, you will give birth to a son. Thereafter, you will have two more boys." The woman left the Rav's presence full of faith that his blessings would materialize.

Her husband wanted to begin divorce procedures, but he was delayed because he was not feeling well. Upon hearing of his plans to leave her, his wife told him about Rabbi Moshe Aharon's blessings, and how he had promised her that she would still have sons. She pleaded with her husband to postpone the divorce procedures, begging him to wait another few months.

Her husband was not convinced. He called R' Mordechai Knafo and informed him that he did not want to remain with his wife anymore. However, R' Mordechai Knafo, who was a good friend of the Arab, told him, "Give yourself a chance. Since you already waited ten years, what can you lose by waiting another few months?" Finally, the Arab agreed.

After three months, the woman started to feel ill. She went to her doctor for an examination and to her delight she was told that she was pregnant. Understandably, there was joyous celebration in her home.

The miracles unfolded with unbelievable precision. On the day that the woman discovered that she was pregnant, R' Mordechai Knafo phoned his Arab friend, the husband, and asked him if there was any news yet. But the Arab responded in the negative. R' Mordechai argued accusingly, "I do not believe you! She should get examined by the doctor, since the blessings of the Rabbi never fail. The Rabbi actually promised you a son."

Then the Arab confided emotionally, "You should know, my dear friend, that the tzaddik is truly a holy person. Too bad we did not know about him before. My wife is really pregnant, exactly as the Rav promised. We are overjoyed, and I am glad that I did not divorce her, as I had intended."

At that time, Rabbi David was still young and unmarried. At every opportunity, he would travel to Morocco to pray at the graves of his holy ancestors. Once when he was in Morocco, he turned up at the home of his hospitable host, R' Mordechai Knafo.

R' Knafo himself went to see who was at the door. There, in front of his eyes, he saw Rabbi David! R' Knafo was speechless! Spontaneously, he broke out in song and praise to Hashem, "*Yishtabach Shemo La'ad*!" Rabbi David was taken aback and asked R' Knafo, "What happened? Why are you so overjoyed to see me?"

R' Mordechai quickly explained to Rabbi David, "You probably recall the blessing that your father gave the Arab woman who was childless and whose husband wanted to divorce her. After he blessed her, you told her, 'With the help of Hashem, when you will give birth to a son, I will come personally to visit you in order to stand witness that my father's blessings come true.'" Rabbi David exclaimed, "Right! I remember that."

Then R' Knafo told Rabbi David excitedly, "I feel chills running

up my spine, since today the Arab woman gave birth to a boy. I was just on my way out to visit her. Because you told her that you will come to see her on the day that she gives birth, Hashem orchestrated events that precisely today you arrived from France. Now you can come with me to visit the woman, in fulfillment of your words."

Thus, they set out to visit the woman in the hospital. The maternity ward was full of distinguished guests, including many officers and dignitaries. When Rabbi David and R' Knafo entered, a very great *kiddush Hashem* was made. The proud father announced in public, "It is only through the blessings of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto that we have a son. He also assured us that we would have more children. We see that the words of the Jewish tzaddik are true, because my wife was barren! Even the doctors cannot believe what happened!"

With his son Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

He also told Rabbi David movingly, "This is really your baby, but I share a part in it because I am the father. Rabbi David told him,

"We all share a part in your son, but now he's yours." He then prayed that the boy should always remain a friend of the Jews.

This incident caused a great *kiddush Hashem* among the gentiles, since the prayers and promise of the tzaddik were fulfilled, as it says, "A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills the decree." During the next few years, the Arab couple had another two boys. They had three boys altogether, just as the tzaddik had promised.

Three Months Later

There was a couple who had been through many medical treatments to have children, but remained childless. Again and again, the couple visited different doctors, but all in vain. Eventually, one doctor delivered the bitter news to the couple, "This woman will never be able to bear children!" Consequently, the couple decided to get divorced.

Before taking this final step, they both went to the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, in order to receive his blessings before embarking on their new chapter in life. After the couple delineated their medical issue, the husband told the Rav that because he really loved his wife, he would allow her to take the house and most of their belongings.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon listened to their account and asked the couple, "On which day did you schedule the *get*?" When they told him, he related the following famous story about a man who decided to divorce his wife because she could not have children. They went to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who told them to prepare a lavish feast before their separation. In the end he blessed them with children, and indeed, within a year they had a baby. "You too," said Rabbi Moshe Aharon to the couple, "should wait another three months. If by then you still do not experience a miracle, you may get divorced."

The couple took his advice readily. They did not need to get divorced.

Keep the Television

A *ba'al teshuvah* came to Rabbi Moshe Aharon with a request. "I want to divorce my wife, but before I do so, I would like to receive the Rav's blessings."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon began to converse with him, and it turned out that this man had become a *ba'al teshuvah* only a month before. The only reason that he wanted to divorce his wife was because of their disagreement over the television. The man wanted to throw it out, but his wife opposed it. She argued that she could not live without it.

The Rav told the man, "Go back to your wife. With the help of Hashem, when you will begin to fulfill all 613 mitzvot, and the television will be your only obstacle, then you may divorce her. Until then, I take full responsibility for keeping the television in your home. The main thing is that you yourself should do complete *teshuvah* before imposing restrictions on your wife."

The man accepted the Rav's advice and returned to his wife. Eventually, they both did complete *teshuvah*. Today, their sons and daughters live according to the dictates of the Torah, and they are a happy family.

Of course, they do not have a television in their home anymore!

The Unexpected Guest

A widow was experiencing a strange and unnerving occurrence. Every day, when she sat down to eat, a lizard would emerge from nowhere, crawl onto the table, and taste her food. Immediately after, it would disappear.

One day, the widow decided that she had had enough. She shut the doors and windows securely in the hope that she would be rid of the problem. But, no! Again the lizard appeared, crawled up on the table, tasted her food and disappeared. This continued every day without letup.

Disturbed, the woman came to Rabbi Moshe Aharon and tearfully told him the story. The Rav explained to her, "This lizard is a reincarnation of your late husband, who needs a *tikkun*." Rabbi Moshe Aharon wrote a *kamaya* as a *segulah* and instructed her which *tikkunim* to do and which prayers to recite. Then he added, "If you do everything I told you, the lizard will no longer come to your house."

The woman did exactly as the Rav said, and the following day the lizard appeared again. It crawled up on the table, but did not taste the food. It just slid off the table and disappeared, never to return. The *neshamah* of the deceased had received its *tikkun*. (Rabbeinu, shlita, is a witness to this story.)

Unfathomable Mysteries

In 1978 (5738), Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in England. He went to see an ophthalmologist to cure his eyes. After forty years of seclusion at the command of his father, he suffered from impaired vision.

One day he told Moreinu, Rabbi David, that he wanted to visit the zoo in Manchester, in order to see the lion, the king of the beasts. Why he wished to see the lion, his son did not know, but he made the necessary arrangements for the trip to the zoo, together with several followers.

Rabbi David relates that it was an amazing experience. It was the

first time in his life that his father had seen a lion. He gazed at the animal in awe and recited the verse, "How abundant are your works, Hashem!" He observed the lion for a long time with great admiration and said, "Shalom to you, Sir, king of the animals."

Afterward, Rabbi Moshe Aharon began to exalt and sing the praises of Hashem Who created such beautiful creatures. He turned to the lion and said, "Fortunate are you that Hashem chose you to be the king of the animals." When he left the zoo, he waved his hand to the lion in farewell. His mysterious actions remain unfathomable.

Burning with Oil

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lit many candles *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddikim, such as Rabbi Chaim Pinto and Rabbi David Ben Baruch. He would light them in his house, as well as in the Beit Hakeneset in Essaouira. He always made sure to use pure olive oil.

Once, when he was in the Beit Hakeneset, Rabbi Moshe Aharon noticed that the olive oil had been used up, and he did not have more oil for the lamp in honor of Rabbi David Ben Baruch. He decided to light with a wax candle instead. However, as he placed the burning candle into the cup, he burned himself, and his suit got stained from the dripping wax.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon's oldest son, Chaim, commented, "Perhaps this happened because all the other candles were lit with olive

oil, whereas the candle in honor of Rabbi David Ben Baruch was lit only with wax."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon immediately asked his attendant to go to the store and buy olive oil to light a candle in honor of Rabbi David Ben Baruch.

Later the same day, Rabbi Moshe Aharon received a large donation. Furthermore, that evening, before going to sleep, one of his friends came to bring him a new, beautiful suit. The money he received compensated for the money spent on the olive oil *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik, and his stained suit was replaced by a new one.

In the Merit of Tzedakah

Chaim Nachman's wife of Casablanca once came to Essaouira to do some touring. While strolling through the main *shuk*, she suddenly realized that her gold vest studded with precious stones was missing. The vest was extremely expensive, and she was devastated.

First, she filed a report at the police station. Then, anxiously, she turned to Rabbi Moshe Aharon, pouring out her heart to him. The tzaddik told her, "Give me 1,000 francs, and with the help of Hashem, you will find the vest today. If not, I will return all the money to you."

As the woman left Rabbi Moshe Aharon's house, she suddenly spotted a gentile wearing her lost vest. She began to shout for help, and soon the police arrived on the scene. They confiscated the vest from the man and returned it to its rightful owner.

Changing Places

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived in Essaouira, and later moved to Casablanca, prior to ascending to Eretz Yisrael to relocate in Ashdod. The reason for his move from Essaouira to Casablanca is told in the following awesome story, which Rabbi Moshe Aharon himself recorded in his sefer *Shenot Chaim*:

On Erev Pesach, 1960 (5720), at 11:00 a.m., Rabbi Moshe Aharon lit a candle *l'iluy nishmat* his holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, as he did daily.

After lighting the candle, he went to hang it up on its hook. He was sure that he had hung it up properly, as he always did. He was used to taking oil out of the cup and giving it to sick people in order to cure them. He would always hang up the cup carefully. However, just as he exited the room, he heard the cup crashing to the floor. Rabbi Moshe Aharon began to cry, and his wife, the Rabbanit, and the children cried too, since this had never occurred before.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon immediately went up to the Beit Hakeneset and brought another cup from there to light. This time, it did not fall. But sorrow over the first broken cup tugged at his heart, and he wanted to know why it had fallen.

That night, the Eve of Pesach, Rabbi Moshe Aharon did a *she'ailat chalom*, and he was informed from Heaven that the cup broke as a sign that the time had come for him to move away. There were not enough Jews left in Essaouira to provide for their illustrious household. "Now," he was instructed, "you must move to Casablanca. By changing places, your luck will change as well." He was also told, "The time has come for you to send your sons to yeshivot, and in Essaouira the last yeshiva closed down." (See the sefer, *Shenot Chaim*.)

Unshakable Faith

On the first of Adar, 1960 (5720), there was a massive earthquake in Agadir, and the entire city was demolished. Over 12,000 people were buried under the rubble. The Jews that survived were left without shelter, and they sought refuge in the neighboring city of Essaouira. Of course, the Jews of Essaouira welcomed their brethren, opening their homes and hearts to the needy, as it says, "And let your brother live with you."

Suddenly, on Shabbat, word spread throughout Essaouira that

another earthquake was about to strike the city, which could topple all the buildings and bury its residents. The authorities warned that all those who valued their lives should leave their homes immediately.

Panic reigned, and all the men hurried to evacuate their families. They recalled the bitter consequences of the earthquake in Agadir. Everyone, young and old, huddled together in an open area, where they believed that they would be safer. Even the Rabbanit and her children left their house on that Friday night.

Only Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, who was in the midst of his period of seclusion, did not budge from his home. He was not afraid and did not panic. Moreover, he maintained that it was a false rumor, which had no basis. The Arabs had only spread this rumor to cause the Jews to leave their homes, so that they would be able to loot their property.

Unfortunately, no one listened to Rabbi Moshe Aharon. In the end, it turned out that the tzaddik was right. Rabbi David adds, "I remember that when we returned to our house, Father told us, 'I told you that it was all a lie. *Baruch Hashem*, I did not disturb the tranquility of Shabbat Kodesh.'"

Finding the Way

During the first week that Rabbi Moshe Aharon and his family settled in Ashdod, the Rabbanit approached her husband and told him that there was no milk in the house. Rabbi Moshe Aharon replied that she should not worry, and with the help of Hashem, milk would yet come. The Rabbanit added that neither was there any meat. When Rabbi Moshe Aharon heard this, he told her to make a detailed list of all the groceries that were lacking. The Rabbanit listened to what he said and prepared the list.

A few minutes later, a young boy knocked on the door. He was the son of R' Levi Ben David, an acquaintance of the Rav from Morocco, who had moved to Dimona.

Rav Moshe Aharon gave the boy the list and asked him to go to Shlomo Weitzman and buy all the supplies. The boy replied that he didn't know who Shlomo Weitzman was, or where to buy all these things. Rabbi Moshe Aharon told him to take the bicycle that was in the entrance of the building and to start riding, and when the bicycle would stop, he would know that he had come to the place where he could buy the groceries.

The boy did not recall seeing a bicycle at the entrance of the house, and he was unfamiliar with Ashdod. But because he wanted to honor Rabbi Moshe Aharon, he went to search for the bike, which he suddenly spotted at the entrance of the house, and he started riding. After cruising along for a few minutes, the chain became entangled on the wheel. When he got off the bike, he was surprised to see a man standing next to him who asked him if he needed help and at the same time mentioned that his name was Shlomo Weitzman. He then helped the boy buy all the groceries on the list.

I Will Bless Those Who Bless You

When Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in England, in 1978 (5738), Rabbi Yisrael Mellul, shlita, came to visit him and discuss several issues and receive his blessings.

When Rabbi Moshe Aharon saw Rabbi Mellul, he told him, "I am aware that your mother prays for me. Her blessings and prayers are very powerful, and make a big impact in Heaven. Your mother can also predict the future."

Rabbi Mellul was very surprised. No one besides for him knew that his mother blessed the honorable Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto. Moreover, on several occasions she had predicted to her son events that would occur in the future. Since he had never revealed this to anyone, he could not understand how Rabbi Moshe Aharon knew.

Rabbi Mellul began to appreciate the exalted stature of Rabbi Moshe Aharon. In turn, Rabbi Moshe Aharon desired to make Rav Mellul aware of how much he admired his mother and added, "I am going to visit your mother, since she is a great and valorous woman."

He Guards the Steps of His Devout Ones

Chazal say, "In the way that a person wants to go, he is led." This indicates that if a man wishes to be righteous or become charitable, he will be presented with opportunities by Heaven in order to achieve this goal. But if he, G-d forbid, wishes to do evil, he will also be assisted in his objective. Chazal say, "Everything is dependent on Heaven, except for the fear of Heaven." First, one must make the effort to be purified, then he will be assisted by Heaven. This lesson was clearly evidenced by the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon, as is illustrated in the following story:

Rabbi Moshe Aharon would always eat his main meal exactly at 12:00 noon. At that time, no one would be allowed to disturb him. Afterward, he would rest a bit, receive people, and then resume learning Torah. Also, at night, he was careful to go to sleep on time. At midnight, he would get up and pray for Am Yisrael. He continued doing so until his last years.

Once, the Rabbanit had to travel to Tel Aviv. Before setting out, she asked Grandmother, a"h, to take out a chicken from the refrigerator, cook it, and serve it to Rabbi Moshe Aharon at exactly 12:00. Grandmother willingly agreed, and she began to prepare the food in order to serve it to the tzaddik. However, Hashem orchestrated events so that exactly at 12:00 noon people

came to see the Rav on an urgent matter. The Rav strayed from his routine and agreed to receive them. Afterward, he wanted to taste his food, but suddenly more people entered. The Rav told Grandmother to allow the people in to see him. The whole afternoon passed in this way. Rabbi Moshe Aharon neither ate nor rested.

When the Rabbanit returned from Tel Aviv, she asked Grandmother if the Rav had already eaten. She told him that he hadn't yet tasted any food, because he had been occupied with people throughout the afternoon. The Rabbanit was visibly distressed.

"What should I have done? He asked to let the people in to see him," Grandmother explained. Then, the Rabbanit asked Grandmother, "Did you *kasher* the chicken?"

"No, I thought that you had already *kashered* it."

Suddenly everything became clear. The Rabbanit entered the room, quickly grabbed the plate of food and threw it away. She proceeded to take another chicken out of the refrigerator, *kasher* and cook it. Suddenly, the Rav asked for food. She then told him the whole story. The Rav smiled and said, "This is in accordance with Chazal's statement, 'In the way that a person wants to go, he is led.' I never allowed non-kosher food to pass my lips. Even when you were not present to supervise my meal, Hashem continued to protect me, assisting me to succeed in my spiritual endeavors." (Heard from friends of the Rav.)

Longing Only For Hashem

Rabbi Moshe Aharon never completely finished the food on his plate during meals. Instead, he would begin eating and then discontinue. When his wife, the Rabbanit, noticed this behavior, she assumed that her husband did not like the way she prepared the food. The tzaddik sensed her uneasiness and told her, "I enjoy your food, but nevertheless, I eat only a little at a time. If I would eat the whole portion at once, I would desire more and

ask you for an additional portion. But I prefer that my desires should be consecrated only for Hashem and Torah and not for the vanities of this world." (Heard from friends of the Rav.)

The Way to Go

In 1978 (5738), as mentioned before, Rabbi Moshe Aharon was in England. The day that he visited Rabbi Yisrael Mellul, he went with his son Rabbi David, shlita, to see an ophthalmologist. Rabbi Moshe Aharon walked ahead of his son. He led the way as if he knew the route by heart, without asking for directions. He succeeded in getting directly to the office, without complications.

Furthermore, Rabbi Moshe Aharon never walked in the streets with his eyes raised to look straight ahead. In fact, he never lifted his eyes from the ground. He always looked down even when he was at home, and all the more so when he walked the streets. It was amazing that even though it was his first visit to the ophthalmologist, and he did not look up as he walked, he was able to find his way directly there.

A Great Tzaddik Will Die

On Chol Hamoed Pesach 1983 (5743), Rabbi Moshe Aharon was taken to the hospital in critical condition. Suddenly, he opened his eyes and said to the people standing at his side, "A great tzaddik will pass away today."

When the family members returned home, they heard the news about the passing of Rabbi Meir Abuchatzeira, zt"l, from Ashdod, the son of the tzaddik, well-known for performing miracles, Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzeira, zt"l, referred to as the Baba Sali. Then they understood the prophetic words of Rabbi Moshe Aharon. Three hours earlier, he had already foreseen through Divine inspiration the passing of the tzaddik, who died suddenly.

His Shining Countenance

Once, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto stayed in the house of the

Azulai family, when visiting Los Angeles. In his honor, the family *kashered* all their dishes and even prepared special foods for him.

Once, Mrs. Azulai told her son David, "Please go to the tzaddik's room and invite him to come eat lunch." The boy went at his mother's bidding and opened the door to the tzaddik's room. But, suddenly, he recoiled and gasped. He quickly retreated.

The family members were alarmed. "What happened?" they asked him anxiously. The boy excitedly reported, "When I entered the room, I saw that the Rav was glowing with a dazzling light, and his face was radiant and shining."

A similar story happened with Makhluf Bitton from Moshav Luzit. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was a guest in his home for a few days, and Makhluf noticed that there was a brilliant light shining from his room. It was because the face of the Rav shone like a torch of fire, casting its rays far and wide.

When the host approached Rabbi Moshe Aharon's room, he suddenly stepped back in fear and retraced his steps without entering. His family members also witnessed the scene, which continued throughout his stay in their home.

Such testimony is also given by Rabbi Moshe Aharon's family members. Many nights, when his room was dark, his face glowed like the sun. At first they were frightened by the scene, but later they became accustomed to it.

Walking in His Ways

A short while before the passing of Rabbi Moshe Aharon, his

son Rabbi David, shlita, was visiting in Los Angeles. One day, he received a message from Eretz Yisrael that his father, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, was critically ill and was on the brink of death.

After further inquiries, Rabbi David found out what had happened. The entire urn of hot water prepared for Shabbat Kodesh spilled on Rabbi Moshe Aharon's feet. It was his custom to make the preparations for Shabbat by himself. His favorite practice was to heat up the *chamin* in honor of the Shabbat and place it on the Shabbat *blech*.

As soon as Rabbi David received the bad news, he flew straight to Eretz Yisrael and went directly to the hospital. His father was lying unconscious, and the doctors informed him that they were planning to amputate both legs the following day. Gangrene had set in, and his feet had to be cut off in order to save his life.

But that night, Rabbi Moshe Aharon opened his eyes and told the people standing around him, "Don't worry. The doctors will never take my legs from me. These are the legs that Hashem gave me as a gift on my birthday, and I used them only to serve Hashem."

They were the very feet that carried him to the Beit Hakeneset every Shabbat, after forty years of his self-imposed seclusion in his house in Morocco. His yearning for Mashiach was so great that his father, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, appeared to him and told him that the time had come for him to ascend to Eretz Yisrael.

These were the feet that transported him to Eretz Yisrael, where he built a Beit Hamidrash, drawing people from all over the world to him to receive his blessings, which always brought good fortune. Since "Hashem is close to all who call upon Him – to all who call upon him sincerely," and Hashem always accepts their prayers, his feet could not be cut off.

בס"ד

בית הכנסת ע"ש הצדיק מרן המלובן רבי חיים פינטו זצ"ל

"גלה כבוד מישראל"

"ואתה צדיק על כל הבא עלינו"

יחד עם כל בית ישראל אנו מתאבלים מדה על המלקוט של הצדיק הקדוש הטהור ופרישא נר ישראל והמאורו

מגדל אראלים והרשרשים

האדמו"ר רבי **משה אהרון פינטו** זצ"ל

בנו של המלוב"ן רבנו הקדוש **חיים פינטו** זיע"א

שעלה בסערה השמימה

ועל בית ישראל יבכו השרפה אשר שרף ה'

סעד ההלוויה יצא מבית הכנסת ע"ש רבנו חיים פינטו

(רחוב רסב"ם מרכז ב' (ע"י כיכר לאנר)

היום יום חמישי ה' אלול תשס"ה (22.8.85) בשעה 3.30 אחה"צ

In fact, when the doctors

were about to wheel Rabbi Moshe Aharon into the operating room for the amputation, one of the doctors noticed an improvement in the color of his legs. Moreover, he also noticed a healthier sheen on his face, which radiated with a special glow. He immediately ordered a review of the case.

The doctors ran several new tests and compared the results they received. An unbelievable miracle had occurred. All the previous tests had shown that the tzaddik was suffering from advanced gangrene, and his life was in danger. However, the new tests determined that blood had begun to flow again through the veins of his feet, and they had resumed a healthy appearance.

All preparations for the amputation came to a halt. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was wheeled out of the operating room and returned to his ward. When Rabbi Moshe Aharon woke up, he began to move his feet and said, "You see, there was no reason to cut off my legs that went to fulfill a mitzvah in honor of Shabbat Kodesh. Hashem does not bring harm upon a person who is engaged in performing a mitzvah, and even more so, when it concerns the honor of Shabbat Kodesh."

Afterward, Rabbi Moshe Aharon began to hobble around his room, singing songs of praise to Hashem with great fervor, thanking Him for saving his legs, so that they should not be buried prior to his death.

A Fruitful Life

Late Wednesday night, on the fifth of Elul, 1985 (5745), the crown of Israel was removed from their heads, and they were left bereft of their leader, the tzaddik and *mekubal*, well-known for performing miracles, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zt"l, who passed on to the Heavenly Yeshiva.

Thousands of people arrived at his funeral to pay their respects. Among them, were several childless couples, who had been married for many years. They stood by the graveside while the ceremony of "*Gallah kevod m'Yisrael*," was conducted according to the custom practiced in Yerushalayim.

Incredibly, all the childless couples that participated in the ceremony had children that year in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon. No doubt, the miracle occurred in the merit of the prayers they offered near the fresh grave during the tzaddik's burial. Many of the children born were named Moshe Aharon, or simply Moshe, after the tzaddik, may his merits protect us.

In the Heat of the Day

Rabbi Moshe Aharon passed away Wednesday night, but was buried the following day. The next day, on Friday morning, before sunrise, several people came to the fresh grave in order to recite Tehillim and pray for salvation in the merit of the tzaddik.

Some of the people prostrated themselves over the earth covering the grave, but suddenly they recoiled from the intense heat that burned beneath them. Usually, the earth is cool before sunrise, but at that time the earth was burning hot. Whoever touched the earth covering the holy tzaddik was instantly burned.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Rabbi Refael Pinto 1900's - died 1980

The youngest son of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan

The Son Outshines His Father

A Moroccan Jew decided to invest in peanuts in order to earn a living. He sold all his possessions and bought a large stock of peanuts for three francs. He hoped that he would earn a profitable income by selling them later for a higher price.

To his dismay, the price of the peanuts did not rise. He was left penniless and feared that he would remain a pauper all his life. People scorned him for selling his possessions in order to buy peanuts, since they could not be sold for a higher price.

Regretfully, he went to the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, in order to receive his blessings. Rabbi Chaim warned him, "Do not sell the peanuts until the price goes up to two rial." The man left the house of the tzaddik, ready to do as he advised. Suddenly, Rabbi Chaim's son, Rabbi Refael met him coming out and told him, "And I advise you not to sell the peanuts until the price goes up to three rial."

In the end, Rabbi Refael was right. The price of the peanuts went up to three rial. The man sold all the peanuts and got rich. Then people told him, "You are so lucky that you waited to sell them for three rial." This reflects what Chazal say (*Chulin* 49b), "The position of the son is better than that of the father." (As heard from friends of Rabbi David, shlita.)

A Safe Trip

For the ten years prior to his passing, Rabbi Refael Pinto did not cross the threshold of his home in Morocco. Many people from all over the world came to him to receive his blessings on various matters. He was famous as a great *mekubal* and well-known for performing miracles, as it says, "A tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills it." His blessings never failed to materialize.

Mr. Shlomo Lasry, who still lives in Morocco, once bought a new Fiat. Even before coming home, he went straight to Rabbi Refael, in order to receive his blessings and to be spared the evil eye. He wished to be protected before he began using the car for his personal needs.

Rabbi Refael greeted Mr. Lasry warmly and asked him, "Why have you come this afternoon? Usually, you are at work at this hour; you generally come either early in the morning or late at night."

Mr. Lasry replied, "I came to receive your blessings for success." Rabbi Refael smiled at him and said, "You are afraid for your car. You fear the evil eye and are scared of accidents. Place your faith in Hashem and then you will fear neither the evil eye nor accidents."

Then, Rabbi Refael patted Mr. Lasry affectionately on his back and told him, "You wanted to hide buying the car from me. But do not worry. I will not cause an evil eye. On the contrary, I wish you good luck!"

Mr. Lasry was amazed by his prophetic vision. How did the Rav know that he had just bought a new car?

Do Not Take the Blessings Lightly

Once, a Moroccan Jew took some friends along with him and went to receive the blessings of Rabbi Refael Pinto. There was a man there who began mocking Rabbi Refael and scorned the concept of blessing people.

Rabbi Refael asked him, "Why did you come to me? Was it in order to scoff at me? Did you come to disturb the other people? If you do not want my blessings, then what are you doing here?" The man replied scornfully, "I just came to watch. The idea of

The wall next to the place where candles are lit in Rabbi Chaim's house in Mogador

blessings amuses me." Rabbi Refael declared, "In another half an hour you will need a blessing, and I will be here to bless you." The man asked, "Which blessing will I need? I do not need anything from you!"

Rabbi Refael said, "How do you know that you do not need anything? Do you know what can happen in half an hour from now? If you came to me, certainly Hashem intended it for a reason. Why can't you wait your turn respectfully? Nevertheless, I do not hold it against you, and I will be here to bless you in another half an hour."

The man continued deriding him and then left with some other people. He got into his car, started the engine, and began to drive. A few minutes later, he suddenly lost control of the car. He spun around and crashed into a wall. The wall crumbled and

came falling down upon the man, injuring him badly. The people near him advised, "Hurry to Rabbi Refael to get his blessings!"

Rabbi Refael was in his house at the time, surrounded by people. Suddenly, someone announced, "The man who scorned the Rav is coming to request your blessings. A wall fell on him and he is badly injured." A few minutes later, the man entered and begged forgiveness and requested a blessing to be cured. Rabbi Refael told him, "Although I am a simple person, my blessings should not be underestimated. Not only did you scorn my blessings, but you also disturbed others. From now on, you should be careful not to deride people, and you should never take the blessings of a simple person lightly."

This was just one example of Rabbi Refael's extraordinary insight and Divine inspiration. Even in our generation, it is important to be aware that if someone mocks a tzaddik, Hashem takes revenge on him, as it says, "Beware of their glowing coal lest you be burnt – for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of a serpent…"

Sanctifying Hashem's Name before the Nations

There is an amazing story told about Rabbi Refael Pinto by Chananya Moyal, the son of R'Avraham Moyal from France. Rabbi Refael once approached the director of the Moroccan bus company, who was a gentile, and told him, "Although you are young, since you are a good friend to the Jews, Hashem will perform a miracle for you today." The gentile laughed at him and told him to leave his office, because he did not know who Rabbi Refael was.

Rabbi Refael left, and the gentile got into his car and drove off. Suddenly, he crashed into a large truck. His car was totaled, but he came out alive and well. Then, he remembered what Rabbi Refael had told him, and he began to search for him. When he found Rabbi Refael, he kissed his hand and told him, "From now on, come to me every Friday, and I will give you a handsome sum of money!" On that day a great *kiddush Hashem* was made.

A Fire Will Erupt

Rabbi Refael once came to the house of a certain man, who thought that he had come to collect donations for charity. Since the man was stingy, he did not want to receive Rabbi Refael. He began to degrade him in front of the people there. Finally, he threw Rabbi Refael out of his house.

Before leaving, Rabbi Refael turned to the man and told him, "I did not come to your house to collect money for charity. I just came to warn you that you should hurry to your store, since a fire was about to erupt. You could have succeeded in extinguishing the flames. However, now it is too late. There is nothing to go for anymore. The entire store has already burned to the ground." This is exactly what occurred. (As heard from friends of Rabbi David, shlita.)

Giving Charity Prevents Theft

The following story took place in 1950 (5710). A man was visiting his friend in his fabric store. From far, they noticed Rabbi Refael Pinto coming toward them. Rabbi Refael entered the store and said to the owner, "Listen well! You must give me a sum

The grave of Rabbi Refael Pinto, zy"a in Casablanca

of money for *tzedakah*, so that Hashem should cancel an evil decree against you and bring you only good tidings."

The store owner got angry and told Rabbi Refael, "We are already familiar with your stories about charity and evil decrees. I do not have money to give you. Leave the store." Rabbi Refael gazed at him and shook his head sadly, "Too bad. I wanted to help you, but you thwarted my efforts. You will yet come to seek my assistance."

After Rabbi Refael left, the store owner's friend said to him, "You really could have given him some money for charity." But the store owner countered, "Why should I give him money every time he comes here?"

Suddenly, a large group of Arabs entered the store seeking to purchase material. In the end, they did not buy anything. After they left, the store owner noticed that his wallet was missing. There was a huge sum of money in it, amounting to 200,000 francs, which would be valued at approximately one million dollars today. It was as if the earth had swallowed it up. The store owner realized that that the group of Arabs that had visited his store had probably stolen the money. He did not know where to turn. Slowly, it dawned upon him that his loss was due to his disgraceful treatment of Rabbi Refael Pinto.

The man quickly went to search for Rabbi Refael. When Rabbi Refael saw him coming, he told him, "They stole your wallet full of money, because you did not want to give charity. If you would have given charity, you would have avoided the theft." The store owner broke down and cried, "Honorable Rabbi, please forgive me for my disgraceful behavior."

Rabbi Refael replied, "I may forgive you, but I do not know if my father, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, can forgive you." The man begged, "If you forgive me, then also your father, Rabbi Chaim, will forgive me."

Rabbi Refael forgave him wholeheartedly, but added, "Next time, if a poor person approaches you, give him *tzedakah*, since

you never know what may happen. Shlomo Hamelech teaches us, "*Tzedakah* saves one from death." (Heard from the friend, who witnessed the incident, and told it to Rabbi David, shlita.)

Along these lines, Rabbi David relates: A similar story happened with my grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. Once Rabbi Chaim asked a certain person to donate money for *tzedakah*, but the man replied that he had no money to give. Rabbi Chaim admonished him and said, "Never say that you don't have any money, since the money is not for me, but for the poor. If you will give *tzedakah*, then you have everything to gain and nothing to lose." The man argued, "I do not see how I can gain anything, since I will only lose money by giving it to charity."

Rabbi Chaim told him, "What should I do? Now it is too late. Hurry to your store as fast as possible and try to salvage whatever is left. A wire caught fire and your whole store is up in flames. Run quickly and try to save whatever you can!" (In those days there was no insurance to pay for the damages.)

Unfortunately, by the time the man arrived at his store, everything had already been burned to the ground.

Flee From Lies

There was a woman who went to pray by the grave of a great tzaddik in Morocco. Rabbi Refael stood near the grave, as well, and asked the woman to donate some money for the poor. The woman replied that she did not have any money. Rabbi Refael contended that she did. The woman swore that that she did not have any money, declaring that if she did have money on her, then her legs should break. Rabbi Refael promptly answered, "Amen! If you are lying, that is what should happen."

Later, while getting on the bus, a strong gust of wind blew her scarf off her head. Tied inside her scarf there was a large sum of money. As she turned around to catch her scarf, she fell and broke both legs.

She had someone carry her to Rabbi Refael, and he admonished

her, "How could you swear that you did not have any money when it was a lie?" She begged his forgiveness, and he accepted her gesture but added, "You lied while standing near the grave of a tzaddik, and that is looked upon harshly in Heaven. I wanted you to donate money for *tzedakah* in order to save you from impending death, but you refused. However, the merit of the tzaddik stood in your stead. Therefore, you only broke your legs and nothing worse happened to you."

The Hidden Mysteries Are Known Only to Hashem

Rabbi Refael was known as being extremely charitable. He followed in his ancestor's ways and gave *tzedakah* to the poor, lending assistance to those in need. He was admired and loved by everyone, including the Arabs, who would come to his house to receive his assistance.

However, there was one area in which he did not experience good fortune. Rabbi Refael married his sister's daughter, but got divorced shortly after. No one knows what happened. Some time later, his divorcee remarried. It was obviously ordained from Heaven. The amazing thing is that precisely on the same day and at the same time that Rabbi Refael died in Morocco, the twelfth of Shevat, 1980 (5740), his divorcee's husband also died in Be'er Sheva. Regarding this it says, "The hidden things are for Hashem…"

Havdalah

Mr. Siboni, who today lives in France, used to come regularly to Rabbi Refael's house on Motza'ei Shabbat to hear him make *havdalah*. On the last Motza'ei Shabbat of Rabbi Refael's life, he came to his house. The Rav took the cup of wine in his hand and began to recite *havdalah*. But, all of a sudden, he burst out in tears, sobbing uncontrollably.

All the people gathered there were mystified by his unusual behavior. Why was he crying? They asked the tzaddik what was the matter, and he told them, "I am crying because I do not have

any children. I am grieved that I will not die peacefully… but at least, I am consoled by the fact that I will serve as atonement for the Jewish people."

The people tried to cheer him up with encouraging words, and Rabbi Refael appreciated their support. He made *havdalah*, and afterward blessed each and every person in his house according to their needs.

That week, his prophecy materialized. On the twelfth of Shevat, 1980 (5740), thieves entered his home and murdered him in his bed, may Hashem avenge his blood.

News about Rabbi Refael's tragic death spread quickly throughout the world. His brother, the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Meir Pinto, who lived with him in the same house, but was very sick and only vaguely aware of what was going on around him, did not know what had happened. When people asked Rabbi Meir if he knew the identity of the murderer, he was scared to say who it was, but declared, "In another month the murderer will be caught, but I do not want to reveal who he is."

Rabbi Meir was anguished over his brother's death. One month later, on the ninth of Adar, 1980 (5740), the police caught the murderer, just as Rabbi Meir had predicted. However, on that day, Rabbi Meir passed away, merely a month after his brother, may their merits protect us, Amen. (Heard from Eliyahu Dehan.)

Rabbeinu David, shlita, adds:

I merited attending my uncle, Rabbi Meir Pinto, during the last month of his life, before he departed to the Heavenly Yeshiva. I was the one who shut his holy eyes. On the last night prior to his death, he called me and asked, "Do you see what I see?" When I answered in the negative, he was surprised.

On that occasion, I asked him to reveal to me the identity of Rabbi Refael's murderer but he refused. However, he added that at the moment that *Kriyat Shema* would be recited at his bedside

before his death, the identity of the murderer would be revealed. This is exactly what happened.

A few hours before his passing, he blessed me that I should get married within the year, and indeed, his blessing was fulfilled. He also revealed to me awesome secrets about the holiness of our exalted ancestors, zy"a.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Rabbi Nissim and Rabbi Yehuda Pinto 1900's

Sons of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan

Rabbi Nissim Pinto

A Time of Troubles

Rabbi Nissim Pinto was Rabbi Moshe Aharon's older brother. He is buried in Montreal, Canada. The following story is told concerning him:

There was a man who was framed by competitors. They reported false accusations to the Internal Revenue Service. The agents arrived at his house unexpectedly, and the poor man could not prove his innocence.

Frightened, he went to his father and told him what had happened. His father said, "My son, do not worry. We will go to Rav Nissim Pinto." They went and told him all about the false accusations. Rabbi Nissim declared, "There is no need to fear. Tomorrow they will call you and beg your forgiveness. They will admit that there was an error and they do not understand how it occurred. Furthermore, they will even give you a refund."

The next day, the Internal Revenue Service summoned him. They admitted that all the accusations had been false and begged his forgiveness. They could not understand how such an error had occurred. Had they investigated the matter properly, they would have realized that the accusations were unfounded.

Then, they gave him a refund. When he asked them why,

they told him that after reviewing the case, they found that he deserved a refund since he had overpaid. This was truly amazing; the Internal Revenue never returns money. In fact, they always attempt to extract as much money as possible from the citizens. This was a fulfillment of Chazal's words, "The will of those who fear Him He will do." (Told by Rabbi David, shlita, as heard from the man himself.)

Divine Inspiration

Once, in the middle of a discussion with friends in his house, Rabbi Nissim suddenly paused and said, "Soon, a man will come here and give me a large sum of money (he specified the exact sum). Immediately after he leaves, someone else will enter, requesting the exact sum that he donated. Then, I will give the money that I received from the first person to the second one."

Within a short time, a man came to Rabbi Nissim with a large sum of money and asked him for his blessings. Rabbi Nissim blessed him and bade him farewell. When they counted the money that he had donated, they discovered that it was the exact sum that Rabbi Nissim had predicted that he would give.

Just as the man left, a woman entered, sobbing bitterly. She cried, "Rabbeinu! My daughter is getting married tomorrow, and I still do not have the money to pay for the expenses of the wedding." The Rav inquired how much money she needed. The woman named the exact amount that the first person had brought him. The Rav handed the money to her, and she left joyfully.

Such stories help us realize that even in our days there are holy tzaddikim who serve Hashem with complete devotion and merit Divine inspiration.

Although there are thousands of stories illustrating the holiness and virtues of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's sons, only a few are recorded here, because of the limited space. May their merits protect us.

The place where the righteous Pinto family would build their sukkah

Rabbi Yehuda Pinto

Is Everything Alright?

Once, when R' Yosef Knafo went to Casablanca for business purposes, he met the tzaddik Rabbi Yehuda Pinto, the son of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. Rabbi Yehuda told him, "Go back to Tiznit immediately! A great miracle happened to your son Mordechai."

R' Yosef was astonished. What miracle could have happened? Moreover, how did Rabbi Yehuda Pinto know about it? In those days there were no telephones in the Arab villages in Morocco.

Since R' Yosef was imbued with faith in tzaddikim, he did not doubt what he was told and prepared to return home immediately. It was already night time, and it was difficult to go back home. Nevertheless, he traveled by bus through the night and arrived home early in the morning.

As soon as he arrived, he asked his family members if everything was alright. When he got the noncommittal reply, "Everything's okay," he persisted in surprise, "Is everything really alright?"

"Everything is alright!" they assured him. "However, yesterday a great miracle occurred. A bus backed up while Mordechai was standing behind it, but the driver did not see him. He knocked Mordechai down and continued driving right over him."

R' Knafo looked at them incredulously. "What are you talking about? A bus ran over him?"

"A great miracle was wrought for us," they rejoiced. "It was a miracle that the wheels did not crush him. It was also a miracle that Mordechai did not attempt to escape from under the wheels. If he would have moved, he would have been crushed under the wheels and died!"

"What time did this happen?"

They told him the exact time, and R' Knafo figured out that it was exactly when Rabbi Yehuda Pinto had told him, "A miracle happened to your son, and you must go back home immediately."

From this story we perceive the exalted level of *kedushah* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto's sons, who merited Divine inspiration, just like their holy father, zy"a.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Documents and Deeds Belonging to the Pinto Family

Deeds, contracts, and gifts belonging to the family of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a, which were drafted and signed by great Rabbanim of Morocco throughout the years.

Preface

May Hashem's Name be blessed for granting us the privilege, after much effort, of publishing the deeds and documents belonging to the Pinto family, which were drafted and signed throughout the years by the great Rabbanim of Morocco. Because of their significance and value, we inserted copies of these documents in the sefer.

Most of these documents were originally written in Arabic script, which were very difficult to read. Much work and effort was invested over many months to decipher these documents, in order to translate each and every one in the clearest way. To this end, we would like to thank Rabbi Aharon Eisenbach, shlita, as well as Rabbi Efraim Levi, shlita, of Yerushalayim, for their hard work in deciphering the documents.

Furthermore, in almost all of these documents, many of the legal terms were written as acronyms, such as וקמאמדכו"ל בקא"ס, which stands for וקנינא מיניה אכל מאי דכתוב ומפורש לעיל בקנין אגב סודר. Or, for example ונהבקושחבי"ת, which means ונגמר הכל בקנין ושבועה חמורה בשם יתברך. There were many more unusual acronyms of this sort. This also made the work extremely difficult, since we had to decipher all the acronyms, so that the reader would be able to understand the document.

The original documents were written as run-on sentences, from beginning to end, without punctuation. To make them comprehensible, we added punctuation as needed. We also inserted titles for new paragraphs of the documents to make it easier on the reader, so that it would not be difficult to read continuously without pause.

It is possible that the documents are not printed in the same order as the originals. In this book, the documents are printed according to the dates that they were drafted; those with earlier dates are placed first, and the ones with later dates are last. Many of the documents belong to the same case. We have tried to ensure that they are listed together with other appropriate documents. We have added a few words of explanation at the beginning of each document to explain what it is about.

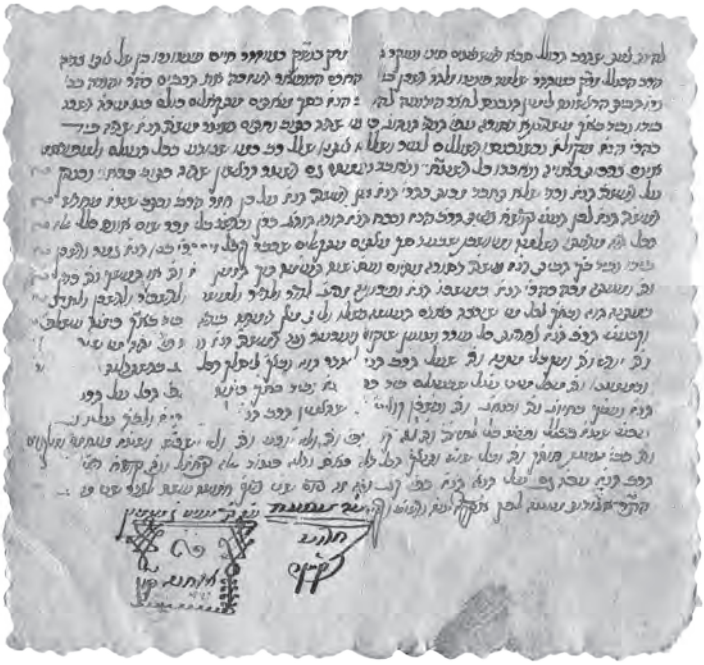
These documents teach a person how to live ethically, and how severe it is to steal. Those who steal suffer the worst prosecution. The documents clearly show to what extent the buyers and sellers, or owners and tenants, were wary of any matter of theft. They were exacting to the precise details of what was written, in order that there should be no room for error.

Every point, down to the last detail is specified so that there should be no breach to invalidate the document or deed. Every variety or option for identifying information was included, such as the words: תדור, ותדייר (different versions of tenancy), תשכיר ותמשכן (rent and rental agreements), תמכור ותחליף ותחסין (sell, exchange, and store), etc. Every detail related to the transaction was included in the document so that everything should be done according to Torah law, as was received from Moshe Rabbeinu at Har Sinai.

Editor in Chief
Yehoshua Silverberg

Shtar 1

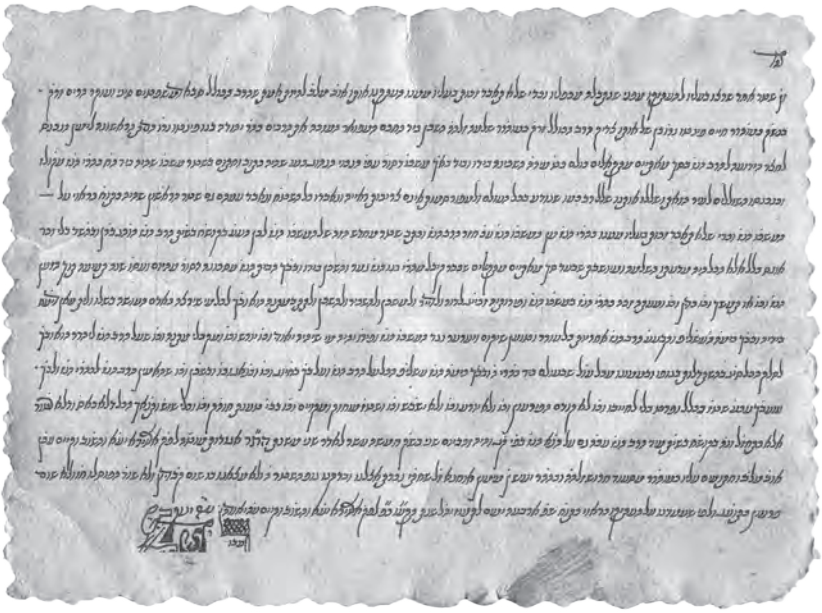
A deed describing the transaction between the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol and his son the tzaddik Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan), regarding the first house on the right side in the courtyard. The contract is for one year. Since the original document was lost, another document was drafted:



Shtar 2

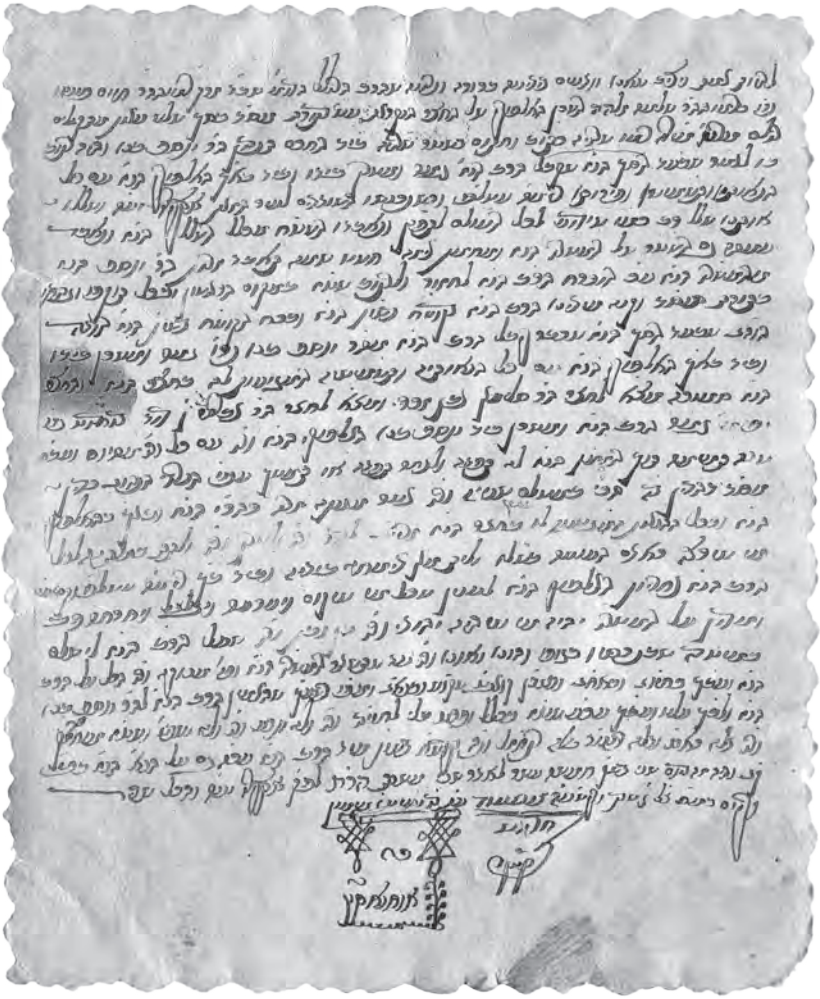
This document seems to be a copy of the previous document:

Note: from the margins of the document we can perceive the great esteem in which his contemporaries held Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, since the Rabbanim of his generation heaped the following praises upon him: "The supreme Rabbi, most senior judge, brilliant, and of holy ancestry." Regarding his son Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan), already in those days it was written about him: "One who brings merit to the people."



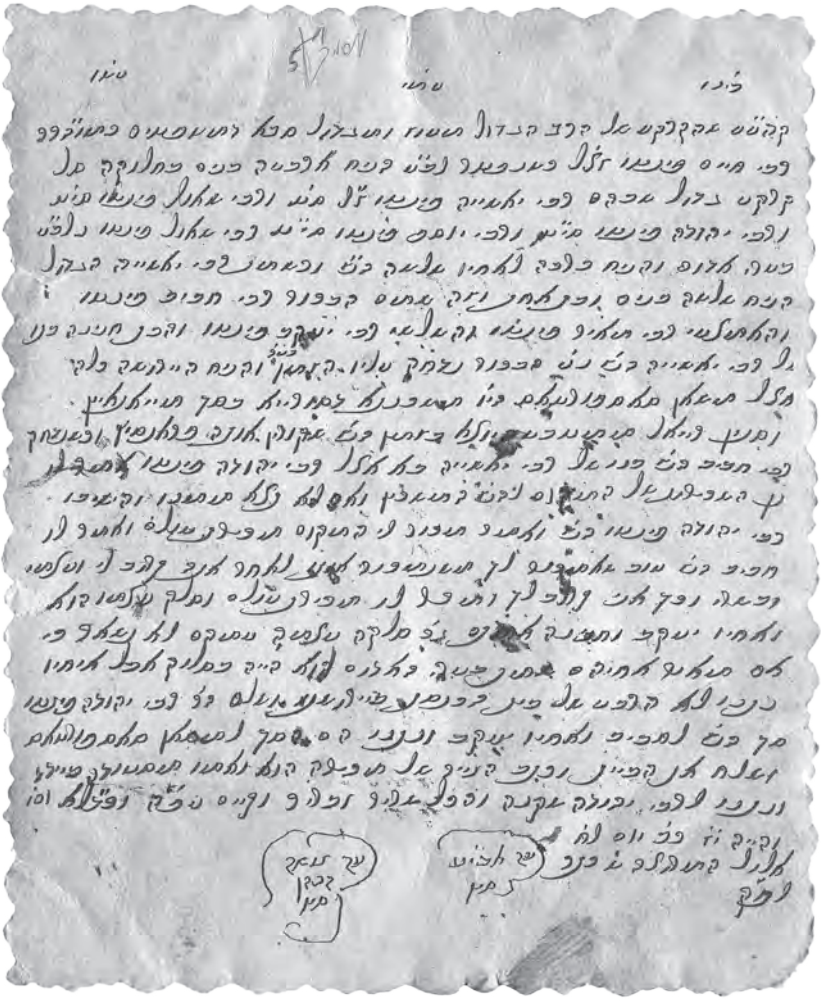
Shtar 3

This document describes a transaction between Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol and his son Rabbi Yosef regarding the courtyard which was adjacent to the courtyard of Rabbi Salimon ibn Zichri on one side, and the courtyard of Rabbi Avraham ibn David Buchbut, on the other side. The contract is for one year.



Shtar 4

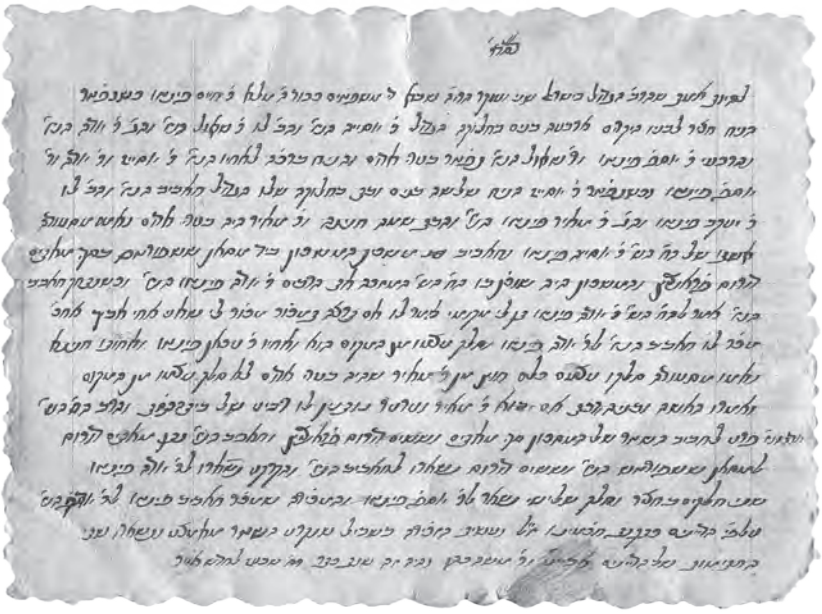
When the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol passed away, he bequeathed the courtyard to his four sons: his oldest son: Rabbi Yoshiyahu, the second: Rabbi Shaul, the third: Rabbi Yehuda,



and the fourth: Rabbi Yosef Pinto. Rabbi Shaul passed away while staying in Europe without leaving children, leaving his

share for his three remaining brothers. When Rabbi Yoshiyahu passed away, he left three sons and a daughter; the oldest: Rabbi Chaviv, the second: Rabbi Yaakov, the third: Rabbi Meir, and a daughter: Chanina. Rabbi Meir moved to Europe with his mother, the widow of Rabbi Yoshiyahu. Chaviv made a contract with Massan Sasportas, making Rabbi Yehuda responsible for supervising the courtyard.

When Rabbi Chaviv met with hard times, he negotiated a contract with Rabbi Yehuda, waiving his rights to the property, as well as those of his brother Yaakov, his sister Chanina, and his mother, Massouda. Meir died in Europe, without waiving his rights. Thus, it was stipulated that if ever Rabbi Meir's share would be disputed, a quarter of the Beit Hakeneset would be allocated as his share.

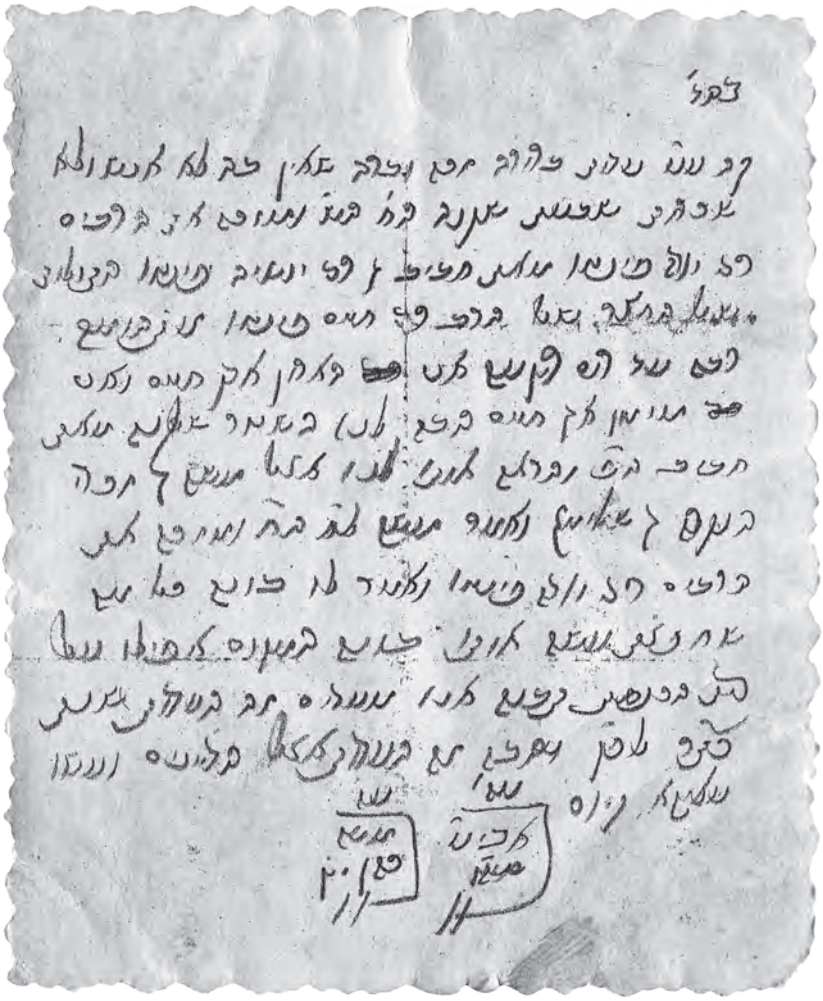


Shtar 5

This document is almost entirely faded, but seems to belong to the previous document:

Shtar 6

This document confirms that Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan) did indeed buy the share of his late brother Yoshiyahu's heirs as mentioned above:

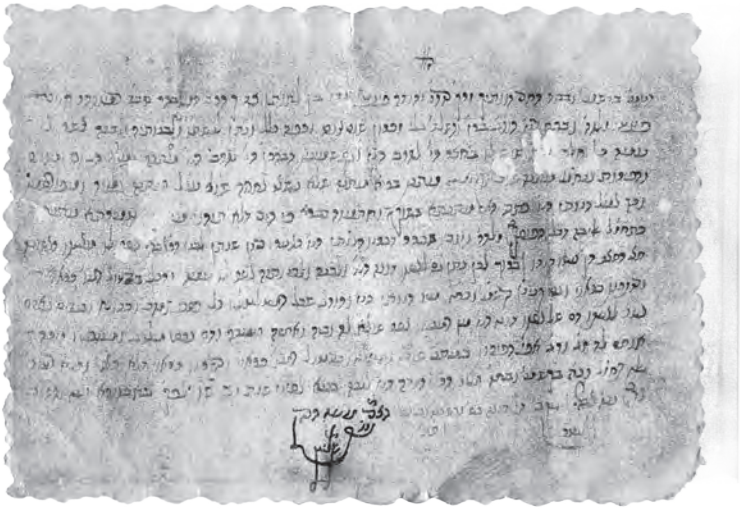


Shtar 7

Rabbanit Miriam, the widow of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol demanded support, including food and clothing, from her sons. Thus, her son Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan) committed himself to supporting her. He also gave her a house to live in. Her son Rabbi Yosef states his agreement to this arrangement:

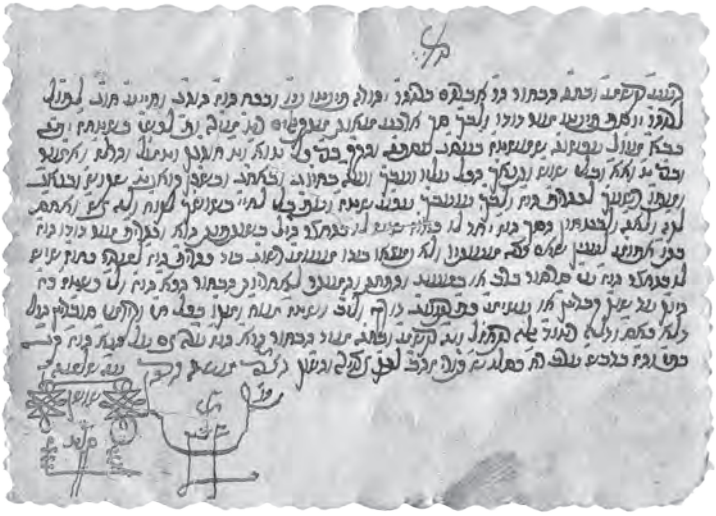
Shtar 8

Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan), zy"a, gave his wife, Donna, her daughters and her son his entire share of the courtyard, and also gave them as a gift an eighth of the building of the Beit Hakeneset. He explained that since he had given half of the courtyard named after Rabbi David Ben Baruch to Rabbi Avraham, his son from his first wife, he was therefore giving his wife Donna and her children his share. Rabbi Yehuda declared that all his wife's inheritance and belongings were her possessions:



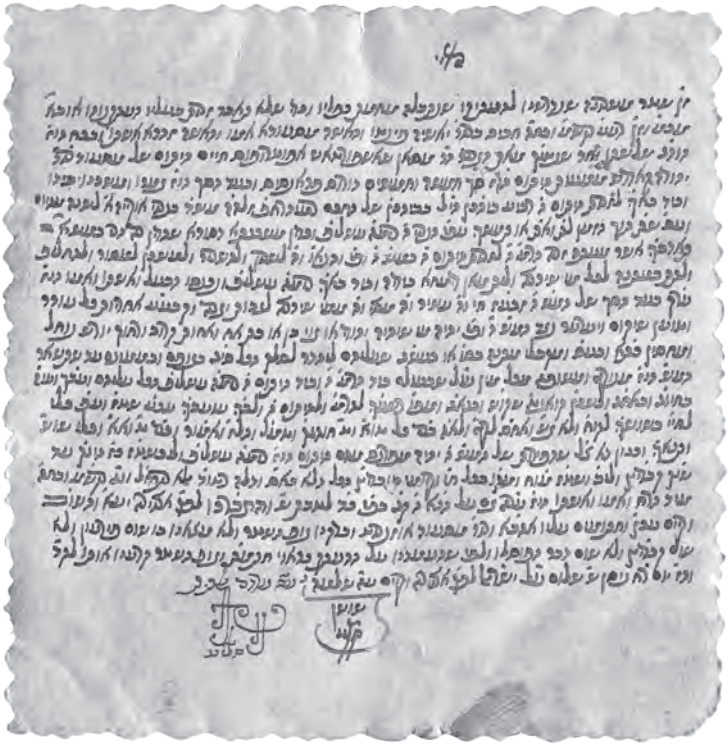
Shtar 9

Avraham, the son of Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan) and grandson of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, made the following contract with his uncle, Rabbi Yosef Pinto:



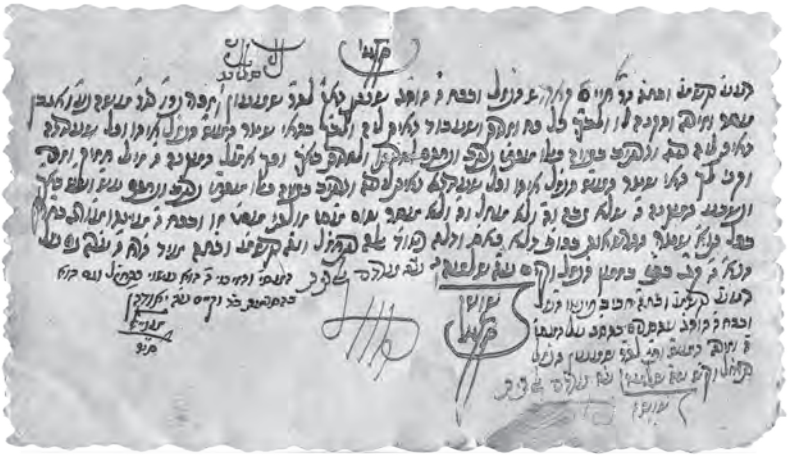
Shtar 10

This is a copy of a previous deed. The contract is between Rabbi Chaviv the son of Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, his mother Massouda, and his wife Zohara on one side, with Massan Sasportas, regarding the support of the orphan, Chaim the son of Massoud ben Rav Yehuda Kadosh. The orphan will be supported by the income from a quarter of the Beit Hakeneset named after Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol:



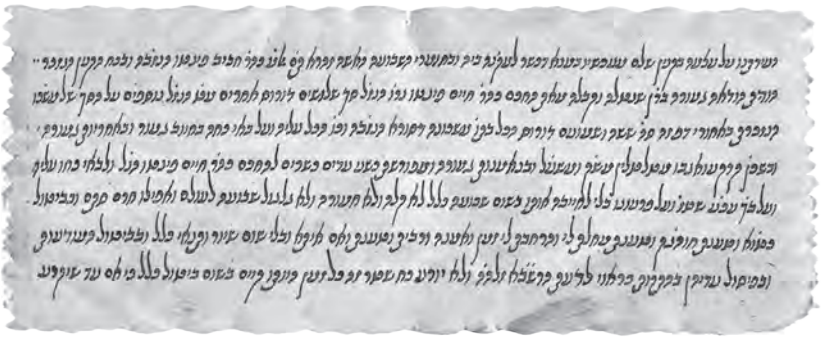
Shtar 11

This document is part of the previous document (10). The orphan Chaim Kadosh transferred four amot of land to Rabbi Shimon Zichri. Rabbi Chaviv Pinto agreed to this transfer:



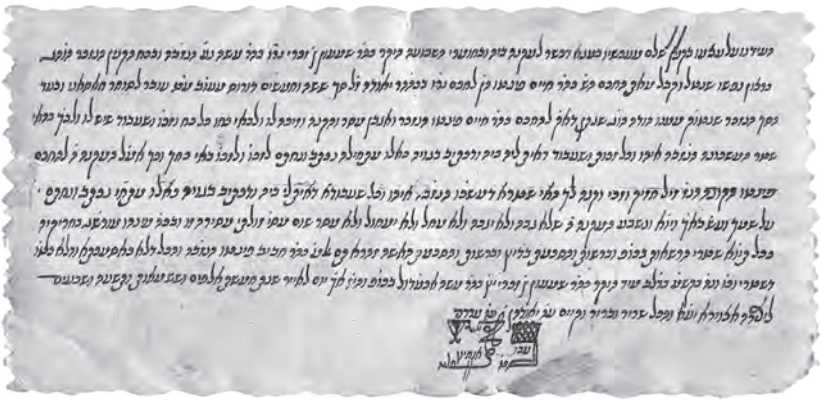
Shtar 12

This document states that Rabbi Chaviv Pinto received a sum of money from Rabbi Shimon Zichri for his rights in the transfer mentioned above (11):



Shtar 13

Rabbi Shimon Zichri transferred those same four amot (mentioned in 11) to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan and received payment for it. This was with the consent of Mrs. Zohara, the widow of Rabbi Chaviv Pinto:

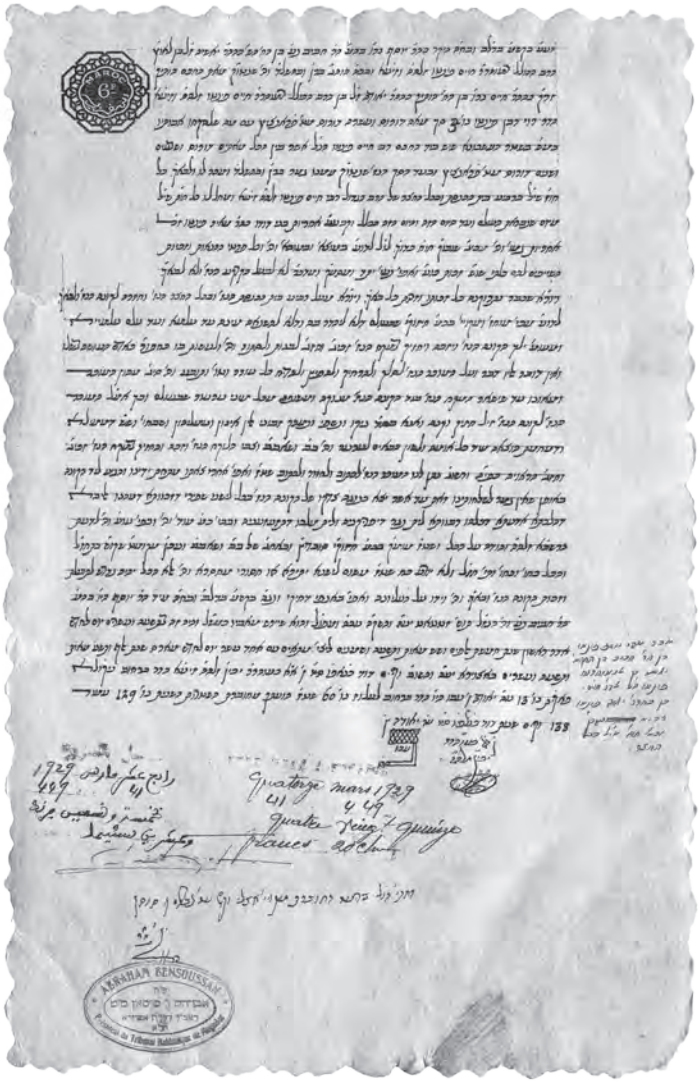


Shtar 14

The widow of Rabbi Chaviv Pinto, Zohara, received money from Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan for the use of the property mentioned above (as did Rabbi Shimon Zichri). Later, there is legal documentation of what Rabbi Chaviv, Rabbi Shimon Zichri, and Mrs. Zohara received:

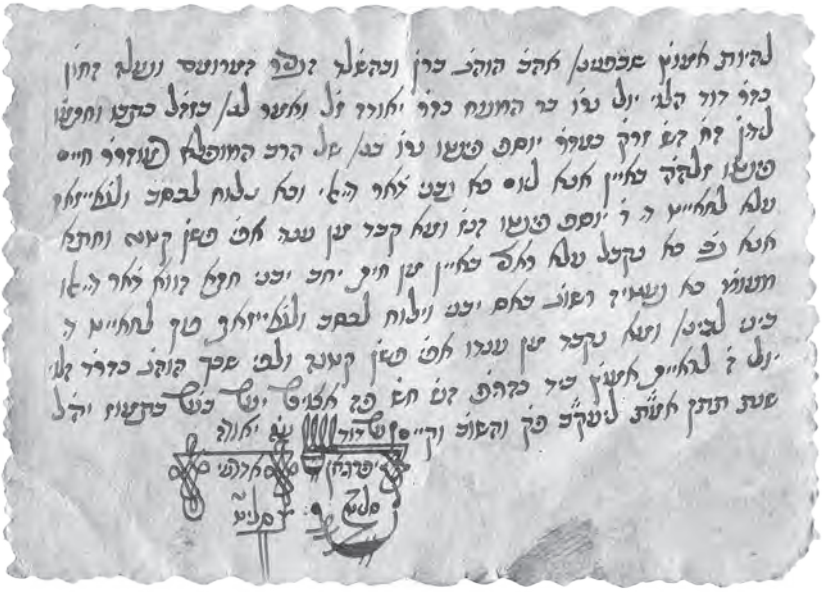
Shtar 15

Rabbi Yosef, the son of Rabbi Chaviv Pinto, and grandson of Rabbi Yoshiyahu, received money from Rabbi Chaim Pinto for his rights to the aforementioned quarter of the Beit Hakeneset and the courtyard of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, taking responsibility for the share of the descendants of his uncle Rabbi Meir Pinto:



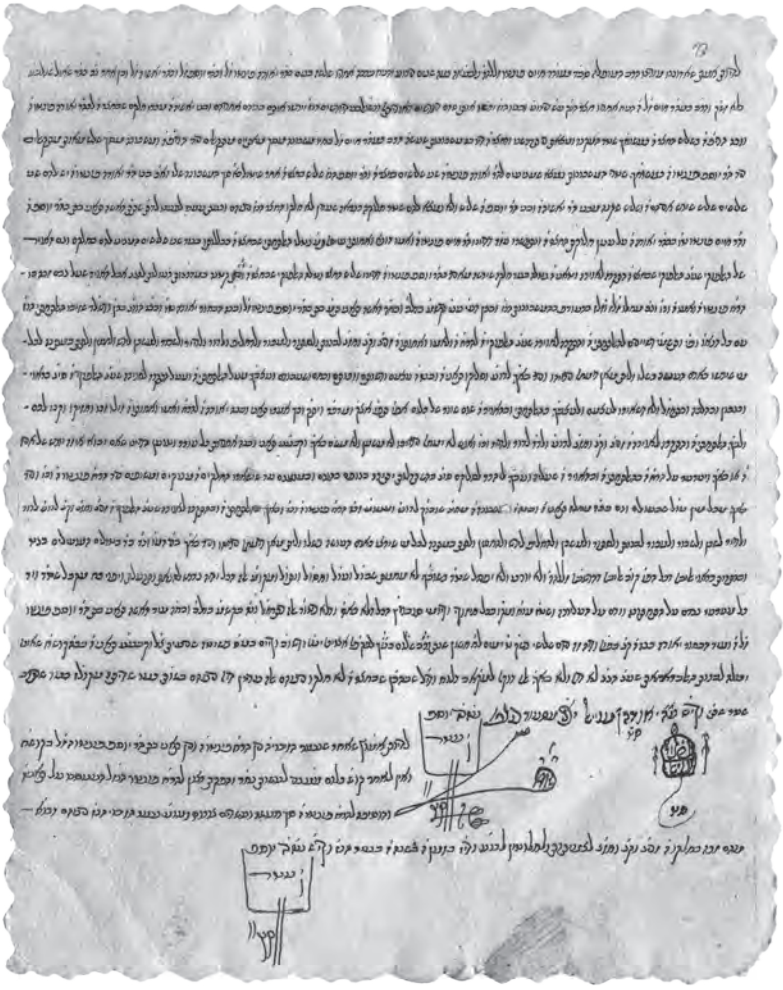
Shtar 16

This deed is a contract between Rabbi Yosef Pinto, the son of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol and between Rabbi David Halevi Yuly, the son of Rabbi Yehuda, z"l:



Shtar 17

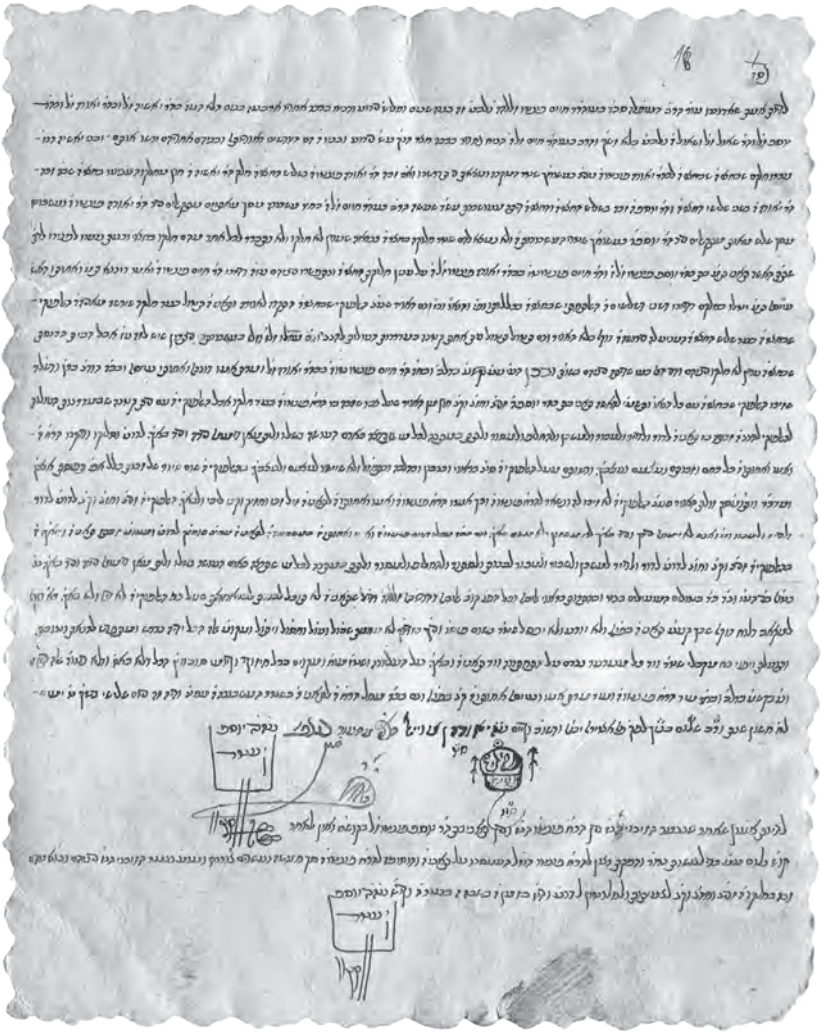
This document records negotiations between Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan and his cousin, Tani, the daughter of Rabbi Yosef Pinto in allocating an appropriate share of the inheritance to the property of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol. In the end, Rabbi Chaim agreed to his share, specified in the deed, and Tani and her son Yehuda agreed to their share. The following is documentation that Tani transferred her rights to Rabbi Chaim's share to him:



**From the comments on the margins of the document, we see that the family members of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol bought and sold his property among themselves, in order that it should always remain the inheritance of the family. In fact, until today, the property of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol is recorded as his family's possession. This is because Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto bought everything from the rest of the family members to ensure that it would not end up in the hands of strangers. Rabbeinu David, shlita, testifies, "And I, the humble servant of Hashem, David Pinto, transferred all the documents to the Beit Din of Morocco twenty-five years ago."

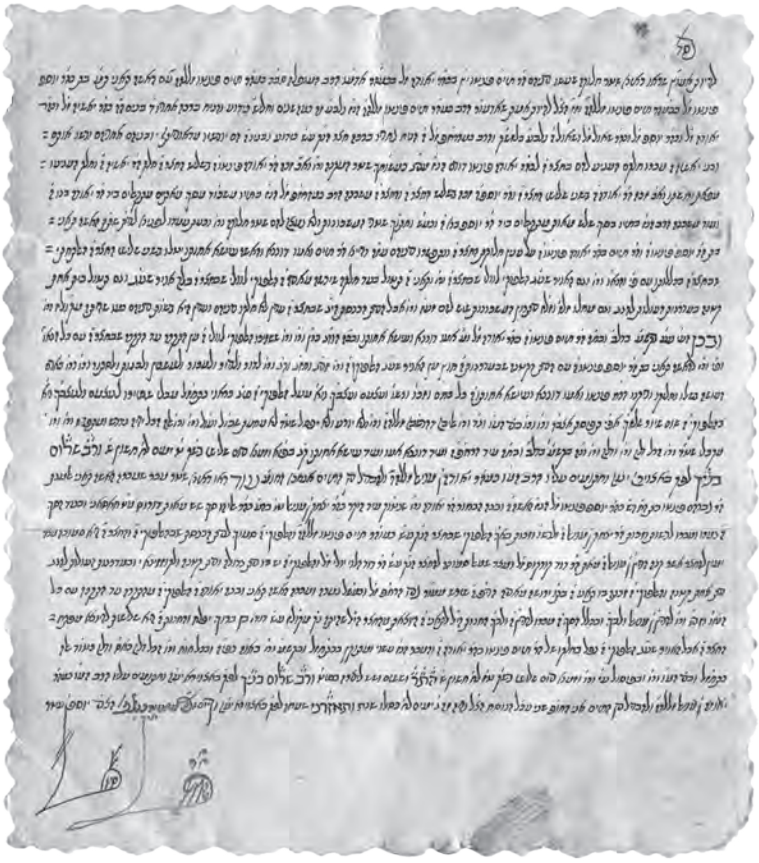
Shtar 18

This deed is a continuation of the previous one (17). Whereas in the previous document, Mrs. Tani consented to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan's share, in this document, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan consents to Mrs. Tani's share (specifying that she was not permitted to build above her share):



Shtar 19

This document is connected to documents 17 and 18. It delineates the agreement between Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan and Mrs. Tani. Thereafter, the second part of the document describes how Mrs. Tani, widow of Rabbi Avraham Pinto and daughter of Rabbi Yosef Pinto, together with her son Yehuda, sold the alfuki (which was a part of her share of the inheritance), to Rabbi Yitzchak Moyal, a short while later. Included in this property is a store, which is situated in the third quarter toward the exit of the courtyard. But the space above the alfuki remains in the possession of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, son of Rabbi Yehuda:

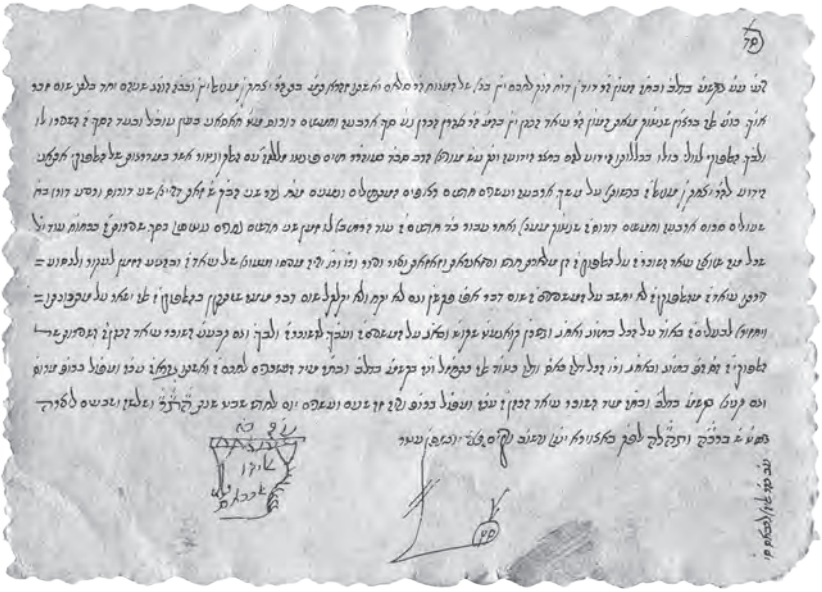


Shtar 20

This deed is also connected to document 19. It establishes that Mrs. Tani and her son sold to Rabbi Yitzchak Moyal their share, the alfuki of the courtyard under the ownership of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. The contract stipulated that the space above the alfuki belongs to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. The store on the property is included in the sale to Rabbi Yitzchak Moyal. Later, it states that Rabbi Yitzchak Moyal gave his share as a gift to his daughter Miss Zohara, on the occasion of her wedding to David Chiyun. Rabbi Yitzchak retained the deed of the small house above the staircase mentioned in the previous deed, as well as the store mentioned there:

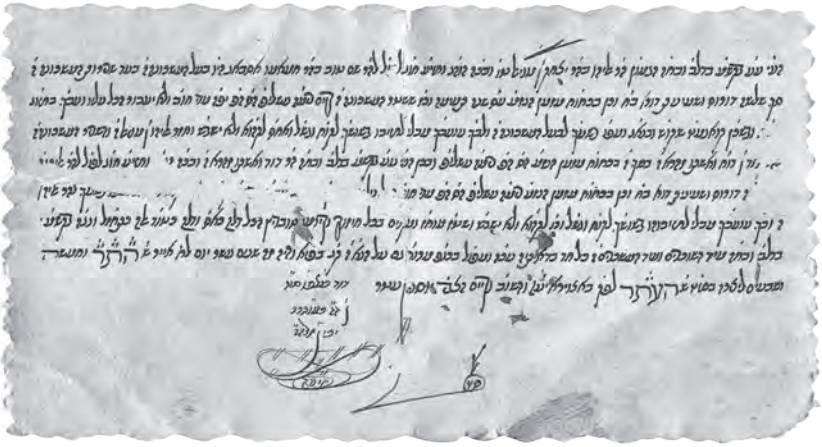
Shtar 21

This deed also records that Rabbi Yitzchak Moyal gave the *alfuki* to his daughter Zohara as a gift on the occasion of her wedding:



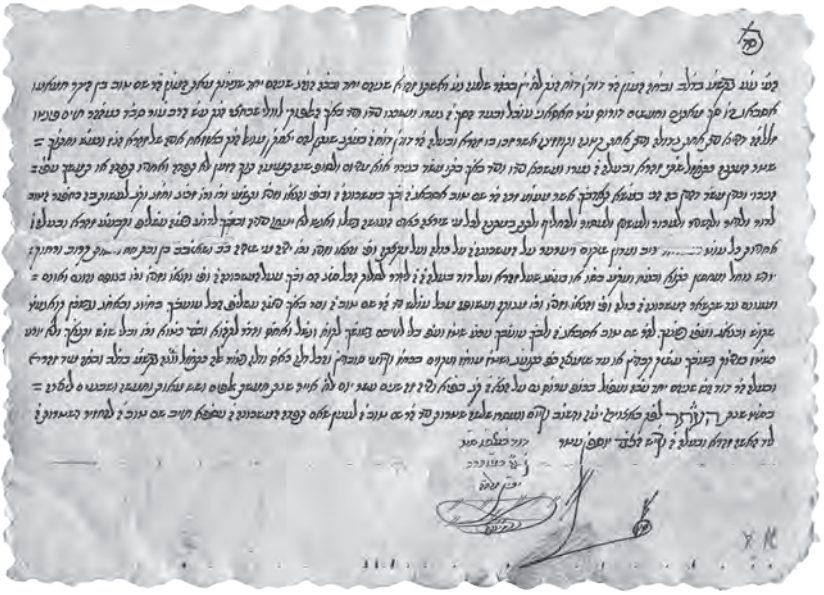
Shtar 22

Rav Eliyahu ben Rav Yitzchak Moyal made a contract with Rav Shem Tov ben Rav Chamamu Assabag regarding use of the property for a year. Rav Eliyahu ben Rav Yitzchak Moyal allowed use of the property for David Chiyun and his wife Zohara during this time. Rabbi David Chiyun and his wife Zohara agreed to pay a sum of money for this each month.



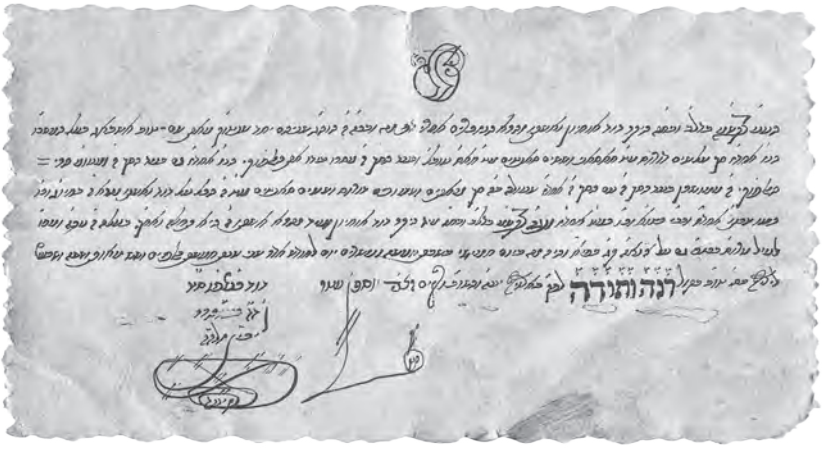
Shtar 23

This deed discusses the *alfuki* of the property that Rabbi David Chiyun and his wife received from Rabbi Yitzchak Moyal on the occasion of their wedding, which they sold afterwards to Rabbi Shem Tov Assabag:



Shtar 24

Additional documentation (a year later) concerning Rabbi David Chiyun and his wife Zohara's sale of the alfuki of the property to Rabbi Shem Tov, as described previously (23):

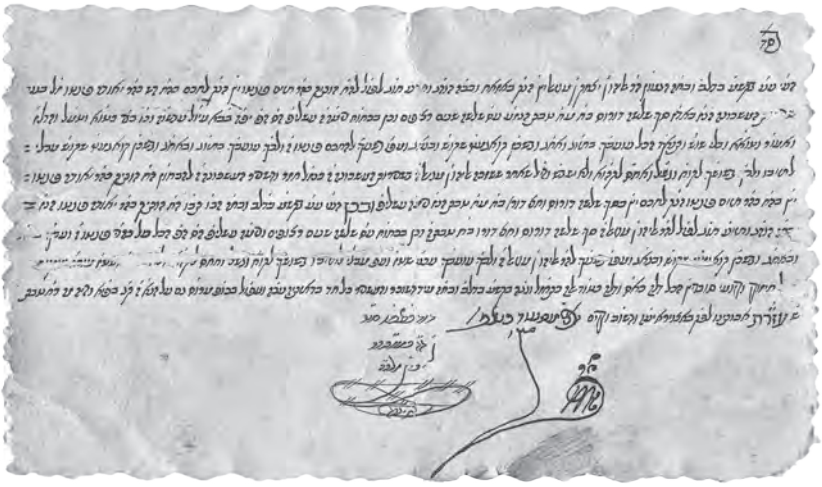


Shtar 25

This document states that Rabbi David and his wife Zohara, and also Rabbi Shem Tov Assabag, sold back their rights to the *alfuki* in the property to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan:

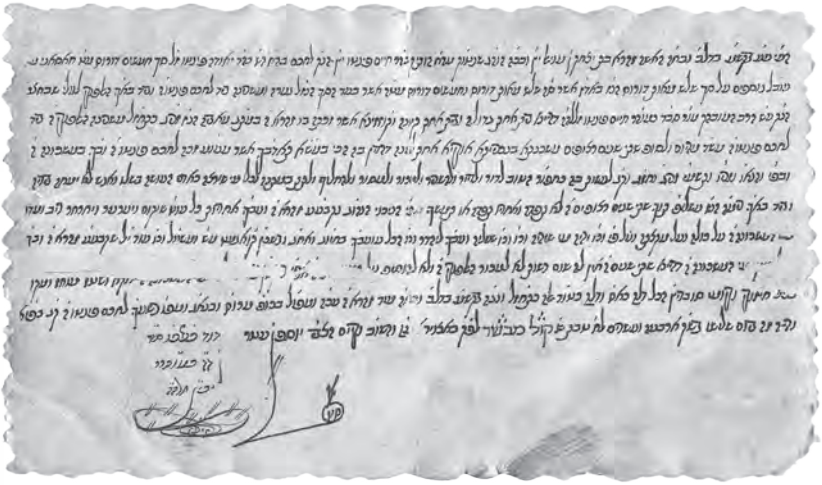
Shtar 26

This deed describes a contract between R' Eliyahu Moyal and Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. R' Eliyahu Moyal agreed to pay a sum of money each month to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. Thereafter, Rabbi Eliyahu Moyal made a contract concerning the property with Rabbi Yehuda Pinto, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan's son, for a sum of money specified in the contract.



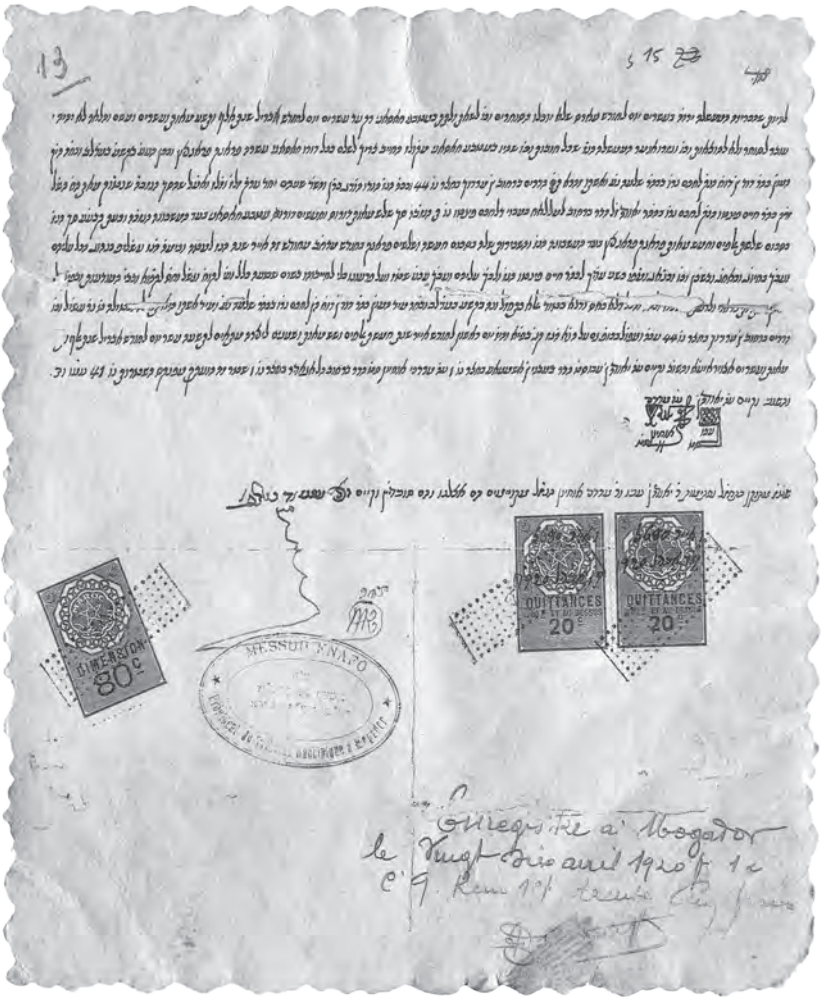
Shtar 27

A deed stating that Mrs. Zohara, the wife of Rabbi David Chiyun, received money from Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan for selling him the rights to the alfuki, as documented above (25):



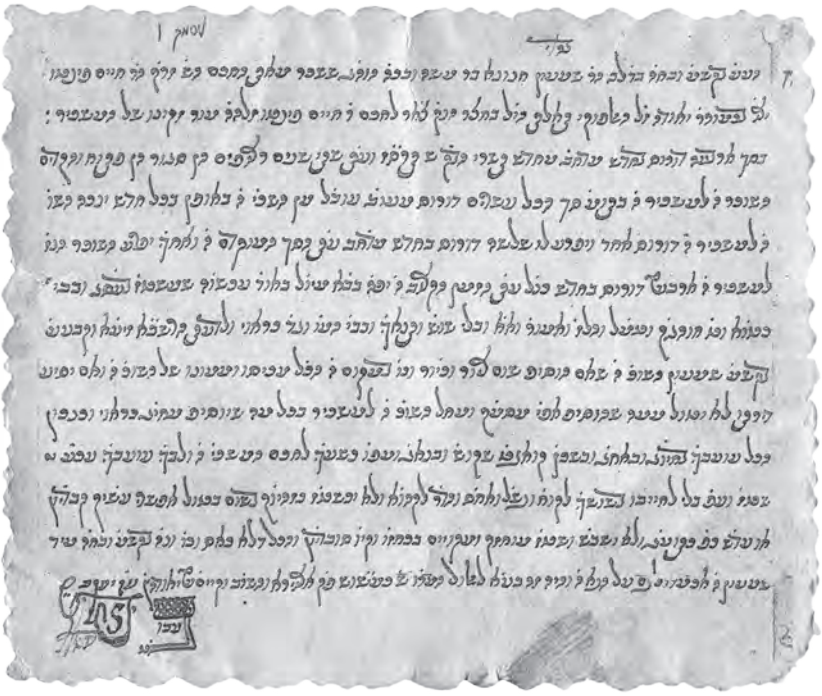
Shtar 28

Testimony of Mrs. Zohara and her husband that the money which they received from Rabbi Chaim Hakatan for their rights to the *alfuki* of the property was converted to the new currency, which was required by law:



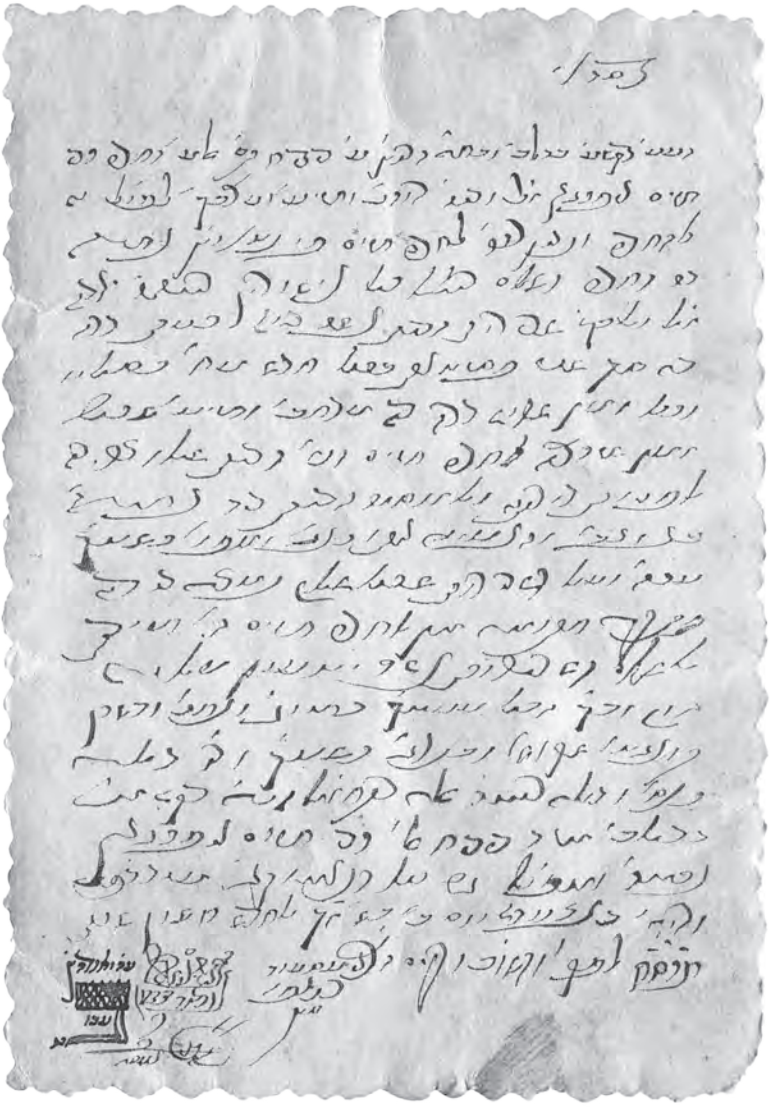
Shtar 29

Rabbi Shimon Chanuna rented the *alfuki* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol's property from Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan for the sum of money specified in the contract:



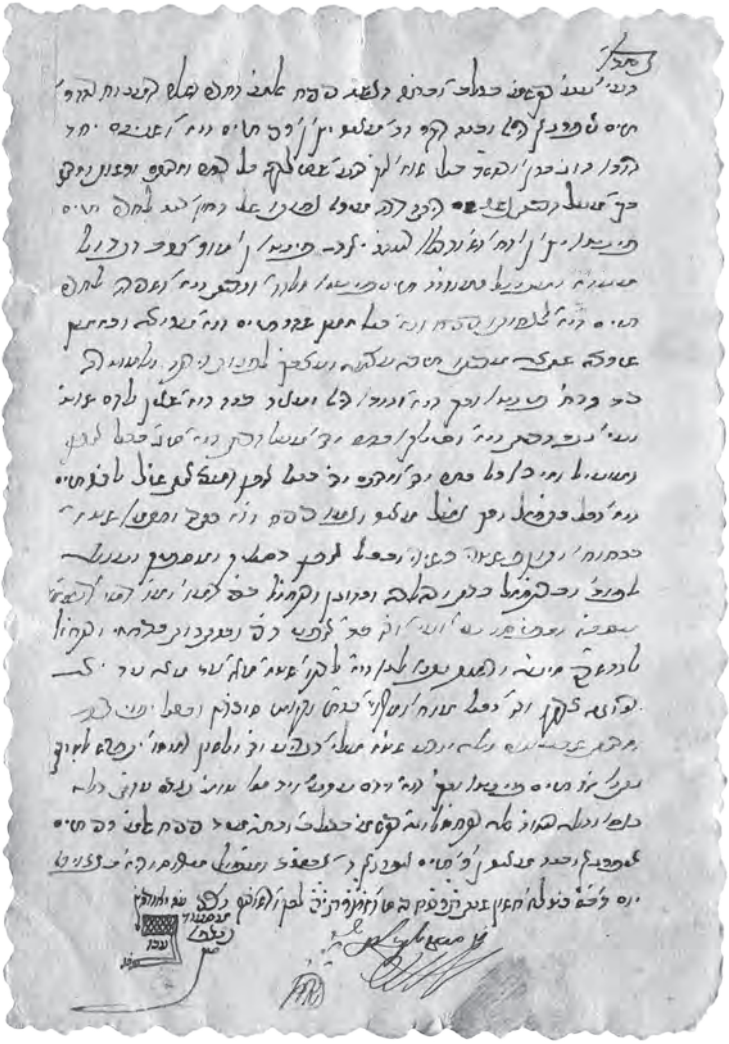
Shtar 30

Mrs. Bébéh, the widow of Rabbi Chaim Ifergan, agrees to pay her father Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan rent for the house in which she lives for the sum specified in the contract. This document stipulates that whenever Rabbi Chaim would want use of the house, she would immediately evacuate it:



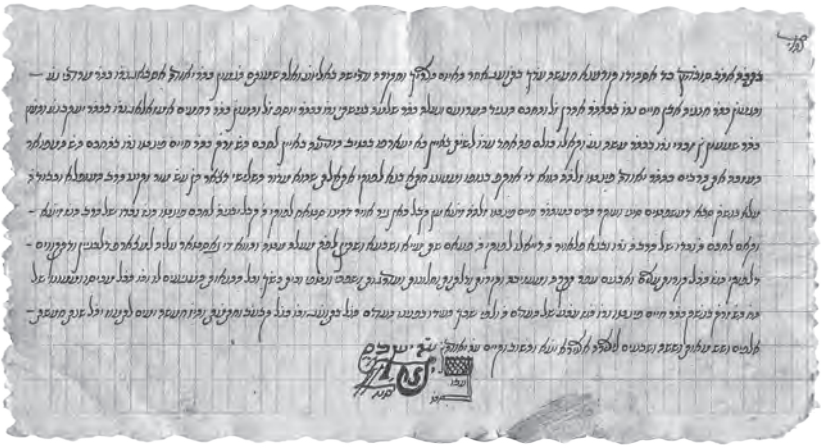
Shtar 31

This is a continuation of document 30. The widow of Rabbi Chaim Ifergan, Mrs. Bébéh and her son Meir ben Chaim, waived their rights to the house where Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan's sister, Mira, used to live. Again, it is stipulated that whenever Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan would want the house, the widow Bébéh would evacuate it:



Shtar 32

This document lists five witnesses who testify that the house belongs to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, the grandson of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol:



Shtar 33

Mrs. Reina, the wife of Shlomo Benisti, waived her rights to the courtyard belonging to her husband, since he had sold the courtyard to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. She adds her consent to the transaction:

Thus, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan bought the courtyard, and this is the way it remains until today. The entire estate of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, together with the Beit Hakeneset named after him, remains in the possession of the family for all future generations.

Shtar 34

Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan gives his son Rabbi Nissim power of attorney to sell the courtyard in Mogador:

11 CK 30442

MAROC 6E

MOSHÉ MEIR MAI ELYAKIM

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The Piyutim of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and Rabbi Chaim Hakatan

The following are a few surviving samples of the *piyutim* composed by Rabbi Chaim Hagadol:

פיוט על ימי בראשית ושבת קודש

סימן: אני חיים חזק

A piyut describing the six days of Creation and the uniqueness of Shabbat Kodesh:

אֲלֵיכֶם נֶאֱמָנַי, אַזְכִּירָה בִּרְנָנַי, רְאוּ כִּי ה' נָתַן לָכֶם שַׁבָּת.
נָאַם אֵ-ל שׁוֹכֵן עָרֶץ, לִבְרֹא רוּם וָאָרֶץ, אוֹר בָּרָא בְּמָרֶץ, בְּאֶחָד בְּשַׁבָּת.
יוֹם לְיוֹם יַבִּיעַ, אָמַר וִיהִי רָקִיעַ, תּוֹךְ מַיִם הָרָקִיעַ, בַּשֵּׁנִי בְּשַׁבָּת.
חִוָּה צוּר בְּרֵאשִׁית, תֵּרָאֶה יַבֶּשֶׁת, דֶּשֶׁא וָעֵץ יָשִׁית, בַּשְּׁלִישִׁי בְּשַׁבָּת.
יָ-הּ בּוֹרֵא טַל אוֹרוֹת, הַמּוֹצִיא מִזָּרוֹת, תָּלָה הַמְּאוֹרוֹת, בָּרְבִיעִי בְּשַׁבָּת.
יָצַר הַתַּנִּינִים, צוּר שׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנִים, דָּגִים מִינִים שׁוֹנִים, בַּחֲמִישִׁי בְּשַׁבָּת.
מֵעָפָר יָצַר אָדָם, וַיִּשְׁכַּב וַיִּרְדַּם, וְעֶזְרוֹ בָּשָׂר וָדָם, בַּשִּׁשִּׁי בְּשַׁבָּת.
חִזַּק אֶת זְרוֹעִי, בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיְצַו לְהַרְגִּיעִי, זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת.
זְכִירָה וּשְׁמִירָה, בְּסִינַי נֶאֱמְרָה, וְנֶפֶשׁ יְתֵרָה, נָתַן לָנוּ בְּשַׁבָּת.
קַבֵּץ אֶת זְרוּעֵינוּ, לְאֶרֶץ מַאֲוַיֵּינוּ, וְאָז יִרְאוּ עֵינֵינוּ, עוֹלָם שֶׁכֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת.

פיוט על רוממות השי"ת

This piyut depicts Am Yisrael's praises of Hashem for His greatness in bringing into existence new creations without the need for any raw materials, and for helping Moshe Rabbeinu lead His nation and deliver the Torah to His people:

סימן: מזמור חיים חזק

מִזְמוֹר לָאֵ-ל אָשִׁירָה, כִּי הוּא הִמְצִיא וּבָרָא, יֵשׁ מֵאַיִן כָּל נִבְרָא, בְּעֹז וּגְבוּרָה:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

זֶה אֵלִי וְאַנְוֵהוּ, כִּי נִמְצָא וְיָחִיד הוּא, אֵינוֹ גוּף וּמַרְאֵהוּ, וְאֵין מִי יוֹדְעוֹ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

מֶלֶךְ רָם וְנַעֲלָה, כַּדְּמוּן וְנֶעֱבָד סֶלָה, דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִגְלָה, מֵרֹאשׁ יְדָעוֹ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

וּנְבוּאָה לֹא בַמִּקְרָא, וּמִמָּרוֹם יַעֲרָה, רוּחַ עַל חוֹזֶה יוֹרֶה, דֵּעָה לְשׁוֹמְעוֹ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

רַב שָׂם מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ, הִבִּיט בִּתְמוּנַת קוֹנוֹ, וְתוֹרָה צִוָּה לָנוּ, כִּרְצוֹן צוּר יִשְׁעוֹ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

חֵן חֵן לָהּ לֹא תִּשֵּׁנֶה, צַדִּיק בֵּינֵינוּ חוֹנֶה, עֲדַת רְשָׁעִים הִנֵּה, מִשָּׁם נָסָעוּ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

יוֹשִׁיעַ צוּר מִשְׂגַּבִּי, עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בַּשִּׁבִי, וּבְחַסְדּוֹ יַדְרִיכֵם, בִּנְתִיבוֹת לֹא יָדָעוּ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

יָצִיצוּ מֵעִיר מְתִים, בִּדְבַר מְשַׁגָּה עִתִּים, הֵן יָבוֹשׁוּ מַשְׁחִיתִים, מִדַּרְכָּם תָּעוּ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

מֶלֶךְ עֵת גְּדֻלָּתוֹ, נִמְצֵאת בּוֹ עַנְוָתָנוּתוֹ, וּמְחוֹנֵן בְּחֶמְלָתוֹ, אֲשֶׁר יָדָעוּ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

חֲזַק יָדַיִם רָפוֹת, קַבֵּץ לְעָרִים יָפוֹת, בָּנִים עֵינֵיהֶם צוֹפוֹת, לָרִיק לֹא יָגָעוּ:

הֵן עַם רָב, יֶעֱרַב אֶל לִבָּם רַב, טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ.

פיוט השיר והשבח לבורא עולם

This piyut describes the obligation of man to praise Hashem, Who created and sustains him. The angels join in song of praise:

סימן: חיים

אֶל אֱלֹקִים אָשִׁיר בְּשִׁירָתִי. לוֹ תְּבָרֵךְ רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי.

חַדְּשִׁי נָא זִמְרָה לְאֵ-ל אֶחָד. הַנִּשְׁמָה תּוֹדֶה בְּרֹב פַּחַד. בַּשְּׁחָרִים בֹּקֶר בְּרוֹן יַחַד.

כִּי אֱלֹקִים יוֹצֵר גְּוִיָּתִי, לוֹ תְּבָרֵךְ רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי.

יַחֲדוּהוּ כָּל מַלְאֲכֵי מָרוֹם. שַׁבְּחוּהוּ צָפוֹן וְגַם דָּרוֹם. יָם וּמִזְרָח לְאֵ-ל נוֹרָא וְאָיֹם.

כִּי אֱלֹקִים יוֹצֵר גְּוִיָּתִי, לוֹ תְּבָרֵךְ רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי.

יַעֲנוּ לוֹ זִמְרָה עֲלֵי נֵבֶל. כָּל בְּרוּאָיו נָגְדוֹ כְּמוֹ הֶבֶל. לוֹ לְבַדּוֹ אֶרֶץ וְגַם תֵּבֵל.

כִּי אֱלֹקִים יוֹצֵר גְּוִיָּתִי, לוֹ תְּבָרֵךְ רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי.

מַרְאוֹתָיו כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה רָמוּ. נִפְלְאוֹתָיו גָּדְלוּ וְגַם עָצְמוּ. גַּם שְׁנוֹתָיו לָעַד לֹא יִתַּמּוּ.

כִּי אֱלֹקִים יוֹצֵר גְּוִיָּתִי, לוֹ תְּבָרֵךְ רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי.

דֹּם לַה' וְשׁוֹרֵר לוֹ בְּשִׁירָה. שַׁבְּחִי לוֹ יָפָה וְגַם בָּרָה. כִּי לוֹ נָאֶה כָּבוֹד וְתִפְאָרָה.

כִּי אֱלֹקִים יוֹצֵר גְּוִיָּתִי, לוֹ תְּבָרֵךְ רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי.

Rabbi Chaim Hagadol's song of praise, thanking Hashem for healing his legs:

סימן: אני חיים חזק

אָרוֹמִמְךָ הָאֵ-ל, אֱלוֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַמַּצִּיל הַגּוֹאֵל, מִדֶּחִי אֶת רַגְלִי:

נִבְהַלְתִּי מִיִּרְאָה, מִצּוּר גָּאֹה גָּאָה, נַעֲנֵיתִי כִּי אָמַרְתִּי, מָטָה רַגְלִי:

יָדֶךָ עָשׂוּנִי, וְהֵם כּוֹנְנוּנִי, ה' חָנֵּנִי, וֶהְיֵה נָא עוֹזֵר לִי:

חַי מָלֵא מֵחִבָּה, אוּמָּתְךָ הִקְרִיבָה, אוֹדְךָ וַאֲבָרֵךְ אוֹתְךָ לְרַגְלִי:

יָצָאתָ לִישׁוּעָה, בָּרוּךְ גְּדוֹל דֵּעָה, כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי, בְּמִישׁוֹר עָמְדָה רַגְלִי:

יְשָׁמַע קוֹל שִׁירִי, לְפָנֶיךָ סִתְרִי, אַתָּה תָאִיר נֵרִי, צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי:

מוּל קָדְשׁוֹ אֶתְחַנֵּן, בְּצִלּוֹ אֶתְלוֹנֵן, בְּבֵיתוֹ אֶשְׁתּוֹנֵן, וְהֵסִיר כָּל חֹלִי:

חֲלוֹתִי זֶה כַּמָּה, זַךְ יָשָׁר בְּאֵימָה, **קו**לִי תִּשְׁמַע לָמָּה, עֲזַבְתָּנִי אַ-לִּי:

פיוט לחנוכה

A piyut recounting the miracles of Chanukah:

סימן: **אני חיים פינטו.** נועם ימינך תסעדני

אֵ-לִי אֲרוֹמְמֶנְהוּ. אֵין יָחִיד כְּיִחוּדוֹ. גַּם לִבְנֵי מַתִּתְיָהוּ. עָשָׂה פֶּלֶא לְבַדּוֹ. פָּדָה עֵדָה נָדָה. מְלֹא אֶרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

נוֹעֲצוּ יַחַד רָעָה. הַיְוָנִים עָלֵינוּ. מִצְוֹת אַ-ל גְּדוֹל דֵּעָה. לְהַעֲבִיר מִמֶּנּוּ. אָנוּ קַמְנוּ שַׂשְׂנוּ. גָּבַר חַסְדּוֹ עָלֵינוּ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

יָוָנִים בֵּית אַ-ל בָּאוּ. טִמְּאוּ הַשְּׁמָנִים. בָּדְקוּ וְהִנֵּה מָצְאוּ. פַּךְ מִפַּכִּים קְטַנִּים. אָטוּם חָתוּם סָתוּם. כֹּהֵן כּוֹנֶנָה יָדוֹ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

חֵלֶק וְשִׁעוּר לַיְלָה. אַחַת לְבַד הָיָה בוֹ. בִּרְכַּת נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה, שָׂרְתָה תּוֹךְ הַנִּשְׁאָר בּוֹ. רָמוּ עָצְמוּ עַמּוֹ. קָמוּ וַיִּתְעוֹדָדוּ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

יָחִיד מָסַר גִּבּוֹרִים, בְּיַד אִישִׁים חַלָּשִׁים. קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵרִים. עַל הַצָּרִים הַנּוֹגְשִׁים. אָכְלוּ כָּלוּ נָפְלוּ, נִגְרְשׁוּ וְשׁוֹדָדוּ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

יָמִים אֵלֶּה נִקְבְּעוּ, בְּהַלֵּל וּבְהוֹדָאָה. כִּי נַפְשׁוֹתָם נוֹשְׁעוּ. מִיַּד צָר גָּאֹה גָּאָה. שִׁירוּ גִילוּ סֹלּוּ. לָאֵ-ל גָּדוֹל כְּבוֹדוֹ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

מִשְׁתֶּה וְשִׂמְחָה יִהְיוּ בָם. מַטְעַמִּים אֲמוּרִים. הַנֵּרוֹת הֵם חִיּוּבִים. נַעֲשִׂים וְנִזְכָּרִים. צָאוּ בֹּאוּ רָאוּ. הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לִמְּדוּ.

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

פְּתִילוֹת **יַ**חַד **גְּ**מְנוּ. **טוֹב טַ**עֲמָם וְנִימוּקָם בְּמִסְפַּר לוֹ יְמָנוּ. כִּי כֵן דִּינָם וְחוּקָם. שִׁמְרוּ הוֹדוּ עִזְרוּ. אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַשִּׂיג יָדוֹ.

הֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

פיוט לפורים

A piyut for Purim, describing the audacity of Haman in attempting to wipe out the entire Jewish nation, and Hashem's miraculous deliverance through the righteous Esther:

(מתוך כתב יד)

סימן: חיים חזק

חַסְדֵי ה' אֲזַמֵּר, אֲשֶׁר מִקֶּדֶם עָשָׂה. כָּבוֹד לְקָלוֹן הוּמַר, בִּימֵי אֲמָה הַקָּשָׁה. יְהִירִים דִּינָם נִגְמַר, לְהַשְׁמִיד עֵדָה קְדוֹשָׁה. מֶלֶךְ עִם מְמוּכָן נַפְשָׁם קָשָׁה, בְּאֲמָה הַנְּמוּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

יָעַץ הָמָן הָרָשָׁע, לָתֵת שִׁקְלֵי מִנְיָנָם. לְאִישׁ רַע בַּעַל רֶשַׁע, הוּא אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ שׁוֹטְנָם. קָדְמוּ שִׁקְלֵי עַם נוֹשַׁע, בַּה' צוּר מָגִינָם. הֵפֵר עֵצָה, וְשִׁבֵּר אֶת גְּאוֹנָם. בַּחֵמָה הַשְׁפוּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

יָחִיד נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה, יָעַץ כֵּן עַל אוּמָתוֹ. עַל עִסְקֵי הָאֲכִילָה, וְצֶלֶם אֲשֶׁר שֵׂרְתוּ. לוּלֵא מֹשֶׁה לְמַעְלָה, עָמַד עַל צֹאן מַרְעִיתוֹ. וּמָרְדְּכַי עָמַד בִּתְפִלָּתוֹ. וְדִמְעָתוֹ נִתָּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

מוּסַר אֵ-ל לֹא מָאָסוּ, בְּנֵי גְּבִירָה תַּמָּה. מִצְוַת יְמִינִי עָשׂוּ, וַהֲדַסָּה תְּמִימָה. בָּאֵפֶר הִתְפַּלְּשׁוּ, וּבִתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה. שָׁבוּ קָרְבוּ לִפְנֵי שׁוֹכֵן רוּמָה. לָכֵן עָלְתָה אֲרוּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

חוּט שֶׁל חֶסֶד מָשׁוּךְ עַל, אֶסְתֵּר וּבִכְנִיסָתָהּ. לִפְנֵי אִישׁ בְּלִיַּעַל, הוֹשִׁיט שַׁרְבִיט לְעֵמָתָהּ. אָמַר כָּל חֲפָצֵיךְ אֶפְעַל, וַאֲזַי אוֹתוֹ עָנְתָה. יָבֹא מֶלֶךְ עִם בֶּן הַמְּדָתָא. לַסְּעֻדָּה הַנְּסוּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

זָחָה עַל הָמָן דַּעְתּוֹ, כִּי קָרוּא לָהּ לְמָחָר. סִפֵּר לְזֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ, כִּי מִכָּל שָׂרִים נִבְחָר. מָרְדְּכַי וַעֲדָתוֹ, בִּתְפִלָּה קוֹלָם נִחַר. לָכֵן שָׁמַע קוֹלָם וְלֹא אֵחַר. אֵ-ל אַדִּיר בִּמְלוּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

קִבְעוּ אוֹתִי כִּתְבוּנִי, לְדוֹרוֹת בֵּין סְפָרִים. אָמְרָה אֵשֶׁת יְמִינִי, לַחֲכָמִים וּמוֹרִים. כִּי כֵן מִצְוַת צוּר קוֹנִי, הַדְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים. זֹאת זִכָּרוֹן בְּסֵפֶר נֶאֱמָרִים. בַּתּוֹרָה הָעֲרוּכָה:

כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה ה' מִי כָמוֹךָ.

פיוט לפורים

This piyut relates the story of Purim and praises Hashem for delivering the Jewish people from the threat of Haman:

סימן: **אני חיים.** נועם נוגש עליך

אָסַפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יָ-ה, רָם עֲלִילָיָה. בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

נוֹתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ, בַּאֲרָצוֹת צַר מִדּוֹחַ, אֵ-ל נֶאְדָּר בַּכֹּחַ, הָיָה הֹוֶה וְיִהְיֶה:

בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

יָעַץ הָמָן הָרָשָׁע, לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶת עַם נוֹשָׁע, אֵ-ל שִׁבֵּר מַטֵּה רָשָׁע, כּוֹסִי רְוָיָה:

בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

הָטְאוּ לוֹ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְאֶל הַצֶּלֶם פָּנוּ, לְמַעְלָה גָּמְרוּ וְנִמְנוּ, לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלָיָה:

בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

יָדַע שׂוֹכֵן מְעוֹנִים, כִּי הֵם עָשׂוּ לְפָנִים, וְנָשָׂא לָהֶם פָּנִים, וְנֶפֶשׁ הֶחֱיָה:

בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

יְמִינִי קָם בִּתְפִלָּה, עִם בֶּן עַמְרָם לְמַעְלָה, וַיִּפֶן צוּר נַעֲלָה, אֶל אֵמָּה עֲנִיָּה:

בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

מַטֵּה רָשָׁע אִישׁ הַדָּמִים, לִפְנֵי בָנִים שְׁלֵמִים, נָפְלוּ מִמְּרוֹמִים, לְבוֹר תַּחְתִּיָּה:

בִּימֵי הַפּוּרִים גַּם הָיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִהְיָה.

פיוט לחג הפסח

A piyut for Pesach. This day shall be remembered for all generations to come. This is the day the Jewish nation was delivered from the hands of Pharaoh, who defiantly denied G-d's existence and was ultimately drowned in the Yam Suf. Am Yisrael became the nation of G-d. On Pesach one is prohibited from eating chametz:

סימן: חיים בר שלמה פינטו חזק

דְּעוּ כִּי הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, הוּא יוֹם זִכָּרוֹן, לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם זִכְרוּהוּ:

חֵן נָתַן הָאֵ-ל גַּם שְׁאֵת וְיִתְרוֹן, לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי קָדוֹשׁ הוּא:

ה' בָּחַר אֵלָיו עֲדַת יְשׁוּרוּן, מִכָּל הָאֻמּוֹת כִּי טוֹב הוּא:

יוֹם זֶה אוֹר גָּדוֹל בּוֹ, נִגְלָה כַּיָּדוּעַ לַחֲכָמִים:

מְאֹד רָם הוּא וְנַעֲלָה, לִפְנֵי אֵ-ל רָם עַל רָמִים:

בּוֹ יָצָאנוּ מִן הַגְּוֹלָה, מִמִּצְרַיִם עִיר הַדָּמִים:

רָעַת הַנָּחָשׁ נִמְשְׁכָה לָנוּ לְדוֹרוֹת, אַדִּיר אַדִּירִים שְׁתָלָהּ:

שָׁמָּה הָרֶשַׁע גַּם חֹשֶׁךְ רַב וְשַׁחְרוּת, וְהוּא חֵלֶק הָרִשְׁעָה כֻּלָּהּ:

לָכֵן יַגִּיעוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בִּזְהִירוּת, לִבְרוֹר קְדֵשָׁה עַל תְּלָהּ:

מַה טּוֹב חֶלְקֵנוּ, הֵן לְשׁוֹנֵנוּ תָּרוֹן, אֵ-לֹהֵי אַרוֹמְמֶנְהוּ:

הִכָּה אוֹיְבֵינוּ אֵ-ל בְּעֶבְרָה וּבְחָרוֹן, מַכּוֹת עֲשָׂרָה כִּי רַב הוּא:

פַּרְעֹה הַכּוֹפֵר נִסְפָּה גַּם בְּעִוָּרוֹן, וְאָמַר מִי יְדִיעֵהוּ:

יָ-הּ עָמַד בַּדִּין לְמָעְלָה, נֶגֶד שַׂר עַמִּים:

נָפֶשׁ מִיכָאֵל נִבְהָלָה, מֵהָשִׁיב וְעָמַד מַשְׁמִים:

טָפַל שֶׁקֶר שַׂר בֶּן עַוְלָה, נָפַל וָמֵת בִּשְׂפַת יָמִים:

וְאָז שׁוֹרְרוּ בְּשִׁירוֹת וּזְמִירוֹת, עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַם סְגֻלָּה:

חָמֵץ נֶאֱסַר בְּחַג זֶה, עַד סוֹף הַדּוֹרוֹת, מַשֶּׁהוּ אָסוּר בַּאֲכִילָה:

זָכְרֵנוּ בְּזִכְרוֹן טוֹב, עֶזְרָה בְצָרוֹת, כְּקֶדֶם וּכְבַתְּחִילָה:

קַדֵּשׁ שִׁמְךָ אֵ-ל וּבְנֵה עָרִים בְּצוּרוֹת, כָּל נְשָׁמָה תְּהַלֶּלְךָ סֶלָה:

פיוט לחג המצות

A piyut for Chag Hamatzot. A song of praise to Hashem, Who redeemed us from darkness to brilliant light with a mighty Hand, inflicting our Egyptian captors with the Ten Plagues:

סימן: **אני חיים בר שלמה חזק.** נועם ה' א-להי אתה

אַשׁוֹרֵר שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה, לַה' עוֹשֶׂה גְדוֹלוֹת. הֲלֹא הוּא, הִפְלִיא וְעָשָׂה, מוֹפְתִים וְאוֹתוֹת מְעֻלּוֹת. וְעֵדָה בָּרָה וּקְדוֹשָׁה, הוֹצִיא אוֹתָהּ מֵאֲפֵלוֹת. וְאוֹר גָּדוֹל הֵאִיר לָנוּ, כְּאוֹר חַמָּה שִׁבְעָתַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

נָתַן לְדָם אֶת מֵימֵיהֶם, וְלִשְׁתּוֹת מֵהֶם לֹא יָכְלוּ. וְכֵן עָשׂוּ חַרְטֻמֵּיהֶם, לַשֶּׁטַח הַגְּרָאָה כֻּלּוֹ. כִּי אֵין הַשְׁלִיטָה לָהֶם, בְּמַה שֶׁהוּא מִתַּחַת לוֹ. וְלֹא סָר מִמַּעֲלָלוֹ, הָאַכְזָר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

יָחִיד שַׁלִּיט בַּגְּבָרָאִים, גָּזַר וּצְפַרְדֵּעַ עָלְתָה. וּמִמֶּנָּה הָיוּ יוֹצְאִים מַחֲנוֹת וּזְעָקָה רָבְתָּה. וּבְתוֹךְ מֵעֵיהֶם נֶחְבָּאִים, לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ גַּם עַתָּה. כִּי בְלַהֲטֵיהֶם נֶעֱשְׂתָה צְפַרְדֵּעַ בְּמִצְרַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

חָזָק יֹסֵף לְהַכּוֹתָם, בְּכִנִּים בְּכָל גְּבוּלָם. רָחֲשׂוּ בָּם וּבְבָהֶמְתָּם, כִּי כֵן גָּזַר מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם. חַרְטֻמִּים קָצְרָה יְכָלְתָּם, בּוֹשׁוּ וְנִכְלְמוּ כֻּלָּם. אָמְרוּ זֹאת אֶצְבַּע הַי נֶעֱלָם, שֶׁל אֱ-לֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

יַחַד בָּאוּ וְנֶאֶסְפוּ, כָּל מִינֵי חַיּוֹת הַטּוֹרְפִים. טֶרֶף גָּדוֹל בָּהֶם טָרְפוּ, מְאֹד וְהִנָּם זוֹעֲפִים. דֶּבֶר וּשְׁחִין בָּם נִגְּפוּ, בָּרָד כָּבֵד בּוֹ רְשָׁפִים. הִכָּה בּוֹ רָעִים מַקְצִיפִים, אֶל מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

יֹסֵף אַדִּיר לְהַכּוֹתָם, מַכָּה רַבָּה וַעֲצוּמָה. אַרְבֶּה עָלָה לְאַדְמָתָם, וַיְכַסֶּה אֶת אוֹר הַחַמָּה. אָכַל פְּרִי תְנוּבָתָם, וְכָל עִשְׂבֵי הָאֲדָמָה. נָהֵל לְשׁוֹכֵן רוּמָה, הַשָּׁם נַפְשֵׁנוּ בַחַיִּים.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

מֶלֶך שָׁלַח חֹשֶׁך לָהֶם, וְנַעֲשׂוּ כֻּלָּם כְּעִוְרִים. וְלֹא רָאוּ אֶת אַחֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים אֲמוּרִים. וְלֹא קָמוּ מִתַּחְתֵּיהֶם, שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים אֲחֵרִים. נִגְלוּ מַצְפּוּנִים אֲחֵרִים, אֶל בְּנֵי אֵ-לֹהִים חַיִּים.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

בְּכָל זֹאת חִזֵּק אֶת לִבּוֹ, רָשָׁע עָרִיץ וְלֹא אָבָהּ לְשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת עַם קְרוֹבוֹ, אֶל אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה וּרְחָבָה. וַיַּךְ כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּאוֹיְבָיו, הוּא וְלֹא מַלְאָךְ שַׂר צָבָא. וַיַּצֵּל לְאֹם אֲהוּבָה, וְלֹא חָלוּ בָהּ יָדָיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

רָצָה לְזַכּוֹת עֲדָתוֹ, וּבְרֹב חֲסָדָיו גְּמָלָם. לִפְרֹשׂ מֵחָמֵץ מִצְוָתוֹ, בִּזְמַן זֶה לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם. כִּי עִם הַשָּׂטָן חֶבְרָתוֹ, אַחִים, וְלֹא יִתְפָּרְדוּ כֻּלָּם. מַצָּה חִלְּקָם וְגוֹרָלָם, הִנֵּה טוֹבִים הַשְּׁנַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

שְׁלֹשׁ הַשְּׁמוּרוֹת סוֹדָם, שָׁלֹשׁ רִאשׁוֹנוֹת מְאִירוֹת. **מו**חִין דְּאַבָּא יְסוֹדָם, **הֵ**מָּה בְּרֹאשׁוֹ עֲטָרוֹת. זְרוֹעַ קַו יְמִין נֶגְדָּם, בֵּיצָה לְצַד הַגְּבוּרוֹת. מָרוֹר בֵּינֵיהֶם מְתַוֵּךְ, לָקַח אֵלָיו פִּי שְׁנַיִם. וְיִהְיוּ אֵלֶּה בַּתָּוֶךְ, וְהוּא בֵּין הַמִּשְׁפָּתָיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

חֲרֹסֶת תַּחַת זְרוֹעַ, סוֹדוֹת נֶצַח בָּהּ נִתְכְּנוּ. הַהוֹד אֶל הַכַּרְפַּס רֵעַ, וְתַחַת הַבֵּיצָה תְּנוּ. וּבֵינֵיהֶם הֵן בּוֹצֵעַ, יְסוֹד חֲזֶרֶת אוֹפָנוּ. קְעָרָה מַלְכוּת אִמֵּנוּ, נִשְׁלְמוּ עֶשֶׂר אוֹרִים.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

שִׁירוּ מְאֹד לָאֵ-ל הוֹדוּ, פִּינוּ יְסַפֵּר נוֹרְאוֹתָיו. טוֹב וְסַלָּח גָּבַר חַסְדּוֹ, עָלֵינוּ עַל פִּי מִדּוֹתָיו. כָּל גּוֹיִם כְּאַיִן נֶגְדּוֹ, וּבְיִשְׂרָאֵל שָׂם תּוֹרוֹתָיו. וַיְכַתְּרֵם בְּעַטְרוֹתָיו, לְאִישׁ כְּתָרִים שְׁנַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

חַדֵּשׁ כְּקֶדֶם יָמֵינוּ, לָמָּה נִשְׁכַּחְנוּ. אֶה כַּמָּה, זָכַרְנוּ וְשָׁמַחְנוּ. עֹשֶׂה בַגּוֹיִם נְקָמָה, **קַ**נֵּא לְכְבוֹדְךָ אָבִינוּ וּשְׁלַח מְנַחֵם נָחָמָה. אָז יִגְדַּל שִׁמְךָ רַב עָצְמָה הַנּוֹטֶה כַּדּוֹק שָׁמַיִם.

בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

פיוט על "סתרי תורה" של רבי שמעון בר יוחאי

A piyut in honor of the "secrets of the Torah" revealed by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai – in honor of his hilula on Lag B'omer. This piyut tells the story of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who hid in a cave with his son Rabbi Elazar. They were miraculously sustained by a carob tree and a river of water provided by Hashem, while they immersed themselves in unearthing the secrets of the Torah:

סימן: **אני חיים פינטו חזק**

אקְרִיב תְּשׁוּרַת זִמְרַת שְׁבָחַי, תּוֹךְ אַחַי, לִכְבוֹד אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים, וּשְׁמוֹ רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בַּר יוֹחַאי:

בחְבָא כַּמָּה שָׁנִים בִּמְעָרָה, סְגוּרָה, עִמּוֹ רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר, מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת רָם, וְהוּא בֶּן אִישׁ חַי:

גדְעוּ סוֹדוֹת תּוֹרָה הַנִּפְלָאִים, נוֹרָאִים, מָלְאוּ דַּעַת וְחָכְמָה, וַיֶּחְכְּמוּ הֵמָּה מִכָּל חַי:

דרוּב וּמַעְיָן לָהֶם נִבְרְאוּ, וְנִרְאוּ, אָכְלוּ וְשָׁתוּ מֵהֶם, בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם, בְּנֵי אֵ-ל חַי:

הצְאוּ מִשָּׁם וְרָאוּ הָעוֹסְקִים, וְחוֹשְׁקִים, בַּהֲבָלִים וּשְׁרָפוּם, לֹא הִסְכִּים עִמָּם אֱלֹקִים חַי:

ושָׁרִים חָזְרוּ שָׁם מֶשֶׁךְ שָׁנָה, אֵ-ל קַנָּא, לֹא יַחְפֹּץ בְּמוֹת רָשָׁע, אַךְ יָשׁוּב מִדְּרָכָיו וָחַי:

משֶׁךְ י"ג שָׁנִים שָׁמָּה נִטְמְנוּ, אָב וּבְנוֹ, וְעַל יָדָם הִשְׁפִּיעַ, ה' מַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי:

פנוּ אֵלָיו עֲשָׂרָה חֲבֵרִים, נִבְחָרִים, רְשׁוּמִים בַּסְּפִירוֹת, וְכָל אֶחָד מֵהֶם קָרוּי חָי:

צאָה **נ**פְשָׁם כִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה הֵמָּה, זֶה כַּמָּה, דְּעָלוּ וְלָא נָפְקוּ, עַל כֵּן מֵתוּ לְעֵינֵי כָל חַי:

טוֹב וּמֵטִיב הוּא לַבָּאִים אֵלָיו, שׁוֹאֲלָיו, וּמְמַלֵּא שְׁאֵלָתָם, וַיֹּאמַר אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה לֶחָי:

חיל יֹאחֲזוּן כָּל בָּאִים אֶצְלוֹ, כִּי גָדְלוּ, נִפְלְאוֹתָיו אוֹתוֹתָיו, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְעֵינֵי כָל חַי:

זֶה הַיּוֹם הוּא יוֹמָא דְהִלּוּלָא, גָּגִילָה, וְנִשְׂמְחָה בוֹ מְאֹד, וּתְפָאֵר אוֹתוֹ נִשְׁמַת כָּל חַי:

קרָאוּהוּ בּוֹצִינָא דִנְהוֹרָא, זוֹ תּוֹרָה, וְעָלָיו לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יִרְאַנִי הָאָדָם וָחַי:

פיוט לחג השבועות

A piyut for Shavuot. A call to seek out Hashem and sing His praises for granting us His holy Torah:

פיוט נועם שיר חדש

סימן: **חיים חזק**

אִמְרֵי אֵ-ל מַה נִּמְרְצוּ, מֵעֵינֵיכֶם אַל יָלוּזוּ, הִתְקוֹשְׁשׁוּ וָקוֹשׁוּ, אַל תֶּחֱטָאוּ וְתִרְגָּזוּ, וְתָמִיד פָּנָיו בַּקְּשׁוּ.

דִּרְשׁוּ ה' וְעוּזּוֹ:

חֶלְאַת זוֹהֲמַת נָחָשׁ, הָסִירוּ וְהִטַּהֲרוּ, עֲשׂוּ מַעֲשֵׂה פִּנְחָס, אֲשֶׁר קִנֵּא לְשֵׁם יוֹצְרוֹ, עוּרוּ הַיְשֵׁנִים וְהָקִיצוּ, וּבְנוּ בוֹעֲרִים עַם זוּ.

דִּרְשׁוּ ה' וְעוּזּוֹ:

יָצַר אָדָם בְּחָכְמָה, אַרְבַּע יְסוֹדוֹת בּוֹ חִבַּר מוֹתָרוֹ מִבְּהֵמָה, הֵן פִּיהוּ הַמְדַבֵּר, גּוֹבֵר עֲלֵיהֶם תָּמִיד כְּחֶפְצוֹ, מִפָּנָיו חָלוּ וְרָגְזוּ.

דִּרְשׁוּ ה' וְעוּזּוֹ:

יָקָרָה מִפְּנִינִים, תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר נָתַן, בָּהּ יִכָּנְעוּ הַזּוֹנִים, אַחַר יִצְרָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן, יוּתַן לַטֶּבַח וְכָל נִיצוֹצוֹ, אַנְשֵׁי צָבָא אִישׁ לֹא בָּזוּ.

דִּרְשׁוּ ה' וְעוּזּוֹ:

מָה אָנוּ מָה חַיֵּינוּ, כִּי אָדָם לַהֶבֶל דָּמָה, אִם רְצוֹן אֵ-ל עָשִׂינוּ, הֲלֹא יֵשׁ לוֹ דִּין קְדִימָה, כַּמָּה רַב טוּבוֹ, מִי בָא עַד קִצוֹ, עֵינָיִם אוֹתוֹ כֹּל חָזוּ.

דִּרְשׁוּ ה' וְעוּזּוֹ:

חַסְדְּךָ וְצִדְקָתְךָ, מְשֹׁךְ אֵ-ל חַי לְיִשְׁרֵי לֵב, זְמַן קֵץ מְשִׁיחֶךָ, דָּרַשְׁתִּי אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל לֵב, עוֹלָם קָנָא וְנוֹקֵם קָצְצוּ, אֲזַי חֲסִידִים יַעֲלוּזוּ.

דִּרְשׁוּ ה' וְעוּזּוֹ:

A prayer for the final redemption:

סימן: **אני חיים חזק.**

קייאץ - סאלף מכמולת לבהא

אוֹחִילָה לְךָ הָאֵ-ל אוֹרִי וְיִשְׁעִי. לְעִירְךָ אֱמוֹר עוּרִי מִשְׁנָתֶךָ. קוּמִי צַהֲלִי וָרֹנִּי:

נָמַס מֵרֹב דִּמְעָתִי עַרְשִׂי וִיצוּעִי. כִּי בְּתוֹךְ מַהְמוֹר אוֹיְבֵי אֲסָרַנִי. כְּמוֹ צִפּוֹר צוֹד צָדוּנִי:

יִלְעֲגוּ אוֹיְבַי עָלַי בְּשָׁמְעָם שִׁמְעִי. וְיֹאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר, אַיֵּה אֵ-ל גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא. אֵין מִלָּה בִּלְשׁוֹנִי:

יִהְיוּ שׂוֹסַי לִמְשִׁסָּה. שָׁמְעוּ רָעָתִי שָׂשׂוּ. וְעַל עַמְּךָ חוֹסֶה. יִשְׁמְחוּ וְיָשִׂישׂוּ. וּלְכָל חַטֹּאתֵיהֶם שָׂא כַּנֶּשֶׁר יִתְחַדְּשׁוּ.

חֶלְקִי ה' כִּי הוּא שָׂרְשִׁי וְגִזְעִי. דְּרָכַי יִשְׁמֹר. וְלֹא נָטָה יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל אַתָּה הוֹרֵתָנִי:

יְמִינְךָ תָּרוּם מִשְׂגַּבִּי וּמוֹשִׁיעִי. רוֹכֵב עַל חֲמוֹר. יָבֹא בְרִנָּה בְּמַעְגְּלֵי צֶדֶק יַנְחֵנִי:

יֵשְׁבוּ בָּנִים אֶת פְּנֵי ה' רוֹעִי. קַיֵּם הָאָמוּר. עַל יְדֵי חוֹזִים. אָנָּא אֵל תָּשׁוּב וּתְנַחֲמֵנִי:

יָ-הּ עֲוֹנוֹתַי תִּשָּׂא. וְאָז זֵדִים יֵבוֹשׁוּ. וְאֶל מְקוֹם קָדְשָׁה. יוֹסִיפוּ וְיִכָּנְסוּ. וְהוֹרָתָם הוֹבִישָׁה. כִּי מִתּוֹךְ קִרְבָּהּ נָסוּ.

מַלְכֵי מְשִׁיחִי אַלּוּפִי וּמְיוּדָעִי. צַו אוֹתוֹ לֵאמֹר. לַאֲסוּרִים צְאוּ בֹאוּ אֶל תּוֹךְ בֵּית אֲדֹנָי:

חָזָק יֻשְׁלַם כִּסְאֲךָ וְשִׁמְךָ מוֹשִׁיעִי. וּבְהַלֵּל אֶגְמֹר. אֲהַלֶּלְךָ צוּרִי קֶרֶן יִשְׁעִי וּמָגִנִּי:

פיוט למורינו הרב הגדול סבא דמשפטים
כמוהר"ר חיים פינטו זצ"ל כשנתרפא מחליו

A piyut sung by Rabbi Chaim Hagadol praising Hashem, Who, with great compassion, saved him from the throes of death and turned eulogy into joyful celebration:

[בספר מודפס רק שני בתים ראשונים השאר נוסף מכת"י]

סימן: **אני חיים חזק**

אַרוֹמִמְךָ יָהּ כִּי דִּלִּיתָנִי, שִׁוַּעְתִּי לְךָ וַתִּרְפָּאֵנִי, וּבִימִין עוּזְךָ תְּמַכְתָּנִי, עַד הֵנָּה חַסְדְּךָ עֲזָרָנִי, מִמְּצוּלוֹת מַכְאוֹב הוֹצֵאתָנִי, וְכִצְרוֹף כֶּסֶף צְרַפְתַּנִי, אֲשׁוֹרֵר כְּשִׁיר מוּשִׁי וּמַחְלִי, הַלֵּל וְזִמְרָה שִׁיר וּשְׁבָחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

נוֹתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ וְעָצְמָה, עַל עֶרֶשׂ דְּוַי יִסְעָדֶנּוּ, אַרְבַּע יְסוֹדוֹת, מַנְהִיג בְּחָכְמָה, וְאֶת תַּפְקִידָם לֹא יְשַׁנּוּ, וְאִם יִתְגַּבֵּר אֶחָד מֵהֵמָּה, יַפְסִיד הַגּוּף מִתִּקּוּנוֹ, וְאַף גַּם זֹאת אֵל פּוֹדֶה מַצִּילִי, וּמוֹצִיא מִצָּרָה לִרְוָחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

יְסוּרָיו קִבַּלְתִּי בְּאַהֲבָה, הִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לִי בְּעֵת צָרָה, נִבְעַת הַמִּשְׁטִין הַמְלַמֵּד חוֹבָה, וְלֹא יָכֹל לְדַבֵּר סָרָה, יַעַן כִּי גָדְלָה הַתְּשׁוּבָה, וּמַגַּעַת לִמְקוֹם מַה נּוֹרָא, כָּל כְּלִי אֲשֶׁר יוּצַר לְמוּלִי, יִרְשַׁע וְלֹא יֵשׁ הַצְלָחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

חָשַׁבְתִּי כִּי הִגִּיעַ זְמַנִּי, לִיסֹּעַ אֶל מְקוֹם אֲבוֹתַי, אֵימוֹת מָוֶת נָפְלוּ בְרַעְיוֹנַי, לִבִּי דַוָּי רַבּוֹת אַנְחוֹתַי, מַרְאוֹת רַבּוֹת בָּאוּ בְרַעְיוֹנַי, וְגָבְרוּ מְאֹד יְגוֹנוֹתַי, נִכְנַעְתִּי לִפְנֵי צוּרִי גּוֹאֲלִי, יָדָיו לְקַבֵּל שָׁב פְּתוּחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

יָהּ בְּרֹב חֲסָדָיו, הוֹרִיד טַל תְּחִיָּה, וְהֶחֱיָנִי וְקִיְּמָנִי, וְנָתַן אֵלַי עֹז וְתוּשִׁיָּה, וּמִשֶּׁפַע בְּרָכָה הִרְוָנִי, בָּרוּךְ הוּא וְיִהְיֶה וְהָיָה, אֲשֶׁר מִשְּׁאוֹל הֶעֱלָנִי, כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי הַלְּלוּ זֶה אֵלִי, עִבְדוּ אֶת ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

יִהְיֶה רְצוֹנְךָ לָשׂוּם בְּלִבִּי, אַהֲבָתְךָ וְיִרְאָתְךָ, וְכֹחַ הַיֵּצֶר לֹא יִשְׁלֹט בִּי, לְהַדִּחֵנִי מִפָּנֶיךָ, רוּחַ נְדִיבָה תַּדִּישׁ בְּקִרְבִּי, וְתֹאחֲזֵנִי יְמִינֶךָ, אָנָּא אֲדֹנָי מַלֵּא מִשְׁאֲלִי, וְנָסוּ יָגוֹן וַאֲנָחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

מָה אֲקַדֵּם אֱלֹהֵי מָרוֹם, עַל רֹב רַחֲמָיו וַחֲסָדָיו, וְרָאִיתִי עַצְמִי עוֹמֵד עָרֹם, מִמִּצְוֹת וְאֵיךְ אָבוֹא עָדָיו, אַךְ עֲוֹנוֹתַי עָלוּ לַמָּרוֹם, הִצְנִיעַ אוֹתָם תַּחַת מַדָּיו, וְלֹא דָנַנִי אֵל כְּמִפְעָלַי. מִדַּת רַחֲמִים לַדִּין נִצְחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

חִזְקוּ נָא וְיַאֲמֵץ לְבַבְכֶם, בַּעֲבוֹדַת אֵל עוֹטֶה אוֹרָה, וְלֹא תָּתוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם, הֵן סַרְסוּרֵי דַעֲבִירָה, וַאֲכַלְתֶּם לָשׂבַע לַחְמְכֶם, וַיַּעַנְכֶם אֵל בְּעֵת צָרָה, גַּדְּלוּ אִתִּי לְצוּר עוֹזֵר לִי, כֻּלְּכֶם וּמְצָאן מְנוּחָה.

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי, וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה.

פיוט על אריכות הגלות בין האומות

A piyut about the lengthy exile. This piyut beseeches Hashem, Who is trustworthy and will never abandon His people, to redeem them from the nations who wish to destroy them.

סימן: חיים

לְעֲמָתִי בֶן שִׁפְחָתִי, נִצָּב לְרִיב אִתִּי: כַּשְׁתּוֹ דְרוּכָה לִירוֹת תָּם, פִּתְאֹם בְּמִסְתָּרִים: הִנֵּה בָנֶיךָ בְּעִתָּם, צַר בִּדְבָרִים זָרִים: לָמָּה אֱלֹקִים עֲזַבְתָּם, פְּזוּרִים בֶּהָרִים:

אֵ-ל נֶאֱמָן הַר הַנִּסְמָן, הַמְזֻמָּן. תְּנָה, לְעַם לֹא אַלְמָן.

הַשְׁתִּי וְלֹא הִתְמַהְמָהְתִּי, לַעֲבֹד עֲבוֹדָתִי: וּדְבַר סוֹפְרִים וְחִידוֹתָם, הֲלוֹא הֵם סְפוּרִים: נַפְשִׁי יָצְאָה עַל דִּבְרָתָם, עִמִּי הֵם צְרוּרִים: הֲלוֹא הֵמָּה כְּמוֹ חוֹתָם, עַל לִבִּי קְשׁוּרִים:

אֵ-ל נֶאֱמָן הַר הַנִּסְמָן, הַמְזֻמָּן. תְּנָה, לְעַם לֹא אַלְמָן.

יָצָאתִי חוּץ לִמְחִצָּתִי, עֲנִיָּה סוֹעֲרָה: אֲנִי כְשֶׂה בֵּין זְאֵבִים, רְשָׁעִים אַכְזָרִים: וְיֵשׁ לִי כַּמָּה עֲרֵבִים, תְּמִימִים וְיְשָׁרִים: הֲלוֹא הֵמָּה כְתוּבִים, מִיַּלְדֵי הָעִבְרִים:

אֵ-ל נֶאֱמָן הַר הַנִּסְמָן, הַמְזֻמָּן. תְּנָה, לְעַם לֹא אַלְמָן.

יָקֵם אַכְזָר בֶּן אֲמָתִי, בְּזַעַם וְעֶבְרָה: וְעַמְּךָ קְהַל נְדִיבִים, יָאִירוּ בִּמְאוֹרִים: מַה לָּהֶם עוֹד לָעֲצֹבִים, אֵיךְ קֵץ הַדְּרוֹרִים: אָרַךְ וְהֵם בְּיַד שׁוֹבִים, נְתוּנִים וּמְסוּרִים:

אֵ-ל נֶאֱמָן הַר הַנִּסְמָן, הַמְזֻמָּן. תְּנָה, לְעַם לֹא אַלְמָן.

מִי יִתֵּן אָשׁוּב אֶל בֵּיתִי, עִיר הַמַּעֲטִירָה: מַעֲלוֹתֶיהָ מְרֻבִּים, כַּמָּה מְפֹאָרִים: בִּימִינְךָ תְּקַבֵּל שָׁבִים, טְהוֹרִים וּשְׁמוּרִים: וּשְׁפֹךְ חֲמָתְךָ עַל אוֹיְבִים, הַשִּׁקֵּמוֹ תַּמְרוּרִים:

אֵ-ל נֶאֱמָן הַר הַנִּסְמָן, הַמְזֻמָּן. תְּנָה, לְעַם לֹא אַלְמָן.

פיוט לקראת הגאולה העתידה

A piyut in honor of the future redemption, describing our yearning for the revelation of Hashem's glory with the coming of Mashiach:

סימן: חיים חזק

עֲנִיָּה יָ-ה קֵץ בָּה הֹלֵל, לָךְ קוֹבֶלֶת אָדוֹן יָ-ה מֶלֶךְ:

חוֹן עֲנִיָּה לְךָ תִּתְפַּלֵּל, רַב יְכֹלֶת ה' מֶלֶךְ:

יְפִיפִיָּה רַב מְחוֹלֵל, מְיַחֶלֶת אוֹר פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ:

יָה שִׁבְחֲךָ מִי יְמַלֵּל, וְרַב חֶסֶד צְדָקוֹת הוֹלֵךְ:

מַטֵה עֻזְּךָ אֵיךְ מִסְתּוֹלֵל, בּוֹ תַּכְּנוּ וּבָא כִּמְהַלֵּךְ:

חוֹן אֶת בִּנְךָ כְּמִסְתּוֹלֵל, כִּי יֵצֵא מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

זֶמֶר מַהֲלָל לְךָ נְהַלֵּל, עֵת בָּא יִנּוֹן בֶּן דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ:

קוֹמֵם אֶמְלָל בְּךָ מִתְהַלֵּל, כִּי לָקַח כְּבֵדָה בַּת מֶלֶךְ.

פיוט בין ישראל להשי"ת

A piyut expressing longing for the redemption, when great love will be demonstrated between Am Yisrael and Hashem, and Hashem will gather in His beloved people:

סימן: חיים

עֵת דּוֹדִים כַּלָּה בּוֹאִי לְגַנִּי, פָּרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן הֵנֵץ רִמּוֹנִי:

הָלַךְ הַגֶּשֶׁם, הַסְּתָו עָבַר. קוּמִי רַעְיָתִי, הַחֵשֶׁק גָּבַר. נֵצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה, נָלִין בַּמִּדְבָּר. שָׁם אֶתֵּן דּוֹדַי לָךְ, מַחְמַד עֵינִי.

יָפִית וְנָעֲמְתִּי, כַּשֶּׁלֶג שִׁנֵּךְ. דְּבַשׁ וְחָלָב, תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנֵךְ. צְאִי נָא וּרְאִה, בְּעִקְבֵי צֹאנֵךְ. קוֹלֵךְ הַשְׁמִיעִנִי, מַרְאֵיךְ הַרְאִינִי.

יָרַדְתִּי עֶפְרָה, לִרְעוֹת בַּגַּנִּים. לִרְאוֹת בְּיָפְיֵךְ, עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים. אָרִיתִי מוֹרִי, לִלְקוֹט שׁוֹשַׁנִּים. עָרַכְתִּי שֻׁלְחָן, מָסַכְתִּי יֵינִי.

מַיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת הָאַהֲבָה. לַיְלָה לֹא תִשְׁבֹּת מִיּוֹם נְדוּדֵךְ. נָשָׂאתִי רִיבוֹת אִם עוֹד אֶשְׁכָּחֵךְ. אָז תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי.

This piyut beseeches Hashem to protect us in exile and guard us from our oppressors. May He take vengeance on Edom and redeem His people:

סימן: **אני חיים**

אֵ-לִי תִּפְרַח בַּת עַמִּי. וְשַׁכֵּל אִישׁ זָר רָם שָׁלַט בְּכָל הַדּוֹר. עַל הַכָּל יָד זָר גָּבְרָה. שׁוּבָה נָחְשָׁךְ אוֹר עֵינַי סַף אֲנִי:

נָצֹר כְּבָבַת בִּנְךָ אֲשֶׁר תָּמִיד נִזְנַח. וּפְרָצוֹתָיו תִּגְדּוֹר אֵלֶיךָ ה׳ אֶקְרָא. בְּכָל צָרָה אַל תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי:

יָסִיר דַּאֲבַת מִלְּבֵנוּ אֱלֹקִים חַי וּבְקִרְבֵּנוּ יָדוּר. יֹאמַר לְשִׁפְחַת שָׂרָי. שׁוּבִי אֶל גְּבִרְתֵּךְ וְהִתְעַנִּי:

חַי מִתּוֹךְ לַבַּת אֵשׁ הוֹצִיא אֶת בֶּן אֲהוּבָךְ, אַבְרָהָם הֶהָדוּר. וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁו, מָתַי יָשׁוּב אַפְּךָ וּתְנַחֲמֵנִי:

יְבָטֵל יוֹשְׁבַת וְיִמַּח שֵׁם אֱדוֹם. וְגַם בֶּן קֵדָר מִדּוֹר וָדוֹר. וְאֶשְׂמַח כָּל עִתּוֹתַי. אֲרוֹמִמְךָ יָ-ה כִּי דִלִּיתָנִי:

יַחְפֹּץ יָ-ה קִרְבַת בְּנוֹ, אֲשֶׁר יָצָא לַחוּץ וְרָחַק מִמְּדוֹר. קָדְשׁוֹ וְעִם אַנְשֵׁי שָׁוְא. שָׁכַן הוּא הַגֶּבֶר רָאָה עֹנִי:

מַלְכִּי תֵּן לְבַת צִיּוֹן הַנָּחָה וְשִׂמְחָה, וְקָרְבָּן הַנָּדוּר. וְקָרְבְּנוֹת חוֹבוֹתַי נַקְרִיב לְךָ קֶרֶן יִשְׁעִי וּמָגִנִּי:

A piyut beseeching Hashem to answer our prayers, forgive our iniquities, and redeem us from our oppressors, since we are His beloved nation:

סימן: חיים חזק

הֲמָמַנִי וְאָסַר אוֹתִי בְּמַלְכֻדְתּוֹ. אוֹיֵב שׂוֹנֵא וְצַר. עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר:

חַטַאת עַמְּךָ סְלַח נָא מְחֵה. מֵהַר קָדְשְׁךָ לְזָרִים תִּדְחֶה. וְזֵכֶר עֲמָלֵק תִּמְחֶה. בָּנֶיךָ בְּחֶסֶד נְחֵה. לִמְנוּחִי אַתָּה אֵ-ל גּוֹחִי. הַנּוֹתֵן לַכֹּל אָכְלָם בְּעִתּוֹ. וְיָדְךָ לֹא תִקָּצֵר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

יָצָאתָ אָז לְיֵשַׁע עַמֶּךָ. וְלָהֶם נָטִיתָ יְמִינֶךָ. עַתָּה עָזַבְתָּ בָּנֶיךָ. הִנָּם בְּיַד מְשַׂנְאֶיךָ. אוֹיְבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר חֵרְפוּךָ. עַתָּה מִגְּבוּרָתָם יֵחַתּוּ לְעֵינֵי כָל בָּשָׂר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

יָדַעְתִּי כִּי צֶדֶק מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ. אָכֵן יָהּ יִהְיֶה נָא חַסְדְּךָ. לְנַחֵם צֹאן מַרְעִיתֶךָ. קַבְּצֵם לִגְוַה קָדְשֶׁךָ. כִּי בְךָ בָּטְחוּ בָנֶיךָ. קִוּוּ גוֹאֲלָם. תּוּכַּר מַלְכוּתוֹ. וְרָאוּ כָל בָּשָׂר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

מָרוֹמָם אַתָּה וּמְאֹד נֶעְלָם. מִי יִדְמֶה לָךְ בְּכָל הָעוֹלָם. מֵהַלֶּלְךָ פֶּה נֶאֱלָם. וְהַלֹּא אֵינֶנּוּ נִשְׁלָם. הִילּוּלָם שֶׁל כָּל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם. גָּדוֹל גִּבּוֹר וְנוֹרָא רוֹמְמוּתוֹ. וְיֹתֵר לֹא יִכְשָׁר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

חוֹלַת אַהֲבָה. זֶה כַּמָּה, אֲנִי. כִּי דוֹד חָמַק עָבַר מִמֶּנִּי. שָׁאַלְתִּי בְּפִי וּלְשׁוֹנִי. קְרָאתִיו וְלֹא עָנָנִי. הֵנֵּנִי. רָאִיתִי עֹנִי. מְאֹד קָשָׁה עָלַי פְּרִידָתוֹ.שֶׁל אֵל טוֹב וְיָשָׁר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

זְרֵה הָלְאָה. אֱדוֹם וּבְנֵי שִׁפְחָה. כִּי נַפְשֵׁנוּ לְעָפָר שָׁחָה. וְהֵם בְּהַשְׁקֵט וּבְבִטְחָה. וְדַעְתָּם עֲלֵיהֶם זָחָה. וּמִנְּחָה. מַשְׂאֵת וַאֲרוּחָה. תּוּבַל לָהֶם אִישׁ אִישׁ כְּהִלָּכָתוֹ. וְלַחְמֵנוּ חָסַר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

קָנֵה אוֹתָנוּ כְּבַתְּחִלָּה. לְשֵׁם וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת וְלִתְהִלָּה. כִּי לְךָ מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה. וְאִם הִרְבִּינוּ מְעִילָה. וְעַוְלָה. מַרְבֶּה מְחִילָה. אַתָּה לַחוֹטְאִים וְלֹא יָמוּתוּ. אִישׁ מֵהֶם לֹא יֶחְסַר:

עֲנֵה אוֹתִי מִן הַמֵּצַר.

A piyut lamenting the subjugation of the Jews to their enemies and pleading with Hashem to take vengeance upon the nations and redeem His people:

סימן: **אני חיים**

אֵל חוֹרְפִי תְּשָׁרֵשׁ. כִּי רַע עָלַי חוֹרֵשׁ. כָּל הַיּוֹם רַע דּוֹרֵשׁ. וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב מִמּוּלִי:

גָּלְאוּ כָל רַעְיוֹנַי. בִּרְאוֹתִי אֶת שׂוֹטְנַי. יָרְשׁוּ כָל קִנְיָנַי. כָּל רֹאַי יַלְעִיגוּ לִי:

יְלָפְתוּ אוֹרְחוֹתָם. וּפְקֹד עֲוֹנוֹתָם. כִּי מָלְאָה סְאָתָם. וְהוּא עָוֹן פְּלִילִי:

חַי אֵ-ל טוֹב וְסַלָּח. שְׁלַח בְּיַד תִּשְׁלָח. כִּי עַתָּה כְּפָלַח. הָרְמוֹן כָּל מִקְהָלִי:

יְגוֹן אֶל מְסִבּוֹ. בְּרִנָּה בֹּא יָבֹא. יַעֲלוּ עַל אוֹיְבוֹ. כָּל מַכָּה וְכָל חֹלִי:

יְקָבְצוּ וְיֵאָסְפוּ. עַם אֲשֶׁר נִדְחֲפוּ. תּוֹךְ עִיר לָהּ נִכְסְפוּ. צִיּוֹן חֶמְדַּת כְּלִילִי:

מָתַי אִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו. בִּנְךָ מֵאַנְשֵׁי שָׁוְא. תִּפְדֶּה וְאֶת כּוֹבְשָׁיו. אֶדְרְכֵם תַּחַת רַגְלִי:

The two surviving piyutim composed by Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, zy"a:

פיוט לחג המצות

Pesach - (This piyut is missing several stanzas which were unfortunately lost)

This piyut praises Hashem's glorious Name while offering the korban Pesach for Hashem, or as in our days, conducting the Leil HaSeder.

סימן: **אני חיים חזק הקטן**
[לפיוט חסרים כמה בתים. וחבל על דאבדין]

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה'.

אַתֶּם הַלְּלוּהוּ, הַלֵּל עַד גְּמִירָא. וְגַם שַׁבְּחוּהוּ, בְּשָׂפָה בְרוּרָה. בִּתְפִלּוֹת נִבְחָרִים, תִּקְּנוּ יְשָׁרִים, בְּלֵיל הַהֲדוּרִים. שְׁמוּרִים לַה'.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה'.

נְעָרִים בַּל יִשְׁנוּ, לָכֵן אַל תְּאַחַר. שֶׁלְּחָנְךָ עָרַכְנוּ, מִכָּל מִין הַנִּבְחָר. קְעָרָה נִבְחֶרֶת, תִּהְיֶה מְסֻדֶּרֶת, מַכְרֶזֶת אוֹמֶרֶת. אֵין קָדוֹשׁ כַּה'.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה'.

יִשְׂרָאֵל בֹּאוּ נָא, עַל יַיִן קַדְּשׁוּ. הַסֵּבָּה נְכוֹנָה, עַל שְׁמֹאל תַּעֲשׂוּ. עַל יָמִין אֵינֶנָּה, מִטַּעַם סַכָּנָה. אָז שְׁתוּ בִּרְנָנָה, כּוֹס בִּרְכַּת ה'.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה'.

חֲבִיבָה לְשַׁעְתָּהּ, מִצְוַת כַּרְפַּס נָאָה. כְּזַיִת פְּחוּתָה, בְּבִרְכַּת הֲנָאָה. וְטִבּוּל צְרִיכָה, וּנְטִילַת יָדֶךָ, מִבְּלִי בְרָכָה. הַלְּלוּ אֶת ה'.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה'.

יַחַץ הַשְּׁמוּרָה, יָשִׁית חֵלֶק גָּדוֹל. בְּמַצָּה הֲדוּרָה, לְמָעוֹז וּלְמִגְדּוֹל. שְׁלֵמוֹת שְׁתַּיִם, הַקָּטָן בִּנְתַּיִם. כֵּן דֶּרֶךְ עֲנִיִּים. הֵם עֹבְדֵי ה'.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה'.

יַתְחִיל הַהַגָּדָה, בְּבֹאוֹ כְּפִי שִׂכְלוֹ. כּוֹס שֵׁנִי בְּמִדָּה, יָסֵב יִשְׁתֶּה כֻּלּוֹ. מִבְּלִי הַבְּרָכָה. וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה, שֶׁל קִדּוּשׁ דַּי לְךָ. יְבָרֶכְךָ ה׳.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה׳.

מִצְוַת הָרְחִיצָה, לַיָּדַיִם בִּבְרָכָה. בִּרְכַּת מוֹצִיא מַצָּה, תֵּכֶף הִיא צְרִיכָה. שְׁנֵי זֵיתִים תֹּאכְלוּ, אַתֶּם הַגּוֹי כֻּלּוֹ. הַפּוֹחֵת מֵאֵלּוּ, תּוֹעֲבַת ה׳.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה׳.

חִיּוּב מִצְוַת מָרוֹר, מִבְּלִי הַסֵּבָּה. כִּי כֵן דִּינוֹ בָּרוּר, בִּרְכָתוֹ כְּתוּבָה. כַּזַּיִת שִׁיעוּרוֹ, וְכַרְפַּס פִּטְרוֹ, מִבִּרְכַּת מַחְסוֹרוֹ. כְּתוֹרַת ה׳.

שֵׁם אֵ-ל חַי יִשְׁתַּבַּח. תּוֹךְ קְהַל אֱמוּנַי, וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לַה׳.

A prayer for Mashiach to come and release us from us the travails of exile, and redeem us in the merit of the Patriarchs:

סימן: חיים הקטן חזק

זֵד בֶּן זָרָה שִׁפְחַת אִמִּי. הֵן בִּי קֵץ לְךָ אֶקְרָא, אֶתְחַנַּן כָּל אֵבְרֵי נָעוּ:

חַדֵּשׁ צוּרִי יָמַי, כִּימֵי צֵאתָם מִנִּי חָנֵם לַחָפְשִׁי, וּמִשָּׁם נָסָעוּ:

יָ-הּ אֶ-לֹקִים לְךָ אַל דָּמִי. אַל תֶּחֱרַשׁ וְאַל תִּשְׁקֹט אֵ-ל. אוֹיְבַי לִי הֵרִיעוּ:

יָשִׁיב אוֹתִי אֶל מְקוֹמִי. יַעֲשֶׂה נִפְלָאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת. הֵן מֵאָז נוֹדָעוּ:

מְשִׁיחִי מִבֵּית הַלַּחְמִי. יִפְרַח כַּתָּמָר יֹאחֲזֵמוֹ רַעַד. עַמִּים שָׁמֵעוּ:

הָסֵר נָא אֶת מַלְכוּת רוֹמִי. וְאַבֵּד אֶת כָּל זָכָר לָמוֹ. דְּבָרְךָ לֹא שָׁמֵעוּ:

קוֹנִי רְאֵה נִכְחַד עָצְמִי. עָצְמוּ מַצְמִיתַי אוֹיְבַי שֶׁקֶר. כִּי הֵם אוֹתִי קָבָעוּ:

טוֹב וּמֵטִיב שְׁבָה עִמִּי. כָּאָמוּר עַל יַד הַנְּבִיאִים. דִּבְרֵיהֶם נִשְׁמָעוּ:

נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי. יֹאמַר כַּאֲמוּר לְבֶן אָמוֹץ. ה' יָדָעוּ:

חַזֵּק אֶת עֲנִיֵּי עַמִּי. הַנְּפוּצִים מֵאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת. נָדוּ וְגַם נָעוּ:

זֵדִים וּפוֹשְׁעִים בּוּזוּ שְׁמִי. יֹאכְלוּ פִּרְיָם. וּמִמּוֹעֲצוֹתָם יִשְׂבָּעוּ:

קַנֵּא לְשֶׁבֶר בַּת עַמִּי. וַעֲקֵדַת יִצְחָק וְעוֹקְדוֹ, אֵ-ל תִּזְכֹּר לְזַרְעוֹ:

GLOSSARY

Acharonim – later commentators

Aggadah, aggadot – true stories recorded in the Torah

A"h – Peace be upon him/her

Aliyah – the honor of being called up in the Beit Hakeneset to recite the blessing over the Torah

Aron Hakodesh – the Ark where the Sifrei Torah are kept in the Beit Hakeneset

Asseret Yemei Teshuvah – The ten days beginning on Rosh Hashanah and ending on Yom Kippur, designated for doing teshuvah

Avodah – (lit. Service) prayer

Avodat Hashem – service of Hashem

Baruch Hashem – Thank G-d

B'iyun – in depth study

B'kiyut – comprehensive study

Ba'al teshuvah – (lit. Master of Return) one who has returned to Jewish observance

Bedikat chametz – the custom of checking one's house for chametz (leavened bread) the evening prior to Pesach

Beit Din – Rabbinical Court

Beit Hakeneset – house of prayer, synagogue

Beit Hamidrash, Batei Midrashot (pl) – house of study

Beit Hamikdash – the Holy Temple

Ben, bnei (pl) – son

Bircat Hagomel – a blessing recited after experiencing miraculous salvation

Blech – a metal plate placed on the stove to cover the flame, enabling the food to remain warm on Shabbat in permitted way.

Bnei Yisrael – the Children of Israel

Brit milah, brit – circumcision

Chachamim – (lit. wise people) – Sages

Chag, Chagim – Jewish holidays

Chalak – (or glatt, in Yiddish) an added stringency in the kashrut of meat

Chamin – special hot dish customarily eaten on the Shabbat morning meal, also known as cholent.

Chanukat Habayit – dedication of a new house

Chas v'chalilah – G-d forbid

Chas v'shalom – May G-d have mercy

Chassid – righteous person

Chatan – groom

Chavruta, chavrutot (pl) – study partner

Chazal – our Sages, may their memory be for blessing

Chessed – Loving kindness

Chevrah Kadisha – an organization that is responsible for the purification and burial of the deceased.

Chillul Hashem – desecration of Hashem's Name

Chol Hamoed – intermediary days of the festival

Chuppah – wedding canopy

Dayan – Judge

Dinei nashim – laws pertaining to marriage

Dinim – Jewish laws

Divrei Torah – words of Torah

Drashah – speech

Drush – deeper explanations of the Torah

Dybbuk – evil spirit of a dead person

Eiruv – a halachically defined area in which one can carry on Shabbat

Elokim – Hashem

Eretz Yisrael – the Land of Israel

Erev – the eve of (Shabbat)

Etrog, etrogim – citrus fruit used in the mitzvah of the four species on Sukkot

Gabbaim – managers of synagogue affairs

Gadol – great person, leader of the nation

Gan Eden – Garden of Eden; Paradise

Gaon – brilliant Sage

Gehinnom – Purgatory

Get – bill of divorce

Glatt – see chalak

Hachnasat kallah – charity to cover the expenses of a poor person's wedding

Hachnasat orchim – the mitzvah of receiving guests

Haggadah – the sefer recited at the Seder table describing the miracles of the Exodus

Halachah, halachot (pl) – Jewish law; edict

Halachic – according to Jewish law

Hashgachah pratit – Divine intervention

Hilula – celebration conducted on the anniversary of a tzaddik's death

Kabbalah – hidden facets of the Torah

Kadi – Moslem religious judge

Kallah – bride

Kamaya – amulet

Kasher – a process necessary in order to render something permissible for consumption or use according to Jewish law

Kashrut – Kosher status of a food

Kelippah, kelippot (pl) – force of impurity

Ketubah – marriage contract

Kiddush Hashem – sanctification of Hashem's Name

Kiddushin – marriage ceremony

Kosher – food permitted by Jewish law

Kriyat Shema – the recital of the Shema

Kupat tzedakah – a tzedakah box

L'iluy nishmat – for the elevation of his soul

Leil Haseder –Passover Night, when the Seder is performed

Leil Shimurim – "The Night of Protection," referring to Leil Haseder

Ma'aseh Merkavah – (Lit. The Heavenly Chariot), referring to deep mystical matters

Ma'aser – a tenth of one's earnings, which must be distributed to the poor as charity

Mabul – The Great Deluge

Masechta, Masechet – tractate

Mashiach – the Messiah

Matan Torah – the Giving of the Torah

Matzah, matzot – unleavened bread

Mayim acharonim – the washing of one's fingers before reciting the Grace after Meals

Mazal – luck

Mekubal – Kabbalist, one who delves into the hidden aspects of the Torah

Melaveh malkah – festive meal conducted after the end of Shabbat to "escort the Shabbat Queen"

Mellah – Jewish Quarter

Meshulach – hired charity collectors

Mi shebeirach – a blessing that includes the person's father's name

Mikveh, mikvaot (pl) – body of water for ritual immersion and purification

Milah – circumcision

Minchah – Afternoon Prayers

Mishnah – part of the Oral Torah

Mitzvah, mitzvot (pl) – good deed; commandment

Mohel – one who performs the circumcision

Motza'ei Shabbat – the conclusion of Shabbat

Mussar – Jewish ethics

Navi – prophet

Ner neshamah – a candle one lights for the elevation of the deceased's soul

Neshamah – soul

Nesi'im – prince, leader of the Jewish people

Parashah, parshiyot (pl) – chapter

Parashat hashevuah – the portion of Torah being read that week

Parochet – The curtain covering the Aron Hakodesh in the Beit Hakeneset

Pasuk, pesukim (pl) – verse

Pidyon nefesh – charity donation to gain merit

Pidyon petter chamor – the mitzvah of redeeming a first born male donkey with a sheep

Piyut, piyutim (pl) – songs of praise or prayers written in poetic style

Posek – an ordained Rabbi, qualified to render halachic decisions

Poskim – sefarim of halachic responsa

Rabbanim – rabbis

Rabbotai – My masters

Rachmana litzlan – May G-d's mercy be upon them

Ribbono shel Olam –Master of the World, referring to Hashem

Rishonim – earlier commentators

Rosh Av Beit Din – the head of the Rabbinical Court

Rosh Chodesh – the first day of a Jewish month

Rosh Hashanah – the first day of the Jewish new year

Sandak – one who holds the baby during the circumcision

Sanhedrin – the High Court

Sefer, sefarim (pl) – book

Sefer Torah, Sifrei Torah (pl) – Torah Scroll

Sefirat Haomer – the period between Pesach and Shavuot

Segulah – an act done to gain merit

Selichot – special prayers for forgiveness said prior to the High Holidays

Semichah – Rabbinical Ordination

Seudah – meal

Shacharit –Morning Prayers

Shaliach – tzedakah collector

Shamash – attendant

Shas – the 36 volumes of the Talmud

She'ailat chalom – seeking Heavenly guidance through a dream

She'ailot u'teshuvot – questions and responses, abbreviated as *shu't*

Shechinah – Divine Presence

Shemoneh Esrei – prayer containing eighteen blessings, recited three times a day

Shivah – seven days of morning observed after the death of a close relative

Shlita – may he live many good years, Amen

Shnayim Mikrah v'echad Targum – reading the Scriptural text twice and the Targum once

Shochet – one who is Rabbinically ordained to slaughter animals or birds

Shuk – market place

Simchah – celebration

Siyata di'Shemaya – help from Heaven

Taharah – purity; the purification process accorded to the body of the deceased

Tallit – prayer shawl

Teshuvah – repentance

Tichyeh – May she live many good years

Tikkun, tikkunim (pl) – rectification

Tikkun Chatzot – a prayer recited at midnight lamenting the destruction of the Temple

Tishah B'Av – The ninth day of Av, when both Temples were destroyed

Tzaddik, tzaddikim (pl) – righteous person

Tzedakah – charity

Va'ad Hakashrut – The board of Kashrut

Va'ad Hakehillah – board of members representing the community

Viduy – confession

Yamim Noraim – High Holidays

Yerushalayim – Jerusalem

Yeshiva – rabbinical college

Yetzer Hara – evil inclination

Yishtabach Shemo La'ad – May Hashem's Name be blessed forever

Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement

Zechut avot – merits of one's ancestors

Zt''l, Ztk"l – May the memory of the tzaddik be for a blessing

Zy"a – May the merits of the tzaddik protect us