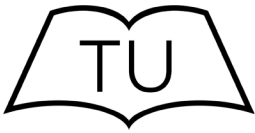


”והיו עיניך רואות את מוריק”

The Life of a Gadol

Biographies and Stories about
a Selection of Gedolim from א-ת



TORAHUMESORAH

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”והיו עיניך רואות את מוריד”

Dear Teacher,

Welcome to “The Life of a Gadol” Unit!

The concept of this unit was born as a way for teachers to introduce a Gadol for each letter of the Aleph Bais that they teach. The Gadol chosen each week is one that begins with the specific letter that is being taught. (Either the Gadol’s first or last name.)

Please note that the letter ‘צ features a “future צדיק”, the actual student himself! Additionally, the letter ‘ת features the Pasuk “תורת ה' תמימה...”

The Gedolei Yisroel Unit includes a brief and clear biography of each Gadol. Following that is a collection of a few stories that can be shared with students. Each story is interesting and inspiring, and will motivate students to model the beautiful Middos Tovos and Chavivus Hamitzvos that our precious Gedolim possessed.

Although this Gedolim Unit will be widely used by teachers who are teaching the Aleph Bais, this is also an extremely valuable resource for any Morah, Rebbe, or Teacher of any grade level! The biographies and stories are relevant to anyone who wants to benefit from learning about the lives of our Gedolei Yisroel.

May we be zocheh to watch our students emulate the ways of our Gedolim, and, B'ezras Hashem, may all of Yaldei Yisroel grow up to become future Gedolim themselves!

Torah Umesorah
Lakewood Teachers Center

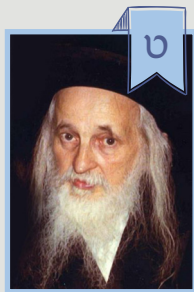
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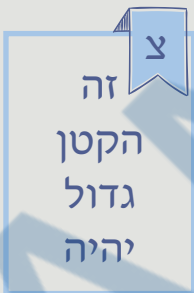
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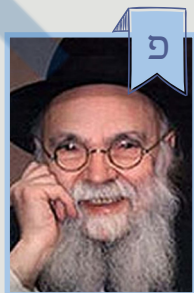


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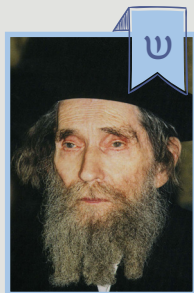


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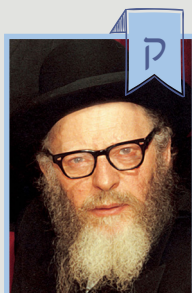
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1910-2012

The Life of a Gadol

Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l was one of the leading Poskim of our generation. He lived in Yerushalayim. His opinions and advice were sought after from all over the world. Rav Elyashiv was a huge masmid who learned Torah uninterrupted for as long as twenty hours straight!

Rav Elyashiv was an only child born to Rav Avrohom and Chaya Musha Elyashiv in 1910 in Lithuania. Rav Yosef Shalom's father, Rav Avraham Elyashiv, was a close talmid of the Chofetz Chaim. He was a Rav and Posek in Homel and in Eretz Yisroel. He was known as the "Homeler Rav".

The Chofetz Chaim once came to Homel when Rav Yosef Shalom was five years old. He met with his father, Rav Avrohom, and he gave a special bracha to his son Yosef Shalom that he should grow up to love Torah and Mitzvos.

Reb Yosef Shalom moved with his parents to Eretz Yisroel when he was twelve years old. Rav Yosef Shalom never learned in a formal Yeshiva. He diligently learned one on one with his father for many hours a day. He benefitted greatly from listening firsthand to his father's answers to halachic inquiries. This precious time spent with his illustrious father is what made Rav Elyashiv so befitting later on to become the Posek Hador, answering all kinds of complicated shailos for the entire Klal Yisroel! His father, Rav Avrohom also founded the Beis Medrash Tiferes Bachurim in Meah Shearim.

Later on, when Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv was twenty years old, he married Reb Aryeh Levin's daughter, Shaina Chaya. Rav Elyashiv had 12 children; five sons and seven daughters. His oldest daughter was Batsheva, who later on married Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l.

Rav Elyashiv took over his father's nightly shiur in Tiferes Bachurim after his father was niftar suddenly at the age of sixty-one. Rav Elyashiv became the leading Posek of our generation. He issued rulings in Halacha for people from all walks of life. Rav Elyashiv used to meet hundreds of people every day who came to seek his advice. He was respected as the Posek Hador by all of Klal Yisroel across the entire world!

He listened patiently to every single question posed to him, carefully analyzing all the facts related to the question before coming up with a Psak.

Horav Elyashiv never got angry. He never raised his voice or insulted anyone. This is despite the fact that so many people would come to talk to him and not always agree with his rulings. If someone disagreed with him, he would remain silent as opposed to trying to argue his point.

Rav Elyashiv was zocheh in his lifetime to have nearly 1000 descendants from him. He was also fortunate to enjoy the birth of the sixth generation of being born into his illustrious family. Rav Elyashiv merited to have a very long and productive life of 102 years! Over 300,000 people attended his Levaya, showing Kavod to the world's greatest Posek and tzaddik of our generation!

Rav Elyashiv's Piskei Halacha are found in a four-volume set of Seforim titled "Kovetz Teshuvos". There are many more Seforim that have been published with Rav Elyashiv's Chiddushim on Gemara, Aggadah, and the Haggadah shel Pesach.

Remaining Silent

Rav Elyashiv's parents did not have children for 17 years. His mother, Chaya Musha, used to cry to Hashem, begging for a child. Chaya Musha had a neighbor who was at times very nasty. One day Chaya Musha had just finished hanging out on the clothesline all the laundry that she had painstakingly hand-washed. Her nasty neighbor walked by and cut the clothesline. All of the clean clothes fell onto the muddy ground and got ruined!

Chaya Musha remained silent. She picked up her laundry, and started all over again. She did not tell anyone about this incident, not even her husband, Rav Avrohom Elyashiv! Later on, the neighbor knocked on her door to apologize. She begged for mechila. She cried that her son became sick with a dangerously high fever, and she felt that this was a punishment for being so mean to Chaya Musha. Chaya Musha forgave her and davened for the neighbor's child. The boy recovered.

Chaya Musha's act of kindness of not revealing to anyone how the neighbor wronged her, and then being mochel this lady, was a big zechus for her! One year later, Chaya Musha, gave birth to a baby boy! He was named Yosef Shalom, who grew up to become the leading Gadol and Posek Hador.

Repaying Kindness

One time, Rav Elyashiv took off time from his busy schedule to attend a Levaya in Yerushalyaim. Rav Elyashiv said over this story:

The niftar at this Levaya was Rav Elyashiv's old neighbor many years before, around the time that Rav Elyashiv had become a Chosson. One day, this neighbor noticed that Rav Elyashiv looked like he was disturbed about something. He inquired from Rav Elyashiv as to what was bothering him. Rav Elyashiv explained that he was about to get married, and although he was a very happy Chosson, he was extremely worried that no bachurim would attend his wedding. He felt that since he never attended a regular Yeshiva, he was not able to create friendships with other bachurim who could join him at his wedding. (Rav Elyashiv learned privately with his father Rav Avrohom.)

"Who will come and dance at my wedding?" He asked.

The neighbor immediately understood Rav Elyashiv's predicament and thus got to work. He gathered together a huge crowd of bachurim who came to sing and dance at the wedding.

Rav Elyashiv came to the levaya of this old, caring neighbor as an ode of Hakoras Hatov for the tremendous chesed that he had done for him so many years before!

The Push That Was Not Felt

One time, someone accidentally pushed into Rav Elyashiv at a very crowded event. The man was so devastated and embarrassed that this happened, and he begged forgiveness from Rav Elyashiv.

Rav Elyashiv responded to him by exclaiming that he really didn't feel like he was pushed, so the man has no reason to be upset and ask for forgiveness!

Rav Elyashiv knew that if he forgave the man, he would not even feel any better about it. Instead, Rav Elyashiv acted as if the incident had never happened.

SAMPLE

The Life of a Gadol

Harav Shmuel Berenbaum was born in Poland in 1920. He was a talmid of Yeshivas Ohel Torah led by Harav Elchonon Wasserman zt"l. He later went to learn in the Yeshiva in Mir, Poland. Harav Shmuel was a young bachur at the onset of World War II. He escaped from the ravages of the Nazi occupied Poland together with the rest of Mir Yeshiva. They traveled for many months before settling in Shanghai, China. Harav Shmuel learned in the Mir in Shanghai for many years until the Yeshiva was able to safely emigrate to America.

Harav Shmuel came to Brooklyn, New York with the remnants of Mir Yeshiva. He married the daughter of the Mir Rosh Yeshiva, Horav Avrohom Kalmanowitz zt"l. In 1964, he became the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir after his father in Law was niftar. He diligently led the Mir Yeshiva in New York for over 50 years.

Harav Shmuel zt"l was well known for his legendary hasmadah in Torah. Every minute of his life was devoted to learning Torah. He delivered a shiur in Yeshiva that he worked on and toiled for hours each day to prepare. He treated his talmidim as his own children, and he even fasted many times for the hatzlacha of his talmidim!

Harav Shmuel Berenbaum was also involved in many acts of chesed, such as spending a lot of time raising money for Talmidei Chachomim in Eretz Yisroel. He started a Keren Tzedakah which today bears his name, Keren Birchach Shmuel.

Chessed on the Boat

Harav Shmuel fled Poland with the entire Mir Yeshiva. They traveled by boat on the very long journey to Shanghai, China. Rebbetzin Zlata Ginsburg, the wife of Horav Efraim Mordechai Ginsburg, who was the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir in Poland, said over the following story about Reb Shmuel Berenbaum.

Rebbetzin Ginsburg was a young mother traveling with her family of young children on the boat from Shanghai to America. One time, her baby was crying a lot and she needed help. Reb Shmuel offered to help her and hold the crying baby. Rebbetzin Ginsburg readily accepted his offer of help and handed the young bachur her baby.

Rebbetzin Ginsburg noticed that Reb Shmuel was holding the baby with one hand, and had an open sefer in the other hand. He was able to calm the baby down and learn Torah at the same time!

The Unused Bed

Harav Shmuel Berenbaum once travelled to Chicago to raise money for Talmidei Chachomim in Eretz Yisroel. He stayed overnight by a gracious host in the city.

The following morning, after Harav Shmuel left Chicago for Mir yeshiva in New York, the hostess entered the guest room that he had stayed in to take off the bedding. She walked in and noticed that the bed was completely untouched! It was very clear that he did not even go into the bed at all!

Harav Shmuel had stayed up all night learning Torah, and he left the bed perfectly ready for the next guest!