

THE Zera Emes זרע אמת PROJECT

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The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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The Lederman Shul Gabbai

Last week we explored the Lederman family and their enduring *Zera Emes* legacy—the Lederman Shul. No discussion of the shul would be complete without mentioning **Rav Yishai (Yeshayahu) ben Yosef Shaul HaLevi Mandel**, one of its outstanding talmidei chachamim, who faithfully served as the shul's gabbai for fifty years. Such was his diligence in Torah that he became known as “the Masmid of Lederman.”

TORAH THOUGHT

Rav Chaim Kanievsky, with whom Rav Yishai shared a close and longstanding friendship, records a beautiful insight that he heard from him (*Derech Sichah*, vol. 2).

In the monthly *Birkas HaChodesh* we say: May Hashem gather in our dispersed from the four corners of the earth; all of Yisrael, united as friends. (ויקבץ נדחינו מארבע כנפות הארץ) (חברים כל ישראל)

Rav Yishai asked: What is the connection between Hashem

gathering us from the four corners of the earth and the subsequent phrase, “all of Yisrael, united as friends”?

He explained that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*—baseless hatred. Accordingly, the prerequisite for its rebuilding is *achdus*, genuine Jewish unity. The *tefillah* therefore means: When all of Yisrael become united as one, Hashem will gather us from the four corners of the earth.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky offered an additional explanation. Even after the Jewish people are gathered together, each community will arrive with its own customs and traditions. We therefore daven not only for the ingathering of the refugees, but also that all of Klal Yisrael remain united despite those differences.

AVODAH

For decades Rav Yishai served as the devoted gabbai of



ר' ישי מנדל

Rav Yishai (Yeshayahu) ben Yosef Shaul HaLevi Mandel was born on the 20th of Kislev, 1927 (5688), in Hungary, near Kerestir. Growing up near the town associated with Reb Shayale of Kerestir helped foster his connection with Reb Shayale's son.

From childhood he suffered from severe asthma, making his survival of the Holocaust—including Auschwitz—all the more remarkable.

After World War II he immigrated to Eretz Yisrael. He first learned in Kfar Saba, where he became close to Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman. Later he attended the Lomza Yeshivah in Petach Tikvah, where he developed close relationships with many of the leading Talmidei Chachamim of the generation, including Rav Chaim Kanievsky.

He married Mina, daughter of Rav Shneur Zalman Tzivion of Petach Tikvah. Soon afterward he joined Yeshivas Tiferes Zion, where he spent decades teaching Torah.

During *bein hazemanim*, Rav Yishai would travel to Tzfas to learn in seclusion. Whenever Rav Chaim Kanievsky was also in Tzfas, part of his daily schedule included spending several hours learning together with Rav Yishai.

Rav Yishai passed away on the 24th of Kislev, 2021 (5782), at the age of 94. He is buried beside Rav Gedaliah Nadel. Rav Gedaliah's children related that their father spoke of Rav Yishai with the greatest admiration and respect.

the Lederman Shul. His dedication to the *beis haknesses* was extraordinary.

Throughout his life he suffered from poor health. Nevertheless, despite constant physical pain, he insisted on attending *tefillah* three times every day. He was so determined not to disturb the aide who slept in his home that he would quietly wheel himself to shul alone rather than wake him. His unwavering commitment to *tefillah* was nothing short of remarkable.

His *levayah* was held at the Lederman Shul, and he was buried in the Ponovezh cemetery near Rav Gedaliah Nadel.

MESORAH

Rav Yishai related an illuminating recollection from the funeral of the [Chazon Ish](#).

He was walking alongside Rav Chaim Shaul Karelitz (1912–20 Tammuz 2001), the son of Rav Meir Karelitz and nephew of the Chazon Ish. Rav Chaim Shaul remarked wistfully:

“If we Litvaks were like the Chassidim, we would appoint a successor immediately at the funeral.”

Rav Yishai asked whom he believed should succeed the Chazon Ish.

Without hesitation, Rav Chaim Shaul replied:

“Rav Aharon Leib of Kfar Saba.”

He was referring to Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, who at the time was not yet forty years old. (*Ke’Ayal Ta’arog*, p. 569.)

THE TRUSTED SOFER

Rav Yishai was also a highly respected *sofer*. Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman entrusted him with writing a Sefer Torah on his behalf.

After marrying off all of his children, Rav Shteinman remarked that he finally had a little extra money and wished to fulfill the mitzvah of writing a Sefer Torah. He arranged with Rav Yishai that he would pay him gradually, and Rav Yishai would write only the amount that had already been paid for, refusing to continue without payment.

Rav Shteinman insisted that the entire project remain confidential, known only to those whose involvement was absolutely necessary. Even when the Sefer Torah was brought into the yeshivah, no public announcement was made.

To commemorate his family discreetly, Rav Shteinman had the initials of his children engraved on the *Atzei Chaim*.

Interestingly, although there is a halachic discussion regarding whether a left-handed person may write a Sefer Torah, Rav Shteinman specifically requested that the Steipler Gaon, who was left-handed, fill in the final six lines.

חזון אי"ש

Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz (11 Cheshvan 1878–15 Cheshvan 1953), universally known as the Chazon Ish, was born in Kossovo, Belarus, into a distinguished family of Torah scholars. Among his siblings, one brother married a daughter of the *Cheshek Shlomo*, while one of his sisters married the Steipler Gaon. In 1933 he moved to Bnei Brak with his wife, Basha (1864–18 Adar 1958). Although he never held an official rabbinic position and rarely spoke publicly or left Bnei Brak, he became one of the foremost halachic authorities and spiritual leaders of the Torah world, playing a pivotal role in shaping the postwar Charedi community.