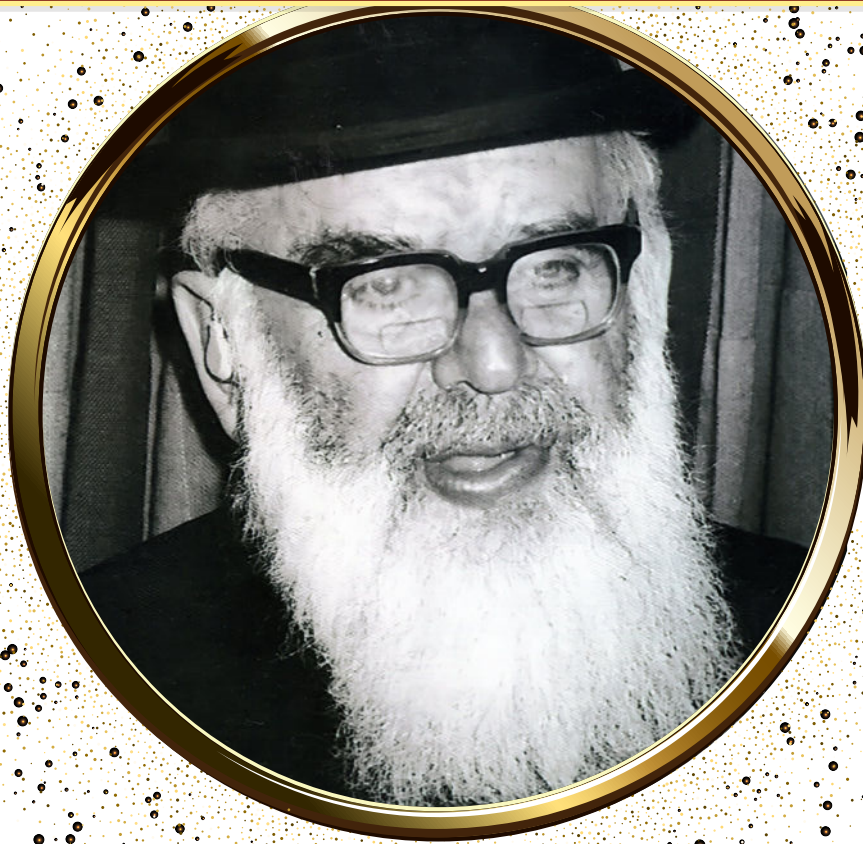


Rav Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל

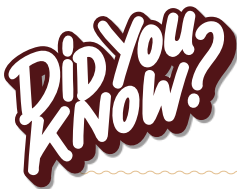


Rav Chaim Leib Shmulevitz was born on 2 Tishrei, 5662 (1901) and grew up in the town of Stutchin, Lithuania. Even though both his parents were *niftar* when he was a teenager and he became responsible for his siblings, he still found time to learn. In fact, his *hasmadah*, immense Torah knowledge, and outstanding memory were already recognized at

a young age. At around age 19, Rav Shimon Shkop appointed him as a *maggid shiur* because "Rav Chaim could give his *talmidim* a love for Torah like no one else." Afterward, he joined Yeshivas Mir, where he stayed for about 50 years, becoming one of its *roshei yeshivah*. He was always learning, reviewing, and thinking in learning. Over the years, despite suf-

fering from hearing loss and pain, he gave thousands of *shiurim* and taught thousands of *talmidim*. He deeply cared for others and would build up his *talmidim*. He became a leader of Klal Yisrael and was a member of the Moetzes Gedolei Torah of Agudas Yisrael.

He was *niftar* on 3 Teves, 5739 (1979).



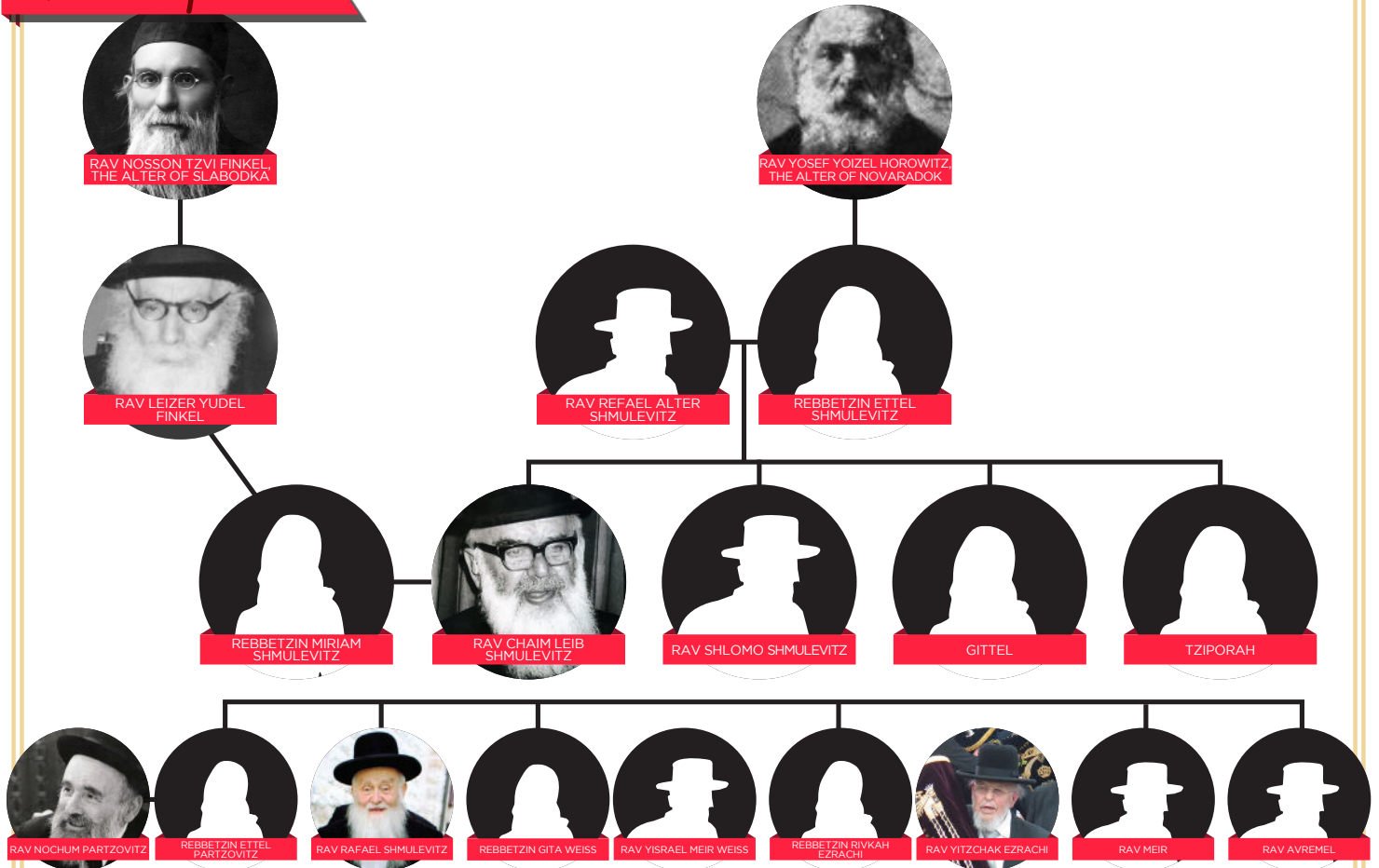
In his younger years, in Grodno, he was forced to join the army, but Rav Chaim would sneak away to give *shiur* to *talmidim* hiding among the bushes.

When Yeshivas Mir was in Shanghai, they had very few *sefarim*. Someone had a *Ketzos Hachoshen* that was missing two pages and Rav Chaim filled in the missing text from memory. Later, someone compared his words to a full *Ketzos* and found they were identical.

When he needed help in his learning, he would sometimes go close to the *aron kodesh* and daven for understanding.

When some members of the yeshivah was traveling by boat from Shanghai to France, Rav Chaim was learning the sefer *Shev Shmaatsa*. Wondering where exactly the boat was, someone asked, "Where are we?" Right away Rav Chaim replied, "*Shmaatsa Gimmel* (the third chapter of *Shev Shmaatsa*)."

Family Tree



Rav Chaim Leib was the son of Rav Refael Alter and Rebbetzin Ettel Shmulevitz. Rav Refael Alter set up the yeshivah in Grodno and was a *rosh yeshivah* in Stutchin. Rebbetzin Ettel was the daughter of Rav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, often referred to as the Alter of Novaradok.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz had three siblings: Rav Shlomo, Gittel, and Tziporah.

Rav Chaim married Miriam, the daughter of Rav Leizer Yudel Finkel, who was the son of the Alter of Slabodka and the *rosh yeshivah* of Yeshivas Mir. (Rav Leizer Yudel's son, Rav Beinush, was *rosh yeshivah* after him, and

his daughter, Leah, married Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel.) Throughout her life, Rebbetzin Miriam dedicated herself to her husband's learning and treated his *talmidim* like family.

Rav Chaim and Rebbetzin Miriam had six children: Ettel (who married Rav Nochum Partzovitz, whose *Chiddushei Rav Nochum* is studied in yeshivos all over), Rav Rafael (a *rosh yeshivah* at Yeshivas Mir), Gita (who married to Rav Yisrael Meir Weiss, a *rosh yeshivah* in Haifa), Rivkah (married to Rav Yitzchak Eizrachi), Rav Meir (a *rosh kollel* and *gaon* in Torah), and Rav Avremel (who gave a *shiur* at Yeshivas Mir).

SOME OF RAV CHAIM SHMULEVITZ'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:



Over a seven-year period, during and immediately after World War II, Rav Chaim guided the yeshivah and its 350-400 *talmidim* as it moved to several locations, including Shanghai, China. In addition to giving *shiurim* twice a week, he became like a father to many *talmidim* who lost their parents during the war. Although he had the chance to relocate to America at one point, he refused to leave if even one *talmid* would be left behind.

Rav Chaim's Gemara *shiurim* were advanced and clear. Since he wrote up all his *shiurim*, he had thousands of written pages when he was *niftar*. Many of his *shiurim* are published in *Sha'arei Chaim*.



After the war, the Mir Yeshivah reestablished itself in two locations — America and Eretz Yisrael. Most of the staff and *talmidim* went to New York, but a minority went to Eretz Yisrael where the branch of the yeshivah was led by Rav Chaim.

Rav Chaim is well known for his *mussar shmuesen*, in which he guided *talmidim* toward perfecting their *middos*. Many of them are recorded in Rav Chaim's *Sichos Mussar*, which is learned in many yeshivos.





RAV CHAIM DEEPLY

cared for others. He cried when people suffered and helped them as much as he could. In the weeks before Rav Chaim was *niftar*, he was clearly very ill. On Yom Kippur, he gave his final *mussar* lesson in front of

the yeshivah by saying, "Look what can happen to a person!" A little more than a week later, on Hoshana Rabbah, a man came to him asking that he daven for someone who was sick. He gave Rav Chaim the *choleh's* name and left. (Some say Rav Chaim knew the sick person.) Rav Chaim then said that he wanted to go to the Kosel to daven for this person right away. His family argued that he could not go, as he was critically ill, bedridden, and in an extremely weak state. Rav Chaim would not change his mind, so his family gave in and called a taxi. Since he was so weak, he had to be carried from his bed to the taxi. When he finally arrived at the Kosel, he davened with a lot of *kavanah* for the *choleh* and then made the exhausting trip back

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Rav Chaim was also very sensitive to the needs of others. He had a relative who lived in an old-age home and Rav Chaim would sometimes write him letters. He once asked someone to mail one of these letters, and the person took the letter and noticed that he had written "Rav Chaim Shmulevitz" on the envelope in the return address. This was very much out of the ordinary; Rav Chaim was an *anav* and would always avoid using titles like "Rav." Why had he written it on the envelope? This person felt like he had to know, so he asked Rav Chaim for an explanation. Rav Chaim replied, "The person to whom the letter was addressed is a *talmid chacham*. He likely does not get the attention and respect he deserves in the nursing home. But maybe if people see that he receives letters from a *rav*, they will treat him more honorably."

RAV CHAIM SHMULEVITZ'S DVAR TORAH

Straight from the Heart

If you look in Parshas Terumah, you will see that the stones for the *Eiphod* and *Choshen* are mentioned at the end of the list of donations to the Mishkan (25:7). Why are these items listed there, as if they are not as highly valued as the other donations?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh writes that these items were brought by the *nesi'im*, the leaders of the *Shevatim*, who did not have to exert themselves to obtain them. Due to their greatness, the *Ananei Hakavod* brought these precious stones right to their homes. Klal Yisrael, on the other hand, gave of their own money, which they got from doing hard work, so the Torah lists their donations first.

In truth, the Torah instructed that donations to the Mishkan be given from the heart (25:2). To give from the heart means to give something received through hard work, because the more one applies himself and gives of his time and effort, the more special the money he earns is to him. Since Klal Yisrael worked hard to obtain what they gave away, their donations came from their hearts and the Torah greatly valued them.

We can learn from here that if you want to become close to someone, you should give them something that is special to you. When you do that, it is like you are giving part of yourself and you can thus achieve *v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha*.

(*Sichos Mussar, ma'amar* 22, Parshas Tetzaveh, 5732)