

The Life of a Chossid



Reb Zalman Moshe Hayitzchaki

Born: 5632* in Nevel, Russia.
Passed Away: 3 Shevat 5712*
in Eretz Yisroel.

Reb Zalman Moshe Hayitzchaki was born in 5632* in Nevel, Russia, to his father Reb Dovber Hayitzchaki, known as “*Berel Der Shochet*,” and his mother Rochel. Tradition has it that his family name was due to their being descendants of Rashi—Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki.¹

Reb Zalman Moshe married around the year 5658* in Zemin, Belarus. His wife, Neshe Reines, was from a leading *misnagdishe* family.² After several years, he moved to Schedrin, Belarus.³

Following his father’s passing in 5679*, he moved back to Nevel and assumed his father’s position as the town *shochet*.⁴

In 5695*, Reb Zalman Moshe moved to Eretz Yisroel, where he lived in Tel Aviv before moving to Kfar Chabad in 5710*. On 3 Shevat 5712*, Reb Zalman Moshe passed away. He is buried in the old cemetery in Tzfas.

After his marriage, Reb Zalman Moshe and his wife lived in Zemin for a number of years, where he worked as a *shochet*. After Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim was founded in 5657*, a number of *temimim* came to Zemin along with the noted *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Gronem Esterman. Reb Zalman Moshe was attracted to the yeshiva and would occasionally attend Reb Gronem’s *shiur Chassidus*. This was Reb Zalman Moshe’s first exposure to Chassidus and it opened his eyes. His longing to learn Chassidus increased

to the point where he came to the *shiur* every day, despite not officially being a student in the yeshiva. In 5659*, Reb Zalman Moshe accompanied the *temimim* on their trip to Lubavitch for Tishrei.

During this first visit to Lubavitch, he listened intently to the many *maamarim* the Rebbe Rashab said over Tishrei. He realized that the style of the Rebbe Rashab’s *maamarim* differed somewhat from the style of Reb Gronem’s *shiurim*. Upon investigating further, he heard from a number of elder *Chassidim* that Reb Gronem taught only the Chassidus of the Rebbe Maharash, to whom he was *mekushar*.

When he returned to Zemin, Reb Zalman Moshe stopped going to Reb Gronem’s *shiurim*. “We have a Rebbe and we must learn his Chassidus,” he said.

The following year, Reb Zalman Moshe again traveled to Lubavitch for Rosh Hashanah, and he had his first *yechidus*. The Rebbe Rashab asked him, “Are you still attending the *shiurim* of Reb Gronem?” “No,” replied Reb Zalman Moshe. “Why?” asked the Rebbe. “Because he doesn’t teach your Chassidus,” Reb Zalman Moshe replied. The Rebbe Rashab made a motion of dismissal with his hand and said, “If that’s the case, it doesn’t matter.”

From that point on, the Rebbe Rashab referred to Reb Zalman Moshe as “my Zalman Moshe.”⁵

Several years after his marriage, Reb Zalman Moshe agreed to the request of the villagers in Schedrin, Belarus, to become that town’s *shochet*. Schedrin was a relatively small town, whose population was half the size of Zemin’s. It was founded by the Tzemach Tzedek, and its inhabitants were all Chassidim, who mostly worked in agriculture. People asked Reb Zalman Moshe, “Zemin is a big city, and you have enough *parnassa* from your job as a *shochet*. Why are you moving to Schedrin, where the job will not

לזכות הוריני
 הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק
 וזוגתו מרת הדסה רייכל שיחיו ניו
 הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
 וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה שיחיו מאנגעל
 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' ישראל וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
 ניו



be as lucrative?” Reb Zalman Moshe answered, “That is the very reason I’m moving to Schedrin! There, I won’t be as busy *shechting*, and I’ll be able to spend more time learning Chassidus.⁶”

Reb Zalman Moshe was generally a gentle person, who spoke kindly to anyone he met. During farbrengens, however, he was known to speak out strongly about things he felt needed improvement. In truth, he intended the rebuke for himself, but as talking to himself wouldn’t seem proper, he directed them at the others present. When asked why he used such biting terms, Reb Zalman Moshe replied, “What can I do? That’s the only language the *beheima* [the *nefesh habahamis*] understands.”

Reb Mendel Futerfas related: “When we were learning in Tomchei Temimim in Nevel, Reb Nissan Nemanov was appointed as *mashpia*. Despite his young age, Reb Nissan instilled awe in the *temimim*; he was extremely particular about *shemiras hasedarim*.

“Reb Itche Der Masmid once came to Nevel, and we were told that he would farbreng with Reb Zalman Moshe. We asked Reb Nissan for permission to go to the farbrengen, but he refused and told us to continue learning. After a few minutes, we noticed that Reb Nissan himself had left the *zal*, and we realized that after prohibiting us from going, he could not resist and had himself gone to the farbrengen. Of course, we immediately closed our *sefarim* and came to the farbrengen, and sure enough, there was Reb Nissan, enjoying the *farbrengen*.⁷”

When the Rebbe was in Paris in 5707*, he said at a farbrengen, “Reb Zalman Moshe’s sayings are repeated in *Beis Harav*.⁸”

“זלמן משה”ס א ווארט חזר’ט מען אין בית הרב.”

In 5693*, Reb Zalman Moshe resolved to move to Eretz Yisroel. At the time, exit visas could only be obtained in Moscow, so he moved there, residing in the home of his son-in-law, Reb Avraham Drizin. He lived there for two years until he finally received his exit visa in 5695*.

When Reb Zalman Moshe got to Moscow and saw the big buildings, he said, “The *malachim* in Moscow created much waste.”⁹

Once, during a farbrengen in the home of Reb Moshe Gurarie in Tel Aviv, Reb Zalman Moshe—after saying much *l’chaim*—turned to Reb Moshe and said, “You’re a big *maskil* in Chassidus, so please tell me what is *Atzmus u’Mehus*?” Reb Moshe tried to avoid the question, but Reb Zalman Moshe would not let up. “You’re a *maskil*, so you have to explain to me what is *Atzmus u’Mehus*.” Finally, after much cajoling, Reb Moshe began to explain. But no sooner had he opened his mouth, and Reb Zalman Moshe admonished him, saying “*Atzmus u’Mehus! Atzmus u’Mehus* is higher than any explanation, higher than any speech! *Atzmus u’Mehus* is even higher than being able to say that it’s higher than any explanation!”¹⁰

Reb Yoel Kahan relates:

“In 5709*, a few *temimim* from Tel Aviv came to Reb Zalman Moshe and asked him to teach them how to write a *pan* to the Rebbe. Reb Zalman Moshe took a pencil and paper, but immediately burst into tears. After a long while, he finally calmed down, and asked the *bochurim* to come back the next day, for right now he was not prepared to write a *pan*.

“The next day, the *bochurim* returned and again asked Reb Zalman Moshe to write a *pan*. He picked up the pencil and wrote the words, “אנא לעורר,” and immediately burst into tears, unable to stop crying. Try as he might, he could not continue writing.”¹¹ **T**

1. *Anashim Chassidim Hayu*, p. 9.
2. *Ibid.* p. 11.
3. *Ibid.* p. 14.
4. *Ibid.* p. 15.
5. *Ibid.* p.11
6. *Ibid.* p. 14.
7. *Ibid.* p. 18.
8. *Ibid.* p. 19.
9. *Ibid.* p. 35. Chassidus teaches that *gashmiyus* comes from *shmarei haofanim*—the waste of the *ofanim*. See Torah Or Beshalach 68:1.
10. *Anashim Chassidim Hayu*, p. 45.
11. *Ibid.* p. 50.