

## ***Seventy-Fours***

Towards the end of his life, in 1850, **Rebbe Moshe of Lelov** traveled to the Holy Land, arriving shortly after the Sukkot festival that year. He said that if he prays at the *Kotel HaMaravi* (Western Wall) [and blows the *shofar* there], it will hasten the Ingathering of the Exiles and the Coming of Moshiach.

Before he began his journey, he went to take leave from several of the major Chasidic leaders of his generation. When he came to Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin, the Rebbe said, "Wait for me. I want to go with you."

R. Moshe pointed to his white beard, implying that he was getting older and didn't have time to wait.

His plan was to travel with a group of ten people. He put away money for this cause, but whenever he had enough money he ended up giving it to *tzedakah*, and then he would have to start saving money for the trip again.

Once, a childless woman came to Rebbe Moshe, and requested a blessing for children. He told her that if she gives him a certain large amount of money (the amount he needed for his trip) she would have a child. She was ready to give the money, but R. Moshe told her that she must ask permission from her husband first. Her husband was a chasid of [Rabbi David-Zvi-Hersz Taub,] "the *Gitte Yid*" [*tzadik*] of Neustadt, and he asked his Rebbe whether to give the money.

The Rebbe replied, "You should give the money. However, since you need a miracle to bear a child, I recommend that you tell Rebbe Moshe of Lelov that you will only give the money if the Rebbe promises that the child will live long. Because when a child is born with a miracle, he often doesn't live long."

When she returned with the money, she stipulated the condition. Rebbe Moshe Lelover replied, "The years of your child's life will be as many as the days I live in *Eretz Yisrael*." R. Moshe lived seventy-four days in Israel, and the child lived for seventy-four years.

[The Rebbe of Ruzhin said that if the Jews in Poland were wise, they wouldn't have permitted such a great Rebbe to depart from them. He provided an allusion to this from a Mishnah in Shabbos, "*Ain polin l'ohr haNer*"—"Do not distinguish by the light of the [Shabbat] candle," which he rendered homiletically as, "The Polish (Jews aren't wise; they had but) let leave their one brilliant light."

When Rebbe Moshe was on the boat, he kept repeating, "*yom leshanah* – a day for a year." People didn't understand his intention. Later they realized that he was praying to live one day for each year of his life. He was seventy-four years old then, and he lived in The Land a corresponding seventy-four days.

Many wondrous stories are told about his voyage. One\* is that there was a hole in the boat and water began to seep in! Rebbe Moshe placed a cloth over the hole, and this

miraculously stopped the influx of water. (This cloth is still extant, and is used as a *bedecken tichel* (wedding veil) by the *kallahs* (brides) of his descendants.)

Rebbe Moshe took with him his son Rav Eliezer-Menachem-Mendel (Rav Luzer Mendel), and his six-year-old grandson David-Tzvi-Shlomo (Reb Dovid'l). The ship docked in the northern port of Acco. Rebbe Moshe travelled [by donkey!] to visit the *tzaddikim* who lived in Tsfat and Teveriya ('Safed' & 'Tiberias') and other holy burial sites in the area before going up to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), because he said that after he gets to Yerushalayim, he will not want to leave.

When he finally came to the Old-city of Jerusalem, he was ill. His children debated whether they should bring him to the *Kotel* in this condition. They decided that since his primary purpose for coming to Israel was to go to the *Kotel* to hasten bringing *Moshiach*, they should. But as they were bringing him towards the *Kotel*, Arabs blocked their way and threw rocks at them until it was impossible to continue. The family and the chasidim who accompanied them sadly returned to their rented lodgings.

Unfortunately, he never reached the Kotel. [Broken hearted, feeling that the window of opportunity for Redemption had now been slammed shut, he became extremely ill and passed away three days later.] On the seventy-fourth day of his arrival to the Holy Land, on the thirteenth of the Jewish month of Tevet, his soul departed from its bodily restraints.

He promised amazing things about his *yahrtzeit*. He said that the date of his demise is propitious for rain, and therefore even in a year that is lacking rain, it is unnecessary to proclaim a fast day to pray intensely for rain before his *yahrtzeit* passes. Rav Shmuel Salant, the chief rabbi of Jerusalem heeded his words, and for the next half century until his own passing refused to decree a fast day for rains until the thirteenth of Tevet passed.

R. Moshe also said that those who will dedicate a meal on his *yahrtzeit* in his honor (even if it is just cake and *l'chaim*,) will have a salvation for whatever they need.

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\**Editor's note*: Others will be reported in a future mailing.

*Source*: Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from "Torah Wellsprings" (gleanings from the teachings of **Rabbi Elimelech Biderman** of Jerusalem - *Vayechi* 5777), as translated by R. Baruch Twersky. Square-bracketed [ ] insertions are from [//littmann613.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-dynasty-of-lelov.html](http://littmann613.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-dynasty-of-lelov.html).

#### *Biographical notes*

**Rabbi Moshe Biderman of Lelov** [? - 13 Tevet 5611 (1850)] was the son of R. David, the first Rebbe of Lelov, and the son-in-law of "the Holy Yid" of Peshis'cha (having married his daughter, Rivka-Rachel). Although he declined to officially succeed his father, considering himself unworthy of the position, the chasidim nevertheless accepted and followed him as Rebbe over his protests. In 1850, he moved to Israel, and settled in Jerusalem, where he passed away 2 ½ months after his arrival. He was succeeded by his son, R. Eliezer Menachem Mendel, and after him by his grandson, R. David Tzvi Shlomo. The three are buried on the Mount of Olives, near the prophet Zacharia, although the exact location of R. Moshe's grave is not known

*Connection*: Seasonal – This Friday, Tevet 13, is the 171<sup>st</sup> yearzeit of Rabbi Moshe Lelover.