

Moreinu Horav Gedaliah HaLevi Schorr zt"l

5671/1910 – 5739/1979

With Torah Vodaath from 1931-1979

Rav Gedaliah HaLevi Schorr zt"l was born on November 27, 1910 (25 Cheshvan, 5671) in Istrik, a village near the town of Pshemishel, Galicia, to Rav Avrohom and Mattel Schorr. When he was 12 years old, his family moved to America, where they lived on the Lower East Side. He learned with tremendous hasmadah, often through the night, while mastering many mesechtos during this period. At the young age of fifteen, he began saying a shiur in Daf Yomi, and finished Shas twice before his wedding. He also met many of the Gedolei Torah who visited America to raise funds for their yeshivos, including Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin, Rav Elchonon Wasserman of Baranowitz, and Rav Aharon Kotler of Kletzk. Rav Meir Shapiro is reported to have stated that Rav Gedalya Schorr was the greatest mind he met in America, and one of the greatest in the world.

Rav Gedaliah joined Yeshiva Torah Vodaath when his family moved to Williamsburg. He quickly became the heart and soul of the Bais Medrash, where his brilliant “kushyos” generated excitement with regard to the sugyos the Yeshiva was learning. When he was twenty one years old, Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz appointed him to a position in the Mesivta, despite his unmarried status. His talmidim, many were only a few years his junior, were drawn to him, and accorded him great respect.

In 1938, he married Rebbetzen Shifra Isbee, and set sail for Europe to learn by Rav Aharon Kotler in Kletzk, Poland. He learned in Kletzk for two zemanim, until the outbreak of WWII. During that time, he spent his *Pesach Bain Hazemanim* with Rav Moshenu of Boyan. He also visited Rav Chaim Ozer Grozinsky, the Rav of Vilna, who gave him an inscribed volume of his recently published *Achiezer*.

Upon his return to America, he once again assumed his position as a Magid Shiur in Torah Vodaath, but also spent a great deal of time raising money and securing visas to save his brethren who were left in Europe. Nothing stood in his way; he even sold his own beloved Vilna Shas, and donated the proceeds to the Vaad Hatzalah.

In 1947, Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz transferred the Hanhalla of the Yeshiva to Rav Schorr and Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky. Rav Schorr spent a great deal of time ensuring that each talmid find his proper place in a shiur that would best suit his needs. On occasion, he would gather some bochurim for a shiur in his office. Rav Schorr would give extra shiurim in additional perakim of the mesechta that were being learned in the yeshiva, as well as saying daily shiurim in Chumash with Ramban and other seforim.

Rav Schorr also delivered shmuezin for the Bais Medrash, where he would weave together the words of many sources to illuminate a clear understanding of the Parshah. In his shmuezin, he would often quote the Ramban, Maharal, Kuzari, Sfas Emes, Reb Tzadok, Shem MiShmuel and many other sources. His legendary talks before the Yomim Tovim would uplift the talmidim, giving them an elevated awareness of the upcoming Yom Tov. These Shmuezen were printed posthumously in his Sefer Ohr Gedalyahu, which has become a classic text on the Parshiyos and the chaggim.

In 1958, Rav Schorr began saying shiurim in Bais Medrash Elyon. He would travel by bus to Monsey on Wednesday evenings to say the Shiur Klali the next morning, followed by a

shmuez in the afternoon, before returning to New York. In 1960, Rav Schorr established the Kollel in Torah Vodaath, with the financial responsibility resting squarely on his shoulders, despite his being uncomfortable in the fundraising role.

On 7 Tamuz 5739, after speaking at the Sheva Brachos of a talmid, he returned his lofty soul to Hashem. America had lost what Rav Aharon Kotler called “the first American Gadol”, yet his teachings continue on through his Sefer Ohr Gedalyahu, and in the multitude of talmidim that he taught for nearly half a century.