

Rav Reuvain Fain zt'l  
(1924 – 1993)

Rav Reuvain Fain was born in *Adar*, 5684 (1924) to his father, Rav Shabsi zt'l, Hy"d, and his mother Sirel Yenta z'l, Hy"d. Rav Shabsi was the son of Rav Yehudah Aryeh Leib Fain zt'l, Hy"d, who served as Rav in Slonim, Poland, and was the head of the Vaad HaRabonim. In this capacity, Rav Yehudah Leib was considered the "right hand" of Rav Chaim Ozer Grozensky of Vilna in all matters pertaining to *Rabanus*. (Rav Yehudah Leib was killed al Kiddush Hashem while attempting to rescue his townspeople from the murderous Nazis ys"v.)

Rav Shabsi Fain was a *Talmid* of Rav Refoel Shapirah of Volozhin and a *Talmid Muvhak* of Rav Yitzchok Rabinowitz of Ponovezh, commonly known as Reb Itzikel Ponovezher. He served as *Rav* of Belitzeh, Belarus, and was amongst the first ones murdered by the Nazi's when they came to that city. Rebitzen Sirel Yenta was the daughter of Rav Reuvain Cohen, the Rav of Narve. Her sister was married to Rav Yitzchok Karelitz, a brother of the Chazon Ish.

As soon as he turned thirteen, Rav Reuvain traveled to Slonim, where he learned in the yeshiva of Rav Shabsi Yogel zt'l. During this period, Rav Reuvain was able to spend time with his illustrious grandfather. At the outset of World War II, Rav Reuvain was brought by his father to Vilna, where he joined the Mirrer Yeshiva, despite his young age. At this time, his mother gave him the first signatures of his father's *Sefer Oneg Shabbos*, which was in the process of being published. [Rav Reuvain published them in 1956, and appended a *Kuntras* of his own *Chiddushim* to the *Sefer*.]

He traveled with the Mir to Japan and Shanghai, China, where the yeshiva remained throughout the war. When he asked the venerable *Mashgiach*, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, as to who would learn with him at such a young age, the *Mashgiach* responded, "Learn well, and they will all want to be your *Chavrusah*." In time, Rav Reuvain was the *Chavrusah* of Rav Nochum Portzovitz (Rosh Yeshivas Mir), Rav Baruch Rosenberg (Rosh Yeshivas Slobodka) and other outstanding Talmidei Chachomim.

During this era, Rav Reuvain applied himself to his learning with unfathomable *Hasmadah*. He would often collapse from exhaustion, and return immediately to his learning upon his revival. Rav Reuvain was granted special treatment from Rav Chatzkel to begin learning *Kodshim* before others who were many years his senior. This was because Rav Reuvain had already attained a high level of clarity in the *Sedorim* of *Nashim* and *Nezikin*, the mainstay of the yeshiva's learning.

In 1947, the Mirrer Yeshiva was finally able to leave Shanghai, and they arrived in New York City. Rav Reuvain met his father's cousin, Rav Shmuel Kushelevitz, who had said a *Shiur* in Torah Vodaas, and gave the tests to the *Talmidim* who were seeking *Semicha*. They developed a strong bond, which they maintained even when Rav Reuvain departed for *Eretz Yisroel*.

After a brief stay in New York City, a large part of the Mirrer Yeshiva emigrated to *Eretz Yisroel* at the urging of Rav Chatzkel, and Rav Reuvain joined this group. In 1950, at the suggestion of the Chazon Ish (whose brother was married to Rav Reuvain's aunt), he married

Rebitzen Yehudis, the daughter of Rav Eliezer Alfa. Rav Alfa had been a *Chavrusah* of the Steipler in the Navardok Yeshiva, and was a prominent Rav in Haifa. Rebitzen Alfa was the daughter of Rav Meir Karelitz, the brother of the Chazon Ish.

Rav Reuvain joined Kollel Chazon Ish, where he learned with great *Mesiras Nefesh*. At one point, he did not have money to buy food for the *Seuda HaMafsekes* on *Erev Yom Kippur*, when he miraculously found a coin wedged in between his drawers with which he was able to make a meager purchase. Yet the deprivation did not prevent him from growing in stature, and before long he was offered a position in Yeshiva Be'er Yaakov.

After a brief period there, he joined his wife's uncle, Rav Tuvia Rotberg, in founding Yeshiva Bais Meir, which was named after Rav Meir Karelitz. For two and a half decades, he said many *Shiurim* each week, both in Yeshiva Bais Meir and Yeshiva Ohr Torah. In addition, he said *Shmuezen* for his *Talmidim*, at one point saying eighteen *Shiurim* a week. In addition, Rav Reuvain also said *Shiurim* in Yeshiva Ohr Kedoshim of Biala.

In 1983, at the suggestion of the Steipler and Rav Shach, Rav Reuvain accepted the position of Rosh Yeshiva at Torah Vodaas, filling the void left with the passing of Rav Elya Chazan zt"l. He would say a *Blatt Shiur* five days a week, and a *Chaburah* once a week. In addition, he said a weekly *Chaburah* on the *Second Seder Limudim*, during which he covered many extra *Perakim* of the *Mesechta*.

During the nearly eleven years at Torah Vodaas, he developed an elite group of *Talmidim*, whom he exposed to the greatness of Torah. They in turn grew extremely close to him, and many stayed on in his *Shiur* for extended periods of time. Rav Fain was known for having his own unique and profoundly erudite *MeHalech* in every *Lomdishe Sugya* in *Shas*. He possessed wide ranging *Yedios* in *Kol HaTorah*, and was able to teach and convey them with great clarity. When he taught a *Sugyah*, it was not just a unique insight in one corner of the subject matter that he taught. Rather, students received the full *Breitheit* of the *Sugya*. He laid out for the *Talmidim* the length and breadth of the *Sugya*. The *Rishonim* and *Achronim*, as well as the *Halachos* in the *Rambam* and *Shulchan Aruch*, were woven into a tapestry of clear logic and beauty. Rav Reuvain committed these *Shiurim* to writing, which he printed in his *Seforim* called *Bain HaMishpisayim*. These *Seforim*, in addition to the several volumes that he published on the *Sedorim* of *Moed*, *Zeraim*, *Kodshim* and *Taharos*, soon became classic *Seforim* for those who sought out the *Lomdus* of these *Sugyos*.

In 1993, Rav Reuvain fell ill, and his strength began to wane. He marshaled his strength to finish writing his *Sefer* on *Mesechta Sheviis*, which he taught to some of his *Talmidim* in anticipation of the upcoming year of *Shmita* (5754). On 25 *Sivan*, 5753, Rav Reuvain returned his *Neshomo* to his maker. In the subsequent years, several additional volumes of *Bain HaMishpisayim* on *Shas*, as well as his *Shmuezen* on the *Parshios*, were released. [*Sefer VaYikra* was published in *Adar* of this year.]