

DARCHEY AVRAHAM

CHAPTERS FROM THE LIFE HISTORY OF
HARAV AVRAHAM CHAIM ADDESS OF BLESSED MEMORY,
AN OUTSTANDING TZADDIK WHO HAD VAST
KNOWLEDGE OF BOTH REVEALED AND HIDDEN
BRANCHES OF TORAH LEARNING

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTION

The following life history of HaRav AddeSS is derived from several sources. These include, first and foremost, my father, Hagaon HaRav Yehuda AddeSS shlit'a, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivath Kol Yaakov and grandson of the author. Further details were provided by other reliable people who were acquainted with HaRav AddeSS either directly or indirectly. Yet another source of information was a letter written by HaRav AddeSS' sons and printed in the sefer, פרי עץ הגן. Written

works, published by Torah scholars of repute who were personally acquainted with HaRav Address, were also consulted.

Whatever I have written here has been culled from authoritative sources and every effort has been made to ensure that all the details are accurate.

I can not but feel that I am totally inadequate to do justice to the personality and greatness of HaRav Address, hampered as I was by the distance of 80 years that have elapsed since he left this world. Nevertheless I feel that the few chapters I have written here are still preferable to making no mention at all of HaRav Address' life history. I sincerely hope that all readers will be positively influenced by them, and that they will prove to be a source of inspiration for people who are striving to improve their Torah-learning and service of Hashem.

CHAPTER 1: HIS LIFE HISTORY

HaRav Avraham Address, of blessed memory, was born in the year 5617, (1857). His father was HaRav Yitzchak Entebbe of blessed memory; the family sometimes used Entebbe as an alternative surname. It is possible that they were descended

from HaRav Avraham Entebbe, author of a number of scholarly works including the well-known **יושב אהלים** and others.

He was not yet twenty years old when he married the daughter of HaRav Moshe Swede, of blessed memory. HaRav Swede was a Rabbi in Aram Tzova (Syria) and very famous for his great Torah scholarship, in particular for the profundity of his Torah knowledge.

HaRav Address passed away in Jerusalem on the 28th of Av in the year 5685 (1925).

CHAPTER 2: HIS AMAZING DILIGENCE IN LEARNING

1. From his earliest youth HaRav Avraham Address was recognized for his remarkable studiousness. His whole life was one of uninterrupted learning, and until the end of his days his outstanding diligence continued to be his greatest asset and the most notable aspect of how he studied the holy Torah.

2. It is known that for quite a number of years he did not sleep at nights during the forty days between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Yom Kippur. Instead, he would stay awake and learn throughout the night. He used to learn together with HaRav

Yitzchak Sherim, of blessed memory, who was a contemporary of his.

3. In the sefer **פרי עץ הגן**, his disciple, HaRav Yaakov Katzin, of blessed memory, wrote about HaRav Address. After all the superlatives he used to describe his life, he concludes with a description of his studiousness, and I would like to quote from it:

"Literally every Jewish person witnessed it and can confirm that no-one ever saw him when he was not studying Torah - any time; day, night, Shabbath, weekdays, Festivals. He was not a person who spoke a lot. However when matters of Torah and fearing Hashem were concerned, he was a **מעין המתגבר**, a 'spring from which the waters never cease flowing', and always had more and more to expound on the subject. Thus we see how HaRav Address was in possession of all the good traits listed by our Sages."

4. It must be added that for many years his devotion to Torah was despite dire poverty and constant hunger. It is difficult or impossible for us to understand how much he suffered from illnesses and other forms of hardship, yet never did it affect his Torah learning in any way.

5. In several places in the Gemara our Sages say that the Torah exists and thrives only within a person who gives his life for it - אין התורה מתקיימת אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה- HaRav Address was the very personification of this concept. His life was Torah; he quite literally drew all his vitality from learning Torah and serving Hashem.

6. For days on end he could be seen sitting in the Beth Kneseth known as the בבא תמא in Jerusalem. He would remain there learning uninterruptedly from morning till night, one tractate of Gemara after another.

He learnt the Talmud Bavli and would go over what he had learnt many times. On one occasion he made a siyum to celebrate having completed the whole Talmud Bavli. He explained that the learning had not been part of his regular learning schedule but a separate schedule of reviewal that he had taken upon himself to learn every day between Mincha and Ma'ariv. In that short time every day, he had been through the entire Shas and was celebrating with a siyum. It ought to be noted that in that particular Beth Kneseth there was only a brief interval between the two services.

7. HaRav Avraham Douek, shlita, grandson of HaRav Shaul Douek, of blessed memory, recalls that as a child in Jerusalem he received blessings from many of the great Rabbis living

there at the time. One notable exception was HaRav Avraham Address; he had always been afraid to approach him. Whenever he saw him, he was so deeply engrossed in his learning that he felt that it was wrong to interrupt him. Even when HaRav Address was walking on the streets, he said, his mind was still so absorbed in the Torah he was learning that you could see his lips constantly moving. Consequently, even when he saw HaRav Address going along the road, HaRav Douek was reluctant to go up to him and disturb him.

In the sefer **פדה את יעקב**, HaRav Avraham Monse wrote about HaRav Avraham Address: "I once saw him going on his way home.... his face was shining brightly..... I followed him until he came to his house and went into the forecourt. I saw his lips moving as he spoke to himself; I don't remember exactly what he said, but I remember that he was quoting verses like, 'שתבה שמך מלכינו' - May Your Name be blessed, our King,' 'מה רבו מעשיך ה' - How great are Your handiworks, Hashem,' and others in a similar vein, all demonstrating how real was his fear of Hashem and his total love for Him; every minute or so he would look upwards and gaze at the heaven."

CHAPTER 3: A GREAT TORAH SCHOLAR

1. He was an extremely great Torah scholar. My father, shlita, once quoted HaRav Ezra Attia, of blessed memory, (Rosh

Yeshivah of Yeshivath Porath Yosef and one of HaRav Address' disciples) as saying that: "If this whole room - and they were in a big room - were filled with seforim from the floor to the ceiling, it could not contain all your grandfather's Torah knowledge. He excelled in particular in learning in depth, **בעיון**."

2. In the introduction to the sefer **הדות יעקב** HaRav Attia relates an incident concerning HaRav Address that impressed him deeply: He was once sitting learning with a colleague in a Beth Medrash when HaRav Address came in for a sefer and noticed that they were working on trying to clarify a certain topic. He himself was not involved in that particular subject at the time, yet without hesitation, outlined to them several principles which made it easier for them to understand the subject under discussion.

3. From this incident we can see that however much importance he attached to in-depth learning, it did not prevent him gaining extensive knowledge of all other areas of Torah at the same time. He expended a great deal of effort on that aspect of learning as well.

4. HaRav Address was never able to afford to buy many seforim of his own. An arrangement he had with a bookseller enabled him to learn from seforim which he might not have been able to obtain otherwise. The bookseller would lend him seforim overnight - a time when customers do not come to buy - and HaRav Address would return them in the morning. Thanks to his phenomenal memory he memorized the contents, and after a single night had the knowledge at his disposal for future reference, even if he did not have access to the sefer again.

CHAPTER 4: HIS MANY DISCIPLES

1. Before he was even twenty years old he had many pupils who learnt Torah from him. We know that by the time he came to Eretz Yisrael (5655 - 1895) he had already been teaching for 18 years in Aram Tzova. Many of his disciples themselves became noteworthy Rabbanim and Chachamim in Aram Tzova. In the sefer פרי עץ הגן it says that almost the majority of the important rabbis of Aram Tzova of that period were disciples of his. The author of the sefer also adds a list of those rabbis. Another list of HaRav Address' disciples can be found in the introduction to the sefer חדות יעקב.

2. His sons were also his pupils, and they later became great Torah personalities in their own rights. They are listed here in the order of their seniority:

The oldest was HaRav Yitzchak who was considered a genius in Torah learning. He passed away in the year 5676 (1916) when he was still a young man. In spite of his youth, he had already reached an extremely high spiritual level, as affirmed by the great men of Jerusalem of that generation.

His sons HaRav Ezra and HaRav Moshe were both on the staff of Yeshivath Porath Yosef.

His son, HaRav Yaakov, was one of the deans of the Yeshiva, and was also an active member of committees working to ensure that no changes were wrought in the educational institutions of Sephardic Jewry. At the same time HaRav Yaakov became one of the leading Dayanim in Eretz Yisrael too.

Similarly HaRav Address' son-in-law, HaRav Aharon Raful, was a member of Yeshivath Porath Yosef's staff as well as being a Dayan.

His son HaRav Yaakov left many unpublished manuscripts. In 5761 (2001) Yeshivath Porath Yosef printed some of them in a sefer named שו"ת חדות יעקב . In the introduction to the sefer, details concerning the life histories of both HaRav Avraham and HaRav Yaakov Address can be found. There are many more manuscripts as yet unpublished and others which have been mislaid over the years.

Anyone who knows of the whereabouts of any writings or manuscripts written by HaRav Yaakov Address is requested to contact Yeshivath Kol Yaakov in Jerusalem, and Hashem will surely reward him well for doing so.

3. His illustrious disciple HaRav Ezra Attia, of blessed memory, must also be mentioned. He was the head of Yeshivath Porath Yosef, and all the students who learnt there were pupils of his. Recently a sefer of his writings, עלה עזרא , was published.

HaRav Ezra was very closely attached to HaRav Address. He said that during the first years after HaRav Address passed away, he missed him so much that every night when he remembered him, he would weep bitterly.

HaRav Ezra once told a grandson of HaRav Address: "Your grandfather was like an angel; just as the seas occasionally spew forth a precious stone on to the shore, so your grandfather was a precious gem sent to grace our generation."

HaRav Ezra used to approach HaRavAddress and request his intervention whenever a situation arose that required sincere prayer. This happened frequently since the power of his prayers was amazing; many instances of salvation and relief can be accredited directly to his prayers.

(It should be mentioned that HaRav Ezra was also a disciple of HaRav Avraham Address' son HaRav Yitzchak, and in the sefer פדה את אברהם he quotes what HaRav Ezra told him about his learning schedule with him. For more details refer to the above sefer, pages 419-420.)

4. The above-mentioned disciples of HaRav Address all taught many disciples of their own, and they in turn guided the next generation. It can truly be said that a high proportion of the Torah leaders of Sephardic Jewry today owe their Torah and greatness to HaRav Address.

5. It would be appropriate to quote here from the writings of the Vilna Gaon: He explains that not only does a master give over Torah knowledge to his pupil; he also brings into existence additional elements of spirituality that the disciple did not possess beforehand. They combine with the spirit of holiness of the disciple's soul and embellish it.

Thus we can understand why the Gemara חגיגה uses such compelling terms when advising us of the importance of learning from a rabbi who is a great Tzaddik. And why the title of "a Rabbi who is like an angel of Hashem" is an appropriate description. The greater the master, the greater will be the holiness of the soul that his disciple receives. This was the secret of HaRav Address' success - he brought forth so much holiness which was passed on to his pupils; they absorbed it

into their souls and it raised the standard of their Torah-learning tremendously.

It is a lesson for everyone to learn: Many of us want to learn Torah and teach others how to become great Torah scholars. Every effort must be put into learning Torah as thoroughly as possible, and to put all the time at one's disposal into the efforts. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the fact that the standard and the achievements of the pupils will also be affected - and in no small measure - by the righteousness and spiritual greatness of the Rav from whom they learn. The greater the Rav, the more success his disciples will see in their Torah-learning.

CHAPTER 5: HIDING HIS GREATNESS

1. HaRav Address was a very unassuming person and spent his whole life trying to avoid acclaim and honor. His humility was extreme. He treated every single person, great and small alike, with the same degree of respect and utmost modesty. His humility is mentioned in the sefer פרי עץ הגן : Every day he would try to improve on the humbleness of his behavior and he treated everyone he met in a truly exemplary manner.

2. HaRav Ezra Attia said that when HaRav Address passed away, he was asked to eulogize him. He was reluctant to do so since he was aware of HaRav Address' aversion to hearing himself praised during his lifetime. How could he now disregard HaRav Address' wishes?

HaRav Address appeared to him in a dream and told him that he need not have any misgivings: It was only while he was alive that he had to fear the sin of pride and avoid anything that might lead to it. Such considerations, he explained in the dream, are irrelevant once a person has left this world.

3. In the sefer פרי עץ הגן, mention is made of someone referred to as Rav Aharon. He was well-acquainted with HaRav Address, and knew about many of the wondrous things he had done in his life. After HaRav Address passed away and his sons were sitting shiv'a for their father, Rav Aharon came to visit them and told them that he could tell them about a number of miraculous events in which HaRav Address was involved. However, he said that he was not sure whether he was permitted to speak about these matters, since HaRav Address had always forbidden him to do so when he was alive. The sons explained to him that now that their father was not living, the reasons were no longer applicable and there was nothing to prevent him talking about the things he knew. He proceeded to tell them several remarkable anecdotes concerning HaRav

Address, a number of which are quoted in the above sefer and any readers who are interested can refer to it for the particulars.

4. HaRav Address never allowed himself to be photographed. His reasons for being so particular about it were probably based on kabbalistic sources (see פתחי תשובה ביו"ד סימן קמ"א ס"ק ז' 'בשם יערות דבש ח"א דרוש ב'), and possibly also because he preferred to keep himself as unknown as possible.

I think it was my father who told me that HaRav Chaim Leib Auerbach of blessed memory, Rosh Yeshivath Sha'ar Hashamayim, once took a photograph of him without him being aware of it, because he thought that it was important to let future generations know what the Tzaddik had looked like. Yet after HaRav Chaim Leib passed away and a thorough search was made for the picture, no trace of it could be found anywhere: It was quite clear to everyone that it was the hand of Hashem acting in accordance with the wishes of a Tzaddik who wanted no picture of his likeness to remain in existence.

5. See also later what is written about his having Ruach Hakodesh, and what Hagaon HaRav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld said about the lengths to which he went to disguise the fact.

CHAPTER 6: A KABBALASTIC SCHOLAR OF REPUTE

1. He was well-versed in the Torah of Kabbalah. In that field of Torah-learning too he achieved greatness, and the leading kabbalistic sages of the era greatly revered his opinions when matters of Kabbalah were under discussion.

2. A debate among the leading Torah giants of the time is mentioned in the Shabbath volume of the Rashash's siddur. HaRav Yedidia Refael Abulafia and HaRav Sasson Parsiedo differed in their opinions about the 'kavanoth' - the devotions one ought to put into the Shabbath prayers, and whether or not they should be similar to those for the weekday prayers in certain respects. In the siddur mentioned above are quoted the proofs by which the controversy was finally resolved. From what is written in the siddur, it is clear that HaRav Avraham Address and HaRav Chaim Shaul Douek were consulted and that significance is attached to the approval that they gave.

3. HaRav Yaakov Katzin writes in the sefer פרי עץ הגן: As well as his pre-eminence in תורת הנגלה - the revealed and explicit branches of Torah learning - HaRav Address also penetrated deep into the kabbalistic branches of learning. He delved into the works of the Ari Hakadosh and the Rashash of blessed memory - the siddurim of the Rashash were favorites of his - until he understood them with all their "roots and branches."

He used to pore over these writings day and night, but always did so in hidden places and unbeknown to other people, because "wisdom comes together with modesty."

In the same place, HaRav Yaakov writes that HaRav Address was one of the founders of Yeshivath Hamekubalim, the Yeshiva of Kabbalists for the Sages of Aram Tzova in the Bucharim neighborhood of Jerusalem. He also comments that during his whole life HaRav Address was known to pray using the 'nusach' - the wording of the prayers - found in the Rashash's siddur.

4. In the above sefer HaRav Address' sons also dwell on their father's kabbalistic knowledge. They said that they had heard him say that there was not a single sefer of Kabbalah, neither in printed nor in manuscript form, that he had not been through and studied in detail from beginning to end.

(I also heard that it was well-known that he used the Rashash's approach when teaching Kabbalah to others, and that he preferred to say his prayers according to the version in the Rashash's siddur. Yet for himself he also studied the kabbalistic writings of many others of the world's Torah giants, and achieved a rare degree of proficiency in them.)

5. Even more than the greatness in Kabbalah that he achieved through diligent study, is that which he was granted through

Ruach Hakodesh. The holy spirit of understanding Kabbalah, which he was given as a direct gift from Hashem, was the main source of his supernatural achievements in reaching the lofty heights of understanding Kabbalah.

See more on the subject in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: HIS RUACH HAKODESH

1. Although unknown to the general public, the extraordinary power of his Ruach Hakodesh and the clarity of his spiritual insights were known to the greatest men in Jerusalem of that epoch. However most of the stories concerning these matters of spiritual nature disappeared from the world together with the passing of those great men. HaRav Address himself never wanted the stories publicized. We only know of them because when he passed away there were great men who, without saying more than a few words, let it be known that HaRav Address had been in possession of tremendous spiritual powers and that he had Ruach Hakodesh.

2. The little that we of the later generations are privileged to know, is from his sons' letter in פרי עץ הגן and other incidents which they told about their illustrious father. Most of that aspect of HaRav Address' life will remain forever secret.

When his sons were sitting shiv'a after their father passed away, HaRav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, the famed Rabbi of Jerusalem, came to them and told them: "Your father had Ruach Hakodesh, but he concealed it so that you were not aware of it." It is obvious that although his sons were aware of the fact that their father had Ruach Hakodesh, HaRav Yosef Chaim considered the little they knew to be negligible in comparison to all that he knew about HaRav Address' greatness in the realms of spirituality.

3. A very small amount of what is known on the subject is all we can hope to convey to the reader. His son HaRav Yaakov Address refers to his father's Ruach Hakodesh in a letter that is printed in פרי עץ הגן .

(The section of the above sefer between pages 65-73 was quite obviously written by HaRav Address' sons. As far as I know, the manuscript in HaRav Yaakov's handwriting is still in existence. HaRav Yosef Address, a son of HaRav Yaakov, also says that he heard the incident mentioned by his father.)

The following is a quotation from that letter: In the year 5679, close to the time of my marriage, I was speaking to my venerable father, and I told him about a dream I had the night before. In the dream, I saw a majestic looking Rabbi whose whole appearance radiated splendor and glory. I knew that it was the great master, the Rambam, of blessed memory, and I

kissed his hand and he blessed me. My father proceeded to tell me about his appearance and his demeanor in great detail. The description fitted so exactly to the vision I had seen in my dream, that I was amazed. I asked my father from where he knew what the Rambam looked like. He answered: "Know my son, that at night when my soul elevates itself and goes up on high, I see all the righteous Tzaddikim and I recognize them all - the Rambam, the Rif, the Rosh, the Rashba, the Ran, etc. and the Ari, the Rachu, and the Rashash. May the merit of all those great men watch over us. On one occasion I saw the Rashash of blessed memory in a dream, and he said to me that I must exert myself and strive to understand his writings and to explain them to others."

4. From the above anecdote we see the greatness not only of HaRav Avraham Address himself, but also of his son HaRav Yaakov; already in the year 5679 when he was only about twenty years old, he saw the Rambam in a dream and received a blessing from him - and he saw him so clearly that the next day he was able to describe him with great accuracy.

In connection with the above, I would like to mention another incident that I heard about from my father. It also concerns HaRav Yaakov and took place at about the same time - just before HaRav Yaakov's marriage:

Due to their extreme poverty, an evening meal was not served in HaRav Address' house at that time - and it is surely unnecessary to add that the other meals of the day were also very frugal. HaRav Yaakov used to learn at night with one of the rabbanim of the Harrari-Raful family. The Harrari-Rafuls had more means than HaRav Address, and in their house they did eat a meal in the evening. HaRav Yaakov would come to his learning partner's house, join him for the meal, and then they would go to learn.

Later HaRav Yaakov became engaged to marry one of the daughters of the family. During the whole period of their engagement he avoided coming to the Harrari-Rafuls house before he went to learn. Instead, he would go directly to the Beth Medrash where they used to learn, even though it meant that he did not eat anything. He was afraid that if he went to the house he might inadvertently catch sight of his fiancé, and he did not think it was fitting for him to do so. My father said that he thinks it very possible that it was due to his extreme caution in this matter of tzniuth, even at the cost of going hungry, that he was found worthy of seeing the revelation in his dream as cited above.

5. Anyone who is interested in reading more of the little that is known of the stories involving HaRav Address' spiritual powers, should refer to the sefer פרי עץ הגן (pages 63-74) See what is written (p.64) about an acquaintance of HaRav Address

who once asked him about great people of their own times who have Ruach Hakodesh and was answered as follows: "My friend, I will tell you of a wonderful matter concerning a Yemenite Tzaddik who appeared in the Beth Kneseth of the מכוניים in the Bucharim neighborhood not long ago. He used to conceal his greatness and tried to act as if he were a simple person. Yet, during the Days of Awe and on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, I saw a pillar of heavenly fire resting over his head: Before the year was over, the Tzaddik had passed away and left this world. May his merit protect us. I can imagine that a Tzaddik of such spiritual caliber must have had Ruach Hakodesh."

6. Another awesome incident is related in פרי עץ הגן by HaRav Yaakov Katzin (p.73): "I feel it a sacred obligation to tell about the righteous Tzaddik; I myself was present and heard it with my own ears. It was before Yom Kippur, at the beginning of the year 1929 (תרפ"ט), and I was concentrating with utmost concentration on the spiritual realms of the Yom Kippur prayers and their kavanoth, and trying to perceive the truth with my own limited human understanding.

The Tzaddik said to me: 'My son, this is the actual truth of how it is, and I say it without any doubts whatsoever because I look with my eyes and see the all the 'lights' (- obviously he was referring not to the physical light and sight that we know, but to spiritual realities totally beyond our comprehension) I

see these things in the World Above arranged exactly as I told you and it is patently clear this is the truth of how it is.'

Thus spoke the Tzaddik; only few words, but from which we can learn a great deal about his amazing familiarity with matters of holiness and purity as well as his great modesty. May his memory protect us."

(This is the most remarkable of all the stories about his Ruach Hakodesh, and I have heard great men say that if the facts had not been written by a reliable person, we would not be aware that such greatness still existed at all in a generation not so very far from ours. It should be pointed out that although HaRav Yaakov Katzin, who wrote the above, was relatively young at the time, he was nevertheless known to be one of the principle disciples of the great Kabbalists in Jerusalem of that era. In his later years he learnt and taught Kabbalah to others. He was also the chazzan with the **סידור הכוונות** for HaRav Shaul Douek - a position he could not possibly have filled without an extremely high standard of comprehensive and accurate knowledge of Kabbalah, especially at a young age.)

7. The great rabbis of Jerusalem of the last generation, and his son HaRav Yaakov among them, knew of another instance which confirms that HaRav Address was blessed with Ruach Hakodesh.

HaRav Yehuda Petaya, זצ"ל, published יין הרקח which is a sefer explaining the אידרות (- part of the Zohar) according to the teachings of the Ari Hakadosh. When HaRav Yehuda came to Eretz Yisrael from Bavel (Iraq) in 1905 (תרס"ה) HaRav Address went to visit him and said to him that he knew that he had written a sefer explaining the אידרא. He requested him to make haste to publish it, and said that if money were the problem he would provide it. HaRav Yehuda asked him from where he knew about the sefer, for he had kept its writing very secret and there were very few people in the world who knew about it. HaRav Address answered that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had appeared to him and informed him of the sefer's existence, and asked him to hasten its publication.

In the introduction to the sefer יין הרקח - the edition published after HaRav Yehuda Petaya's death - HaRav Yaakov verifies the account.

8. There were other remarkable aspects to HaRav Address' personality. His understanding of people's souls was extraordinary; he knew who they had been in previous gilgulim and the deeds they had done then. He knew what they were meant to rectify in their present gilgul, and what happened to them in their lives now as a result of their behavior in the past. He was also aware of what would happen to them in the future.

Not everything can be written here, and therefore I will not elaborate on the subject.

9. There is a sefer written by an extremely learned sage of that generation which is so holy that it may not be printed, nor may it even be circulated as it is in manuscript form for individuals to read. In it too, I think, reference is made to HaRav Address' above mentioned ability to understand about gilgulim.

10. I heard from a grandson of HaRav Yehoshua Sharbani that when the Ben-Ish-Chai passed away in 1909 (תרס"ט), HaRav Yehoshua was in Eretz Yisrael. The Ben-Ish-Chai appeared to him in a dream and told him that he had departed from the world, and asked him to say a hesped for him in Jerusalem: First HaRav Avraham (Address) will eulogize him, he told him, and afterwards he - HaRav Sharbani - should. HaRav Yehoshua went to HaRav Address to tell him the dream. Before he could even begin speaking, HaRav Address said to him: You need not tell me anything for I know; I will say a hesped first, and then you will.

CHAPTER 8: THE POWER OF HIS PRAYERS

1. The manner in which he prayed was remarkable too. I quote from the sefer פרי עץ הגן: Everyone knew that to hear him

lead the prayers on Shabbath and the Festivals, and especially during the Days of Awe, was a very moving experience. His prayers aroused the spiritual awareness of whoever heard him, and awakened all the congregants to fear Hashem and to intensify their love for Him. The way he chanted the prayers too, had in it a pleasantness that made the heart of the listener rejoice at the same time as rousing the spiritual fires of the soul.

2. Many are the tales told of the wonders he performed with the power of his prayers and the effectiveness of his blessings. HaRav Ezra Attia mentioned the subject on several occasions, and commented that he himself had been involved in a number of situations where HaRav Address' powerful prayers and blessings brought benefit and relief.

3. From HaRav Yehuda Tzadka's biography we learn how much the great men of the time esteemed HaRav Address' prayers: HaRav Ezra Attia once told HaRav Tzadka that after HaRav Address passed away he had been very troubled about the future. Now that HaRav Address is not with us any more, he said, he did not know to whom he could turn when a situation called for someone who knew how to pray, and whose prayers would be accepted. (He was answered in a dream that henceforth he should go to HaRav Yehoshua Sharbani.)

4. I heard from several descendants of HaRav Yehoshua Sharbani that the birth of a child in their family was never a straightforward matter. It was always considered a life threatening situation accompanied by great fear and trepidation. The family used to go to HaRav Address and ask him to pray for them, and the danger would be averted. Once when they did not do so (I do not remember whether HaRavAddress had already passed away at the time, or whether for some other reason he was not available) and then unfortunately a tragedy did happen רח"ל.

5. See in the sefer פרי עץ הגן more about the incredible power of his prayers which continued even after he left this world. People went to pray at his gravesite, and those prayers too were often answered in a miraculous fashion.

CHAPTER 9: THE LAST DAYS OF A TZADDIK

1. In the month of Av of the year 1925 (תרפ"ה) HaRav Address was walking along the road, when he was suddenly hit by a passing bus. He was immediately taken to the Sha'arei Tzedek hospital, and there he lay for a few days.

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2. After several days of suffering, he returned his pure soul to his Maker on the 28th of Av.

3. Close to the time of his death, he told his sons that he did not want the bus-driver to be sued.

4. He added that he has nothing whatsoever against the driver, and blessed him that he should be granted longevity and have a good life. (I heard that the blessing was indeed fulfilled; there are men in Jerusalem who remember who the bus-driver was, and they say that he passed away at a ripe old age.)

5. Those who were present when his soul departed from his body say that it was awe-inspiring to see how lucid his mind was as he left this world, and to see the wonderful way in which he strove to cleave to his Creator.

CHAPTER 10: HIS WRITINGS

1. It is reported that he was in the habit of writing Chiddushei Torah. HaRav Shalom Rafal, of blessed memory, related that remembered occasions when he saw HaRav Address learning,

and it was clear that he was concentrating on some complex matter which he was finding difficult to resolve. When this happened, he would go up to the nearby Aron Hakodesh and pour out his heart in prayer. Upon finishing his prayers, HaRav Raful would see him return to his place, sit down, and proceed to clarify the subject in writing.

2. Today, however, nothing is known of the whereabouts of those manuscripts, and we appeal to anyone who does know anything about them to contact Yeshivath Kol Yaakov in Jerusalem; either copies or originals of anything written by HaRav Address will be greatly appreciated. Anyone who does so surely deserves to be well rewarded by Hashem.

3. Nevertheless a small amount of HaRav Address' Torah writings did get printed, mostly in Kabbalah seforim. In the sefer *שערי רחמים* of HaRav Rachamim Sherim זצ"ל he is quoted dozens of times. Similarly *אור לבנה* of HaRav Yaakov Katzin you will find many ideas of his in the realms of the Torah of Kabbalah. In the Rashash's siddurim - for Shabbath, for Succoth, for Rosh Hashana and for the Ten Days of Penitence - are important notes attributed to HaRav Address. Some are quoted in his name; others are brought down as having been said by 'one of the Rabbanim of the Yeshiva' and we have it from reputable sources that the rabbi referred to is HaRav Address.

It must be stressed that several of the concepts are fundamental and significant principles concerning the 'kavanoth' - the meaning of the prayers according to Kabbalah.

Other than his kabbalistic writings, very little of his Torah exists in print; a few short lines are printed at the end of the sefer **חדות יעקב**, and he is quoted in the sefer **שו"ת דברי שאול** with reference to the time of saying **טל ומטר** in other countries.

4. The above mentioned writings of his have been collected and published in the sefer **תורת אברהם**. Explanations have been added in several places, since HaRav Address sometimes spoke very concisely and his words could be difficult to understand without clarification.

Anyone who is familiar with the writings of the Ari Hakadosh, but not with the Torah of the Rashash, will find that the explanatory notes serve an additional purpose, for they include introductions from the Rashash's Torah which facilitate understanding HaRav Address' ideas.

CHAPTER 11: HIS GRAVESITE

1. HaRav Address is buried on the Mount of Olives. His son, HaRav Yaakov, used to tell about the miraculous way in which people were saved and their prayers answered after they came

to pray at his gravesite. Some of the stories have been printed in the introduction to the sefer **חדות יעקב**.

2. There was a time when the Arabs controlled the Mount of Olives and did a vast amount of damage to the graves there. Many tombstones disappeared; some were uprooted from their places, others were covered with dirt.

For many years the site of HaRav Address' burial place was unknown. All that was known was that he was buried near the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh. Recently, however, the gravesite was rediscovered, and it is indeed in close proximity to that of the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh. There are pious Jews who still go there to pray, in particular on the 28th of Av, the day on which HaRav Address passed away. On the 15th of Tammuz the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh passed away, and on that day too people visit HaRav Address' gravesite, since as mentioned previously, the two are in the same area.

CHAPTER 12: AN EXAMPLE TO EMULATE

1. No doubt anyone who reads HaRav Address' life history will find himself overcome with a keen desire to emulate his ways and to strive towards similar lofty heights of spirituality.

With that aspiration in mind, the first step is surely to discover how he earned the powers to achieve as much as he

did in his lifetime. From all that is written above, the answer must be obvious; HaRav Address' greatness can be attributed chiefly to his remarkable diligence when learning Torah, and to the tremendous efforts he put into perfecting how he served Hashem through prayer.

2. However, about that itself we are in need of instruction: We need guidance to teach us how to learn diligently, and how work on the skill of praying with concentration and meaning. My father - who heard from his father, HaRav Yaakov Address - told me that his grandfather's principle strength was in the **מדת היסוד** - perfection in matters of holiness and modesty.

3. Similarly, in the sefer **אנא עבדא**, the Chazon Ish, of blessed memory, is quoted as having said that the reason for man coming down to this world is primarily to rectify and perfect his level of holiness. Success in achieving this goal in life, he says, is determined by the intensity of the efforts one puts into learning Torah.

4. A similar idea is quoted in the sefer **מעשה איש**.

5. The Vilna Gaon explains the underlying principle: (ביאור הגר"א לתיקוני זוהר ריש תיקון כ"ג.ג. ref.) He says that everyone's purpose in life is to perfect the **מדת היסוד**, - and that

involves perfection in matters of holiness and modesty, as mentioned above.

6. There is a Medrash in Parshas VaYeshev about the Splitting of the Sea - cited by our Sages in other places too - which quotes the verse in Tehillim: **הים ראה וינוס, הירדן יסוב לאחור** "The sea saw and fled, the Jordan river turned back." The Medrash asks: What did the sea see that caused it to flee? and answers that it saw "the coffin of Joseph."

The Medrash connects the word **וינוס** with the words **וינס החוצה** used in the Torah when Joseph fled from the temptations of the evil inclination in the guise of the wife of Potiphar. The reward for Joseph's holiness and modesty was that the sea split for all the People of Israel.

7. The Tikunei Zohar, as quoted by the Vilna Gaon, goes even further and there it says explicitly that if Joseph had succumbed to temptation, the sea would not have split, and the whole of Am Yisrael would have drowned in the Yam Suf. In that case, they would not have stood at Mount Sinai and would not have received the Torah, nor would they have come to Eretz Yisrael and built the Beth HaMikdash. It follows, therefore, that it was due to superior standards of holiness that Am Yisrael were deemed worthy of receiving the Torah and building the Beth HaMikdash.

APPENDIX

1. At the same time as HaRav Avraham Address there was another very great Kabbalist from Aram Tzova living in Jerusalem: HaRav Shaul Douek

HaRav Douek authored several seforim, and one of them *איפה שלימה* includes an approbation from the famed author of the *לשם שבו ואחלמה*, HaRav Shlomo Eliyashiv, of blessed memory. In it he praises the author in superlative terms even though HaRav Douek was still comparatively young at the time, not yet fifty years old. Another of HaRav Douek's seforim *בן יהוידע-בניהו* also includes HaRav Eliyashiv's written approval in which he praises the author and extols the contents of the sefer.

2. There was a very close bond indeed between HaRav Address and HaRav Douek. They frequently prayed in the same Beth Medrash, and regularly explored the depths of the holy Torah together as study partners. HaRav Avraham Douek, shlita, a grandson of HaRav Shaul Douek, told me that he had been worthy of seeing those two great men, and he remembers that they were so close to each other that they were like members of the same family.

3. He said that the difference between the spiritual level in their times and the standards now is so vast, that it could even be said that today it is as if there is a different heaven and a different earth.

4. He also said that he remembers that after his grandfather and HaRav Douek passed away, he used to attend the prayer services in their Beth Medrash together with the great men of the next generation. After the services on the Yamim Noraim, he recalls how sorrowfully they used to discuss the drastic change. He remembers them saying to each other that the prayers and services could not be compared to the spiritual inspiration that had been evoked when the two great Tzaddikim were still with them.

5. HaRav David Harrari-Rafal used to relate that once on Yom Kippur, after the evening services, he saw the two Tzaddikim sitting by themselves in the Beth Knesseth and discussing matters of the loftiest nature. They requested him to leave, but when he asked to stay and told them that that he would not disturb them, they consented. He remembers that they were speaking about trusting Hashem being the most important thing in life.

We should try to understand in which way they meant that trusting Hashem is of paramount importance in life. Quite

simply it surely means that when a person has total trust in Hashem, he can spend all his days and nights concentrating on learning Torah and praying to Him. He is not distracted by worrying about how to obtain the physical necessities of life, since he trusts Hashem to provide him with whatever he needs.

Yet it could be that they meant more than that. A person always has desires in life, everyone according to his own situation. Someone whose trust in Hashem is ingrained in his heart, knows that everything is from Him and his desires are always directed towards Him. Instead of wishing that things should be as he desires, his wishes automatically become a desire that Hashem should give them to him. Consequently he is always close to Hashem in his thoughts and his wishes, and this is an extremely high standard of spirituality.

In Mishlei (chapter 22 verse 19), the Vilna Gaon elaborates on the significance of trust in Hashem. It is clear from the way he writes that he is not referring only to trusting Hashem to provide his needs so that he can be occupied solely with Torah and Tefilla; the actual trust itself is the commendable trait which is of utmost importance.

The same concept could apply to the above interpretation of the words of HaRav Address and HaRav Douek.