

Rav Chaim Friedlander Ztl, Tal Chaim of Liska



Rav Chaim Friedlander, Tal Chaim of Liska (1840-1904) who was born in Klienverdan, Hungary, was a sixth generation descendant of the **Maharsha** (the Divrei Chaim of Sanz was able to trace his direct lineage), as well as a descendant of the **Maharal miPrague**, the **Taz**, the **Bach**, the **Shelah Hakodesh**, and the **Baal Smichos Chachamim**.

He married the daughter of the first Liska Rebbe, Harav Tzvi Hersh, the Ba'al **Ach Pri Tevuah**; but after having three children together, his wife passed away. The Ach Pri Tevuah, who was very close with his son-in-law, wanted the Tal Chaim to stay in the family and declared that he would not find a wife outside of the family, and indeed, so it was. Some time later, the Tal Chaim married his niece, Rebbetzin Miriam Leah, the daughter of his brother-in-law Hamekubal Rav Avrohom Schwartz ZTL.

The Tal Chaim's connection to his father-in-law was legendary. When the Ach Pri Tevuah was niftar on 14 Av 5634/1874, the Tal Chaim inherited the mantle of leadership, becoming Rebbe, at the age of 34.

He was best known for unswerving dedication to Torah learning, submerging his feet in cold water to keep himself awake and forgetting to eat for days at a time. "His whole life was Torah," says his great-grandson, the current Liska Rebbe, Harav Tzvi Hersh Friedlander, shlita. "He looked at everything, including current events, with the perspective of Torah."

His mind was so immersed in Torah learning that he did not know the value of money. In fact, once when a person wanted to give him a pidyon, he extended a blue coin (of a lesser denomination), then realized his mistake and corrected himself, extending a red coin (of a higher denomination). The Tal Chaim enquired why the chassid chose to give him the red coin instead of the blue one. The person replied that the red one was more valuable. The Tal Chaim responded by saying that "he did not understand the government. After all, red symbolizes midas hadin, and blue, midas harachamim!"

He epitomized hasmadah in Torah learning; every second was dedicated to the amkus of being mechadesh chiddushei Torah, coupled by extreme humility, to the point of limiting his accessibility.

An interesting anecdote that highlights his hisbatlus is worth mentioning. A woman who lived near Liska traveled to Munkatch requesting a brachah from the **Darkei Teshuvah**. Upon inquiring where she was from, the Darkei Teshuvah asked the woman why she hadn't gone to see the Tal Chaim, who lived closer. She replied that the Tal Chaim rarely interrupts his Torah learning to see people and held himself unworthy of giving brachos. The Darkei Teshuvah told her that when she returns to Liska, she should go to the Liska Rav and relay, in the Darkei Teshuvah's name, that he should "open his doors to receive people and that he is worthy to be a poel yeshuos."

Indeed, the Tal Chaim was very famous among the Rabbanim and tzaddikim of the generation. His sefarim contain 17 haskamos from the tzaddikim of that generation, including the Rebbes of **Shineve**, **Vizhnitz**, **Munkatch**, **Bruzhan**, **Tolshove**, **Borgenfreund**, **Dezh**, **Chust**, **Ma'ad**, **Satmar**, **Vi'atzen**, **Selish**, **Brodi**, **Bonihad**, **Harav Avraham Binyamin Kluger**, son of Harav Shlomo Kluger, and more. Indeed the Tolsheve Rav called him a Gaon HaGaonim. Harav **Yaakov Moshe of Kamarna** declared, "I heard of the Tal Chaim's greatness in Kabbalah from my father, **Harav Eliezer Tzvi of Kamorna**. However, I did not know of his greatness in Toras Hanigleh until now."

The **Arugas Haboisem**, Rav Moshe Greenwald, wrote in his haskamah on Tal Chaim, "I, too, was zocheh to know him," considering this a zechus to have had a relationship with the Tal Chaim.

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Rav Mordechai Winkler of Mad, author of **Levushei Mordechai**, who was regarded as one of the Torah giants of Hungary, writes of Reb Chaim in his haskamah, "tzaddik yesod olam," recalling his Torah discourses with the Tal Chaim. In his words, "I was stunned by the deepness of his holy words, highlighting his depth and vast knowledge in Torah."

Rav Shmuel Ehrenfeld, previous Mattersdorfer Rav once recalled that his father, Rav Simcha Bunim Ehrenfeld, the **Mattersdorfer Rav**, used to quote in his daily shiurim from the sefer Tal Chaim U'Brachah and that he regularly sent his talmidim to the Tal Chaim. His respect for the Tal Chaim was so intense that he once escorted him, together with all his talmidim, to the edge of town, upon the conclusion of a visit.

Although Vishnitz is a region far from Liska, Rav Menachem Mendel of Vizhnitz, the **Tzemach Tzaddik**, used to visit the Tal Chaim when he traveled to Hungary, and his grandson the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz wrote a warm haskamah on the Tal Chaim, writing "that although I personally did not know the Liska Rav, but my grandfather held him in high esteem."

The **Komarna Rebbe**, Reb Eliezer Tzvi Safrin, the son of Harav Eizikel Komarna, who used to travel to Reb Tzvi Hersh of Liska, continued to visit Liska, to spend a Shabbos with the Tal Chaim. Reb Yisroel Frankfurter, a prominent Komarna chassid, writes in his memoirs that he was present when the Tal Chaim once spent a Shabbos in the presence of Reb Eliezer Tzvi of Komarna.

Rav Tzvi Hersh of Liska, the Tal Chaim's son and successor (named after his grandfather, Rav Tzvi Hersh, the Ach Pri Tevuah), once recalled that the **Belzer Rav**, Harav Yehoshua, to whom the Tal Chaim traveled upon the petirah of his father-in-law, secluded himself in private with his father for many hours, discussing the intricacies of Toras haKabbalah. When the Tal

Chaim was pressed to reveal the contents of his discussion with the Belzer Rav, he replied that, "This is precisely why the Belzer Rav is talking with me — he knows that it will remain confidential." In later years, his successor Rav Tzvi Hersh confirmed that the Belzer Rav had wanted to discuss with his father certain Toras hanistar. In fact, the Belzer Rav once referred to the Tal Chaim as "the Hungarian Lamed Vav." Once, during a tisch, he took the Tal Chaim's plate and mixed the contents with those of his own plate, mixing the two portions and then distributing shirayim, which was very symbolic of his deep respect for him.

After his father-in-law Rav Tzvi Hersh, the Ach Pri Tevuah inquired if his chiddushim on sugyos Hashas were being recorded and upon discovering that it wasn't; instructed him to begin doing so. Upon being presented with the text, he reviewed it and kissed it.

The Tal Chaim authored the **Tal Chaim on Torah**, and the **Tal Chaim U'Brachah on Shas**.

At his levayah, one of his hespadim was delivered by Rav Avraham Yitzchak Glick, the Rov of **Tolshava**, the Ba'al **Yad Yitzchak**, who remarked, and in essence summed up the life and ideals of the Tal Chaim by declaring, "Some can consider the Liska Rav a batlan; I say we are batlanim, for he was able to "free" an agunah with a Tosafos."

On 9 Iyar, suddenly and without any foreboding the Tal Chaim was niftar during a meal--attributable to his deep concentration and focus on learning which usually necessitated a person to watch over him who was absent at that time. He was 64 . Upon discovering that the Ohel in which his shver the Ach Pri Tevuah was buried had no room a minyan headed by his son and successor Rav Tzvi Hersh, the Sharei Hasyoher "requesting" him to make room for his son-in-law. To the astonishment of everyone, miraculously, the Ohel expanded and he was buried alongside his shver in the Ohel in Liska. To this very day, one may notice his matzivah literally abutting the wall of the Ohel.

Zechsei Ugain Olainu.

In honor of the yartzeit of the Tal Chaim on 9 Iyar, and to usher in a new chapter of Bais Liska, a new entity "Igud Nechdei Liska has been established to

serve as a unifying body comprised of all descendants of the Liska Rebbes. A **Yartzit Seudah** will be held in Khal Ateres Tzvi M'Liska on **Monday evening, April 27 at 8:30pm** with Mincha/Maariv located at **1449 50th St**, Brooklyn, NY to help inaugurate this new development with the goal of bringing together the diverse branches of all einiklach of the various Rebbes who all share a common ancestry to this illustrious dynasty.

Divrei Torah will be delivered by the current **Liska Rebbe, Rav Tzvi Hersh Friedlander** Shlita as well as others who trace their heritage to Liska. It is anticipated that projects pertaining to the dissemination of seforim authored by the various Liska Rebbes will be announced shortly.

For more information, please contact: **718-436-5555 x 101** or **BaisLiska@gmail.com**.

