



## THE LIGHT, LIFE & LEGACY OF R' MICHOEL FORSHLAGER ZT"L

Parshas Pinchas

### The Light

In this week's parsha we find an excellent lesson about serving ones Torah leader. Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu that his student Yehoshua Bin Nun will replace him as the leader of the Jewish nation. In the Medrash (Medrash Rabah Naso 14:9) it is brought down that the reason Yehoshua took over Moshe Rabbeinu's position - as opposed to Moshe Rabbeinu's children as is normally the custom, is due to Yehoshua faithful service to Moshe Rabbeinu. Additionally, Yehoshua's dedicated service merited him prophecy.

This idea is reiterated in the following Gemara; "The serving of Torah [scholars] is greater than the learning of Torah itself" (Berachos 7b). Meaning, the act of serving a teacher and learning from his ways is greater than receiving Torah lessons from one's teacher.

Why is serving a teacher so important that it is considered greater than Torah learning itself? And why did Yehoshua merit to inherit Moshe Rabeinu's position specifically because of his service - and not for all the Torah he learned?

The response to that question is that a teacher teaches through his actions. When a student serves his teacher, he is privy to the nuances of his teachers' actions, particularly with the application of Torah study in its day-to-day capacity. In the Gemara we see that Shlomo Hamelech was prevented from sinning (on his level) as long as he lived near his teacher Shimi Ben Geira (Berachos 8a). Living in proximity to a holy person and being able to observe their actions often allows for great spiritual benefits.

A truly elevated Torah scholar lives his entire life according to the Torah he learns. Therefore, he becomes a source of Torah, and his actions are Torah lessons. That's why it is greater to serve a Torah scholar than to learn torah from him.

When one serves a Torah scholar in a humble and subservient way, he becomes deeply connected to his teacher and by proxy becomes part of the Tzadik's soul. Through this connection the student can directly receive his teacher's holiness. This is only achieved when the student serves his teacher in a pure and humble way.

Now we can understand Yehoshua's inheritance of Moshe's leadership position. Yehoshua always served his teacher Moshe Rabbeinu faithfully and humbly. This allowed him to learn Torah from Moshe's every action. Because he was so subservient to Moshe, he connected very deeply to Moshe Rabbeinu's soul and merited prophecy. As a result, Yehoshua was seen as an extension of Moshe Rabbeinu, which led him to assume this leadership position.

**Adapted from Toras Michoel Parshas Pinchas**

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## The Life

When one looks at Reb Michoel Forshlager's Torah, one sees Torah that has been achieved personally by its author. Reb Michoel was a devoted and humble student to his teacher the holy Avnei Nezer of Sochatchov.

Reb Michoel's father was a Sochatchover chassid. From a very young age Reb Michoel grew up hearing stories about the greatness of the Avnei Nezer. When he was a young child of 5 1/2 years old, Reb Michoel's father took him to the Avnei Nezer's court in Sochatchov. This visit made quite the impression on Reb Michoel and resulted in a deep yearning to be in close proximity of the Avnei Nezer and his teachings. When he was only six years old, he walked from his hometown of Lovitch to Sochatchov which was 15 miles away so that he can attend the Avnei Nezer's tish on Shushan Purim.

When he was fourteen years old, he joined the Avnei Nezer's yeshiva. He later reminisced that he needed to sit on a special chair to raise his height up. From an early age he became close to the Avnei Nezer and had a strong desire to be in his company. Reb Michoel soon became one of his closest students. Towards the end of his life, the Avnei Nezer no longer gave public lectures. However, he would spend hours each day learning privately with Reb Forshlager. He was so close and respected by the Avnei Nezer that before any of his famous halachic responses would go out, he would bring it to Reb Michoel for his insight.

His devotion and dedication to the Avnei Nezer was legendary. In later years he wrote a famous letter to the Satmerer Rebbe. In his introduction he says, "I was a Talmid Muvhak- an outstanding student- who served my teacher faithfully for 12 years". These were the last 12 years of the Avnei Nezer's life. His complete Hisbatlus- self cancellation and surrender- to his Rebbe, elevated

his soul to a tremendously high level. How appropriate then that he was the last person who spoke to the Avnei Nezer in learning before his teacher's passing and was able to give an answer to a question that bothered the Avnei Nezer for many years – ultimately bringing him great joy.

He remained connected to the Avnei Nezer's soul for the rest of his life. Whenever his Rabbi's name was mentioned, his eyes would fill with tears at his memory. His deep devotion and dedication made him feel strongly bonded to his teacher and allowed him to reach tremendous heights.

May we merit to serve Torah in the way Reb Michael Forshlager outlines in his Torah, and the way in which he demonstrated it with his own Rebbe the Avnei Nezer. May their holy memories be a blessing to all of us.

**Translated and Adapted from Michael Be'achas, Bergman, B., (2013)**

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## The Legacy

With great honor and joy, we announce the publication of Toras Michael on Vayikra, Bamidbar, and Devarim. With this volume, the monumental Toras Michael al Hatorah is complete. We would like to take this opportunity to thank R' Bentzion Bergman for his dedicated work in publishing the seforim. These seforim are a beautiful and accessible collection of divrei torah based on the weekly parsha. Additionally, we would also like to thank the generous individuals who contributed towards the printing - and ultimate success of the seforim. The new seforim are already in stores.

There are currently several more projects in the works. When Chizuk Emuna - the shul Rabbi Forshlager taught Torah at voted to remove their mechitzah, he wrote a long response about the importance of the holiness in Klal Yisrael. This piece is now being developed for publication. In addition, the acclaimed Hebrew biography Michael Be'achas, is slated to be re-printed in a new and expanded edition in honor of the Yahrtzeit.







## A Place of Yeshuos

This week we received a phone call from a Yid who needed a yeshuah and wanted to get the Zechusim of the great Tzadik Reb Michoel Forshlager. He donated a generous amount and committed to donating more when he has the yeshuah. We sent his kvitel straight to the Tzibur Yeshuos through Mr. Michael Stein-the incredibly dedicated cemetery chairman. Mr. Stein has been doing the greatest kindness in maintaining the cemetery, a true Chesed shel Emes. We thank him deeply for his work. The zechus of the newsletter this week is dedicated to our generous benefactor. May he quickly see the yeshuah that he needs in a miraculous and unexpected way.

To place a name by the Tzibur please email [RabbiForshlagerFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:RabbiForshlagerFoundation@gmail.com) or call Pinny Kreizel 845-263-0781.

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## Bathroom Renovation Project

We started getting in quotes for the bathroom. In order to make the bathrooms comfortable for those visiting we need to do a number of upgrades. First and foremost we need to make it secure. The cemetery has issues with vandalism and homeless people breaking into the bathroom. We need to get new metal doors and cameras. In the bathroom itself the floor needs to be replaced as well as patching the roof and walls. The stalls need to be upgraded and the toilets replaced. All of this will cost anywhere between 15-25 thousand dollars. It is a very worthwhile investment because there are visitors at the Tzion almost every day with thousands coming on special occasions and the Yahrzeit. The Zechus of all those tens of thousands of tefilos will partly go to those who have worked to make the holy Tzion a comfortable place to visit. you would like to take a part in this great zechus please contact Pinny Kreizel at [Rabbiforshlagerfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:Rabbiforshlagerfoundation@gmail.com) or at 845-263-0781. Until the bathroom is renovated there will be a portable restroom on site.

Partner

**Ohr Michael**

A project of the Rabbi Forshlager Foundation  
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