

Special Salute to
the Graduates of 2010

COMMUNITY

Volume IX No.10

Tamuz - Av 5770 July 2010

HAGAON
HACHAM
MORDECHAI
רמב"ם ELIYAHU

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HAGAON HACHAM MORDECHAI עליהו ELIYAHU

21 ADAR I 5689 - 25 SIVAN 5770
(MARCH 3, 1929 - JUNE, 7, 2010)

YEHUDA AZOULAY

It was 1951, when a wealthy community leader from New York, Mr. Isaac Shalom, approached the Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, Hacham Ezra Attia, seeking to bring another rabbi to his community. The Rosh Yeshiva immediately summoned his finest prospect for the position.

When he arrived, Hacham Ezra turned to the visitor and said, "This young man is proficient in all topics in the Torah. He will respond in any area you choose to question him."

Mr. Shalom looked at the young rabbi – a mere 22 years old – and asked "Is it so?"

"Are you questioning the word of the Rosh Yeshiva?!" the *talmid hacham* asked disbelievingly.

Impressed with the young scholar's instincts, Mr. Shalom proceeded to test him and found his knowledge both deep and vast. Then Hacham Ezra Attia turned to his

student and said, "This man wants you to come serve as rabbi in New York."

At that time, the young rabbi was teaching for an hour and a half in the morning in a Talmud Torah before returning to his studies in the Yeshiva. After hearing the offer, he said, "Let me remain in Israel for five years so that I can master the entire *Shas*, *Tur* and *Shulhan Aruch* in preparation for the position. During this time I will dedicate all my efforts to studying, I only ask for a stipend equal to the salary I will give up from my job at the Talmud Torah. Then, in five years I will be ready to come to your city."

Because of the urgent nature of the position to be filled, Mr. Shalom could not accommodate the young rabbi's request to wait five years. But he was determined to persuade the rabbi to accept the post immediately and offered a very generous salary, comfortable living arrangements and



Hacham Mordechai giving a class in his youth at Yeshivat Porat Yosef following Israel's War of Independence when the yeshiva was moved to temporary quarters at the Sofiyof synagogue. Pictured: Hacham Shalom Cohen, Hacham Shelomo Ben Shimon, Hacham Sason Rassabi, Hacham Eliyahu Cohen-Zangi, Hacham David Kadouri, Hacham Shemuel Sharabani, Hacham Yehuda SadkaTM, Hacham Edmon Shayo, Hacham David Shabili

The great Kabbalist Hacham Salman EliyahuTM father of Hacham Mordechai.

Rabbi Aryeh LevineTM making a blessing at the wedding of Hacham Mordechai. On the right Hacham Shalom AzoulayTM and on the left Rabbi Pinchas EpsteinTM



From left to right, Hacham Mordechai EliyahuTM, Hacham Yaakov MussaffiTM, Hacham Salman Hougi AboudiTM, Hacham Yehoshua SharabaniTM, Hacham Moshe Sharabani shelita

more if the rabbi would agree to continue his studies in New York. In spite of his background of dire poverty and having been orphaned from his father at a young age, the young scholar could not be swayed by the kind material offer. Finally, seeing how strong his desire was to continue growing in Torah, the Rosh Yeshiva accepted the young scholar's decision to decline the position.

The wisdom of this decision would become evident to all some three decades later when, in 1983 this Jewish sage, known to us as Hacham Mordechai Eliyahu, succeeded Hacham Ovadia Yosef *shelita*, *sheyibadel lehaim tovim ve'arukim*, to become the Chief Rabbi of Israel.

A Child Prodigy

Rabbi Mordechai Semach Eliyahu, *z.s.l.*, was born to Hacham Salman and Mazal Eliyahu on 21 Adar, 5689 (March, 12th, 1929) in the Old City of Jerusalem. His father was one of the greatest *mekubalim* (kabbalists) in Jerusalem, and his mother was renowned for her charity and kindness, and for helping her husband achieve his lofty stature of spiritual greatness.

In spite of their grinding poverty, the house was filled with Torah. Young Mordechai grew up in one small room together with his brothers and sisters. Their parents raised them in accordance with the teachings and customs of Rabbenu Yosef Haim ben Eliyahu of Baghdad – the Ben Ish Hai (1833-1909), who was a relative of Rabbanit Mazal. The family's financial hardship and cramped quarters did not deter young Eliyahu from devoting himself to Torah, and he was often found learning by the light of a candle beside a table – or even under it.

Hacham Salman passed away at a young age, when Hacham Mordechai was just 11 years old, but not before he succeeded in instilling in his son some of his extraordinary piety and love of Torah, as well as a special devotion to the hidden areas of Torah. Hacham Eliyahu's connection to Kabbalah developed over the

years, and is reflected both in his personal customs as well as in his halachic rulings. After Hacham Salman's death, Hacham Mordechai's righteous mother decided that her gifted son must continue along the path of Torah he had been following since he was born, and she ensured that his life would be dedicated to Torah. With her encouragement, he devoted himself to his studies with remarkable diligence. Upon reaching the age of bar missva, he joined the prestigious Yeshivat Porat Yosef, which was near his home. As a student, he displayed exceptional talents and diligence, sitting in his usual corner in the yeshiva from the early morning hours until very late at night. He quickly became a beloved disciple of the Rosh Yeshiva, Hacham Ezra Attia.

Hacham Mordechai spent night and day engrossed in Torah and serving the great sages of his time, including Hacham Ezra Attia (1885 – 1970), and Hacham Sadka Hussin (1876 – 1961), one of the greatest Torah leaders in Jerusalem. He was also very close to the Hazon Ish (Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz 1878- 1953), and spent much time serving him and learning from his ways.

Going Out to the People

Hacham Mordechai came of age during the genesis of the State of Israel. He, like many people at that time, felt that the manners and behaviors adopted at that time would set the tone for the future of the country. As a young student, he decided to do his part in injecting spiritual substance into the fledgling State. Along with his learning, he traveled daily to far-flung settlements with his friend, Rabbi Shabtai Yudelevitch, and they would each deliver a lecture. Hacham Mordechai taught *halacha* (Jewish law), and Rabbi Shabtai taught *aggada* (rabbinic homilies). The young scholars also joined forces in the struggle for an alternative to the drafting of girls into the Israeli army, and against the sale of pork in Jewish cities.

When he was twenty-four years old, Hacham Mordechai married Rabbanit Sviva Hana, the daughter of Hacham Nissim David Ezran, his teacher in Porat Yosef.

Hacham Mordechai studied in the *bet midrash* (study hall) for rabbis and *dayanim* (rabbinic judges) led by the Rishon LeSion, Chief Rabbi Hacham Yizhak Nissim. He excelled on all his exams, and at the age of 28, Hacham Mordechai Eliyahu was appointed as the youngest rabbinical judge in Israel.

A Career of Religious Leadership

His career in the Israeli Rabbinate began in Beer Sheva, which at that time was a remote, southern village. Hacham Eliyahu's job entailed numerous responsibilities, and yet he extended even beyond his assigned role, expanding the work of the *Bet Din*, specifically with regard to abandoned wives and other complex issues. He was extremely sensitive to the plights of the downtrodden Sephardic Jews in those areas who were, by and large, poverty stricken and neglected by the government. Due to their difficult situations Hacham Eliyahu tried his utmost to find lenient halachic rulings that would ease their situations.

Several years later, a job became available in the Jerusalem district *Bet Din*. The rabbis of Jerusalem were familiar with Hacham Mordechai from his years living there, and invited him to fill the position. He held that job for several years until he was appointed to the *Bet Din Hagadol*. During these years, he nurtured a connection with the general public. They saw him not only as a *posek* (halachic authority), but as someone with the ability to solve any problem, be it halachic, personal, or emotional. Gradually, Hacham Mordechai's relationship to the general public grew to include even the most far-flung places in the world.



Hacham Yehoshua Sharbani²¹ (right) and Hacham Moderchai Eliyahu in his younger years



With Hacham Yosef Ades²¹ and Hacham Ben-Sion Abba Shaul²¹



With Hacham Yizhak Kadouri²¹



The Baba Sali²¹ blessing Hacham Mordechai upon his appointment to the post of Chief Rabbi.



With Hacham Shalom Messas

There are different types of Torah leaders. Some dedicate their lives to learning Torah and do not interact much with the public. Others dedicate their lives to helping the public, leaving them very little time for Torah learning. With Hacham Mordechai, however, it all came together. He acquired mastery over all areas of Torah, even while tending to communal matters on a daily basis. For him, Torah learning and responsibility to the community were one and the same. This rare fusion of first rate Torah scholarship with tireless public service is an inspiring example of true greatness.

Despite his intensive involvement in public affairs, he never officially aligned himself with any political party. He did this to ensure that people from all streams would feel comfortable seeking his assistance and guidance. He regularly emphasized the importance of encouraging all people to continue the good deeds they perform, rather than criticizing them for their mistakes.

During Rabbi Eliyahu's term as Chief Rabbi he focused strongly on providing secular Jews with a basic understanding of Judaism. He would travel to their *moshavim* (settlements) and *kibbussim* (collective communities) to lecture and reach out to them.

Everyman's Posek

The result of his non-political stance was evident in the wide array of people who passed through the bureau of the Chief Rabbi during his tenure from 1983-1993. People from all walks of life and from all levels of society could regularly be seen entering and exiting the Rabbinat offices: *Bet Din* judges, Roshei Yeshivot, communal rabbis from the Diaspora, doctors, secular childless couples and dejected individuals. His fax machine was constantly humming with halachic questions coming in from all over the world, and the telephone rang at all hours of the day with more

of the same. In dispensing advice and rendering halachic decisions, Hacham Mordechai would combine practical logic and worldly knowledge together with his vast Torah wisdom and understanding. By viewing the entire picture, he rendered halachic decisions that would bolster Torah observance – even in light of the unique challenges and needs of the generation.

His decisions in halacha are recorded in many *sefarim* (holy books), including the volumes that he personally authored: *Sefer Halacha*, *Darchei Tahara*, *Kissur Shulhan Aruch*, *Sefer Hahagim*, *Maamar Mordechai*, *Imrei Mordechai*, *Hilchot Berachot*, and others. Many more *sefarim*, including his responsa, are in the process of being published. A large portion of his halachic rulings can be found in the archives of the Israeli Rabbinat.

Hacham Mordechai consistently followed the views of the Ben Ish Hai, who advocated combining the rulings of the *Shulhan Aruch* with the practices of the great Kabbalist, the Arizal, whose customs were accepted and followed by the Jews of Israel. In addressing new questions that arose after the establishment of the Jewish State, Hacham Mordechai showed how the rulings of the Ben Ish Hai can be applied to modern day halachic issues. Thus, the halachic approach forged by the Ben Ish Hai and the Arizal was perpetuated through the decisions of Hacham Mordechai.

Divine Protection From Sin

Hacham Mordechai delivered lectures in halacha and *aggada* in *kollelim* all over Israel. Once, as he delivered a *shiur* in a certain kollel in Jerusalem, he became very enthusiastic and animated, gesturing and waving his arms as he clarified important points. A student prepared a cup of tea for the rabbi and placed it on the table in front of him. The rabbi acknowledged the favor with a nod and continued speaking. As he



At a meeting with Esther Pollard (wife of Jonathan Pollard) and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Hacham Mordechai was among Pollard's most vocal advocates.

Dancing at Kever Rahel with ESSION Division Commander, Colonel Nadav Padan

motioned with his arm, his sleeve knocked over the cup and the tea spilled. Another tea was quickly prepared and placed a bit further away on the table, but again the rabbi knocked it over with his arm.

"It's alright" he said, "I don't need to drink."

The students nevertheless prepared a third cup, but it met the same fate as its predecessors. This time, the rabbi stopped the *shiur* and said, "If it happened three times, there must be a lesson to be learned."

He turned to the one who had brought the tea and asked how he had prepared it. "In the usual manner," he replied. "I boiled water in the teapot and made tea."

"What is this pot generally used for?" the rabbi inquired.

"The *avreichim* [kollel students] use it only to prepare their tea and coffee."

"Does anyone else use it?"

Suddenly, one of the *avreichim* stood up and called out, "Yes, yes! There is a gentile who cleans up here, a foreign worker from Romania. Some mornings he cooks an egg for himself in the pot."

Everything became perfectly clear. The rabbi was very stringent with regard to the law of *bishul akum* (the prohibition against eating food cooked by a non-Jew), and he would not use a utensil with which a gentile had cooked.¹ The three spilled cups of tea were Hashem's Divine providence protecting the rabbi from violating his ruling.

The Judge's Prayer

In an interview with Israel National News, Rabbi Shmuel Zafrani, a close student of Hacham Mordechai, told of a major discovery that was made just before the rabbi's burial. As the youngest *dayan* (rabbinical court judge) ever elected, he explained, Hacham Mordechai "felt very strongly the heavy responsibility that weighed upon him, and so it became known that he composed a prayer that he would recite every day before entering

the courtroom. However, we never knew the wording of the prayer – until just two hours before the burial, when I found a note in his wallet with the prayer." (See below for the text the prayer.)

Rabbi Zafrani then proceeded to describe an amazing "rescue" witnessed by Hacham Mordechai – which the latter attributed to the power of prayer, both his own and that of others.

When Rabbi Eliyahu first became a *dayan* in Be'er Sheva, in 1957, his was the only rabbinical court in the entire Negev region. On his first day on the job, he saw a woman standing outside, praying from a small Book of Psalms. She remained outside all day. This repeated itself the next day, and then for several days thereafter. Finally, he asked the court secretary to ask the woman to come inside. He asked her why she stood outside and prayed all day, and she related in all innocence, "I moved to Israel from Morocco by myself, and they sent me to Be'er Sheva. I asked where the closest rabbinical court was, I was told it was here, and so here I am."

"What are you praying for?" the rabbi asked.

"My husband," the woman explained, "was a taxi driver in Morocco. A week after we were married, at the end of the *Sheva Berachot* [the week of wedding festivities], his taxi was completely destroyed in a terrible accident. He was killed, but his body was not recovered. After a while, I went to the rabbis to be declared a widow so that I could remarry, but they said that without a body, they could not be certain that he was dead – and so I remained an *aguna* (a 'chained' woman who is unable to remarry). But when I came to Israel, I had faith that what the rabbinical courts in Morocco could not accomplish, the courts in Israel would be able to do."

"So why did you remain outside the court?" Rabbi Eliyahu asked, "Why didn't you come in to plead your case to the *dayanim*?"

"Plead to the *dayanim*?" the woman asked, "I pray to Hashem, not to *dayanim*!"

Rabbi Eliyahu immediately took up her case. He took all her papers and went to Hacham Yisrael Abuchassera (the Baba Sali), who told him that his brother, the Baba Haki, a leading rabbi in the Israeli city of Ramle, was familiar with the officials involved in Jewish burials in Morocco.

Rabbi Eliyahu traveled to Ramle to speak with the Baba Haki, who informed him that there were only two Jewish *kavranim* (people involved in burials) in Morocco, both of whom had come to Israel. One lived in the southern town of Dimona, and the other in Kiryat Ata, near the port city of Haifa in Northern Israel.

"I live in the south," Hacham Mordechai figured, "so I might as well go to Dimona." He went to the address given to him by the Baba Haki – only to find that the man's family was sitting *shiva* for him. He had died just a few days earlier.

Rabbi Eliyahu, though disappointed, went inside, shared some words of Torah and solace with the grieving family and friends, and explained why he was there. Immediately, a man jumped up and said, "I am the other *kavran*, and I know the story! I was the one who buried the taxi driver!"

Rabbi Eliyahu asked him to accompany come him to other rabbis, who questioned him and determined that his testimony was acceptable. Rabbi Eliyahu convened the rabbinical court, and the woman was declared "unchained" and permitted to remarry.

"This is the power of prayer," Rabbi Eliyahu later said, "both hers and mine."

The following is a translation of the prayer composed and recited daily by Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu before entering the rabbinical courtroom:

"Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that it was not my idea to stand and serve Your holy nation, to judge and teach. I well know my small worth. I

1 Shulan Aruch – Yoreh Deah, 113:16.



At a meeting with US President Ronald Reagan



At the Azkara for Edmund Safra™, with philanthropists Mr. Joseph Safra on the right and Mr. Moshe Safra on the left.

did not seek to do what is beyond me, but my rabbis instructed me to take this path, and this is how You arranged matters... Your wisdom has decreed that I serve the holy nation, teaching and judging... But trembling has overtaken me, fear and shaking have come over me, regarding the terrible danger that faces me and the vast abyss that is open before me...

I have trust in Your vast mercies... for You are He Who hears prayer. Please G-d, have compassion on all those who sit in justice, and especially upon me, your servant, son of Your handmaid, Mordechai ben Mazal. Have mercy on me and give me a heart that hears, as well as knowledge to understand and judge Your people...

Grant us wisdom, and let us not rule 'impure' that which is 'pure,' nor on that which is 'permitted' shall we say 'forbidden,' nor shall we deem guilty he who is innocent - and vice versa. Save us from all errors, and let my heart be strong, and allow me to rebuke those who oppress others; let us not be tempted to ignore injustice, and give us the merit to correct that which needs to be corrected, institute new regulations and directives when necessary, and to teach Torah, so that the Name of Heaven be sanctified by us. Let the people respect and fear us, and let us remain far from arrogance, anger and pettiness..."

Ruah Hakodesh (Divine Inspiration)

A year and a half ago on Succot, when Hacham Mordechai awoke after undergoing surgery, he was unable to speak. He began to communicate by writing notes. His first note, a request for water seemed appropriate enough. But then he quickly added, "They've brought here a 'white covering,' a *tallit* cover."

Rabbi Zafrani, Hacham Mordechai's closest *shamash* (assistant), who was attending to him, indicated that he didn't understand. The rabbi underlined the word "here" on the note. Rabbi Zafrani, however, was still confused.

"It has many crosses," Hacham Mordechai added. With this, Rabbi Zafarani was taken aback. The sage then added in writing, "Five minutes ago," compounding his disciple's confusion. Finally, Hacham Mordechai pointed a finger toward the dividing curtain in the recovery area.

Rabbi Zafrani went over to a nurse and asked if there was a patient with crosses. She shook her head. Faithful to his rabbi's instincts, he continued to ask who else was in the ward.

"An Arab woman," she said, adding that there was some "witch" who had come to visit her.

"Did she bring crosses with her?" he asked.

"I imagine not."

"But the rabbi knows what he is saying," Rabbi Zafrani insisted.

They went over to the visitor and, after some inquiries, learned that she had several crosses in her handbag. Only then did Rabbi Zafrani understand that "the white tallit" referred to that woman, based on Kabbalistic terminology.

Rabbi Zafrani politely asked if she could remove them. "There is a holy man here who sensed their presence and it disturbs him," he explained. The woman left.

Rabbi Zafrani returned to tell Hacham Mordechai Eliyahu that the woman left, but when he entered the room, he saw that the hacham had already sensed her departure.

The Beracha for Triplets

Rabbanit Sivia Eliyahu, Hacham Mordechai's wife, and their daughter, spoke about their correspondence with the hacham during his stay in the hospital toward the end of his life, and the messages that he related to them. One remarkable incident involved a woman who had conceived with triplets. The doctors told her that since two daughters were sharing the same placenta, one was taking strength from the other, and therefore, one or both of the girls will, in the doctors' words, have "serious

problems." The pregnant woman wept bitterly, feeling that she would not be able to raise a child with such a serious defect. She went to Rabbi Eliyahu, and he told her, "I promise that all the girls will be fine, and if something is not fine, bring them to me. I only have one daughter..." Several months later, she gave birth to perfectly healthy girls. The doctors were in disbelief.

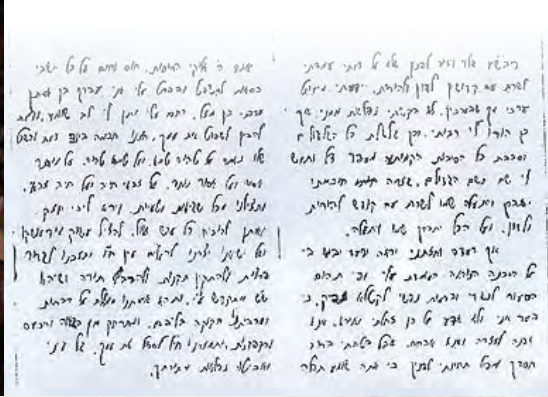
The Righteous Decrees and Gd Fulfills

After Hacham Mordechai's passing, Mr. David Vazana, a neighbor of the Eliyahu family and the head of the Bank of Israel Employees Union, said that, "As a neighbor, I saw how people would come to his home at all hours of the day, from all walks of life and of all different types, with questions and requests and problems – and he would receive all of them happily and graciously."

Mr. Vanza described how, "there were so many times when we saw the fulfillment of the Talmud's words, 'The righteous man decrees and Gd fulfills.' Once, the son of one of the employees at Bank of Israel was critically wounded in a car accident, and was unconscious in Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. We came to the rabbi, telling him that the doctors said he has only a few hours left. The rabbi waved his hand in dismissal and said to do a *kapara* [atonement] with money for charity, and that if he still doesn't open his eyes, they should do the same with a chicken. We did the first, and the boy started to move his arms and legs. The doctors happened to be there and said, 'It's nothing, just his last-minute palpitations before death.' We went back to the rabbi, and he said we must immediately do the *kapara* with a chicken. We did that, and the boy opened his eyes the next day... He later made a full recovery and was even able to enlist in the Israeli army... There were many other stories like this, as well."



Hacham Mordechai's funeral was attended by over 100,000 people..



The letter that Rabbi Shmuel Zafrani found in Hacham Mordechai's pocket

Suffering for the Jewish People

Hacham Mordechai's wife recalled an instance when, while in poor health himself, the rabbi gave a blessing to a man who was deathly ill. She turned to Hacham Mordechai and asked, "There, is someone who looks like he... is on his way to the next world, while you, by contrast, look healthy, but could also use a recovery. Why don't you pray for yourself?!"

"No, no," the hacham replied. "I need to annul the *gezeirot* (harsh decrees against the Jewish people)." He explained that his illness served as a *kapara* (atonement) for the Jewish nation.²

The next day, a ship with 500 grad missiles being smuggled in for Palestinian terrorists was discovered and captured by the Israeli navy.

During his illness, the rabbanit further recalled how she pleaded with the hacham to pray for his own recovery. "When I told him, 'Enough! Get out of this situation! You could free yourself!' he signaled 'no' with his hand and whispered, 'Thousands could be killed, thousands could be killed.'"

"I asked him, 'Maybe all this suffering is because of me, maybe because of the children or the grandchildren, or someone in the family did something [wrong]?!'"

"He responded, '*Ribono Shel Olam!* No, no, because of Kelal Yisrael.' I asked him, 'At least you could tell me what this process will bring?' He wrote, 'Mashiah.'"

"Nu, when?" I wrote this three times but the rabbi did not answer me. I asked, "What do we need to do?"

"The Rabbi wrote, '*Teshuvah.*'"

"I asked, 'For what?' The rabbi answered by citing the verse, '*Ve'ahavta lere'acha kamocho* – Love your fellow as yourself.' What is hurtful to you – do not do to your friend. Even during the time of [the

idolatrous king] Ahav, they worshipped idols, but because there was no baseless hatred, there was no war for 40 years. Because there was unity in *Am Yisrael*, there was no war. So we should be concerned that everyone should accept this upon themselves."

"The community has an important job," explained the rabbanit during her husband's illness. "The rabbi will not nullify what he took upon himself. He suffers because of Kelal Yisrael and Kelal Yisrael needs to act for him. He told me explicitly, 'I will not pray [for my recovery]; the community should pray.'"

The Jewish Nation Loses a Leader

On Monday, 25 Sivan (June 7th) Hacham Mordechai's soul departed this world, representing an incalculable loss to the Jewish people. Rabbi Yona Metzger, Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel, spoke to the *Jerusalem Post* shortly before the funeral: "This is a huge loss to the Torah world and the rabbinate. Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu was a pillar of Israel's Chief Rabbinate. He started off as the country's youngest rabbinical judge, and worked his way up to the High Rabbinical Court through his greatness in Torah, from where he was appointed Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel. I owe him a personal debt; I received so much from him. He was unrivalled in his human relations, loved by all, and Jews of all types – Hassidim, Lithuanians, Settlers, Ashkenazim and Sephardim – would convene in his house to hear Torah from him."

Over 100,000 people came from near and far to pay respects to this outstanding Torah personality, one whose prominence crossed the religious and social lines that divide us, as evidenced by the cross-section of Jews who felt pained by the loss and wanted to give respect and join the mourners in their

time of sorrow. The eulogies were short, as the family was determined to complete the burial before midnight, in accordance with the rabbi's wishes that the burial not be delayed.

The Mashiah Watch

Hacham Mordechai left us, not only with a wealth of valuable Jewish works and a family of Torah scholars who are following in his footsteps, but also with a powerful sense of hope. Israel's Channel 1 Television News aired a short piece regarding the "Mashiah Watch," explaining that Baba Baruch Abuchassera had a dream, in which his father, the Baba Sali, instructed him to give Hacham Mordechai a special watch. He said that when the hands are on 12:00, Mashiah will arrive.

In an interview given over two years ago, Rabbi Eliyahu commented, "I don't touch the watch. I am afraid to open it. It remains by me untouched."

The dream first spoke of a gold watch, then a silver one. The time on the watch was originally 3:00, and at the time of the interview, the time was 11:45.

The rabbi explained that the hour indicates that the redemption is underway. He added that the gold watch is underneath the silver watch, and silver represents *rahamim* (mercy) whereas gold is *din* (judgment). "I wanted the silver to be on top so *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* should ensure that the redemption will be rapid."

"We must believe that Mashiah will come, and through our *ma'asim tovim* (good deeds), he will come even sooner!"

Yehuda Azoulay is the author of A Legacy of Leaders, a groundbreaking English series containing biographies and stories of Sephardic hachamim.

More information and articles can be found on the website: www.

SephardicLegacy.com

² In an interview with the weekly, *Ma'ayanei Hayeshuah*.