

R' Dovid Borntein Sochatchover Rebbe

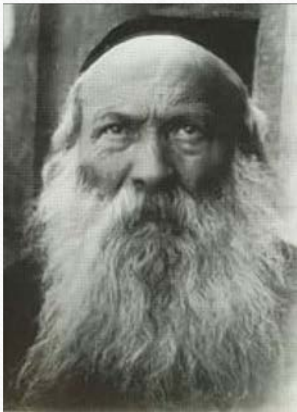
Rabbi Efrem Goldberg
Boca Raton Synagogue

Sochatchov Chassidus

- Rav Avraham Bornstein (1838-1910) was a close student of the Kotzker Rebbe and married the Rebbe's daughter. Sochatchover Chassidus is based on the Kotzker derech.
- After the Kotzker passed away, he became a chassid of his uncle, the Chidushei Ha'Rim, R' Yitzchak Meir Alter.
- In 1866, after the Chiddush Ha'Rim passed away, he became a chassid of R' Chanoch Henoah of Alexander, the Alexander Rebbe.
- In 1870, when the Alexander Rebbe passed away, he agreed to become a Rebbe himself. He was the Rav and Av Beis Din of Sochatchov so he became the Sochatchover Rebbe.



Sochatchov Chassidus



- He wrote derashos published as Ne'os Deshe and wrote 7 volumes of response, Avnei Nezer on all areas of Jewish law.
- His only son, R' Shmuel Bornstein succeeded him as 2nd Sochatchover Rebbe. He established a yeshiva, Beis Avraham, named after his father. He wrote 9 volumes called Shem Mi'Shmuel.

Biography

- Born Elul 5636 - November 17, 1876 in Nasielsk, Poland, (near Warsaw) where his grandfather was the Rav.
- Was the oldest son of R' Shmuel and Yuta Leah Borenstein
- In 1883, when his grandfather moved and became Rav of Sochatchov, his parents and family moved too. His father was the only son of the Avnei Nezer.
- He had a younger brother Chanoch Henoah and at least one sister.



Biography

- When he was young, R' Dovid was taught privately by Rabbi Yitzchak Shlomo Lieberman of Ozorkow, but his primary teacher during his childhood was his grandfather, the *Avnei Nezer*.
- His grandfather took Rav Dovid under his wing, taught him formal Torah but also mysticism and Chassidus. They studied together for 33 years.
- By the time he was Bar Mitzvah, the Avnei Nezer said about his grandson, “he is a complete person.” He would sit and learn Friday nights until the candle went out and when it did, he took his gemara and went outside to learn near a street light, no matter the temperature.

Marriage

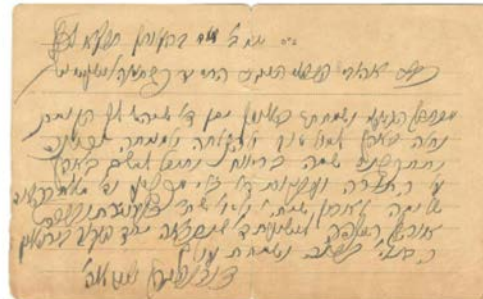
- In 1891 he became engaged to Rachel, the daughter of R' Chaim Yisrael Morgenstern, the Pilover Rebbe. She died the same year before the wedding could take place.
- In 1893, he married Esther Weingut, daughter of R' Mottel Weingut, a Ger Chassid. They lived in his grandfather's house where he continued to learn from him.

Rabbanus

In 1906, R' Dovid became the Rav of Wyszogrod. Wyszogrod was a city of simple workers. The young scholar, who only recently had left the tent that was completely Torah and Chassidism, met the masses, average people, who did not necessarily understand even the words of their prayers. He served as a rabbi, teacher and guide in day to day life. Very few people were scholars in this town of gardeners, and there were also some who participated in the Haskala (enlightenment). These people would gather in the house of the rabbi on winter nights, and conduct discussions on matters of Torah and books of Torah research, which were also familiar to the young rabbi.



Rabbanus



- He established a yeshiva with hundreds of young men modeled after Sochatchover Chassidus.
- When WWI broke out, he was forced to move to Lodz. When the war ended, rather than return to Wyszogrod, he became the Rav of Tomaszow Mazowiecki where he served from 1918-1926.
- When his father died suddenly in January, 1926, Rav Dovid was appointed the third Sochatchover Rebbe during the funeral itself on 24 Teves 5686/1926.

Rabbanus

- Rav Dovid established his court in Pabianice near Lodz.
- He founded a network of yeshivas under the name Beis Avraham in Lodz, Warsaw and cities across Poland.
- He published a monthly journal entitled Beis Avraham which disseminated the Sochatchover method of Torah study.
- In addition to being Rebbe and Rosh Yeshiva, he was active in Agudas Yisroel and the Moetzes Gedolei Ha'Torah, a member of the rabbinical association of Poland.



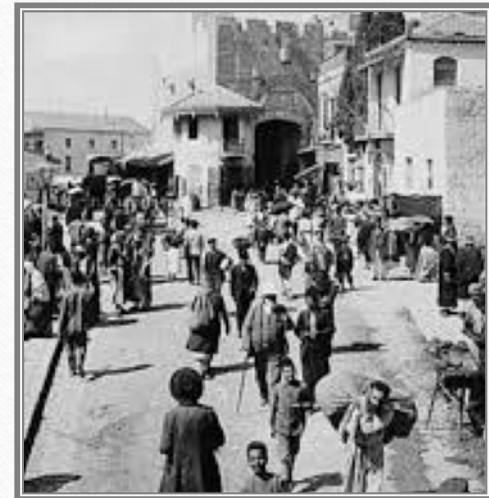
Land of Israel

- He was a big proponent of settling the Land of Israel and promoting it to his Chassidim. He said he himself would have emigrated if not for his thousands of followers in Poland who relied on him.
- He visited Palestine four times including in 1924 and 1925. He was greeted by the biggest Rabbonim in Palestine, foremost among them, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha'Kohen Kook.
- At the Agudas Yisroel conference in Poland in 1934, he gave an impassioned speech in favor of settling Eretz Yisrael, "because from Eretz Yisrael will come the revival of Israel, to last until the Messianic era."
- When he was a member of the Council of Torah Sages, he influenced the relationship of Agudas Yisrael to the Land of Israel in his famous speech "His Society is Founded on the Land" – that is to say that the foundation of "Aguda" should be upon the Land of Israel...
- He visited the Land again in 5685 (1925) accompanied by an entourage of family members and a group of his close associates.



Land of Israel

- He visited the holy places of Jerusalem, Tzefat, as well as the new settlements that were creating new life – all places were to him a wellspring of inspiration, holy enthusiasm, and a refreshing of the spirit.
- He spent Purim in Tel Aviv full of happiness and rejoicing, with days filled with dances and songs of praise. He spent Pesach in Jerusalem, in sanctity as it was in days of old. He spent Lag Baomer in Meron,



Land of Israel

- On the first trip, he took his younger brother and put a down payment on a plot of land south of Ramle with the goal of creating a city for his chassidim.
- Meanwhile, Rabbi Chanoch stayed in Jerusalem, living first in the Bucharim neighborhood and then settling on Chida St. in the new Bayit Vegan neighborhood, where he established a Beis Medrash.
- When he returned to Poland to raise the rest of the money he ran into an economic depression that thwarted his plans.



Holocaust

- On Rosh Hashana 1939, the Nazis invaded Lodz, at the time the second largest Jewish community in Europe.
- They came to the Rebbe's home, beat him, cut off his beard and forced him to clean the streets.
- His Chassidim obtained forged documents and smuggled him into the Warsaw Ghetto where he lived incognito.
- Nevertheless, people flocked to his home for Torah study and communal activity. He continued to conduct a tisch every Friday night.



Holocaust

- Another witness described, “Many Torah sages who had not yet been transported from the city then came to his house along with ordinary people, Jews seeking a word of encouragement and solace.”
- He was one of the first leaders in Warsaw to warn of the impending transports.
- A miracle took place in Purim of 1940: the news arrived that the the Rebbe and his family could save themselves. The government authorities in Rome were willing to give him papers to enter Italy, which was still a neutral country in those days.



Holocaust



- However the Rebbe did not leave. He did not leave his students, chassidim, and friends, who were to him like one large family. He was like a captain whose ship is in danger, but does not abandon his ship until the last of his passengers is safe.
- During this time, he printed the unpublished chiddushim of his grandfather, the Avnei Nezer on Eruvin.
- On the last Sukkos of his life in 1942, he was visited by many refugees who had arrived to the ghetto. One described:

“I was invited to the Rebbe’s tisch and I partook of the meal. That Sukkos I became a different person. In those moments the stresses of the times were sheared from my mind. I moved into a different world, cleansed of physicality. The melodies to which he sang the verses of Kohelles, emphasizing every word and translating into Yiddish still ring in my ears. During the holiday he voiced his Torah teachings and his Chassidic statements as if immersed solely in heavenly matters.”

Holocaust

- Before Rosh Hashana 1940 the Rebbe encouraged his Chassidim to do teshuva and warned that they were in danger in the ghetto.
- He convened a meeting of Rabbonim in the summer of 1942 to warn them about the future.
- He worked in several factories in the ghetto including that of Schultz who employed many Rebbes and prominent Rabbonim. It was arranged by R' Avraham Hendel.



Holocaust



- When the deportations began, the Rebbe hid in a shop on 67 Genesha St.
- He died there of heart failure on November 17, 1942 – 8 Kislev 5703.
- He was the very last person to be buried in the Genesha St. cemetery in Warsaw, next to Rav Shlomo Zalman, the Chemdas Shlomo, Rav of Warsaw. We don't know where his grave is, no headstone. The very next day, the Nazis closed off the cemetery.

Holocaust

- The Rebbe's wife, children, children-in-law, and grandchildren were all murdered by the Nazis in the spring of 1943.
- Almost all of his Torah manuscripts were destroyed or lost except for a few pages on the Hagaddah that today are published as Chasdei Dovid in the back of Shem MiShmuel, his father's sefer.
- The leadership of Sochatchover was passed to his brother, R' Chanoch Henoch who had established a Beis Medrash in Bayit Vegan in Yerushalayim in the early 1920's.

Sochatchov Dynasty

- R' Avraham Bornstein, the *Avnei Nezer* (1838–1910)
- R' Shmuel Bornstein, the *Shem Mishmuel* (1856–1926)
- R' Dovid Bornstein, the Chasdei Dovid (1876–1942)
- R' Chanoch Henocho Bornstein (d. 1965)
- R' Menachem Shlomo Bornstein (1934–1969)
- R' Shmuel Bornstein (b. 1961)

