

The Tzaddik of Ra'anana: a beacon of yeshuos for generations after his passing



Right, Rav Kushelevsky with Eliyahu and Rabbi Glatstein. Left, Rikkudim at the end of the evening.

People from all across Eretz Yisrael made their way last Thursday night to the familiar stone walls of Yeshivas Heichal HaTorah in Yerushalayim, led by its Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Zvi Kushelevsky. They were not gathering for a regular tefillah or seder, but rather for a remarkable and deeply emotional evening of tefillah and chizuk, marking the yahrzeit of the Holy Tzaddik of Ra'anana ztl.

Many of those who came carried with them quiet, private pain – years of waiting and davening for children, for shalom bayis, for health, for parnossah, for shidduchim. Years of whispered tefillos. Years of hope mixed with uncertainty. Years of wondering whether – and when – their pleas would be answered.

They left having witnessed something few generations have ever seen: a Rosh Yeshiva, renowned throughout the Torah world for his greatness in Torah and avodas Hashem, holding in his arms a baby boy born after sixty-five years of marriage.

And at the centre of it all was a name that, for countless Yidden, has become synonymous with extraordinary yeshuos: the tzaddik of Ra'anana, the *Ben l'Ashri*.

The Seudah

Although the public gathering was announced for eight o'clock, the building had already begun to hum with emotion long before.

At 6:30 p.m., a smaller group of talmidim, supporters, and friends of the yeshiva, together with those connected to Rabbi Daniel Glatstein's Mechon Maggid HaRakia, assembled for a yahrzeit seudah in memory of the tzaddik of Ra'anana. The tables were set, the atmosphere was warm, but everyone knew they were standing on the threshold of something far greater than a regular commemoration.

When the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Zvi Kushelevsky, entered the hall, the emotional tone of the evening became immediately clear.

Music began.

Men rose from their seats.

Within moments, a circle of dance formed around the Rosh Yeshiva.

But this was not an ordinary dance. In his arms, the Rosh Yeshiva cradled his infant son – his long-awaited bechor, named Eliyahu. It was a sight that few could describe without their voices breaking: a gaon who had spent more than six decades childless, now surrounded by talmidim, holding his "miracle child" as they sang and danced around him.

For many in the room, the dancing felt like more than a celebration of one family's simcha.

It was as if the entire tzibbur was dancing with the concept of hope itself – a living, breathing reminder that no wait is too long, no tefillah too old, for Hashem to answer.

Remembering a tzaddik, discovering a world

After the dancing, the participants took their seats for the seudah. The food was beautiful, but it quickly became clear that the main nourishment of the evening would be the words of Torah and chizuk.

The Rosh Yeshiva spoke first, focusing on the unique greatness of the tzaddik of Ra'anana, whose yahrzeit they were marking. He described a Yid whose entire existence was one of *dviekus* – a life that did not operate within the standard calculations of nature. When a person cleaves to Hashem to such a degree, the Rosh Yeshiva explained, his koach ha'tefillah and his zechuyos can break through the barriers of teva itself.

He also shared a glimpse into his personal connection to the tzaddik. Throughout the long, lonely years of childlessness, the Rosh Yeshiva undertook that every single day he would share Torah from the *Ben l'Ashri* with at least three talmidim. Day after day, year after year, that commitment never wavered. He expressed his deep feeling that his own personal yeshua came in the zechus of spreading the Torah of this hidden giant throughout Klal Yisrael.

At that point, Rabbi Glatstein introduced someone uniquely suited to bring the tzaddik of Ra'anana to life for the audience: Rav Neuman, mechaber of *Shu"t Ben l'Ashri* and a lifelong expert in the Torah and history of the tzaddik.

With warmth, clarity, and emotion, Rav Neuman sketched the contours of a life that was anything but simple. He spoke of the tzaddik's fiery avodas Hashem, his staggering *hasmada*, and his total simplicity and humility. He traced his journey through the horrors of wartime Europe, the frozen exile of Siberia, the crushing poverty that followed, and the final years of blindness and childlessness. Those present were left with the sense that the "tzaddik of Ra'anana" was not merely a name at the end of a *Mi Shebeirach*, but a living source of inspiration whose spiritual impact continues to widen with every passing year.

Downstairs, the Beis Medrash fills

While the yahrzeit seudah unfolded upstairs, the main Beis Medrash downstairs was filling rapidly.

There were bnei Torah and baalei batim. There were younger men, older men, avreichim, and working people. The crowd was diverse, but a quiet thread stitched them all together: nearly

every person present was carrying some inner story of waiting. Waiting for a child. Waiting for a refua. Waiting for a long-overdue yeshua. Waiting for a door, somewhere, to open.

They had come because they had heard about a Rosh Yeshiva whose own wait had lasted sixty-five years – and because they knew that this was not simply an evening of speeches, but a gathering of heartfelt tefillah, held on the yahrzeit of a tzaddik known for his extraordinary power of yeshuos.

The programme for the main event featured three names: the Rosh Yeshiva himself; Rabbi Daniel Glatstein; and Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhuis.

Finding meaning in the "in-between"

Rabbi Frankenhuis began by addressing something that many carried quietly in their hearts: the pain of the long middle period.

Most of those who arrived that night were not strangers to tefillah. They were not asking how to begin davening for a yeshua. They were asking how to continue.

He spoke about the natural tendency we have to focus on the moment of salvation itself – the phone call, the simcha, the test result, the long-awaited breakthrough. But, he said, the life of the tzaddik of Ra'anana, and the story of the Rosh Yeshiva, both teach us that there is also profound meaning in the years before the yeshua. Those years are not an empty, wasted stretch of waiting; they can become a workshop of the soul.

The tzaddik of Ra'anana endured a life marked by almost constant suffering. He encountered the brutality of war, the inhuman conditions of Siberian exile, grinding poverty, and in his later years, both blindness and childlessness. And yet, instead of becoming broken, he rose to even greater heights. His pain became raw material for growth, his nisyonos the very ladder by which he climbed.

Just as the tzaddik of Ra'anana transformed suffering into spiritual ascent, the Rosh Yeshiva himself views his own life through the same lens. Together with the indescribable simcha of finally becoming a father, he has often spoken about the long decades of waiting as one of the greatest gifts Hashem ever gave him. Those years, he explains, drew him closer to Hashem, deepening his tefillah and refining his inner closeness to Hashem. The birth of his son was a miracle – but the years of waiting were also a miracle, a different kind of Divine kindness that shaped his avodas Hashem in the most profound way.

With that perspective resonating throughout

the room, Rabbi Frankenhuis then invited the Rosh Yeshiva to address the gathering.

"Nothing stands in the way of tefillah"

When Rav Zvi Kushelevsky rose to speak, the Beis Medrash became completely still. He spoke softly about the personal kabbalah he had taken upon himself during the long years of waiting – to share Torah from the *Ben l'Ashri* every single day – and the deep gratitude he now feels to be able to see the fulfillment of his tefillos after so many decades.

He then spoke about the nisyonos of our generation. Life today brings enormous pressure, confusion, and spiritual strain. Many people feel overwhelmed. Yet, he said, there is one area in which a Jew is never powerless: tefillah. There are situations we cannot fix, problems we cannot solve – but there is never a moment when we cannot turn to Hashem. No tear goes unnoticed. No sigh is unheard. No sincere tefillah ever disappears. A Jew who keeps davening, even when the years go by and nothing seems to change, is never turned away empty-handed.

The words were gentle, but they came from someone who had waited a lifetime and had finally seen the yeshua. When he finished, he invited Rabbi Daniel Glatstein to address the crowd.

Giluy Eliyahu and a lifelong dream

Rabbi Glatstein continued to draw back the curtain on the tzaddik whose yahrzeit they were marking.

Among the stories he related was a striking testimony from Rav Aharon Leib Steinman ztl, who is quoted as saying that he had "many proofs" that the Ben l'Ashri merited giluy Eliyahu on a regular basis. Such a statement, Rabbi Glatstein emphasised, is not made lightly by someone of Rav Aharon Leib's stature.

Rabbi Glatstein then spoke about one of the deepest wishes of the tzaddik of Ra'anana: that his Torah should not remain hidden in scattered writings and fading memories, but should be printed, learned, and shared throughout Klal Yisrael. Over the years that dream slowly began to take shape, but the publication of the new sefer *Birchas HaTzaddik* marks a major step forward.

This sefer – a rich collection on the parshiyos and mo'adim – gathers and organises the teachings of the *Ben l'Ashri* so they can find their way into homes and batei midrash across the world. Rabbi Glatstein emphasised that with the publication of this sefer, the tzaddik's lifelong dream is finally being fulfilled.

The evening concluded the way it had begun: with tefillah and song.