

## ***Rav Yitzhak Arieli and his Disappearance from the Circles of Rav Kook and Mercaz HaRav<sup>1</sup>***

This is continuation of “Historical Revisionism by the Families of Rav Kook’s Disciples: Three Case Studies,” *Hakirah* 24. From the estate of the author, HY”D.

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### **Introduction: Rav Arieli’s Place in the Rav Kook Chronicles**

At the end of 2006, the Religious Zionist press erupted in protest over censorship by descendants of Rav Yitzhak Arieli, one of Rav A.Y. Kook’s greatest disciples and the *mashgiach* in Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav for many years. These descendants published an updated version of their grandfa-

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\* Translated from the Hebrew by Michael Appel.

*Hakirah* thanks Eliezer Brodt for his involvement with this article.

<sup>1</sup> Note from the author’s parents: This article is a slightly abridged continuation of the article “Historical Revisionism by the Families of Rav Kook’s Disciples” that was published in *Asif*, Vol. 3, 2016, pp. 1138–1156. (Translator’s note: available in English at <http://hakirah.org/Vol24Henkin.pdf>). The author, HY”D, worked on the present article in several stages, but we were not privileged to see his finished work. We decided to publicize the material as is, because it is of much interest. From the author’s words, it appears that he intended to delve further into the details of the split in the Orthodox community in Israel into two separate camps (as he indicated in the *Asif* article), and to draw conclusions about the aspects of Rav Kook’s legacy that the proponents of the various positions sought to foster in his Yeshiva. The author’s computer contained a file on the first topic, the split in the Orthodox community. We have appended this material to the end of the current article as an addendum. We did not find material related to the second topic, that of the varying aspects of Rav Kook’s legacy that the proponents of the various positions sought to foster in the yeshiva. This work will have to be left to the reader. In the section entitled “Leadership

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Rav Eitam Henkin ר"י, by the time of his death at age 31, had authored over 50 articles and three books. He was renowned both for his halachic writings and his mastery of the byways of the rabbinic world of the 19th and 20th centuries. He wrote *לכם יהיה לאכלה* on laws of insect infestation, *אש תמיד*—*biddushim* and *be’urim* on *dinie Shabbat* of the *Mishnah Berura*, as well as a soon-to-be-published historical work on *Arukh Ha-Shulhan*. His murder, together with his wife Naama ר"י, on *Hol Ha-Moed, Sukkot* 5776 was a great loss to both the Torah and academic communities.

ther's work *Einayim La-Mishpat* on Tractate *Berakbot*, and chose to eliminate the final section of the Introduction in which Rav Arieli described his reverence for Rav Kook and his own involvement in the founding and administration of Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav over many years. Moreover, the descendants added their own biographical introduction of their grandfather that completely ignored any ties between him and Rav Kook or Mercaz HaRav. **"But this was the focus of his life!"** protested Rav Eliezer Melamed in his weekly column in *Be-Sheva*.<sup>2</sup> Similar indignation was expressed by Rav Neriah Guttel, who called upon readers of *Ha-Tzofeh* to flood the publisher with complaints and even to boycott the book.<sup>3</sup>

The protests were, of course, justified. Censorship of facts and revisionist history are completely unjustified actions, especially when they impugn the image of Rav Kook for ideological purposes. However, on the other hand, we must clarify: Did Rav Arieli receive his due recognition in the historical consciousness of the Mercaz HaRav circles and those who continued the path of Rav Kook?

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of Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav in the Generation after Rav Kook" (the second to last section), the author collected several passages that it seems he was preparing to analyze. In this section, as well, we have not completed the work but have added words or connecting sentences. All of our additions in this chapter and in the addendum appear in square brackets (except for very minor stylistic edits), in order to distinguish between these small additions and the author's work. In the rest of the article, the enclosures in square brackets are by the author himself, with one addition of our own, in Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Revivim, B-Sheva*, Volume 207, 7 Elul, 5766 (2006)

<sup>3</sup> "A Protest for the Rav's Honor" (Hebrew) in *Ha-Tzofeh: Musaf Sofrim U-Sefarim*, 1 Elul 5766 (2006). An even greater omission by several orders of magnitude was made in the edition of *Einayim La-Mishpat* published in Jerusalem in 1989 (and again in 1994). In it, the publisher erased almost half (!) of the Introduction to Kiddushin in order to omit any reference to Rav Kook and Mercaz HaRav (Even though a letter from Rav Charlap appears at the end of the book, in which the connection between Rav Arieli and Rav Kook and his yeshiva was not omitted. Also, the volume on *Berakbot* left this part intact.) It is surprising that the uproar was raised only in connection with this small omission from the *Berakbot* volume, almost two decades later! [Addition from the author's parents: In his article in *Asif* 3, page 1142, the author showed that the omission was done by Rav Arieli himself, and even suggested a reason for it: "A more plausible explanation is that Rav Arieli wanted this volume to be accepted in the growing community of *yeshivot* and institutions that did not look kindly upon volumes that emphasized the persona of Rav Kook." Later on, we learned that, indeed, marketing considerations were behind this omission.]