



# Rabbis of Chicago



רב יצחק אייזיק סג"ל שמואל

Rabbi Isaac HaLevi Small

1899-1977



Rabbi Isaac Small was born in Russia in 1899 and left home at the age of 10. He first learned with Rav Elchonon Wasserman in Brisk, and later learned in Yeshivas Radin. He became exceedingly close with the Chofetz Chaim and spent time learning with the Rav's son-in-law, Rav Hirsch. During World War I Rabbi Small spent time in the yeshivas of Slobodka and Kamenetz and served the Rogochover Gaon. Rabbi Small received smicha from Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein, and in 1925 he married the daughter of Rabbi Dovid Feinstein.

During World War I Rabbi Small was in St. Petersburg, where he founded yeshivas and was close with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. However, the Russian authorities pursued him for the illegal activity of opening these yeshivas, and Rabbi Small fled to America.

In America Rabbi Small spent some time in Baltimore and then moved to Chicago, where his brother lived. Rabbi Small began his career in Chicago as the Rabbi of the large Sefardic shul, Kenness Israel Nusach Sefard, and then took the pulpit at Congregation Poalei Tzedek in 1928, which was open around the clock. Rabbi Small used to give a daily Gemara shiur, and on Shabbos, aside from the regular drashot and at the request of the congregation, he gave a Chumash shiur with Ohr Hachaim in addition to other shiurim, including one on Tehillim. Rabbi Small was also a member of the Mercaz Harobonim, Agudas Harobonim, and Agudas Yisroel.

Rabbi Small was well respected and was extremely active in community matters. He worked tirelessly in the field of kashrut and was the head of the Vaad Hashchita that oversaw the chicken slaughters. Among other oversight activities this involved personally checking the knives of all the shoctim every other month. Some of his hard work to improve the kashrut situation in Chicago earned Rabbi Small a few enemies, to the point that one time a brick was thrown through his window barely missing his son's head.

Another area in which Rabbi Small engaged was the cessation of the rampant desecration of the Shabbos, which led to the creation of the Vaad L'Maan Hashabos. This group of dedicated rabbis and community members picketed and otherwise placed pressure on Jewish owned stores that were open on Shabbos, forcing them to close on the holy Shabbos.

Rabbi Small was nifter in the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Chol Hamoed Sukkot 1977. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, who was Rabbi Small's brother-in-law, ruled that the bier had to be returned to Chicago for the hespedim, after which he was interred at Har Menuchos in Yerushalayim.