

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

By: Yitzchak Meyer Twersky

December 2017

Introduction

The following genealogical study -- a culmination of the author's more than 30 years of research spanning 31 countries¹ -- is the first surname study of a chassidic dynasty which reconstructs the genealogical lines bearing its surname.

The Twersky Family is known as the most prolific chassidic dynasty in the world.² In addition to present-day Grand Rabbis, Twersky descendants have made their mark in professions including, but not limited to, academia, medicine, law, and business.³ In rabbinic, chassidic, and genealogical circles, it is generally presumed that all Twerskys are related and descend, in one way or another, from Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky (1730–1797) of Chernobyl, Ukraine.⁴

But is this presumption correct? What of Twerskys who are unaware of their lineage, and countless others who, at first glance, bear no links to the family tree of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty? It is these questions that the author will address in this study.



Figure 1 - Distribution of Twersky family members worldwide.

The Twersky Surname

The Twersky surname has many spellings, modified based on country and region.⁵ For simplicity, the following spelling -- “T-W-E-R-S-K-Y” -- will be used throughout this study. The Twersky surname is an Ashkenazic Jewish habitational name from Tvery [Rus], a Lithuanian city, or from Tiberias in Israel -- the Yiddish name of which is Tverye.⁶ The oldest recorded listing of the Twersky surname is found in the Chernobyl Census of 1815, as well as the Ariogala, Lithuania, Census of 1816.⁷

Twersky Alternate Spellings							
							
USA	Ukraine	Russia	Romania	Poland	Israel	Brazil	Germany
Twersky	Tverskoy	Tverskii	Tverschi	Twerski	Tverski	Tversqui	Twerskoi
Twirsky	Tverskaya	Tverskij	Teverszki	Twierski	Tiversky		Twerskoy
Twirski	Tverskoi	Tverskikh	Tverskiy	Twierska	Tversky		
			Tverskoj	Twerske			
			Twerschi				

Figure 2 – Twersky alternate spellings.

Background

The roots of this project date back more than 30 years to the mid-1980's. It was during this time that I became interested in delving more deeply into my family's heritage.

In 1986, while a student at Yeshiva University in New York City, I attended the funeral of my father's first cousin, Grand Rabbi Yitzchak Yoel Rabinowitz of Manestrisch (1908-1986), in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, NY. The service was performed by elderly Grand Rabbis who circled the coffin holding dripping candles while chanting ancient Hebrew prayers. The funeral had a profound impact upon me, and I was determined to look further into my family history. I turned to my father, Harav Yaakov Yosef Twersky (1928-2001), who was an encyclopedia of knowledge of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. Thus, 1986 was a year of discovery, as I started combing through my father's Judaica library and extensive collection of pre-WWII genealogical works. Employing the computer technology of the time, I built rudimentary family trees based upon those publications.



Figure 3 - Grand Rabbi Yitzchak Yoel Rabinowitz of Manestrisch.

My research during those years included conducting personal interviews; scanning newspaper archives for obituaries; visiting cemeteries; and obtaining birth and death certificates. During my many visits to Israel in the 1980's, I interviewed relatives and visited research institutions. At every opportunity, I continued calling, writing, and visiting members of the extended Twersky family. The

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

500 or so Twersky-related pages of testimony I found at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem would become a valuable source of genealogical source material.

Within two years, the family tree would grow to include more than 20,000 members. My hobby had become an obsession. I was determined to identify and connect all people with the Twersky surname. As my research progressed, I noted gaps in the family puzzle. Numerous Twerskys did not yet fit into the rabbinic family tree I had built. My challenge was to connect them.

During the summer of 1988, numerous newspaper articles about my quest appeared in the English, Hebrew, and Yiddish press both in the United States and Israel. I was interviewed on a Jewish cable TV program. The publicity spurred an influx of letters and phone calls from around the world from those who were searching for a connection to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.



Figure 4 – Profile of the author, shown with a family tree draped over his desk. (Jewish Journal: July 1988)



Figure 5 – The author being interviewed on the "Schmoozing" cable TV program in 1988.

I travelled to Ukraine in 1989, and again in 1991, to search for clues to the family history and to find the tombstones of my ancestors. My 1991 visit was featured in an article in the New York Times on July 10, 1991.⁸ Upon my return, I lectured at the New York and Philadelphia Jewish Genealogy societies about my trips and research projects, and thus discovered additional sources and family connections from attendees.

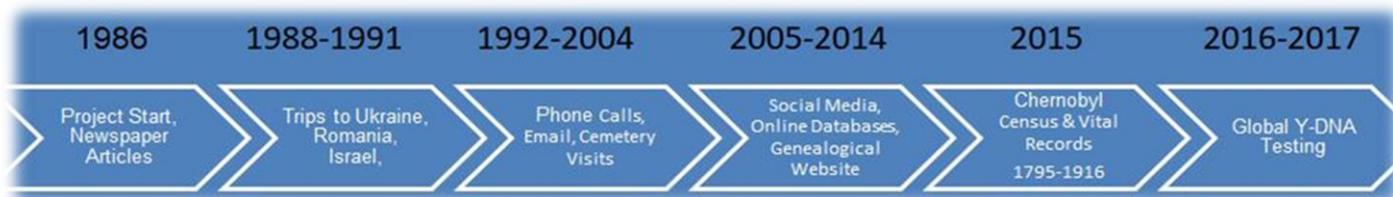


Figure 6 - Twersky Surname Project Timeline.



Figure 7 - The author (rear, second row), flanked by his father (r.), HaRav Yaakov Yosef Twersky; his aunt, Mrs. Rose Lipkis; and six members of Khotyn's Jewish community, during a visit to Khotyn, Ukraine in 1991.



Figure 8 - A meeting of Twersky descendants and researchers in 1992. (l. to r.): Rabbi Benzion Twersky, Rabbi Zusia Novoseller, the author; Don Wittenberg and Rabbi Heshy Twersky.

The highly emotional toll of the pilgrimage notwithstanding, the fact-finding trips to Ukraine provided the impetus to move ahead with the project. Realizing the sheer breadth and scope of this undertaking, I needed assistance.

In 1992, a group of relatives gathered at the Lakewood, NJ, home of Rabbi Zusia Novoseller to discuss the initiative. Each committed to assisting in the documentation of a family branch of the Twersky family genealogy.

As part of my responsibilities during my 20-year tenure as a Vice President at Deutsche Bank, I traveled throughout the United States and to more than a dozen countries. While there, I made sure to visit museums and archives. I contacted Twerskys listed in local phonebooks. With the advent of the internet and social media, I was able to easily contact Twerskys around the globe; obtain online census records; and access online databases. I continued to build family trees of Twerskys who did not fit into the rabbinic family tree.

With my father's death in 2001, my paternal link to past generations was gone.

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Twersky, Scion of Chernobyl Rabbinic Hassidic Dynasty, Dead at 74

Was Son-in-Law of Grand Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel of Kopitchnitz

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Twersky, a Bronx congregational rabbi for more than 19 years and one of the outstanding descendants of the 18th century Chernobyl Rabbinic Hassidic Dynasty, died May 10 after a long illness. He was 74 years old.

Rabbi Twersky had collapsed within hours of leading Shabbat Sabbath services at the Bronx Park East Chodiner Synagogue, the congregation he had founded in 1981 as a perpetual legacy to his family's annihilated Hungarian town. He was



Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Twersky, a

survivor of the Holocaust. Rabbi Twersky was his father, a Hassidic Rebbe, and his brother shot by the Germans in Chodin on July 9, 1941. Following his

internment in several deportation camps, Rabbi Twersky and his sisters arrived in the United States in 1948. On July 4, 1969, Rabbi Twersky founded the Chodiner Jewish Center and Hebrew School in the Pelham Parkway section of the Bronx and served the congregation for his father, Rabbi Mordechai Israel Twersky.

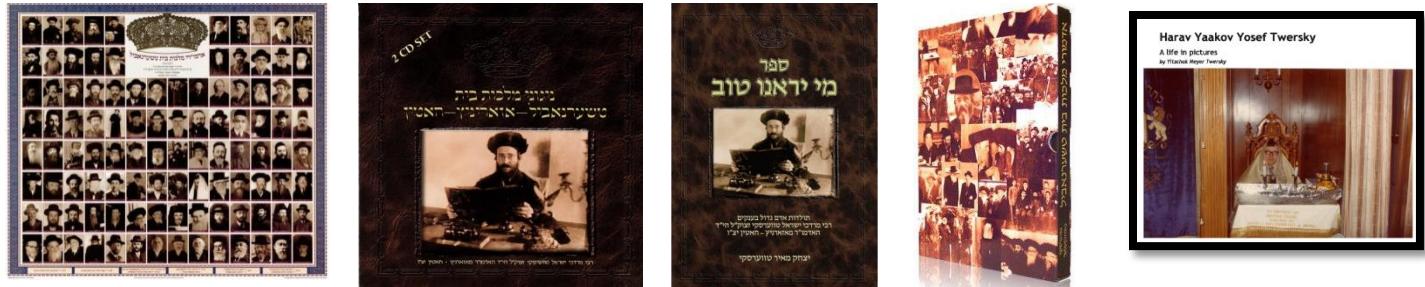
Rabbi Twersky was a 7th generation descendant of Nahum of Chernobyl (1750-1837), the progenitor of the

congregation on page 112.

Figure 9 – Obituary for HaRav Yaakov Yosef Twersky. (2001)

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

Determined to perpetuate my father's legacy, I published three comprehensive genealogical works⁹ on the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty in his memory. I released a two-CD set of my father's original recordings of prayers, transmitted through the generations from Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum.



Poster of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty
Published 2001

Two-CD boxed set of
Twersky Chassidic
Dynasty Prayers
Published 2001

"Mi Yareinu Tov"
Published 2002

"Admorai
Malchus Beis
Chernobyl"
Published 2003

"HaRav Yaakov Yosef
Twersky: A Life in Pictures"
Published 2007

Figure 10 - Publications by the author.

I also published a *Sukkah* poster, which is displayed each year in thousands of *Sukkahs* throughout the world. All proceeds from these projects were donated to charity toward the establishment of "Heichal Yaakov Yosef" at Yeshiva Ketana of Queens in Flushing, NY, in 2003.



Figure 11 – The "Heichal Yaakov Yosef" at Yeshiva Ketana of Queens, Flushing NY, 2003.

With the publication of each of the volumes came renewed interest in the family tree project – both from the international media and the international Jewish community. Countless families informed the author of their intention to begin marking the traditional *yahrzeits* (dates of passing) of their previously unknown forebears. Others bestowed ancestral names upon their newborns. Various Chernobyl chassidic sects incorporated the chants into the traditional prayers, while families sang the songs at their Sabbath and Holiday meals. But there was even more work to be done.

Recalling the neglected and dilapidated familial burial sites I had seen a decade earlier in Ukraine, I marshalled the support of fellow family members in making possible the rehabilitation and safeguarding of the resting places of our common grandparents and great-grandparents in Khotyn, Mogilev-Podolsk, and Murafa, Ukraine.

In the ensuing years, cemetery debris were cleared and retaining walls were rebuilt. Tombstone letters and etchings were meticulously restored, and plaques were erected.

I spent the summer of 2009 documenting the graves in the Jewish cemetery of Khotyn. I deciphered and transcribed the fading Hebrew letters on more than 1,000 tombstones – some of them hundreds of years old. The work was included in the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR).¹⁰



Figure 13 - Renovated mausoleum in Mogilev - Podolsk, 2002.

Multigenerational family pilgrimages ensued. Survivors – many of whom had not been in their native countries since the Holocaust – returned with their children and grandchildren at their side. Families contacted the author to describe their relief at viewing, via the database, a photograph of a thought-to-be-lost tombstone of a grandparent, parent or sibling. Others were overcome with emotion as they finally learned – in some cases more than a half-century later -- the precise date of passing of a family member. Thus, a *yahrzeit* could now be observed and the mourner's *kaddish* recited.

Some of the greatest accomplishments over the course of the project was working with unaffiliated Twersky descendants who became closer to their religion upon the discovery of their ancestry. Some started to keep the Sabbath, Light Chanukah Candles, or send their children to Hebrew School.



Figure 12 - Mausoleum in Mogilev-Podolsk, Ukraine, 1989.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

In 2005 and 2014, two Torah Scrolls were commissioned in perpetuation of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. The Torah Dedication celebrations were attended by Grand Rabbi David Twersky of Skvira.



Figure 14 – First Torah scroll dedication, Queens, NY, 2005.



Figure 15 – Second Torah scroll dedication, New Square, NY, 2014.



The Twersky Family Tree

By Jon Kalish

Dec 13, 2010 Courtesy of Yitz Twersky

Figure 16 - Screenshot from the Forward website article and link to 2010 audio podcast interview with the author.

On December 13, 2010, the Jewish Daily Forward featured a podcast about the Twersky family tree.¹¹ The broadcast by this internationally renowned publication triggered a new wave of fresh genealogical inquiry.

By 2015, my research on the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty spawned interest beyond the media. Academic journals revealed new findings. Most of the Twersky chassidic courts published extensive hagiographic works. Yet ironically, my own genealogical research had stalled. Chassidic researchers

and others showed no interest in filling multi-generational gaps -- spanning dozens of disparate Twersky families -- which did not yet fit into the family tree.

Breakthrough

In the summer of 2015, I was contacted by genetic genealogist Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull of Walnut Creek, CA, and genealogist and researcher Dr. Jeffrey Briskman of Brooklyn, NY. They invited me to partner with them in conducting a Y-DNA¹² study of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. (Dr. Paull and Dr. Briskman had collaborated previously on Y-DNA genetic studies of several rabbinic



Figure 17- (From l. to r.) The author; Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull, and Dr. Jeffrey Briskman. April 2017.

lines.¹³)

Their addition to the Twersky family tree project -- and the convergence of our respective areas of research -- would produce significant findings.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

We began our two-year-long collaborative partnership by ordering all available census and vital records from the city of Chernobyl from 1795 to 1916, as well as from other relevant cities. Said records – coupled with the fruits of my 30 years of research tracing present-day Twerskys some five generations earlier – enabled us to match family members with genealogical trees and identify living Y-DNA testers.¹⁴ Hence, the breakthrough had arrived.

Dr. Briskman's meticulous research solidified the project. He pieced together thousands of Russian vital records, which enabled him to create family trees of disparate Twersky families -- both Rabbinic and yet unidentified Twersky lineages.

We published a ground-breaking Y-DNA study¹⁵ identifying the Y-DNA genetic signature¹⁶ of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty dating back to its patriarch, Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky (1730–1797) of Chernobyl. The study also identified living paternal descendants of Rabbi Moshe Twersky, son of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum.

News of the study made the front page of *Hamodia* Magazine ("Discovering the Missing Branch of a Famous Dynasty," August 14, 2016).



Figure 18 - Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty profiled the author in a 2016 documentary



Figure 19 - The author places a traditional *kvitel* at the gravesite of his paternal ancestor, Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky, during a visit to Chernobyl, Ukraine, in November 2017.

During the summer of 2016 -- the year marking the 30th anniversary of the nuclear accident in Chernobyl -- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty profiled the author in a short-form video documentary. The report, which aired in three languages, was viewed by more than 30,000 viewers around the world.¹⁷

In November 2017, I visited the grave of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum in Chernobyl. I placed a traditional *kvitel*¹⁸ with the names of 50,000 of his descendants I had documented over a 30-year period. My life-long odyssey had come full-circle.

Methodology

The Twersky surname research may be broken down into six main lineages:

TABLE 1 - TWERSKY SURNAME RESEARCH: SIX MAIN LINEAGES

<u>Lineage 1</u> Patrilineal Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty (approx. 50,000 descendants)	<u>Lineage 2</u> Known Matrilineal Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Who Adopted the Twersky Surname	<u>Lineage 3</u> Suspected Matrilineal Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Who Adopted the Twersky Surname
<u>A</u> Patrilineal Descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl	<u>A</u> Grand Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twerski of Hornistaiple (approx. 1,500 descendants)	<u>A</u> Shraga Meyer Branch (approx. 500 descendants)
	<u>B</u> Grand Rabbi Gedalia Twersky of Malin (approx. 300 descendants)	<u>B</u> Yudko Branch (approx. 250 descendants)
	<u>C</u> Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Halevi Twersky (approx. 100 descendants)	<u>C</u> Berko Branch (approx. 250 descendants)
	<u>D</u> Rabbi Hirsh Halevi Twersky (approx. 500 descendants)	
<u>Lineage 4</u> Possible Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Whose Line of Descent is Unknown	<u>Lineage 5</u> Non-Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Who Independently Adopted the Twersky Surname	<u>Lineage 6</u> Non-Jewish Twerskys
<u>A</u> Y-DNA Tested Families with no match to the Twersky Rabbinic Signature (approx. 350 descendants)	<u>A</u> Twerskys from Ponovich, Lithuania (approx. 500 descendants)	<u>A</u> Possible descendants of Michael of Tver
<u>B</u> Fifteen Twersky Families with no available Y-DNA Testers (approx. 750 descendants)	<u>B</u> Non-Descendants Who Adopted the Twersky Surname by Mistake or Exaggerated Lineage Claims	<u>B</u> Residents of Tver, Ukraine
		<u>C</u> Twersky Family of Winnipeg

Lineage 1:**Patrilineal Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty
[Haplogroup R-M173] (Approx. 50,000 descendants)****A. Patrilineal Descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl (1730–1797)**

In their prior Y-DNA study, the author, together with co-authors Dr. Paull and Dr. Briskman, “identified eight pedigree descendants as potential study participants and candidates for Y-DNA testing. Two of these study participants descended from Rabbi Moshe, the elder son of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nahum Twersky of Chernobyl, and six of them descended from his younger son, Grand Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl. These latter study participants represent six of the eight Chassidic dynasties that were established by the sons of Grand Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl, including the Chernobyl, Makarov, Trisk, Tolna, Skvira, and Rachmastrivka branches. The paper trail for these eight pedigree descendants was validated by an extensive search of Chernobyl census and vital records.”¹⁹

The authors concluded in said study: “Based upon the closely matching Y-DNA results of these eight pedigree paternal descendants, we have succeeded in identifying the haplotype and haplogroup that characterize the Y-DNA signature of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty, back to their most recent common ancestor and founder of the rabbinical dynasty, Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky (1730–1797).”²⁰

TABLE 2 - PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT FOR PEDIGREE DESCENDANTS OF THE TWERSKY CHASSIDIC DYNASTY

GENERATION	TWERSKY CHASSIDIC DYNASTY PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT						
1	Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum TWERSKY of Chernobyl, Ukraine b. 1730, Narinsk, Ukraine d. 1792, Chernobyl, Ukraine						
2	Rabbi Moshe TWERSKY b. circa 1750, Ukraine d. before 1792, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Mordechai TWERSKY b. 1770, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1837, Amatov ka, Ukraine					
3	Rabbi Mechele TWERSKY b. 1772, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1845, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Aharon TWERSKY b. 1784, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1871, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum TWERSKY b. 1804, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1851, Makarov, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Avraham TWERSKY b. 1806, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1889, Trisk, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi David TWERSKY b. 1808, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1889, Tolina, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Yitzchak TWERSKY b. 1812, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1885, Skvira, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Yochanan TWERSKY b. 1816, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1895, Rachmastrivka, Ukraine
4	Rabbi Moshe TWERSKY b. 1792, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Rabbi Abraham TWERSKY b. 1822, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum TWERSKY b. 1820, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1870, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak TWERSKY b. 1828, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1871, Makarov, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum TWERSKY b. 1852, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1911, Mohy Iv-Podilskyi, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Mordechai TWERSKY b. 1847, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1887, Brisk, Belarus	Grand Rabbi David TWERSKY b. 1848, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1919, Skvira, Ukraine
5	Rabbi Aharon TWERSKY b. 1828, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1901, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Rabbi Mordechai TWERSKY b. 1846, Tolina, Ukraine d. 1945, Kishinev, Moldova	Grand Rabbi Baruch Meyer TWERSKY b. 1852, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1911, Mohy Iv-Podilskyi, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Yeshaya TWERSKY b. 1862, Makarov, Ukraine d. 1919, Kiev, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Mordechai Zusia TWERSKY b. 1862, Tolina, Ukraine d. 1939, Jassy, Romania	Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum TWERSKY b. 1867, Tolina, Ukraine d. 1915, Tolina, Ukraine	Grand Rabbi Yitzchak TWERSKY b. 1888, Skvira, Ukraine d. Abt. 1942
6	Rabbi Mordechai Yisrael TWERSKY b. 1866, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1915, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Zev TWERSKY b. 1878, Tolina, Ukraine d. 1945, Haifa, Israel	Grand Rabbi Mordechai Yisrael TWERSKY b. 1870, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1941, Khotyn, Moldova	Grand Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak TWERSKY b. 1880, Ukraine d. 1941, Chicago, IL, USA	Grand Rabbi Yaakov Arye Leib TWERSKY b. 1885, Makarov, Ukraine d. 1945, Chicago, IL, USA	Grand Rabbi Yaakov Arye Leib TWERSKY b. 1911, Tuchin, Ukraine d. 1959, Brooklyn, NY, USA	Rabbi Aharon TWERSKY b. 1911, Tuchin, Ukraine d. 1959, Brooklyn, NY, USA
7	Zalman Leib TWERSKY b. 1905, Chernobyl d. 1983, Kiev, Ukraine	Abraham TWERSKY b. 1911, Bessarabia d. 1974, Australia	Rabbi Yaakov Yosef TWERSKY b. 1926, Khotyn, Moldova d. 2001, Bronx, NY, USA	Rabbi Yeshaya TWERSKY b. 1930, Chicago, IL, USA	Grand Rabbi Pinchas TWERSKY b. 1916, Zhitomir, Ukraine d. 2001, London, England	Rabbi Neal (Menachem Nachum) TWERSKY b. 1947, Newburgh, NY, USA	Rabbi Yitzchak David TWERSKY b. 1960, Queens, NY, USA
8	Yisrael TWERSKY b. 1937, Kiev, Ukraine	Jonathan TWERSKY b. 1956, Australia	Yitzchak Meyer TWERSKY b. 1965, Bronx, NY, USA	Rabbi Zvi Hirsh TWERSKY b. 1975, Brooklyn, NY, USA	Grand Rabbi Menachem Mendel Matisyahu TWERSKY b. 1947, London, England		Menachem Nachum TWERSKY b. 1994, Queens, NY, USA
9					Rabbi Yitzchak David TWERSKY b. 1977, London, England		Rabbi Moshe Yehuda TWERSKY b. 1993, Brooklyn, NY, USA
BRANCH	MOSHE	CHERNOBYL	MAKAROV	TRISK	TOLNA	SKVYRA	RACHMASTRIVKA

Lineage 2:

Known Matrilineal Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Who Adopted the Twersky Surname

The Twerskys in this lineage are classified as documented descendants of Grand Rabbi Mordechai, son of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl. More specifically, a son of a documented female descendant adopted his mother's maiden name of Twersky. The author documents four examples:

A. Grand Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twerski of Hornistaiple (1839-1903) (Approx. 1,500 descendants)



Figure 20 - Grand Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twerski of Hornistaiple.

Grand Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twerski of Hornistaiple (1839-1903) was the son of Rabbi Meshulam Zusia Yitzchak Auerbach and Shterna Rachel Twersky, daughter of Grand Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Twersky of Cherkass (1800-1875). He adopted the maiden name of his mother, Shterna Rachel, and is listed in the 1850 Chernobyl Census with the Twersky surname. His descendants, who settled in Milwaukee, WI, use the surname, "Twerski."

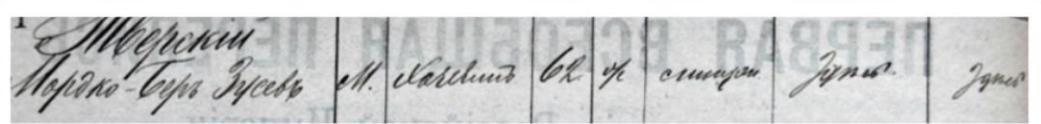


Figure 24 - Hornistaiple Census of 1897 listing "Mordechai Dov Twersky, son of Zusia, age 62."

B. Grand Rabbi Gedalia Twersky of Malin (1827-1901) (Approx. 300 descendants)



Figure 5 - Grand Rabbi Chanoch Heinach Twersky of Malin-Radomyshl, great-grandson of Grand Rabbi Gedalia Twersky of Malin.

Grand Rabbi Gedalia Twersky of Malin, Ukraine, was the son of Rabbi Yisrael Rabin and Chaya Sarah Twersky. Gedalia, who was very young when his father died, was raised by his grandfather, Grand Rabbi Aharon Twersky of Chernobyl (1784-1871). Gedalia later adopted the maiden name of his mother, Chaya Sarah Twersky, and he is listed in the 1834 Chernobyl Census with the Twersky surname. His descendants settled in Chicago, IL.

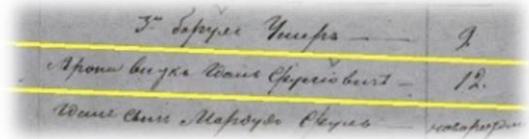


Figure 23 - Chernobyl Census of 1850 listing "Gdal" Twersky, son of Yisrael, grandson of Aharon Twersky of Chernobyl.

**C. Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Halevi Twersky (1921-2013)
(Approx. 100 Descendants)**



Figure 6- Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Halevi Twersky.

Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Halevi Twersky (1921-2013) of Uman, Ukraine, was the son of Rabbi Pinchas Shtall and Chaya Sarah Twersky, daughter of Grand Rabbi Baruch Benzion Twersky of Loyev-Uman. Chaim adopted the maiden name of his mother, Chaya Sarah Twersky, who was murdered during a pogrom when he was an infant. He was brought up by his grandfather, Grand Rabbi Baruch Benzion Twersky of Loyev-Uman (1875-1945). His descendants settled in Brooklyn, New York. Ellis Island arrival records from 1925 list his last name as Twersky. His tombstone inscription states that he was a son-after-son Levite descendant of the renowned Horowitz Family.



Figure 25 - Tombstone of Rabbi Chaim Twersky

13	TWERSKY	Beruch	53	V	M
14	TV ERSKY	Gittel	48	V	F
15	UNDER 16 TWERSKY	Chaim	3	X	S

Figure 26 – Ellis Island record of 1925 listing Chaim Twersky.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

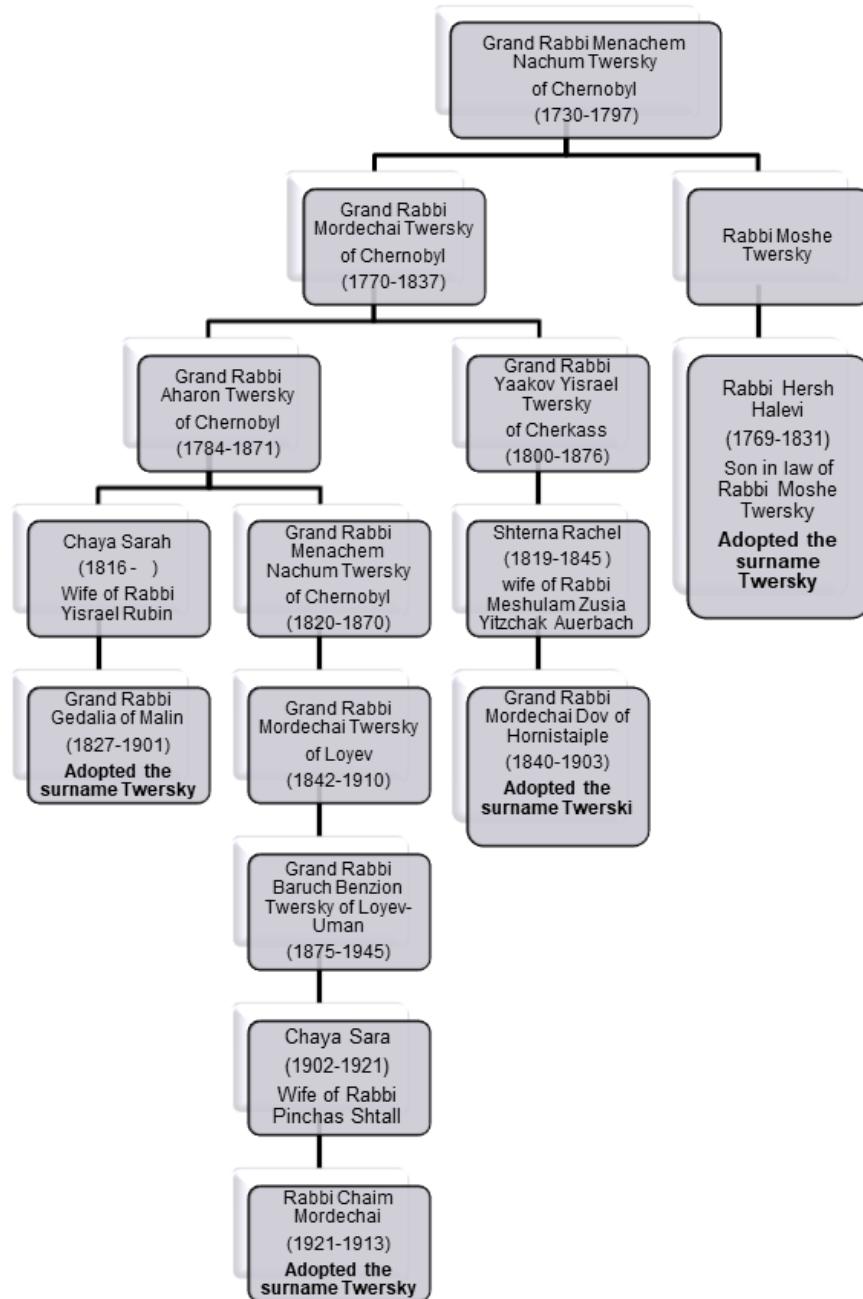


Figure 27 - Rabbinic pedigree matrilineal descendants who adopted the Twersky surname.

D. Rabbi Hirsh Halevi Twersky (1769 - x) (Approx. 500 descendants)

Discovery of the Rabbi Hirsh Halevi Branch of the Twersky Family Tree [Haplogroup R-M198]

In 1990, while conducting genealogical research at Baron Hirsch Cemetery in Staten Island NY, the author discovered a tombstone located at the plot of the Grand Rabbi David Twersky-Tolner Society.



Figure 28 – “Here lies R’ Yehoshua son of Pinchas, Halevi, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov and grandson of R’ Nachum The Great of Chernobyl – Died 2 Tevet 5691.” Photo of Rabbi Yehoshua Halevi Twersky

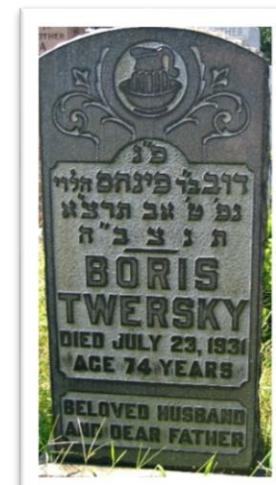


Figure 29 - “Here lies Dov, son of Pinchas Halevi.”

The Hebrew gravestone listed a “Yehoshua, son of Pinchas Halevi, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov (b. circa 1700 – d. 1760)²¹ and grandson of R’ Nachum the Great of Chernobyl.” Yehoshua’s descendants, contacted by the author, said they were unaware as to how

Yehoshua was connected to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.

The tombstone inscription posed the following quandary: As all known rabbinic Twerskys are Israelites (not Cohanim or Levites), how could the deceased have borne the Twersky surname and be a descendant of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl? The author subsequently found the tombstone of Yehoshua’s brother -- Boris (Dov), buried in Beth David Cemetery in Elmont, NY -- which also listed him as a Levite, but did not cite his ancestry.



Figure 30 - “Binyamin, son of Eliahu Halevi, died 5725.”

The author noted the graphic of an ewer and bowl on each of the brother’s tombstones, symbolizing the Levite function of washing the hands of the *Cohen Gadol* (High Priest) in the Jerusalem temple.²²

In another instance, in 2000, the author discovered a Twersky tombstone at Temple Beth El Cemetery in Falls River, MA, which read: “Binyamin, son of Eliahu Halevi, died 5725 - Twersky Family Plot.” Binyamin’s descendants told the author they were unaware of any connection to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

In 2015, Rabbi Peretz Steinberg of Kew Gardens Hills in Flushing, NY, approached the author concerning a family named Tavor, which was celebrating a family event at Steinberg's synagogue. Steinberg said the family's actual surname was Twersky, but changed it to Tavor while living in Israel. The family provided some genealogical information and claimed to be descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. The family also provided a photograph of the tombstone of their ancestor, Rabbi Zev (1866-1926), from the cemetery in Kishinev, Moldova.

Census Records

A thorough analysis of Chernobyl vital records (census, birth, marriage

and death) from 1795-1923 enabled the author to piece together the family's genealogical tree. The 1815 Chernobyl census lists a "Hersh Twersky (b.1769), son of Moshe, married to Golda (b. 1779)." The subsequent Chernobyl censuses of 1834, 1850, 1858, 1874, 1875, and 1897 list Hirsh's descendants as having served as sextons and scribes within the Twersky chassidic court.

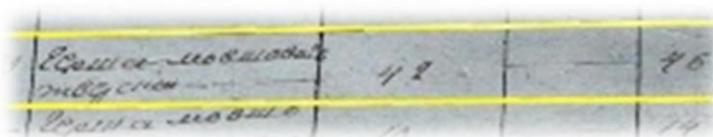


Figure 32 - Chernobyl Census of 1815 listing "Hersh Twersky, son of Moshe, age 46."

Figure 31 – "Here lies Zev son of Mordechai Halevi Twersky, from the holy descendants of the Baal Shem Tov, R' Nachum of Chernobyl. Born 5627, Died 5687."



The naming patterns also indicate children listed in the 1815 census who carried the name Nachum or Moshe were born immediately after the death of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl, and of his son, Rabbi Moshe Twersky. Based upon the available census and tombstone data, it was the author's initial conclusion that Hirsh was a son of Rabbi Moshe Twersky, son of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl.

Y-DNA Results

Paternal descendants of Binyamin Twersky and Zev Twersky agreed to perform a Y-DNA test to ascertain whether they were paternal descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. Results indicated they were not a match to the Y-DNA genetic signature of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty, and that they belonged to an entirely different Haplogroup [R-M198],²³ which is a known Haplogroup of Levites. Three subsequent testers were also found to belong to this same Haplogroup.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

TABLE 3– PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT FOR PEDIGREE DESCENDANTS OF THE RABBI HIRSH HALEVI

GENERATION	Rabbi Hersh Halevi son of Moshe b.1769, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1831, Chernobyl, Ukraine					
1	Rabbi Yisrael Twersky b. 1786, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1846, Chernobyl, Ukraine				Rabbi Nachum Twersky b. 1801, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Rabbi Moshe Twersky b. 1811, Chernobyl, Ukraine
2	Rabbi Moshe Twersky b. 1812, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1843, Chernobyl, Ukraine				Rabbi Pinchas Twersky b. 1819, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Elya Twersky b. 1845, Chernobyl, Ukraine
3	Rabbi Mordechai Twersky b. 1835, Chernobyl, Ukraine				Rabbi Yehoshua Twersky b. 1847, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1930, Brooklyn, NY	Beryl Twersky-Tweer b. 1884, Makarov, Ukraine d. 1947, Los Angeles, CA
4	Rabbi Zev Twersky b. 1867, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1927, Kishinev, Moldova	Nachum Twersky b. 1853 approx d. Kodna, Ukraine			Binyamin Shmuel Twersky b. 1875 d. 1941, NY	Eli Rubin Tweer b. 1921, Los Angeles, CA d. 2011, Los Angeles, CA
5	Nachum Twersky b. 1884, Skvira, Ukraine d. 1953, Tel Aviv, Israel	Shlomo Hirsh Zvi Twersky b. 1876, Zhitomir, Ukraine d. 1941, Uzbekistan	Eliahu Twersky b. Kodna 1880	Pinchas Twersky b. 1901, Uman, Ukraine d. 1988, Bridgeport, CT	Jaime Rubin Tweer b. 1953, Los Angeles, CA	
6	Amihud Twersky b. 1913, Tel Aviv, Israel d. 1996, Tel Aviv, Israel	Moshe Twersky b. 1924, Zhitomir, Ukraine d. 1999, Netanya, Israel	Yaakov Tverski b. 1896, Fastov, Ukraine d. 1941, Ukraine	Binyamin Shmuel Twersky b. 1892, Berdichev, Ukraine d. 1964, Rhode Island	Yehoshua Moshe Twersky b. 1936	Daniel Aaron Rubin Tweer b. 1980, Los Angeles, CA
7	Ziv Tavor b. 1949, Tel Aviv, Israel	Rabbi Avraham Chaim Baruch Twersky b. Zhitomir, Ukraine	Matvei Tverski b. 1939, Kiev, Ukraine	Moshe Twersky b. 1925, NY d. 1990, NY	Dr. Zvi Twersky b. 1961, Baltimore, MD	
8			Genadi Tverski b. 1976, Kiev, Ukraine	Brad Twersky b. 1965		
9				Max Twersky b. 1995, NJ		
10						
						
	Nachum Twersky	Shlomo Hirsh Zvi Twersky	Yaakov Tverski	Eliahu Twersky	Rabbi Yehoshua Twersky	Beryl Twersky-Tweer

Conclusion

The five Twersky families which performed Y-DNA tests for this branch are documented descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl's son, Moshe, but are not his paternal descendants. The descendants of the sixth family – of Rabbi Yehoshua Twersky -- refused to perform a Y-DNA test, but have a definitive paper trail back to Rabbi Hersh Twersky. As the tombstones of Binyamin Twersky and Zev Twersky indicate, they are Levite descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl -- and could not be his paternal descendants. Five documented descendants had their Y-DNA tested and genetically matched each other but did not match the Y-DNA genetic signature of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.

Hence, based on Y-DNA results, Rabbi Hersh Twersky was not a paternal Twersky descendant. The author believes Rabbi Hirsh married Golda, daughter of Rabbi Moshe Twersky, son of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl, and subsequently adopted the Twersky surname. Their descendants live in New York, Los Angeles, Israel, and Ukraine. Some have retained the Twersky surname, while others changed theirs to Tweer and Tavor, respectively.

Lineage 3:

Suspected Matrilineal Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Who Adopted the Twersky Surname

The Twerskys in the following three lineages are classified as Twersky families from the city of Chernobyl who are not paternal descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl. They have no confirmed connection to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty, though they all claim to descend from a “Great Rabbi” from Chernobyl. It should be noted that per the Chernobyl Census Records, three additional Twersky families lived in Chernobyl at the time of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum. Some were the same age as Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum and therefore could not be his descendants. As persons in the following three lineages were not aware of their exact genealogy, the Y-DNA testing and census records help identify how they fit into the family tree. These lineages may be classified into three main families:

A. Discovery of the Shraga Meyer Branch of the Twersky Family Tree [Haplogroup R-M201]

In 2008, the author was contacted by Mr. Evgeny Benn of Moscow, who was researching the ancestry of his maternal grandfather, Rabbi Moshe Ber Twersky (1864-1913). Mr. Benn’s family history suggested that his ancestry was traceable to the city of Chernobyl and that they were paternal descendants of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky. The author suggested that Mr. Benn hire a researcher in Kiev, Ukraine, to comb the archives for any connection to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. Using census records, the researcher concluded that Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl had an undocumented son, “Shraga Meyer.” Mr. Benn first published his research in the journal, “Alef,” in 2008. He later created a website²⁴ listing a detailed family tree, as well as census records from the city of Chernobyl dating back to 1795, thus proving his paternal connection to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.

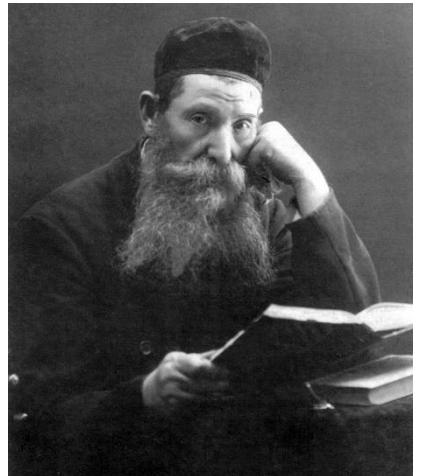


Figure 33 - Rabbi Moshe Ber Twersky.

More specifically, the researcher found a “Meyer (b. approx. 1755), son of Nachum,” in the Chernobyl Census of 1795. He assumed that “Nachum” was none other than Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl, as no surnames were listed. The census records did prove that Mr. Benn’s ancestry stemmed from a Twersky family from Chernobyl. There is no known listing of an additional child of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl in any of the rabbinic sources.

Census Records

The author's examination of census records yields further clarification. Yosef Krasnoschok (b. 1770), son of Meyer, is listed in the census of 1815 as married to Basya (b. circa 1765). Their children's surnames in the 1818 and 1834 census, respectively, are listed as "Twersky." The descendants are listed in the Chernobyl Census of 1897 as "sofrim (scribes), *melamdim* (teachers), *mohels* (ritual circumcisers) and *gabbaim* (sextons) for the *Maggid*,²⁵ who served in the chassidic court of the Twersky Grand Rabbis. Records from Chernobyl in 1904 also show that the descendants of this family prayed at a synagogue of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.²⁶ In the 1815 census, Yosef Krasnoschok's father's name is listed as "Shraga Meyer."

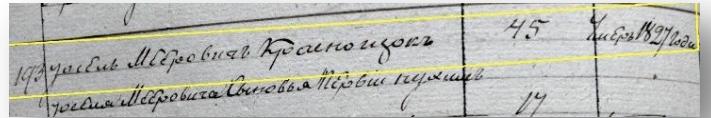


Figure 34 - Chernobyl Census of 1834 listing "Yosef Krasnoschok, son of Meyer," and his children, with the Twersky surname.

Records from Chernobyl in 1904 also show that the descendants of this family prayed at a synagogue of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.²⁶ In the 1815 census, Yosef Krasnoschok's father's name is listed as "Shraga Meyer."

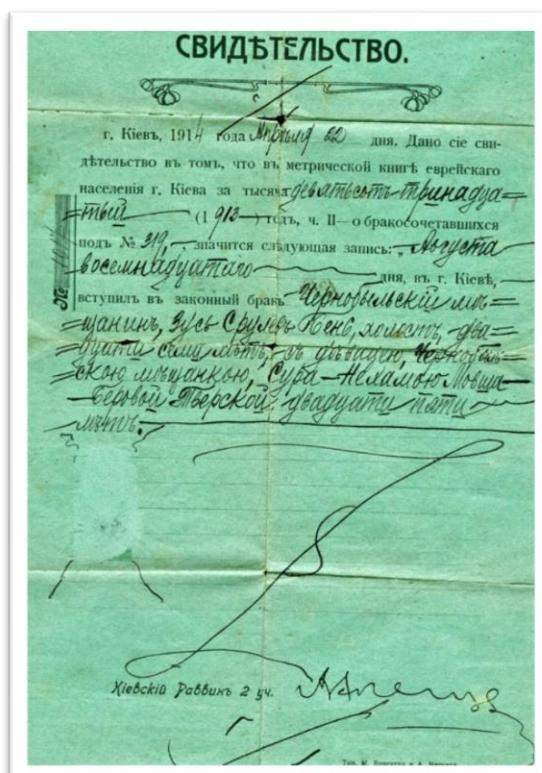
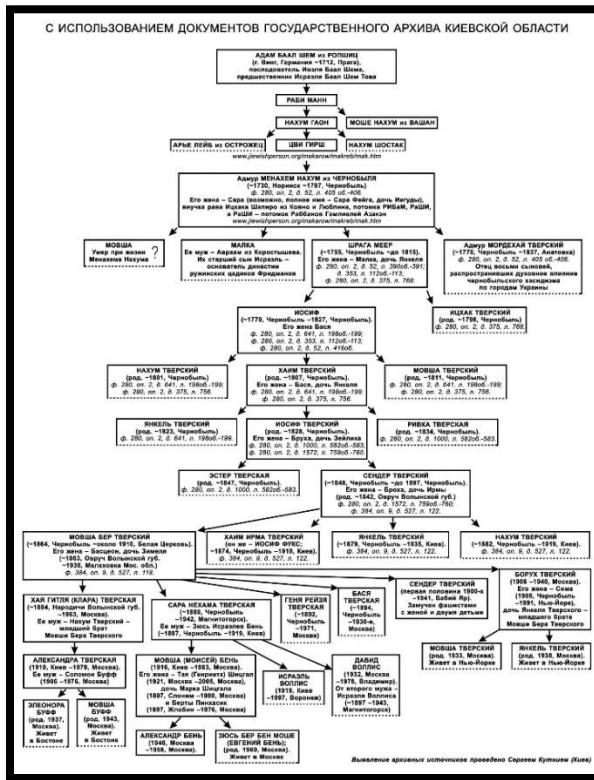


Figure 35 – (l.) Family tree written in Russian claiming patrilineal descent from Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky.

Figure 36 – (r.) "1913 Marriage in Kiev of Chernobyl bourgeois Zus, son of Sruel Ben, age 27, and Chernobyl bourgeois Sura Nechama, daughter of Movsha Ber Twersky, age 25."

Y-DNA Results

TABLE 4 - PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT FOR PEDIGREE DESCENDANTS OF THE SHRAGA MEYER BRANCH

GENERATION							
1	Yosef Krasnoshchok son of Shraga Meyer b. 1770, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1827, Chernobyl, Ukraine						
2	Chaim Twersky b. 1807, Chernobyl, Ukraine		Nachum Twersky b. 1801, Chernobyl, Ukraine		Unknown		
3	Yosef Twersky b. 1828, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1875, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Avsey Shlomo Twersky b. 1837,	Avraham Avsey Twersky b. 1824, Chernobyl, Ukraine		Unknown		
4	Sender Twersky b. 1848, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1910, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Avraham Twersky b. 1886, d. 1957,	Rabbi Yisrael Twersky b. 1860, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Rabbi Moshe Twerskoi b. 1867, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1937, Azarinitz, Ukraine	Avraham Tverskoy b. 1880 approx, Ukraine	Mechal Tverskoy b. 1865 approx, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Yaakov Twersky b. 1860, Ukraine d. 1942, Ukraine
5	Rabbi Moshe Ber Twersky b. 1864, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1913, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Yaakov' Tverski b. 1911, d. 1978,	Binyamin Twersky b. 1892, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Yechiel Tverskoi b. 1900, Azarinitz, Ukraine d. 1970, Mogilev Podolsk, Ukraine	Henry Tverskoy b. 1900 approx, Ukraine d. Ukraine	Aharon Tverskoy b. 1885 approx Chernobyl, Ukraine	Boris Twersky b. 1888, Saint Petersburg, Ukraine d. 1961, Saint Petersburg, Ukraine
6	Boris Twersky b. 1906, d. 1940,	Evgeny Tverski b. 1941, d. 2007,	Reuven Tverskoy b. 1923, Kiev, Ukraine d. 2005, Rhode Island	Boris Twerskoi b. 1936,	Anatoly Tverskoy b. Ukraine d. Ukraine	Shmaria Tverskoy b. 1914, Kiev, Ukraine d. Ukraine	Gregory Twersky b. 1923 d. 2010
7	Moshe Baruch Twersky b. 1933,	Oleg Tverski b. 1975	Dimitry Tverskoy b.	Vladislav Twerskoi b.	Sergei Tverskoy b. 1954, Moscow, Russia	Yury Tverskoy b. 1943, Podolsk, Ukraine	Ilia Tversky b. 1954
8	Boris Twersky b.				Andrey Tverskoy b. 1986, Moscow, Russia	Maxim Tverskoy b. 1967, Novosibirsk, Ukraine	
							
	Rabbi Moshe Ber Twersky	Avraham Twersky	Rabbi Yisrael Twersky	Rabbi Moshe Twerskoi	Henry Tverskoy	Aharon Tverskoy	Yaakov Twersky

Conclusion

The seven Y-DNA testers matched each other, but did not match the Twersky rabbinic signature. Based on child name patterns; the fact that many descendants served in the houses of the Grand Rabbis; and also prayed in the synagogue of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty, it is the author's contention, that Yosef Krasnoschok's wife Basya, was a daughter of Rabbi Moshe Twersky, son of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl, and that his children adopted the Twersky surname.

B. Connecting Three Disparate Twersky Families - The Yudko Branch of the Twersky Family Tree (Approx. 250 descendants) [Haplogroup J-M267]

Family #1

In 2015, the author came across an article in the California Oakland Tribune of December 11, 1930. It reported that Dr. Samuel A. Twersky sought to legally change his surname to Twain, because of the “the inability of friends and patients to remember his name.”

Dr. Samuel A. Twersky's father, Julius (Yudel) Twersky, was born in Ostrov, Ukraine, in 1876. He married Jennie Shapiro in Odessa in 1899. Upon arriving in New York in 1903, he settled in Detroit, Michigan, and later, in Los Angeles, CA. He died in San Francisco, CA, in 1946. His tombstone at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, CA, lists his father's name as Abraham. The author subsequently located a second Twersky family in California, which also had changed their name to Twain. They descended from Fred Twersky, Julius' second son. Fred's son, David, documented his family tree, which lists his great grandfather, Abraham, as an undocumented grandson of Grand Rabbi Aharon Twersky of Chernobyl.

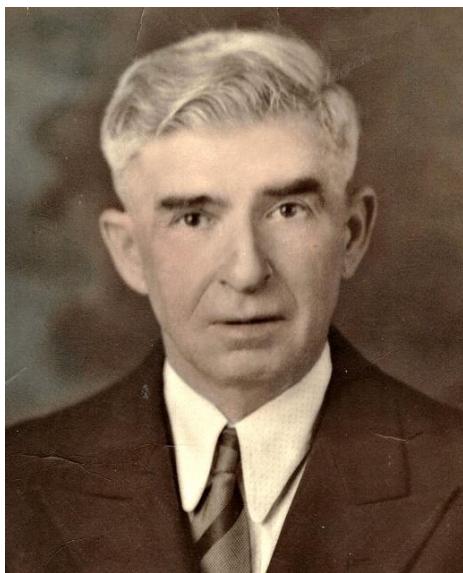


Figure 37 - Julius Twersky

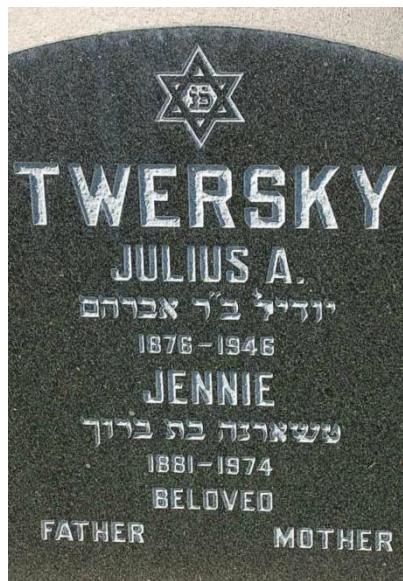


Figure 38 - Tombstone of Julius Twersky, Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland, California

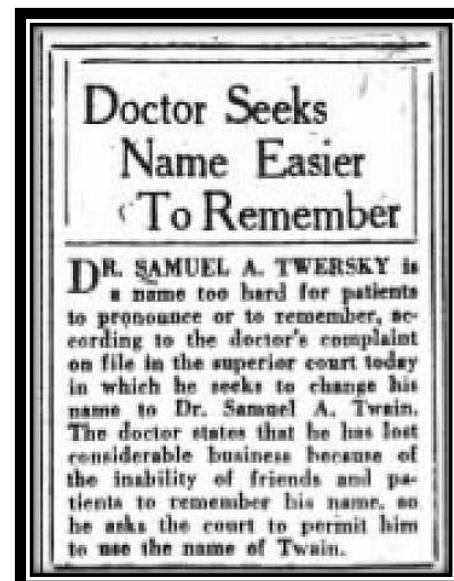


Figure 39 - Newspaper clipping mentioning Dr. Samuel Twersky. (Oakland Tribune, Dec. 11, 1930)

Family #2

The author located the Petition for Naturalization of a Louis Twersky, born in 1866. Louis and his wife, Rebecca Schmidt, arrived in Baltimore in 1899 from Bialystok, Poland. They had five children in Russia and three more in New York. They settled in Pennsylvania and later moved to Atlantic City, NJ. Louis died in 1917. His death certificate lists his father's name as Abraham and place of burial at Old Montefiore Cemetery in Queens, New York. The author visited the cemetery, but no tombstone for Louis was ever erected. The Atlantic County Department of State of Commercial Recordings/Name Change Judgements of 1876-1947 lists Joseph Twersky and David Twersky as having changed their surnames to Twain on November 18, 1944. Joseph and David were sons of Louis Twersky.

Was it a coincidence that two Twersky families changed their names from Twersky to Twain? Both Louis and Julius each had a father named Abraham, but the descendants of both families were unaware of any shared Twersky relatives.

Family #3

In 2016, Dr. Briskman contacted a Sergey Twersky of Saint Petersburg, Russia, who was researching his ancestry on the genealogy site, MyHeritage.com. Sergey's ancestor's name was Yudel Twersky, born in Chernobyl in 1804.

Census Records

The Chernobyl Census of 1795 lists Yudel (b. 1735) as "the son of Nachum." The census of 1818 lists Avraham Twersky (b. 1787) as the son of Yudel. Avraham married Chana (b. 1788) and adopted the Twersky surname. Based on Nachum's date of birth, he could not be Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky. The census records enabled the author to plot a family tree to the late 1800's that connected with living descendants both in Ukraine and the United States.



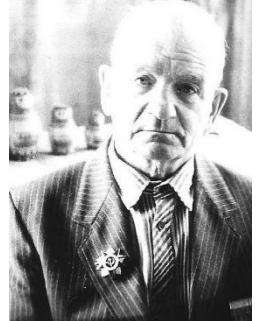
Figure 40 – Rav Avraham ben Yudel Twersky of Chernobyl. (b. 1837)

Figure 41 - Chernobyl Census of 1818 listing "Avraham Twersky, son of Yudel, age 31."

Y-DNA Results

TABLE 5 - PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT FOR PEDIGREE DESCENDANTS OF THE YUDEL BRANCH

GENERATION		
1	Avraham Twersky son of Yudel b. 1787, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1838, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
2	Yudel Twersky b. 1804, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
3	Meyer Twersky b. 1828, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1898, Chernobyl, Ukraine	Rabbi Abraham Twersky b. 1837, Chernobyl, Ukraine
4	Yudka Shuel Twersky b. 1879, Irkutsk, Ukraine d. 1934, Ilan Ude, Ukraine	Yudel Julius Twersky b. 1877, Ostrov, Ukraine d. 1946, San Francisco, CA
5	Vladamir Twersky b. 1920, d. 1984,	Fred Twersky-Twain b. 1909, Detroit, Michigan d. 1962, Alameda, CA
6	Sergey Twersky b. 1948, Poland	Ken Twain b. 1945, Alameda, CA
		
	Yudka Shuel Twersky	Rabbi Avraham Twersky (Born Chernobyl 1837)



Clockwise: *Figure 42* - Avraham Leib Twersky (1886 - ?); *Figure 43* - Yaakov Twersky (1880-1932); *Figure 44* - Vladimir Twersky (1920-1984); and *Figure 45* - Meyer Twersky, (1911-1995).

Conclusion

Y-DNA tests of the two descendants did match each other, but did not match the Twersky Rabbinic signature – thereby confirming they are not paternal descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. The census of 1818 lists Avraham Twersky (b. 1787), who married Chana (b. 1788). The author believes Avraham adopted the Twersky surname. The author maintains that Chana was the daughter of a rabbinic Twersky, and that her grandson, Abraham, was a chassidic rabbi living in Chernobyl. Chernobyl synagogue records from 1904 also indicate that the descendants of this family prayed at a synagogue of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.²⁷ The author was also able to connect the two Twain families, as Julius and Louis Twersky were actually brothers. But their descendants were unaware of the connection. Some of the descendants of this family – who reside in the United States – changed their surname to Twain.

C. Berko Branch of the Twersky Family Tree (Approx. 250 descendants) [Haplogroup J-M172]

In 1989, the author received a letter from Robert Sasportas of Kibbutz Yahel in Israel concerning the search for his wife's Twersky ancestors. The maiden name of his wife's great-grandmother, Chaya Sarah Geifman (1872-1939), was Twersky. Chaya Sarah's son, Mordechai (1907-2011), was born in the city of Hornistaiple, Ukraine, and later resided in Brownsville, TX. Chaya Sarah was buried in Mexico City, Mexico. On her tombstone, her father's name is listed as "Baruch Benzion." Members of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty lived in the city of Hornistaiple, but the name "Baruch Benzion" does not appear in the family lineage.



Figure 43 – Tombstone of Chaya Sara Geifman.

Census Records

The Chernobyl Census of 1818 lists "Shimshel Twersky [1758-1832], son of Berko." Shimshel had a grandson, Yisrael Menachem Nachum, son of Yaakov. The census records are unclear as to whether Yaakov was the son or son-in-law of Shimshel. The family subsequently moved from the city of Chernobyl to Hornistaiple.

102. Crub. Steu. Auro. m. a. m. a.	40.
Crub. E. auro. Segno.	10.

Figure 44 - Chernobyl Census of 1818 listing Yisrael Twersky son of Berko, age 40.

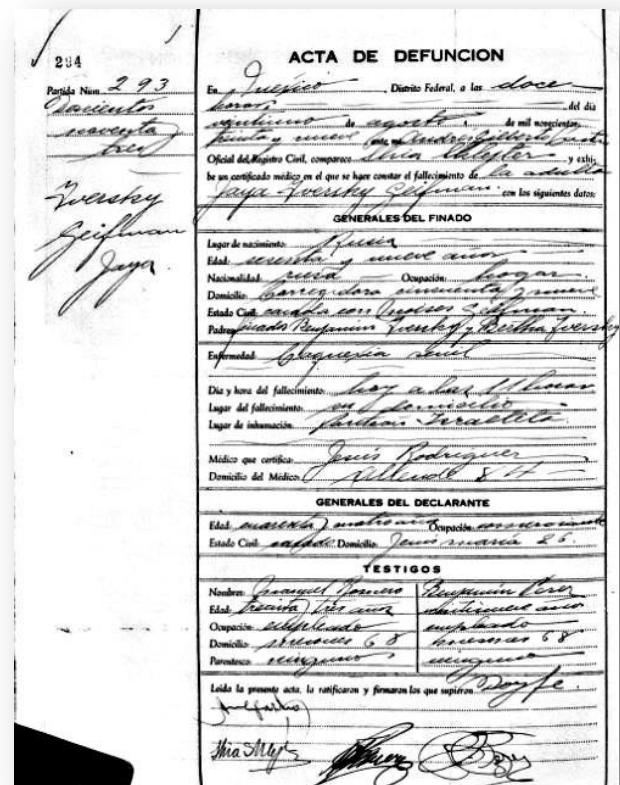


Figure 45 - Death certificate of Chaya Sarah Geifman, Mexico City, Mexico.

Y-DNA Results

TABLE 6 – PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT FOR PEDIGREED DESCENDANTS OF THE BERKO BRANCH

GENERATION	Berko	
1	b. 1738 approx	
2	Shimshel Twersky b. 1759, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1832, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
3	Yaakov Twersky b. 1779 approx, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
4	Yisrael Menachem Nachum Twersky b. 1811, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
5	Ios Leib Twersky b. 1843, Hornistaple, Ukraine d. 1900, Hornistaple, Ukraine	Baruch Benzion Twersky b. 1837, Chernobyl, Ukraine
6	Avraham David Tversky b. 1864, Hornistaple, Ukraine	Nachum Twersky b. approx 1880
7	Pinchas Morbuch Tversky b. 1884, Radomyshl, Ukraine d. 1939, New York	Yitzchak Aharon Tverskoy b. 1908, Hornistaple, Ukraine d. 1963, Kiev, Ukraine
8	Avraham David Tversky b. 1921, Bridgeport, CT d. 1998, New Jersey	Alexander Tverskoy b. 1947, Novosibirsk d. 2011, Kiev, Ukraine
9	Paul Alexander Tversky b.	Oleg Tverskoy b. 1975, Kiev, Ukraine
		
	Tombstone of Pinchas Tversky	Nachum Twersky



Figure 46 – Nachum Twersky and his wife, Rachel Lea.

Conclusion

Y-DNA tests of the two descendants did match each other, but did not match the Twersky Rabbinic signature -- thereby confirming they are not paternal descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. The author believes that Shimshel's wife was a daughter of a rabbinic Twersky. Chernobyl Census records of 1818 state that they had a son Nachum (b. 1798), who was surely one of the first children named for Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl after his death in 1797. Chernobyl synagogue records from 1904 indicate that the descendants of this family prayed at a synagogue of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.²⁸

Lineage 4

**Possible Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty
Whose Line of Descent is Unknown
[Haplogroups J-M172, J-M267, J-M269]**

A. Y-DNA Tested Families with No Match

In this category, each of the families claims a history linking it to a “Great Rabbi” from Chernobyl. One family cites their earliest ancestor as coming from the city of Chernobyl. Of the Twerskys in this category, Michael Silver, Vladimir Tverskoy, Elkana Tversky and Leonid Tverskoy underwent Y-DNA tests and were found not to match the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. They did not match one another, nor any of the author’s documented branches. Alon Tverski, Mariano Twerski and Michael Twersky refused to be tested, and their ancestry is unknown. The author believes all these families descended from sons-in-law who assumed the Twersky surname based on naming patterns, family history, and Ukrainian descent.

TABLE 7 – PATERNAL LINE OF DESCENT FOR UNKNOWN TWERSKY DESCENDANTS

GENERATION							
1	Unknown						
2	Unknown						
3	Unknown						
4	Eliahu Twersky b. 1865 approx, Ukraine d. 1905, Balta Kovoza, Ukraine	Mordechai Tverskoy b. 1842 approx, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. Chernobyl, Ukraine	Avraham Twersky b. 1840 approx	Unknown			Hirsh Twersky b. 1825 approx
5	Hershel Tversky b. 1888, Krivoje Ozero, Ukraine d. 1973, London, UK	Issur Tverskoy b. 1872, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1940, Kharkov, Ukraine	Shmuel Twersky b. 1863, Koristchev, Ukraine d. 1922, Koristchev, Ukraine	Yisrael Yitzchak Tversky b. 1876 approx, Ukraine	Zev Wolf Twersky b. 1874 approx	Avraham Shlomo Twersky b. 1894 approx d. Pinsk, Poland	Meyer Twersky b. 1845 approx
6	Alec Silver b. UK	Mordechai Tverskoy b. 1913, Kremenchug, Ukraine d. 2000, Bronx, NY	Yitzchak Twersky b. 1897, Koristchev, Ukraine d. 1968, Zhitomer, Ukraine	Gregory Tverskoy b. 1906, Ukraine d. 2002, Stamford, CT	Aaron Twersky b. 1894, Narinsk, Ukraine d. 1968, Zhitomer, Ukraine	Mordechai Twerski b. 1914, Poland d. 1968, Buenos Aires, Argentina	Michael Twersky b. 1884, Mozir, Ukraine d. 1954, Waterbury CT
7	Michael Silver b. UK	Vladimir Tverskoy b. 1953, Kharkov, Ukraine	Elkana Tversky b. 1942, Koristchev, Ukraine	Leonid Tverskoy b. 1939, Kiev, Ukraine	Zev Wolf Twerski b. 1921, Ukraine	Zev Twerski b. 1936, Buenos Aires, Argentina d. 1986, Buenos Aires, Argentina	Saul Twersky b. 1913, Waterbury, CT d. 1976, Philadelphia, PA
8					Boris Tverski b. 1954, Ukraine	Mariano Twerski b. 1971 Buenos Aires, Argentina	Stephen Twersky b. 1940, Philadelphia, PA
9					Alon Tverski b.		Michael Twersky b. 1967, Philadelphia PA
							
	Hershel Tversky	Issur Tverskoy	Yitzchak Twersky	Yisrael Yitzchak Tversky	Alon Tverski	Mordechai Twerski	Michael Twersky

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

B. Fifteen Families Without Possible Y-DNA Testers

Fifteen individual Twersky families have been documented but have no viable Y-DNA tester. Said families may belong to the group of already tested families or may be part of the unknown families.

TABLE 8 – No viable Y-DNA Tester (Family 1-7)

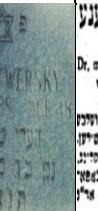
GENERATION	Unknown							
1								
2								
3								
4	Unknown	Yudel Twersky b. Approx 1858	David Twersky b. Approx 1855	Yaakov Tverskoy b. Approx 1880	Gregory Tverskoy b. Approx 1875	Morris Max Twersky b. Approx 1870	Hirsh Twersky b. Approx 1890	
5	Aaron Tverski b. 1885 d. Novoselitz, Ukraine	Mendel Twersky b. 1878 Podolsk, Ukraine d. 1929, Los Angeles	Shaul David Twersky b. 1975, Yelisabethgrad, Ukraine d. 1953, Rhode Island	Leonid Tverskoy b. 1904, Kiev, Ukraine d. 1938, Leningrad	Naftali Tverskoy b. 1895, Ukraine d. 1961, St Petersburg	Harry Twersky b. 1890, Kiev, Ukraine d. 1938, Detroit	Dr. Yosef Twersky b. 1900, Warsaw, Poland d. 1939, Bialystok, Poland	
6		Abraham Twersky b. 1914, New York d. 1996, California	Araham Tversky b. 1906, Rhode Island d. 1979, MA	Mikhail Tverskoy b. 1933	Gregory Tverskoy b. 1931, Ukraine d. 2011, Arad Israel		Marian Twersky b. 1924, Warsaw, Poland d. 1939 Bialystok, Poland	
7	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3	Family 4	Family 5	Family 6	Family 7	
								
	Aaron Tverski	Mendel Twersky	Tombstone of Shaul David Tversky	Leonid Tverskoy	Gregory Tverskoy	Tombstone of Henry Twersky	Warsaw Newspaper Ad of Dr. Yosef Twersky	

TABLE 9 – No Viable Y-DNA Tester (Family 8-15)

GENERATION	Unknown								
1									Notka Twersky b. Approx 1766
2									Zelik Twersky b. 1786, Chernobyl, Ukraine
3									Binyamin Levi Twersky b. 1823, Chernobyl, Ukraine
4	Unknown				Yitzchak Twersky b. Approx 1818	Meyer Twersky b. Approx 1842	Mordechai Twersky b. Approx 1840	Yisrael Twersky b. 1862, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
5	David Twersky b. 1846, Russia d. 1912, New York	Moshe Twersky b. Approx 1839	Levi Yitzchak Twersky b. Approx 1831	Ios Wolf Twersky b. Approx 1856	Abrraham Twersky b. Approx 1838	Nuta Twersky b. Approx 1862	Zvi Hirsh Twersky b. 1860, Rhozenh, Ukraine	Binyamin Levi Twersky b. 1868, Chernobyl, Ukraine	
6		David Ber Twersky b. 1859, Vitebsk, Ukraine d. 1937, New York	Mordechai Twersky b. Approx 1851	Efraim Mendel Twersky b. 1876, Ukraine	Yitzchak Twersky b. 1858 Chernobyl, Ukraine	Baruch Shmuel Twersky b. 1882, Makarov, Ukraine	Eliahu Yehoshua Twersky b. 1892, Pavloch, Ukraine d. 1975, Chicago		
7		Aaron Twerski b. 1881, Warsaw, Poland d. New Jersey	Moshe Zev Twersky b. 1871, Berdichev Ukraine d. 1941, Babi Yar, Ukraine	Moshe Twersky b. 1901, Makarov, Ukraine d. 1904, Makarov, Ukraine	Aaron Twersky b. 1873, Chernobyl, Ukraine d. 1958, New York				
8	Family 8	Family 9	Family 10	Family 11	Family 12	Family 13	Family 14	Family 15	
									
	Tombstone of David Twersky	David Ber Twersky			Tombstone of Aaron Twersky		Eliahu Yehoshua Twersky	Newspaper Article in Hamagid	

Lineage 5:

Non-Descendants of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty Who Independently Adopted the Twersky Surname

A. Ponovich, Lithuania, Branch (Approx. 500 descendants) [Haplogroup J-M267]

In 1988, New Jersey-based genealogist and author, Dr. Neil Rosenstein, returned from a trip to Johannesburg, South Africa, and presented the author with a photo of the tombstone of "Nathan, son of Moshe Twersky [1872-1946]." The cemetery later provided the author with the phone number of the next of kin -- Nathan's son, Morris Twersky, of Illovo, South Africa. They first

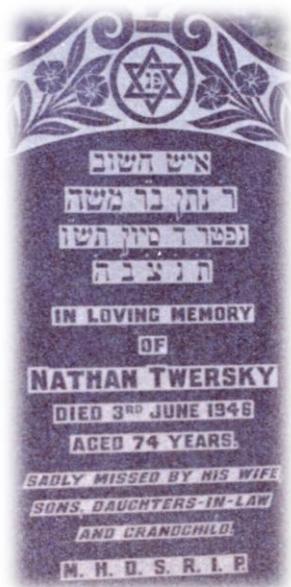


Figure 47 - Tombstone of Nathan Twersky, son of Moshe.



Figure 48 - Receipt for 50 rubles issued by the Jewish Old Age Home in Ponovich, Lithuania, upon the death of Moshe Twersky. February 14, 1910.

communicated via telephone before corresponding via post over a two-year period. Morris shared many documents tracing his family origins to the province of Kovna Gubernia,

Many Twerskys who arrived in New York from 1885-1900 originated from Ponovich. According to Ellis Island ship records, "Isaac Twersky" – who arrived in New York from Ponovich in 1885 -- was the earliest Twersky to arrive in the United States. He later settled in Nashville, TN. His naturalization record also lists his country of origin as "Ponovich."

Census Records

The online archive of the genealogy website, Jewishgen.com, includes the Ariogala, Lithuania, Census of 1816 and subsequent censuses. These records enabled the author to build a family tree of the Twersky Family of Ponovich, Lithuania, extending down to Morris Twersky.

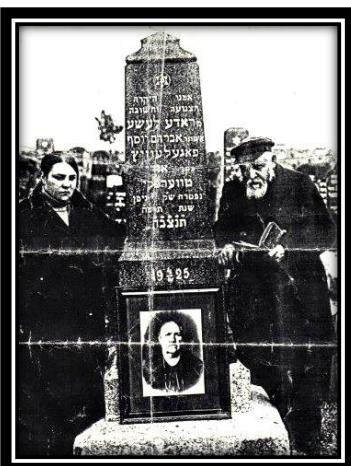


Figure 49 – Gravestone mentioning a Twersky in the Ponovich Cemetery.

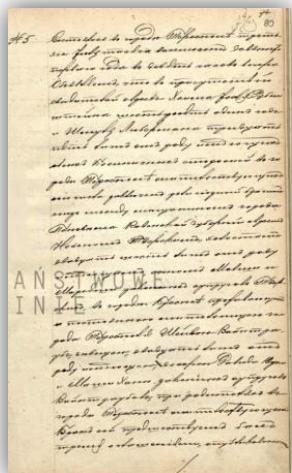


Figure 50 – Marriage Certificate of Natan Tversky from Ponovich, Lithuania, 1891.

Y-DNA Results

Table 10 – Y-DNA TESTERS OF THE PONOVICH BRANCH

GENERATION					
1	Moshe Twersky son of Beryl b. 1764, Lithuania				
2	David Twersky b. 1788, Lithuania	Nosson Twersky b. 1787, Lithuania	Mordechai Tversky b. 1786		Unknown
3	Yehuda Leib Twersky b. 1825, Ponovich d. 1887, Ponovich	Moshe Twersky b. 1836, Ponovich d. 1910, Ponovich	Rabbi Efraim Abba Tversky b. 1819	Yitzchak Tversky b. 1824	Moshe Tversky b. approx 1845
4	Dov Ber Twersky b. 1845, Ponovich d. 1930, Chicago	Natan Yona Twersky b. 1871, Ponovich d. 1946, Johannesburg	Uria Tversky b. 1839	Eliash Twersky b. 1857	Natan Tversky b. 1865, Ponovich, Lithuania d. Warsaw
5	Abba Twersky b. 1870, Ponovich d. 1937, Chicago	Moshe Twersky b. 1914, Johannesburg d. 1995, Johannesburg	Mordechai Yitzchak Tversky b. 1861	Max Nathan Twersky b. 1895, Kovna d. 1962, New Jersey	Yosef Tversky b. 1894, Warsaw, Poland d. 1968, Jerusalem, Israel
6	Leonard Twersky b. 1902, Chicago d. 1976, Milwaukee	Noel Twersky b. Johannesburg	Efraim Abba Twersky b. 1895, Kovna d. 1958, New York		Amos Tversky b. 1937, Haifa, Israel d. 1996, CA
7	Arnold Twersky b. 1936, Chicago				Oren Joseph Tversky b.
8	Larry Twersky b. 1961, California				
					
	Dov Ber Twersky	Tombstone of Natan Yona Twersky	Efraim Abba Twersky	Max Nathan Twersky	Natan Tversky

Conclusion

The scion of this family, Moshe Twersky (b. 1764), son of Beryl, lived in Ponovich, Lithuania. He was a contemporary of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl. As some of his family members were the same age as Rabbi Menachem Nachum, they could not be his descendants. Two Ponovich descendants, Larry Twersky and Noel Twersky performed a Y-DNA test. Results indicated they matched each other, but did not match the signature of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty -- thereby proving this family is not paternal rabbinic Twersky descendants. Their Haplogroup J-M267, is the Jewish Priestly (Cohen) Haplogroup. The descendants of the Twersky family from Ponovich settled in South Africa and the United States. There is no evidence connecting it to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. The author cannot hypothesize how this family acquired the Twersky surname, though early generations of this family did have documented rabbis listed in the Ponovich census records.

B. Non-Descendants Who Adopted the Twersky Surname by Mistake or Exaggerated Lineage Claim

Case #1 - The Genealogical Misrepresentation of Rabbi Yisrael Schwartz (Approx. 30 descendants)

In 1994, the author found a book in his father's library titled, "Einei Yisrael" (Eyes of Israel). It was published in 1937 in Brooklyn, NY, by "Rabbi Yisrael Twersky, son of Shlomo Zev of Kozenitz, Poland." With no record of either individual in the Twersky family tree, the author obtained a copy of Rabbi Yisrael Twersky's 1954 death certificate and visited Mount Hebron Cemetery in Flushing, NY, to search for the tombstone.



Figure 52 - "Einei Yisrael" (Eyes of Israel), published in 1937 in Brooklyn, NY, by Rabbi Yisrael Twersky, son of Shlomo Zev of Kozenitz, Poland.

The tombstone inscription was puzzling, as it listed Rabbi Twersky as a "Cohen."²⁹ It also listed him as the "Grand Rabbi of Kozenitz," and as descending from major Chassidic Dynasties (Chernobyl, Hanipoli, Lizensk, Apt, Linitz, and Kozenitz), as well as from The Baal Shem Tov. The author wondered why, in his many years of research, he had not been aware of this individual and his astonishing pedigree.



Figure 51 - Rabbi Yisrael Schwartz-Twersky



Figure 53 - Tombstone of Rabbi Yisrael Schwartz-Twersky citing Twersky lineage.

Initial Research

According to Ellis Island records, Rabbi Twersky was 29 years-old when he arrived in New York unaccompanied on March 5, 1926 via the SS Berlin. His last residence was listed as Pressburg, Austria, with his birthplace as "Chernobyl, Russia, 1897." Also listed was his wife, Gittel, and three children, born in Lublin, Poland. They would arrive in New York on June 13, 1928, via the SS Majestic. But oddly, their surnames were listed as "Twersky-Szwartz."

Two conflicting Declaration of Intent documents exist for Rabbi Twersky in 1927, as the document from March 14, 1927 lists his arrival in New York in 1920 as "a bachelor from France," with a former residence of Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. The second document, from September 30, 1927, lists him as a married man who arrived via railroad at Rouses Point in 1927 from Ottawa, Canada. His last foreign residence was also listed as Bratislava. Rabbi Twersky's Petition for Naturalization of August 18, 1939 lists him with the surname, "Schwartz-Twersky."

The author combed the Yiddish newspapers of 1920-1930. He found newspaper ads heralding the arrival of "Rabbi Yisrael Twersky, Grand Rabbi of Kozenitz-Chernobyl," and his plans to observe the Sabbath in various communities, to lecture, and lead a *Tish*.³⁰ Grand Rabbi Shalom Twersky of Trisk-New York (1883-1948) hosted Rabbi Yisrael Twersky during one Sabbath gathering, as did Grand Rabbi Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz of Manestrisch (1860- 1938), who wrote an approbation to the aforementioned "Einei Yisrael."

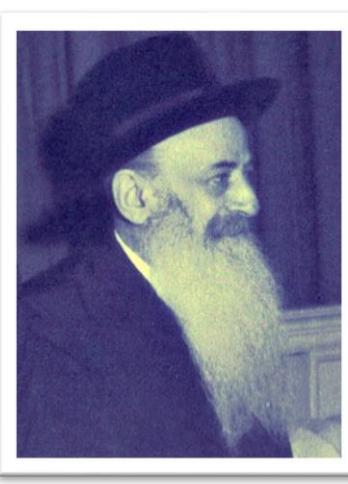


Figure 55 - Grand Rabbi Yisrael Elazar Hopstein of Kozenitz.

The Mystery Unravels

In 1934, when the "Chernobler Rebbe," Grand Rabbi Shlomo Shmuel Twersky (1866-1935), arrived in NY, Rabbi Yisrael Twersky no longer referred to himself as "Chernobler Rebbe." When the "Kozenitzer Rebbe," Grand Rabbi Yisrael Elazar Hopstein, arrived in New York in 1942, Rabbi Yisrael Twersky no longer referred to himself as "Kozenitzer Rebbe." These two Grand Rabbis lived in Chernobyl and Kozenitz,

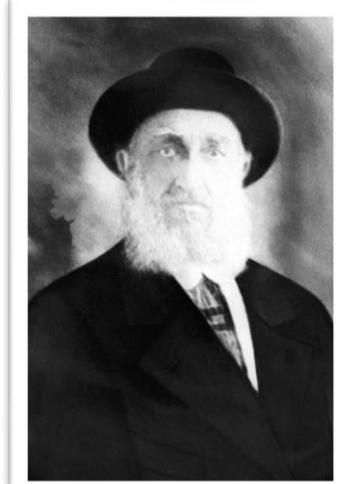


Figure 56 – Grand Rabbi Shlomo Shmuel Twersky of Chernobyl.

respectively, and knew of no such family or that claimed such ancestry.

In the 1943 roster of the organization, “Agudas HaAdmorim,” which listed 86 Grand Rabbis in the United States and Canada at the time, a total of 15 Twersky Grand Rabbis were mentioned. Rabbi Yisrael Twersky was not included.

Grand Rabbi David Twersky of Skvira-Boro Park and Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Twersky each told the author that they knew Rabbi Yisrael Twersky personally and attended school with his son, David. They said the family admitted that Rabbi Yisrael Twersky had adopted the Twersky surname but was in no way related to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. The sons of Grand Rabbi Shalom Twersky of Trisk-New York and Grand Rabbi Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz of Manestrisch told the author that their fathers were duped and later uncovered the ruse.

In 2016, the author obtained Chernobyl census and vital records spanning 1795-1916. He found no listing of the birth of “Yisrael Twersky” or any listing of his parents or family in the city.

In 2017, Dr. Briskman obtained a copy of the 1897 birth listing of Yisrael Schwartz, son of Shlomo Wolf (Zev) Schwartz, as well as the 1917 marriage listing of Yisrael and Gittel Schwartz from the Lublin, Poland, State Archives. The records also provided additional genealogical information concerning Yisrael and Gittel’s parents and grandparents, thus proving that the Ship Records, Declaration of Intent as well as the U.S. Naturalization Record for Rabbi Yisrael Twersky had a falsified place of birth as Chernobyl, Ukraine.

Conclusion

Rabbi Schwartz’s descendants were contacted and shown the evidence of our findings. They insisted, however, that Rabbi Yisrael Schwartz was somehow a maternal Rabbinic Twersky descendant, and they claimed to have a family tree to prove it. But they were unwilling to share any information. It is the conclusion of the author, based upon the overwhelming evidence and personal testimonies, that Rabbi Yisrael Schwartz -- a rabbi and author with no genealogical connection to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty -- adopted the Twersky surname.

Case #2 – ‘Printing Error’

In 2010, the author found an article by Rabbi Israel Porush (1907-1991) -- known as the “Uncrowned Chief Rabbi of Australia” - in the Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal in 1963. The biography listed his ancestor, Rabbi Israel Brimat. It also listed “Brimat” as an acronym for “Ben Rabbi Yaakov Mordechai Twersky.” The author found an additional Rabbinic Porush Family Genealogy titled, “Early Memories,” by Rabbi Eliyahu Porush,³¹ which listed the identical family genealogical information.

The author contacted a family member, who acknowledged that the listing was in error. Said family member indicated that the family surname was actually “Tver” or “Tauber,” and that the Porush family, in fact, had no genealogical connection to the Twersky family.



Figure 57 - Rabbi Israel Brimat

Case #3 - Twersky is shorter than Teverovsky (Approx. 5 descendants)

Hyman Teverovsky was born in Lipovitz, Russia, on July 29, 1898. He arrived at Ellis Island on February 2, 1923 from Bucharest, Romania. On November 15, 1928, he was naturalized in the city of Chicago, IL, as “Hyman Teverovsky-Twersky.” Hyman’s brother, Misha, subsequently chose the surname, “Tavrov.” Hyman’s only child, Evelyn Twersky-Goodman, told the author in 2016 that her late father adopted the Twersky surname and was not related to the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty. She added that her mother, Ray Berko, was a descendant of Grand Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev (1740-1810),³² and as her father was not a religious man, she found it odd that of all names, he picked a rabbinic surname.

1101		Given name or names	
Family name <i>1101</i> Teverovsky (Twersky)		Hyman	
Address 1443 S. Trumbull Ave		2	
Certificate no. (or vol. and page) p-58592 cn-2830230		Title and location of court U.S. Dist. Ct., Chgo.	
Country of birth or allegiance Russia		When born (or age) July 29, 1898	
Date and port of arrival in U.S. Feb. 1, 1923-N.Y.		Date of naturalization Nov. 16, 1928	
Names and addresses of witnesses Jakob Season		1113 S. Troy St.	
Samuel Becker		1524 Washburne Ave	
U. S. Department of Labor, Immigration and Naturalization Service			

Figure 58 - Naturalization card of Hyman Teverovsky.



Figure 59 – Tombstone of Hyman Teverovsky.

Case #4 – Adoption of the ‘Twerski’ Surname - (Approx. 5 descendants)

Grand Rabbi Benzion Chaim Shlomo Meshulam Zusia Twerski (1923-1981) of Hornistaiple-Denver (CO) married secondly to Pessa Kelia Dawson. Dawson’s son, Adam (from her first marriage), along with his children, subsequently adopted the Twerski surname. Adam has no blood relation to the Twerski/Twersky Chassidic Dynasty.

Lineage 6:

Non-Jewish Twerskys³³



Figure 60 - Map of the Tver Gubernia 1885.

A. Possible descendants of Michael of Tver (Twersky) (1271-1318).³⁴

Prince Michael of Tver was notable Russian leader who lived in late 13th and early 14th century. He is listed with the surname of Tversky, as he was from the province of Tver.

B. Present-day residents of Tver, Ukraine, who acquired the “Tversky” surname.

Dozens of families currently living in the city of Tver, bear the surname of Tversky. The author contacted many of these families, and they carry the surname due to their families residing in the city of Tver for centuries.

C. Twersky Family of Winnipeg, Canada (50 Descendants)

Nestor Twersky (1875-1959) arrived from Hamburg Germany to Camper, Manitoba-Canada in 1914. His family later moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba-Canada. His descendants are unaware of any connection to the Twersky Rabbinical Family.

NESTER TWERSKY, 84, of Camper, Man., died Thursday in Winnipeg General Hospital. He had farmed for 39 years, 15 years at Camper, retiring in 1954 when he moved to Winnipeg. Surviving are his wife Annie; six sons, Adam, Steve, Paul, Henry, Victor and John; one daughter, Mrs. Doris Campbell; and eight grandchildren. Funeral service will be at 2 p.m. Monday in Memorial Chapel, Rev. T. Giljawsy officiating. Burial will be in Brookside Cemetery.

Figure 61 – Obituary of Nestor Twersky

Conclusion

Based upon 30 years of meticulous research coupled by Y-DNA testing of 29 disparate Twersky families around the globe, I can now conclude that two Jewish Twersky families existed – one from Chernobyl, Ukraine, and one from Ponovich, Lithuania. On a professional level, I have accomplished my initial goal, and identified the foundation of the Twersky Families. On a personal level, the work has just begun, and I pray for the strength to continue to bring Twersky descendants closer to their faith and family history.

Further Research

The work of a Genealogist never truly ends, as new records, discoveries, and technologies always present themselves. I continue to do research, and answer the weekly genealogical requests from around the world. I am hopeful that one day, the missing links of the Twersky family tree will be uncovered.

Dedication

I dedicate this study to the memory of my father, HaRav Yaakov Yosef Twersky (1928-2001), who in his life, spirit, and dedication to God and to mankind, personified the unwavering faith of his rabbinic forebears. It is he who inspired me to explore my family's precious legacy. The lessons my father taught me continue to guide me every day, as I have tried to instill these lessons into my children.



Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Twersky family and descendants throughout the world for providing valuable insights and information that contributed significantly to this study's stated objectives. I express gratitude to all Twersky Y-DNA study participants for their cooperation and patience, and for permitting me to present their names and Y-DNA findings in this study.

Figure 62 – The author (r.) with his father, HaRav Yaakov Yosef Twersky in 1993.

Thank you to the Admor of Skvira, Grand Rabbi David Twersky, who believed in me 30 years ago and continued to support this project both spiritually and financially. On my many visits to New Square, the Rebbe and his family continue to guide me on my growth in Yiddishkeit and Chassidus.

Thank you to my honored cousin, Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull, who had the tremendous vision to perform Y-DNA Rabbinical Studies, and I am so fortunate to be included in his projects. The suggested outline of this study, and his continued advice, permeate this paper. I am so fortunate to have met Jeff and call him my friend. If not for his assistance, this work would not have been possible.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

Thank you to my dear friend, Dr. Jeffrey Briskman, the greatest genealogist I have ever met! Jeff meticulously documented the Ukrainian and Lithuanian Census records of the Twersky Families spanning 1795-1916. This data was the key to deciphering the Twersky family lineage. Jeff and I speak almost daily as he continues to find genealogical treasures, and our working partnership has grown into a strong family friendship. If one person had to receive credit for the success of the Twersky project, it would be Jeff.

Thank you to my dearest cousin, best friend, and mentor, Harav Zusia Novoseller – who does not miss a day to call me, and talk about Twersky stuff. While I am busy digging up Twersky Families, Zusia is busy saving the souls of Jews around the globe. I am in awe of his daily accomplishments, and hope some of his greatness will one day rub off on me.

Thank you to my dear and beloved brother, Mordechai Yisrael Twersky of Jerusalem, who once again saved me, by editing another project at the last minute. His tremendous patience in numerous modifications and additions was much appreciated. This project is just as much mine as his, and I look forward to working with him on many future initiatives.

To my children, Mordechai Yisrael, Aharon Shraga Feival, Nachum Asher Zelig, Batsheva, and Yaakov Yosef, I thank you for giving me the time to research this work, and for putting up with my obsession over these many years. I love you all so much!

Lastly and most importantly, thank you to my dear wife Elke, who has put up with my “research project” for the past 25 years. Even though I have made many amazing discoveries over these years, you are surely my greatest find. I know you eagerly await the announcement of my next hobby..... May we continue to bring up our children with a life of Torah and Yiras Shomayim.

About the author



Yitzchak Meyer Twersky was born and raised in the Bronx, NY. He received his B.A. from Yeshiva University. Yitz worked in Banking Technology on Wall Street for 20 years, and for the past seven years, he has worked in the healthcare technology industry.

Yitz is a son-after-son descendant of Grand Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl via Menachem Nachum's grandson, Grand Rabbi Aharon Twersky, who founded the Chernobyl branch of the Twersky Chassidic dynasty. Yitz's personal exploration of his ancestral lineage dates to 1986, when he first began researching the family's ancestry. Since that time, Yitz has authored several books on the Twersky Chassidic dynasty, including: *Mi Yareinu Tov*; *Grand Rabbis of the Chernobyl Dynasty*; and *HaRav Yaakov Yosef Twersky: A Life in Pictures*.

Yitz has been profiled in dozens of newspaper articles and television news programs. He has been featured in audio podcasts and video documentaries on the subject of the Twersky Chassidic dynasty. He has consulted and contributed to more than 30 scholarly books, biographies, articles, and genealogical publications in the United States and Israel. Recently, he was featured in a 2016 video documentary by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, titled: *Chernobyl's Lasting Jewish Legacy*. It was broadcast in 23 countries and translated into three languages.

The author can be reached at yitz.twersky@hotmail.com

Notes

¹ Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, England, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United States, Uruguay

² Yitzchak Alfasi : "Hachasidus MiDor L'Dor – Volume 1", Machon Daas Yosef Publishing house, Jerusalem 1994. Pages 117-134

³ Another Kind of Power Coming from Chernobyl, Mordechai I Twersky, New York Times, June 29, 1986.

⁴ For a brief summary of Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl see "The Y-DNA Genetic Signature and Ethnic Origin of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty," Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull, Dr. Jeffrey Briskman and Yitzchak Meyer Twersky.

Published 2017. http://www.academia.edu/26048275/The_Y-DNA_Genetic_Signature_and_Ethnic_Origin_of_the_Twersky_Chassidic_Dynasty

⁵ Variations include: Twirsky, Twirski, Tvirsky, Twierski, Twierska, Twersky, Teverszki, Tiversky, Tverski, Tverskii, Tverskij, Tverskyiy, Tverskikh, Tverskiy, Tverskoi, Tverskoj, Tverskoy, Twerskoi, Twerskoy, Tversky, Twerske, Twerski, Tverschi, Twerschi, Tverskaya

⁶ Dictionary of American Family Names ©2013, Oxford University Press

⁷ Jewishgen.org, All Lithuania Revision List – August 14th 1816, Ariogala-Kaunas, Lithuania. Revision List LVIA/515/25/383, Page 78.

⁸ About New York ; By Douglas Martin, The New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/07/10/nyregion/about-new-york.html>

⁹ "Mi Yareinu Tov", Published in 2002, by the Genealogy Research Center of the Twersky Chernobyl Dynasty "Admorai Malchus Beis Chernobyl", Published in 2003 by the Genealogy Research Center of the Twersky Chernobyl Dynasty; "HaRav Yaakov Yosef Twersky", Published in 2007 by the Genealogy Research Center of the Twersky Chernobyl Dynasty

¹⁰ The JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) is a database of more than three million names and other identifying information from cemeteries and burial records worldwide. See cemetery database of online genealogy site JewishGen.org.

¹¹ <http://forward.com/articles/133911/the-twersky-family-tree/>

¹² Defined as "A Y chromosome DNA test (Y-DNA test). It is a genealogical DNA test which is used to explore a man's patrilineal or direct father's-line ancestry. The Y chromosome, like the patrilineal surname, passes down virtually unchanged from father to son." Source: International Society of Genetic Genealogy Wiki.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_signature

¹³ See Jeffrey Mark Paull: "Connecting to the Great Rabbinic Families through Y-DNA: A Case Study of the Polonsky Rabbinical Lineage." *Op. cit.*; Jeffrey Mark Paull and Jeffrey Briskman: "Connecting to the Great Rabbinic Families through Y-DNA: The Savran-Bendery Chassidic Dynasty." *Op. cit.*; Jeffrey Mark Paull, Neil Rosenstein, and Jeffrey Briskman: "The Y-DNA Genetic Signature and Ethnic Origin of the Katzenellenbogen Rabbinical Lineage." *Op. cit.* and Jeffrey Mark Paull and Jeffrey Briskman: "Identifying the Genetic Fingerprint of a *Tzaddik* that Touched the World: The Shpoler Zeida." *Op. cit.*

¹⁴ "The Twersky Chassidic dynasty extends over nearly three centuries, and identifying living paternal descendants, descending solely from father to son, who are willing and able to take a Y-DNA test, presents unique genealogical challenges. Extensive genealogical research of the Twersky family conducted by Yitzchak Meyer Twersky, culminating in the publication of *Grand Rabbis of the Chernobyl Dynasty*, laid the necessary groundwork for identification of living descendants for this Y-DNA study." See "The Y-DNA Genetic Signature and Ethnic Origin of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty," Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull, Dr. Jeffrey Briskman and Yitzchak Meyer Twersky. Published 2017.

¹⁵ "The Y-DNA Genetic Signature and Ethnic Origin of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty," Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull, Dr. Jeffrey Briskman and Yitzchak Meyer Twersky. Published 2017. http://www.academia.edu/26048275/The_Y-DNA_Genetic_Signature_and_Ethnic_Origin_of_the_Twersky_Chassidic_Dynasty

¹⁶ Defined as "A gene signature is a group of genes in a cell whose combined expression pattern is uniquely characteristic of a biological phenotype or medical condition." Source: Gene signature – Wikipedia.

https://isog.org/wiki/Y_chromosome_DNA_tests

¹⁷ <https://www.rferl.org/a/chernobyl-hasidic-twersky-jews/27699170.html>

¹⁸ Defined as a note with a petitionary prayer.

¹⁹ "The Y-DNA Genetic Signature and Ethnic Origin of the Twersky Chassidic Dynasty," Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull, Dr. Jeffrey Briskman and Yitzchak Meyer Twersky. Published 2017.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer, considered the founder of the chassidic movement.

The Worldwide Twersky Surname Study

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_washing_in_Judaism - “Before the Priestly Blessing”

²³ Defined as is a genetic population group of people who share a common ancestor on the patrilineal or matrilineal line.

ISOGG: “Haplogroup.” International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG). <http://isogg.org/wiki/Haplogroup>.

²⁴ http://www.informprostranstvo.ru/N128_2009/otkritie.html

²⁵ Referencing Grand Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl.

²⁶ List of Jews in Chernobyl Jewish praying school in the hose of Boruch-Usher Twersky who are older than 25 y/o
July 28 1904

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ List of Jews in prayer school of Shlema Bentsion Twersky in Chernobyl

August 3, 1904

²⁹ All known rabbinic Twerskys are Israelites (not Cohanim or Levites).

³⁰ Yiddish for “table,” whereby the Grand Rabbi presides at a traditional meal attended by his followers.

³¹ http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=miscellaneous_papers

³² Chassidic leader and prominent disciple of the Rabbi Dov Baer ben Avraham, the Maggid of Mezerich (b. unknown-d. 1772)

³³ Non-Jewish families not within the scope of this study

³⁴ See <http://ermakvagus.com/Europe/Russia/tver/monument-michael.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_of_Tver

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Karenina - Dostoyevsky Books mentioned a “Princess [sic] Tversky”