

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE SECTION

# HACHAM BARUCH זצ"ל

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# The Special Relationship Between Hacham Baruch<sup>רצ"ב</sup> & Hacham Ovadia Yosef<sup>שליט"א</sup>

## Hacham David Yosef

THE COMMUNITY HAS LOST its greatest leader. For the last six months, the angels were trying to take Hacham Baruch<sup>רצ"ב</sup> to them in Heaven. Hashem loves him and they wanted him in Gan Eden already. But we wanted him here and so we were praying every day, crying to Hashem to let him stay with us. For six months we were fighting with the angels. But in the end, they won.

The community lost its leader, but I feel very greatly affected by the loss personally. Hacham Baruch was like a

father to me and he also had a special relationship with my father, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, he should live and be well. On many occasions my father told me that the best friend he ever had in his entire life was Hacham Baruch. When they learned in Porat Yosef, he was his closest friend, and they studied together constantly as a havruta (pair). He would tell me that Hacham Baruch's speed of comprehension was particularly remarkable. He would study difficult sugyot (Talmudic sections) very quickly and

would understand it in depth. Material that for others would take hours to comprehend, would take him just minutes to master. My father told me that had Hacham Baruch remained in Israel, he would have undoubtedly been among the greatest of the rabbis in Israel.

From the age of twelve, Hacham Baruch and my father were together in Porat Yosef. Together with Hacham Ben-Sion Abba Shaul, the three Torah giants fulfilled to a great extent [the pasuk], "[you shall speak in Torah even]



*Hacham Ovadia Yosef<sup>שליט"א</sup>, Hacham Baruch<sup>רצ"ב</sup> and Hacham Yaakov Kassin<sup>רצ"ל</sup> in the Ben-Haim home*

as you go along your way." They would walk together and talk in Torah wherever they went.

I remember when I was still a young child and my father would invite Hacham Baruch for Shabbat. Many times he would call me over and test me. And his tests – to be honest – were very, very difficult. As soon as you would answer, he would then ask another question about the answer and then another question. My father would see how he spoke to me and would melt with pride. He was overjoyed to see how his closest friend would relate so warmly to his children.

Later, Hacham Baruch went to South Africa and my father went to Egypt. When my father returned from Egypt, Hacham Baruch was already in New York. So they would often exchange letters and speak on the telephone. Although their geographic connection was distant, emotionally, their souls were always

attached throughout the years.

Anything my father confronted, any pain, any issue, any distress – the person to whom he would tell it all personally, in genuine friendship, was Hacham Baruch. They loved one another with heart and soul. Over the last six months, there was not a day when my father would not pray for his well-being, crying and crying for his dear friend Hacham Baruch.

When Hacham Baruch passed away, my father spoke at the funeral, comparing their relationship to the legendary love between King David and Yehonatan. Later that day, the sons, Hacham Eliyahu, Hacham Yaakov and Yehuda began to sit shiv'ah in my office. My father came and sat with them for a full hour. The next day, on Shabbat, the sons were invited to my father's house and he sat with them again, giving them tremendous support and affectionate encouragement.

My father's respect for Hacham Baruch was very deep. It is well known that whenever questions were asked of my father, even from communities that had a rabbi, he would not refrain from answering – with the exception of this community. "Ask Hacham Baruch," he would always say.

In the same way, Hacham Baruch would defer his opinion, out of his high regard for my father. There was once an issue here in the community, regarding which my father wanted to issue a certain halachic ruling. He first sent me to Hacham Baruch, to ask his opinion. I asked Hacham Baruch, and Hacham Baruch felt a bit differently about the matter. "Nevertheless," he said to me, "tell your father that I give him my consent to issue the halacha as he sees it. I will keep silent."

Just last year, in the summer, I was delivering a shiur (Torah class) in Ohel



*Hacham Ovadia שליט"א and Hacham Baruch זצ"ל in Shaare Zion*

Yaakob Synagogue (Lawrence Avenue, Deal, NJ), and Hacham Baruch was in attendance. As I looked at him in the middle of the shiur, it appeared that he wasn't happy with what I was saying. So I stopped and asked, "Does the rabbi agree with what I am saying?" He said to me, "Please continue the shiur." At the end of the shiur, I approached him and I said, "Does the rabbi agree with what I said, or not?"

He answered, "No! I do not agree at all. But I know that what you said is your father's view. I very much respect your father, and therefore I kept quiet. I suppress my view in deference to your father's." This was Hacham Baruch's humility.

I loved him very much, and he showed me love in return, equal to my love. On many occasions he went out of his way to help me with what I needed whenever I came to New York. I can honestly say that without his assistance, I would not have been able to accomplish many of the things that I consider to be my most important achievements. There is no doubt that I am among the many thousands who owe Hacham Baruch Rephael ben Miriam a great debt of gratitude.



*From left: Hacham Yaakob Kassin, Joe Hamoui, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, Hacham Abraham Harari-Raful, Hacham Baruch, Hacham Helfon Safdieh*



*Former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, Hacham David Yosef (back), Mr. Ellis Safdeye and Hacham Baruch*

# Capturing Hacham Baruch's Legacy

**Hacham David Yosef**

Around ten years ago, a certain serious question arose involving the halachot of marriage. Hacham Baruch wrote a long halachic responsum and handed it to me, asking that I give it to my father to hear what he thought. I gave it to my father, and my father read it and wrote him a response about everything he had written. He agreed with him and even brought more proofs to support what he had written. Before I left, my father handed me the letter and instructed me, as follows: "One can see in this responsum Hacham Baruch's greatness in Torah. Ask him if he has other responsa like this one, and if so, I feel all these responsa must be taken and made into a book."

I came to Hacham Baruch and asked him. Hacham Baruch showed me several responsa that he had written, and I read these responsa and saw in them his towering greatness, particularly in the areas of Even Ha'ezer (areas of marriage) and Hoshen Mishpat (code of monetary laws). I asked that he give me all his responsa, so that I can take them and publish them. He then told me that there are many responsa that he must first review; before he publishes them, he wants to see them and study them once again. The problem was that he had no time for this, preoccupied as he was with communal affairs. So he said to me, "Od

hazon la'mo'ed" – we'll do it at some point in the future. I asked him, "Why? Why not give them all to me, and I will go over them myself, I'll review them thoroughly, write you comments and additional points and then you'll decide what to do with it." He agreed, but told me that the materials are scattered in several places, so he would have to search for them. I returned to him several weeks later, and he told me that he changed his mind, and he does not want to go through with it. I asked him why, and he just smiled and said, "Od hazon la'mo'ed," as if to say, "The time will come." On several occasions afterward I reminded him of this matter and pleaded with him to give me all the responsa for publication, and my father would also always remind me to tell him, but it was to no avail.

Unfortunately, he has now passed on. Hazal (our rabbis of blessed memory) say about a late Torah scholar in whose name matters of halacha are discussed, "siftotav dovevot be'kever" ("His lips continue whispering in the grave"). Therefore, I've asked his sons to search for all the responsa that he wrote. Perhaps now it is worthwhile to embark on this project. With Hashem's help, these great writings will strengthen the community so they may continue to follow in the way he led them for so many years.



*Hacham Ovadia Yosef שליט"א, signing a new volume of his work for Hacham Baruch שליט"א. It was Hacham Ovadia's longtime practice to always deliver the first copy of each book he published to Hacham Baruch. Also pictured from left, are Jack Cabasso, Hacham David Yosef שליט"א, Ike Sutton, and David Ben-Haim.*

# The Life of Our Teacher, Leader and Mentor, Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim זצ"ל

BY DAVID BEN-HAIM

There are really no words to properly describe my father, Harav Baruch Rephael Ben-Haim זס"ל. But our rabbis tell us that one must accurately describe the deceased, so I will try my best. My dad was a man who lived his life helping others to become better in their service to Hashem, and bringing understanding between man and his fellow man.

He grew up in Jerusalem, poverty dictating that nine children and two parents share three small rooms and one bathroom. From the age of three he was sent to school to sit at a desk and learn. He returned home one day with a bloody nose. His father, Harav Haim Mizrahi זס"ל, a businessman at the time, asked, "What happened?" My dad answered that he was hit inadvertently by an object thrown by the teacher at a disruptive child sitting next to him. His father immediately convened a meeting and demanded that a new Talmud Torah be opened where it would be forbidden to hit a three-year-old. The people agreed to support the idea, but the new Talmud Torah needed a leader. My grandfather Hacham Haim agreed to leave his store and business and lead the Talmud Torah. My father was enrolled and at the age of three learned aleph bet; at four, Humash; at five, Mishna; and at six, began Gemara.

## Jerusalem of Above

Among my dad's many great rabbis was one blind Hacham who knew Gemara, Rashi, Tosafot, and Reshonim by heart. My dad read and the rabbi told him where to look in the Reshonim for more explanation. My dad was careful to always concentrate on Jewish law, even when learning Gemara. This was a practice he learned from his great rabbi, Hacham Ezra Attia.

As librarian to Yeshivat Porat Yosef, my father read constantly to assist others in their search for answers. This practice was to serve him well for his future leadership and ability to deliver psak halacha (legal decisions).

His father, Hacham Haim, was to later begin a synagogue called Maskeel el Dal, in Bet Yisrael. My dad therefore gave the same name to his charity organization, from which he distributed funds that people gave him. This organization is now run by my dear brother Rabbi Yaakov Ben-Haim.

My grandmother Rabbanit Miriam (Shalom), was to instill fear of Torah scholars in him and she herself constantly read Humash and Tehillim. In her old age many great rabbis would visit her, real-

izing her special place in the lives of her husband and children.

When my dad left Israel in 1949 for New York, he went to visit the two chief rabbis of Israel, Harav Uziel and Harav Herzog, for blessings. Rabbi Uziel felt bad my dad was leaving. The rabbi told my father then that he knew the position of chief rabbi would soon be filled either by my father, or by his good friend, may he live and be well, Hacham Ovadya Yosef. Rabbi Herzog walked him down the block as one walks a Talmid Hacham (great Torah scholar) when leaving him.

My dad was to return only a handful of times to the land he loved over the next 56 years. I merited to make two such trips in 1980 and 1983. Both times I observed that my father did not vacation, but constantly lectured throughout Israel; and on one particular Shabbat in Bayit Vegan, he spoke four times in four different shuls. Torah knows no vacation. The respect he received from gedolai Yisrael (the great rabbis of Israel) enlightened me to the fact that my dad was a recognized gadol (great Torah scholar). This was despite the fact that he had no beard and had left Israel some 30 plus years before.



## His Love for the People

My dad had an ability to connect with people. Old, young, and middle-aged, all felt a closeness. While we sat shiva, many stated that he was like a father, brother, or best friend to them. Everyone felt he loved them. He smiled at them, knew their first name and their families going back generations. He taught four generations in some families and married three generations of others.

My father had a tremendous love for every Jew and would try to do whatever he could for people. An elderly man once complained to my dad that on Rosh Hashana, in the silent Amida, the shofar would blow before he was ready. From then on, my dad waited for a sign from this man that he was ready, and only then would he allow the shofar to be blown.

Once on Yom Kippur, a message was sent to my father, that an old man was refusing to comply with doctor's orders to eat. My father went to his home to try and convince him to eat. The man refused. My father called to the man's wife, "Please bring two plates of food." When the food arrived, my dad said, either you eat or I'm eating. The man ate.



*Chief Rabbi Auziel (left) at Hacham Baruch's Bar-mitzvah.  
His father, Hacham Haim is seated far right*



*Hacham Haim Mizrahi<sup>ztl</sup>,  
father of Hacham Baruch<sup>ztl</sup>*

Mr. Eli Hedaya did not have his eyesight, so he asked my dad to recite Tehillim on cassette so that he may review it. My dad did so and continued to receive requests from elderly men, and made cassettes for many, one at a time. Finally Mr. Leon Betesh, may Hashem bless him, got him to recite Tehillim in a professional studio. One of my dad's last wishes was that we all learn Tehillim, ten chapters a day with taamim and understanding of the words.

Ike (Bert) Dweck told me he saw my dad at a wedding and my dad started to tell him what an eshet hayil (woman of valor) his wife, Marlene, was. Ike said, "Eshet chayil my foot! You should have seen my Amex bill last month." Then, turning conciliatory, Ike started to say, "You know Rabbi, she's not like others. When I turn off the faucet she stops spending. With other women there are leaks in the faucet." My dad turned to him and said, "You turn off the faucet? You should not." Ike said, "But Hacham, I thought you're my friend." My dad answered, "I am. If you want Hashem to give you, you must always give her what you can." Marlene could not stop smiling. Hopefully my wife doesn't read this one.

I often told my dad to slow down. He would tell me, I want the people to remember how I ran for everyone, rich or poor. I would persist and say, but dad, why not rest and recharge the batteries? He would smile and say, "You want to do to me what Hashem does not want to do to me, by closing me down." He had all

the answers.

A former neighbor of my dad's told how, when he was a small child, my dad would stop to pick him up every time he saw him, to take him to school. He would also often drive the elderly wherever they needed to go after functions.

### **A Fixture at Community Functions**

Ezra Shalom told me that when he was in seventh grade, he asked my dad a question on the Tosafot in Gemara Berachot and my dad answered, "sheila gedola shaalta beni (you have asked a great question, my son)." At Ezra's wedding night some eleven years later, as he was to sign his ketubah (marriage contract), my dad reminded him of his question back in seventh grade. How many questions from how many people did my dad hear in the interim? Amazing!

Dr. Mayer Ballas was my dad's personal physician for the past few years. Dr. Ballas, a cardiologist, would come to see my dad in the house every day to examine him and adjust medications. When the situation got bad he was available 24 hours, seven days a week. He would come sometimes as many as four times in one day, never taking a penny. My father would call him his "angel from heaven." On behalf of the entire family we thank him and his dear wife Rachel for all his efforts.

In May of 2003, my dad discussed with Dr. Ballas a procedure he would have to do the following month. Dr. Ballas tried to convince him not to wait. The procedure was considered minor, requiring no hospi-

talization. My dad told him, "Rebbe Meir, you have your daughter's wedding next month, and I'm worried that if I do the operation now, complications will make me miss it. So I am waiting until the day after your wedding."

It is well known that my dad attended many community functions, constantly running from place to place. But what is less well-known is that at these functions, he would sit at a corner table and talk to people constantly. He would deal with all their issues and problems in his temporary offices. I recall one such case at the wedding of Dr. Ballas's daughter. My family wanted him home early so he could rest for the procedure being done the next day, but he set up shop at the reception; blessing a couple and dealing with assorted problems, all the while thanking well-wishers who knew about his procedure the following day. For him, helping people was just instinctive.

Similarly, on a "vacation" to Florida, my dad never stopped working; giving classes and even counseling couples.

### **Unrestrained Compassion**

On Purim my dad would distribute envelopes with gifts to all his grandchildren. One year my wife brought a maid to wash the dishes in his house. She was new to us also, so prior to leaving our house, my wife, without the maid knowing, checked her purse and found nothing inside. Upon returning home, my wife rechecked her bag and found a twenty-dollar bill. My wife asked her where she

got it from, and the maid told her she could not say. My wife confiscated the twenty, fired her, and threw her out, never to be seen again. A few days later, while at my dad's house, I asked him if he had given the maid anything. He said, "why would I, you never want me to." I told him we had found a twenty in her purse and fired her. My dad put his hand on his head and said, "You didn't." He explained that he gave the maid the money, but made her promise never to tell anyone. I asked, "But dad, why?" He said he saw the maid looking at the kids each getting their envelopes with money and did not want her to be jealous. But perhaps what's most amazing is that from the brief time the maid was in the house, somehow even she was able to

## Consoling His Community

My friend Haim Zariff lost his mom on Motzai Shabbat, two days after my dad passed on. After crying for a while, he realized that there was no rabbi to eulogize his mother that knew her like my dad. He had been the family rabbi for decades. It was then that he realized how much my dad would be missed. He told me, I have no rabbi, and I told him to stand on line behind me. I didn't even realize my dad knew his mom. Upon arriving home, family members expressed to me that he often spoke very highly of her, may Hashem rest her soul.

My dad felt the pain of his people. When he heard of tragedies in our community or in Israel it affected him greatly.

time already. My father admitted that he didn't think he would be able to walk up three flight of stairs so easily. But a few minutes later, he said, "let's go and visit." We did so despite his difficult time going up. While we were there, my dad chatted with the family members, and even though they had never met my dad before, one could sense that they were truly comforted by his visit.

My dad used to always arrive early for funerals. Once, he took extra time to write a poem right before a funeral. I drove him and he barely arrived on time. I asked him why he insisted on writing the poem. My dad said that the week before, he had written a poem for a wealthy person who had passed away. The man who drove my dad



*Caption courtesy Aleppo, City of Scholars*

*Bottom row (from right): R' Ezra Shayo , R'Saadiah Lofez , Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim, Hacham Ovadiah Yosef (Rishon LeSion), R' Shabbetai Atoon (Rosh Yeshiva of Reshit Hochmah), R' Pinhas Vaknin of Jerusalem, R' David Levy. Middle Row (from right): R' David Shalush (Rabbi of Netanya), R' Yosef Harari-Raful of Religious Ministry, R' Ezra Ades (son of R' Yaakob Ades) – Herzliyah, R' Eliyahu Shrem , R' Raphael Ades (secretary of Rabbinical High Court), R' Yosef Elnadav (killed in 1948). Top Row (from right): R' Aharon Aboud (Rabbi of Haifa), R' Moshe Yosef Ades , R' Sion Levy (of the Panamanian Syrian Community), Hacham Ben-Sion Abba Shaul*

recognize his greatness, and would rather lose her job than break her promise to him. Somewhere out there is a maid I need to ask mehilla (forgiveness) from.

How many couples did he personally assist, to bring understanding between them? A lady visited during the shiva and said that every argument in her household for thirty years was brought to my dad. She wondered where would she go now if, Gd forbid, she needed.

About nine years ago, a three-year-old child from a family who had recently arrived from Syria, was tragically hit and killed by a garbage truck backing up. I told my dad, and even though this was one of the very rare instances that he did not know the family, he wanted to visit them while they were sitting shiva. I told him the family was sitting on a third floor walk-up and reminded him that his legs had been giving him problems for some-



home from that funeral, was the grandson of the person whose funeral was today. My father remembered that the grandson commented in passing how beautiful the poem was. My dad felt that if he did not honor this poorer person with a poem, the eighteen-year-old grandson would think he wrote the poem the previous week because of the person's wealth. He made sure to write an extra-special poem.

My dad would often tell me how in the first, almost 25 years from his arrival in New York, he never missed a funeral. Once in the '70s, he was called by a man in Brooklyn whose mother had passed on. He was in New Jersey at the time and was unable to attend the funeral. He would often recount this story, ignoring all the thousands he attended in previous years.



## Respect for Rabbis

My dad showed great respect for other rabbis. One time Hacham Ovadia Yosef, he should live and be well, was over for Shabbat lunch with Hacham Yaacob Kassin at our house. It came time for Kiddush and each rabbi tells the other, bechovod (you take the honor). This went on for many minutes, with each Rabbi declining the honors, until finally my mom said to them, "Hey, I'm hungry." If memory serves me, Hacham Ovadia shlita said kiddush, my dad made hamotzei and Hacham Yaacob made zimun. The modesty of the gedolim incredible!

One time Hacham Ovadia shlita arrived from Israel and my dad yelled to the hazan in Shaare Zion's midrash, "Yehi Shem," instructing him to adjust the prayers accordingly. Before Alenu, the final prayer, my dad got up and said that today is not just a regular day. The presence of a gadol hador (leader of the generation) is a special occasion which should be recognized in the prayers. He then requested from the congregation that no one touch breakfast (on a work day no less) until after the rabbi made a blessing on the food. This would give respect to the Hacham and put a true blessing in the meal.

A young rabbi came to teach in Magen David over thirty years ago. His first day there my dad drove him home. Then, since the young rabbi had no car, for the next year and a half, my dad drove him back and forth to school, all the while teaching this rabbi many valuable lessons during those car rides.

## Diligently Upholding Torah

While my dad would always try to accommodate everyone in whatever way he could, there was no compromise when it came to halacha (Jewish law). Dad would always try to correct things done against halacha in a firm but diplomatic manner. One time at a funeral a young lady stood up to speak about her relative. My dad was strongly against this, but so as not to embarrass her, he waited until she concluded her speech. Then he immediately got up and after commented how beautifully she spoke about her relative, he concluded by firmly stating that, while he knew the girl meant no harm in this case, in the future, "as per halacha, no ladies may publicly address audiences that include men."

On Shabbat, before the Sefer Torah was brought out, my dad would not permit speeches or drives. He felt it was

not respectful to delay the Sefer Torah from coming out. One Shabbat, a young man speaking on behalf of a community Yeshiva wanted to speak before the Torah came out. My father refused to allow it. This was a familiar occurrence and many times that the speakers would be disappointed. My dad would tell me, "they want me to honor them more than the Torah."

Hacham Matloub Abadi, with whom my dad also had a wonderful relationship, once turned to my father at a gathering and asked my dad to allow shaving for business purposes on Hol Hamoed (intermediate days of Sukkot and Pesach). My dad got up and told Hacham Matloub's students that they could rely on their rabbi, but that he could not permit them that which his rabbi, Hacham Ezra Attiya, told him not to permit.

A lady once dressed immodestly for her child's wedding. My dad refused to make blessings under the chuppah until she covered up with a shawl. She approached my dad after the ceremony and accused him of embarrassing her. My dad answered "I don't know what's more embarrassing, your dress or me making you dress."

## Honorable Business Sense

I would often go to my dad for business advice. One time I went to him to discuss a potential partnership. Seeing my excitement he would tell me, "Better to trust straight in Hashem without dependence on partners, bosses, or workers."

Another time I had a problem getting a sufficient credit line with a certain supplier. Although the company owner was a community member, the credit manager was not. Not expecting my father to do anything about it, I mentioned the situation to him in passing. That day he saw the company owner and assured him that he would personally guarantee all balances. I found out the same day that my credit limit was now whatever I needed.

Another time I had difficulty collecting a balance from a community owned retailer. My father spoke to the customer's relative and was assured I would be paid. When I had still not received payment, my dad offered to pay the balance himself so that I would not be upset.

My dad was careful to pay all debts quickly. He would buy lullavim for about 30 people and tie them personally by hand for all. He always wanted me to pay the sellers right away whether he was paid or not.



Wedding of Isaac & Marilyn Shehebar 6/7/1972

## Always a Kind Word

My dad was the epitome of "Hevi mekabel kol adam besever panim yafof" ("Always greet every person with a pleasant face"). It was amazing to me that he would always smile at the doctors and nurses in the hospital when they would enter. This was despite his difficulty breathing and the fact that he had no strength. He would make an extra effort to shake the doctors' hands even though it was difficult.

One young man didn't come to shul one Shabbat, and my father asked him the following week, "Where were you last Shabbat?" After that the young man didn't miss coming to shul again. He told me, "How amazing it is that of the hundreds of people in the shul, he would notice I wasn't there and remember to ask me about it the following Shabbat! It ensured that I would make the extra effort to come and not be questioned by the rabbi again."

A more elderly gentleman told me, "I'm not the most religious guy in the world, but I used to come to shul just to shake your dad's hand and see his smile." He would always ask children, with a smile, "Who made you pretty (or handsome)? Daddy or Mommy?" Another

famous question was, "Where is Hashem, in the sky or down here?" Simple questions to us, but not to a child four to six years old. These questions were to instill in children that Hashem is Creator of all and exists everywhere. What joy he had when a child would answer, "Hashem made me pretty."

## Teacher of Torah

My dad put learning Torah above all else. My dad would say learning Torah daily, day and night, was of utmost importance. He would say, better to learn one hour in the morning and one hour at night than two hours at once. He likened this to a sick man that went to a doctor and the doctor prescribed one pill a day for ten days. If the patient ate all ten pills at once he would end up sick in the hospital, instead of getting better more quickly.

My dad gave Torah classes to anyone who requested it. Whether it was one person or many, and regardless of the level, he was always pushing for more classes. He would encourage shuls to have more minyanim, and particularly in the summer and during the time of selihot, he personally would make phone calls for people to come to shul.

Isaac Shalom, with whom my father had a wonderful relationship, would walk into my dad's class at Magen David to test students. Once he asked the class, "How long would it take to learn the whole Torah?" My dad said, "But Mr. Shalom, even I have no answer." Mr. Shalom answered with surprise, "But you, Rabbi, taught me the answer. Did you not say the whole world was created for the Torah and the world will last 6000 years? So it must be that to learn the whole Torah would take 6000 years."

## Prophetic Wisdom

In spring 2001, Jerry Natkin of William Barthman Jewelers wanted to take a retail jewelry store in the World Trade Center. He went to my dad to arrange a Shabbat contract with a non-Jew, as it was required by the landlord that the store stay open on Shabbat. My dad asked him, "Do you have food to eat without the store in the World Trade Center?" Jerry answered, "Yes."

"Then," my father said, "I advise you not to take the store." He listened and was saved from catastrophe on 9/11. Jerry still keeps a copy of the lease for the ground floor space – which was completely wiped out – as a reminder of this miracle.

Abe (Saul) Shrem went to my dad for

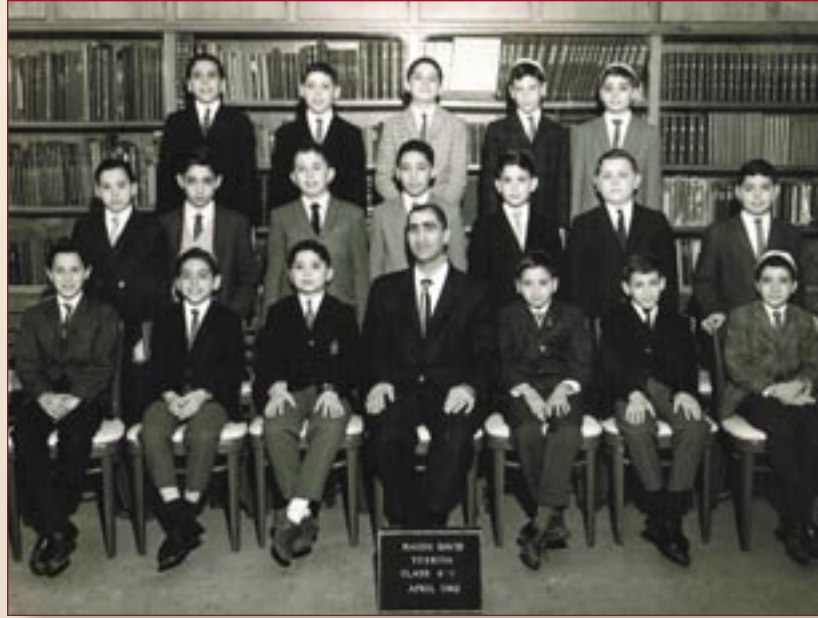
the same purpose, for a Shabbat contract for a new business, and my dad told him, "We save people from the well, we don't sink them in." My dad advised people to avoid retail businesses for this reason, and never liked Shabbat contracts.

In September 2004 a young couple who had been trying to have a baby for a while, was advised by a doctor to do things that were halachically questionable, in order to conceive. The couple approached my dad and asked his advice. My dad advised them to ignore the doctor's orders and follow halacha and that Hashem would help them. That month she became pregnant. Nine months later, baby "Haim," he should live and be well, was born hours after my dad had passed on. May Hashem grant this baby long life with only much happiness always.

Some twenty-two years ago, a man sat shiva for his dad. Towards the end of shiva my dad sat on a chair next to him and said, "You are a disappointment to your father, rest his soul." The man asked why, and my dad answered, "Because you work on Shabbat." The man answered, "But I have to support my family." My dad agreed he was right, but asked him as a favor to not work at least only for the Shabbatot of the thirty days from his father. The man agreed. For the twenty-two years since then, he has not worked on Shabbat, nor do his children.

People would show him writings on the internet of so called rabbis who spoke against the forefathers Abraham, Yizhak, and Yaacov. I would question why he would not take stronger positions against individuals he felt were out of line. He would answer, "It would only give more attention to what they say. One must know when to be vocal and when to be quiet." He was a master at it. He had an ability to practically see the future through his wisdom.

Once, a young man with a strong right wing tilt, began to question him as to why he did not speak more forcefully against those doing wrong. He smiled and told the young man, "if I would have been more forceful with your dad, instead of loving,



you would never have gone to yeshiva and been where you are today." The young man became silent.

## Protecting the Community

Some seventeen years ago, a speaker, who had gained employment at Shaare Zion was deviously introducing dangerous ideas that were anti-Torah in his lectures. My dad fought tooth and nail to prevent him from speaking, so much so that a committee member requested a meeting with my dad on the matter. At the meeting, the man promised to double my dad's salary and offered him many other perks, if only he would allow the speaker to continue. That Shabbat, my dad got up and stated in his speech, "No money in the world will stop me from speaking against such a thing – even if I receive no salary." Thanks to dad, this speaker was gone from the shul shortly afterwards.

One rabbi from New Jersey told of how he would receive phone calls directly from my dad suddenly. My dad would instruct him, "Don't go to this wedding" or "don't give so-and-so an aliya." The rabbi would never even question the situation. My dad's words were enough, and the rabbi followed his wishes, knowing that they were in strict accordance with Halacha.

It was well known that my dad was firmly against the eruv in Brooklyn. I once asked him if he would ever allow such a thing in the future. He got cross with me and with some surprise asked, "Is my letter and my position on the matter not clear enough? As per your grandfather (Hacham Yaacov kassin zt"l), I firmly believe that no eruv in Brooklyn can ever be halachically permitted." He reiterated his position on this verbally many times and his letter against the eruv left little doubt that

this was his position forever. No one can state he would have changed his mind on this issue at any time.

One time Dr. Ballas was alone with my dad in the house examining him. My dad had an oxygen mask on his face and was having difficulty breathing. The phone rang and Dr. Ballas answered. A young lady was calling with a halachic question for the Rabbi. Dr. Ballas explained that the Rabbi could not talk right now. My father with his hand asked Dr. Ballas what the call was about. Dr. Ballas explained it was a halacha question about the mikveh. My dad motioned to give him the phone. He took off his oxygen mask and spoke to the lady answering her question. Upon finishing Dr. Ballas asked him why he pushed himself so hard to answer the question right then. My dad told him, "it is forbidden to unnecessarily delay such a matter by even one day."

One year before Pesach my dad was walking and an elderly lady came to ask him a question: Hacham, what should I do about all these Pesach lists I get from all over. My father asked her if her mother used lists. She said no. He asked her if she remembered what her mother did all those years. She said yes. He told her to ignore all the lists and follow what her traditions always were.

How careful my dad was with the charity entrusted to him. He personally paid

for all the expenses of his organization, Maskeel el Dal, so that all of the money pledged by the people went to where they intended.

## Amazing Talents

Rabbi Eliach, formerly of Yeshiva of Flatbush, told me my dad was a Talmid Hacham with personality. He recounted a story that amazed him. At an Ashkenazic wedding my dad was attending, some men gathered for mincha (afternoon prayers) before the ceremony. There were no prayer books, and so my dad led the prayers himself – by heart and with Ashkenazic tunes no less. I told him that I had seen my dad pray and read the Torah for Ashkenazim, not to mention speak Yiddish.

Rabbi Eli Mansour told me that on one trip to Florida some twenty plus years ago, it was Shabbat Rosh Chodesh and my dad was present. There were no siddurim (prayer books) with the special Musaf prayer, which is read on the rare occasions that Rosh Hodesh falls on Shabbat. My dad recited the prayer by heart, out loud for all to follow along.

Joey Harary, a prized student of my father's, asked me to tell the following story. Once at a bar-mitzvah some ten years ago, Joey was reading the Torah in front of about 300 people, my dad among them. An accomplished reader, Joey, who was then in his forties, prided himself on his abilities and accuracy. As he came to the word "hasech," my dad immediately corrected him and made him repeat the word, this time putting the accent on the second syllable. Following prayers Joey met my dad and put his head down sheepishly. Knowing that he may have thought that his minor mistake of simply stressing the wrong letter did not call for the embarrassing correction, my dad asked him, "You want to know why I corrected you? Do you know the meaning of the word?" Joey answered correctly, "to pour oil on the sacrifice". My dad asked him, "Do you know the meaning the way you read it?" Joey did not. My dad cited a Navi involving King Saul that it means to defecate. Joey now understood. Joey did not feel that

any other person in this community would have caught such a mistake.

About one week after my dad's passing, a group of rabbis visited my dad's grave in Israel. One young rabbi prayed there for a couple of hours. He had a large family, thank Gd, but lived in a two-room apartment. He had found a larger apartment and needed to raise the money to buy it by first selling the one he owned. But after months on the market, he still had no buyer. The rabbi beseeched my father to advocate on his behalf from Heaven, that Hashem should help him sell the apartment.

As he was about to leave the cemetery, his cell phone rang. A man who had seen the apartment a month earlier wanted to know if it was still for sale. When the rabbi told him it was, the man replied that he wanted to buy the apartment that night and would pay for it in full. The rabbi was shaking with trepidation over this development. That night the deal was completed.

## Legendary Modesty

Alan Mizrahi, my dad's faithful driver for many years, told me that he had been praying in my dad's minyan for over 30 years. For almost that much time, Alan had been going up to the Torah on the 12th day of Shevat, his father's yahrzeit, to say kaddish. Only a few years ago, Alan found out that that my dad had his father's yahrzeit on the exact same day. Hacham Haim z"tl passed away in the early 1950s on the 12th day of Shevat. Alan told me with amazement, "Your father never said anything to anyone in the minyan and I just kept getting invited to the Torah that day when surely the invitation would have gone to him if he mentioned it at all. I could have prayed elsewhere if I knew, but he was careful not to ever let me know."

My dad avoided all honors. They would call to make dinners and dedicate Torahs and other tributes in his honor. He would refuse all. When I took a charity collector around the city, he yelled at me never to do it again, even though he supported the institution. He would never go himself to collect in the city.

When someone who did not know him asked his name, he would answer, I am a simple Jew. His name, Hacham Baruch, was a badge of honor all by itself, and for me, being his son was my badge of honor. Yehi zichro baruch, may his memory be blessed.

*The family is requesting stories and pictures from all community members for a book about the Hacham.*



*In 1998 Ike Shemuel Franco dedicated a Sefer Torah in memory of his father and in honor of his mother Alice, may she live a long healthy life. The Torah was given to whatever shul Hacham Baruch was praying in and so it followed him wherever he went. The Torah remained in Shaare Zion in the winter and Ohel Yaacov in Deal in the summer.*

# A DAY OF CRYING

## THE FUNERAL OF HACHAM BARUCH

It was one of the coldest June days in recorded history, when the community gathered in three separate locations to pay tribute to its leader whose soul ascended to Heaven only hours earlier. At Congregation Shaare Zion, throngs of people waited outside for the funeral procession to pass. The streets in front of Magen David Yeshiva were lined with students, parents and teachers wishing to honor the memory of the one who brought so much Torah to the school and the community. Finally, at Congregation Magen David of 67th Street, thousands somberly greeted arrival of the procession.

Leading Rabbis of the community took turns eulogizing the great leader, each one expressing both the Hacham's profound influence on the community as well as on themselves personally. The speeches of Hacham David Yosef, Hacham Yosef Harari-Raful and Rabbi Saul Kassin were delivered in an appropriate mix of Hebrew and English. Although it was not possible to accurately reproduce them here, the recordings are readily available.

Below are the eulogies delivered by Rabbi Isaac Dwek, Rabbi Shlomo Diamond and by his sons, Rabbi Eli and Yehuda Ben-Haim.

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### Rabbi Isaac Dwek

Today is a sad day, a very sad day in the history of our community. Today is a day of eulogies, a day of tears, a day of crying, a day we will never forget. Our Rabbi, our spiritual leader, our mentor, our teacher, our educator, our Malach from the Heavens has left us.

Let's mourn for the passing of a kosher person. Hacham Baruch who is a Talmid Hacham, was a scholar, a man dedicated, he gave his heart and soul to our community. He hardly ever took a vacation. You owe him, I owe him, we all owe him. You have to cry, let the tears go down to the ground. You have to let the tears swell in your eyes. We owe him.

Thirty-five years ago this week, the great giant, Hacham Ezra Attia passed

on to Heaven. Hacham Baruch was the bridge to Hacham Ezra Attia, and Hacham Baruch was the bridge to Hacham Ezra Hamway, who he often told us stories about. He was a good friend of our Rabbi, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, Hashem should give him long life. Last Shabbat I had the zechut to be by Hacham Ovadia and he asked how Hacham Baruch was. He told me how good he is, and how great he is, and how worthy he is to be a Chief Rabbi.



Morris Antebi

When we lost Hacham Baruch we lost an era. It's the end of an era. How much do we owe him? Thirty-six years ago this week Hacham Baruch performed my wedding. I got married in the Aperia Manor. There was another wedding at Shaare Zion, a wealthier family, and a lot of people wanted to go there. Hacham Baruch was with me. My father loves him. Whenever Hacham Baruch would speak my father's eyes would well up with tears. He would tell me he is full and overflowing [with Torah], he reminded my father of the rabbis of Halab (Aleppo).

Two years ago, when the Rabbi was sick, very sick, a young man in our community, who will remain anonymous, fasted so that the Rabbi should get better. This young man did not fast one day, or even two consecutive days but fasted 40 days until the Rabbi regained consciousness. This is the love, the dedication that

all of us have for our Rabbi.

Look at the great crowd that's here today, a testimony for our love for the Rabbi. The Gemara says that when a rabbi passes away and he has 600, 000 people there at his funeral it's not enough, because 600, 000 were there when the Torah was given so 600, 000 should be there when the Torah goes back to Heaven.

I got the call this morning, a little after two from my son, who I'm proud to say is married to the granddaughter of Hacham Baruch, and later in the morning I told the people in charge of the yeshiva, Deal Yeshiva, that today nothing is regular. We're shutting down and we're getting

coach buses and we're coming to have the zechut to be at this special occasion.

Hacham Baruch came to Brooklyn in 1950. It is said that G-d makes matches in Heaven. G-d matches a rabbi with a congregation. Hacham Baruch was Rabbi in Bradley, and in Deal, and in Brooklyn. Hacham Baruch came at a time when the Syrian community that was in Halab and in Damascus for 2, 500 years was being replanted in foreign soil. The tests of keeping Shabbat were awesome, the tests of maintaining our traditions were very real. And as Rabbi Raful said, Gd in Heaven said I'm going to send you a lion, a blessed man who doesn't shake. G-d made the match and now we lost that great leader.

What I find amazing was Hacham Baruch, who was so strong, uncompromising, took unpopular stands, and yet his appeal brought him closeness with people across the community, with the

very observant and the less observant, with the old and with the young. No matter how unyielding he was that did not lose him the following he had in our community.

The Gemara tells us that the Holy Ish Gamzu was in a house. He was sick and his students wanted to move him out. He told his students to move the furniture out because, "If you take me out of the house it will not stand."

We have to be very careful. Hacham Baruch's zechut held up our house. His devotion and his self sacrifice and his unyielding principles held up our community. We have to redouble our efforts, our prayers, our misvot, our maasim tovim (good deeds), and as Rabbi Kassin said our modesty. We have a lot to be proud of and one day we will be proud of our modesty at weddings, b'ezrat Hashem. We have to hold up the houses, the tremendous void in our community today.

It says when a Sadik leaves a city the glory and the glow and the beauty of the city is gone and you and I, little us, have to fill the void. We do it for tzniut, we do it for Torah, we do it for self sacrifice.

Hacham Baruch is going to Eretz Yisrael and I dare say that he never left Eretz Yisrael. Hacham Baruch brought Eretz Yisrael with him. He brought the holiness and the Torah. Hashem should elevate his memory and may he pray for us.

My consuegro, Rabbi Eli Ben Haim, G-d should bless him, I love Eli. I watched Eli and I always told him what a son you are to your father and he always told me I would never make a move without my father.

I was coming here to the funeral today with my son who is married to Cynthia, his granddaughter, and my son told me, "I want to tell you a story. A couple of months ago, my father-in-law, Rabbi Eli Ben-Haim told Hacham Baruch over the telephone from Deal, 'I love you Dad so much, anything you want I will do for you.' It's Friday afternoon. Hacham Baruch told his son, 'I would like to have for Shabbat that sea bass that Cynthia makes.' Eli went to his daughter, my daughter-in-law and told her to make the best sea bass, 'I want to bring it to my father.' She made it in Deal, he got in a car, went to Mt. Sinai and was by the door of Hacham Baruch. And Hacham Baruch said, 'I wasn't serious, I was just

joking.'" So this was the relationship of the son to his father.

We love Hacham Baruch. We miss him. We will try to emulate his ways and continue in his ways. May he pray for us and b'ezrat Hashem may we see Mashiah very soon. And we will see him again. We will see his father-in-law, Hacham Yaakov. Hashem sent Hacham Yaakov and he came as his father-in-law's assistant. He has raised a gorgeous community. A community that supports every Yeshiva in the world. Our community is a cornerstone of Torah all over the world and a good part of the zechut goes to Hacham Yaakov and Hacham Baruch, may their souls be elevated in Heaven, Amen.

## Rabbi Shlomo Diamond

In the Shulchan Aruch it says that when a great Talmid Hacham (Torah scholar) passes away and is not eulogized properly there is terrible punishment. I am certainly not deserving to eulogize Hacham Baruch properly. Why do the Hazal put such emphasis on eulogizing the Talmid Hacham properly? Because we are in danger, when we don't have a man of this stature anymore. Torah, Avodah (service to Hashem), and Gemilut Hasadim (kindness to his fellow man) were his life. We don't have people like this to emulate anymore and only the eulogy can now capture the essence of the person to teach us how to behave and who you can become. If the Talmid Hacham is not properly eulogized, G-d forbid, it is a terrible tragedy for us, since we no longer have the role model who can convey the tremendous idealism and greatness that all of us can reach.

The rabbi spoke about the last six months. In truth, two and a half years ago Hacham Baruch at Maimonides in the ICU was next to death and [it is] only because of the tefilot (prayers) of the community and his zechut (merit) that we have [him with us] the last two and a half years and the last six months. When he went to a hospital in Cleveland [to undergo] an operation, someone expressed to me a sentiment as to, "why prolong the agony?"

I told the man of the story in the Gemara that is told of Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakai, when he met the Roman Emperor. The Emperor allowed him to make three requests. Rabbi Yohanan



requested that the Emperor spare the Hachamim (Rabbis). Secondly, he asked him to spare the royal families. Thirdly, Rabbi Yohanan asked that a doctor be sent to Rabbi Sadok to cure him. The Emperor answered that he understood why Rabbi Yohanan would want the Hachamim and the royal families spared, but asked, "Who is this Rabbi Sadok? Bring him to me." Rabbi Sadok had to be carried to the Emperor, too sick and weak to walk from fasting for 40 years. When the Emperor saw him he exclaimed, "For this old and sick man you are wasting a wish?" The Yerushalmi continues that Rabbi Yohanan answered him that we only have one Rabbi Sadok and he is our protection. If we had had one more like Rabbi Sadok, the Roman army could not have reached one finger of the Jewish people.

We don't realize the zechut in having Hacham Baruch, the protection for our people. We don't understand the danger we are in now, Hass Veshalom that we don't have a sadik (righteous) like Hacham Baruch who truly cared and loved us. The rabbis said that he was tough, but he loved us and in our hearts was a reflection of what was in his heart.

He was really a doormat. We pray that we should be like the earth, for all, he was. He went to every wedding, every bar misvah. Did we ever think of the burden that we placed on him? We used him.

Did we ever think of what we put on him to be at all the occasions happy or sad?

He was really a continuation of his father-in-law, Hacham Yaakov Kassin and did not deviate by one iota in the way he loved his community. We feel the loss of Hacham Yaakov Kassin all over again as we lose Hacham Baruch. The loss of Hacham [Yaakov] Kassin is the loss of Hacham Baruch, the loss of Hacham Baruch is the loss of Hacham [Yaakov] Kassin.

The rabbis talk about mourning for a person that we were afraid of. When I first entered the community, 27 years ago I was a young person and I made a few mistakes. Hacham Baruch sent for me and spoke to me and straightened me out. He taught me about the Mesorah of the community and through the years every time I made a decision I thought, what would Hacham Baruch say about this. This is the man that I was afraid of. Who knows what's going to happen today in our community. We are in danger. He united everyone, black and white, he was beloved by all. What's going to be now? Who is going to lead us? We have to realize our loss and to cry for the *sadik* (righteous one) and to cry for ourselves.

Hacham Baruch, look at the people, how they loved you, how they revered you, and how they respected you, and how they honored you, the man of Torah, *Hesed* (kind acts), *Tefila* (prayer), *Avoda* (service to Hashem). I know today that the streets are filled [outside this building], schools are here, young and old. This is the *Kavod* (honor) that we are giving to you for what you have given us.

The biggest *Kavod* we can give, is to continue the path that Hacham [Yaakov] Kassin started and Hacham Baruch continued – the path of the Torah, *Avodah*, and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of loving kindness).

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## Rabbi Eli Ben-Haim

And Hashem spoke to Moshe in Midbar Sinai on this first day of the second month of the exodus from Egypt saying."

It was the custom of my father for the last 60 years that whenever he would give a eulogy he would relate the *parasha* of the week to the deceased. Why was the Torah given in the desert, why wasn't it given in a beautiful garden? Isn't the Torah compared to gold and pearls? The

Torah is better than gold and pearls. In order to receive the Torah the person has to make himself like the desert, that everyone steps on him. Many times I would ask my father, "Daddy, why do you have to be the first one at a wedding when no one has arrived yet? Daddy, why do you have to go everywhere?" And he would teach me and tell me that the first thing that you have to do in life is respect the people. You have to be willing to sacrifice yourself for the people. This is what the rabbis meant in their *hespedim*. Even though he was tough and even though he stood firmly for the Torah, he was beloved by all the people, young and old, right, left or middle of the road. This was because he sacrificed himself for the people and was willing to be stepped on. That is why Hashem took him on the *Perasha* of *Bamidbar*.

Only five days ago was the *yahrzeit* of his beloved teacher Hacham Ezra Attia. In the same week of his Rabbi's *yahrzeit*, his *neshama* (soul) left the world. Last week I was at the gravesite of Rabbi Ezra Attia, with two other rabbis to say *Tehilim*. For two and a half hours we sat and prayed that the Rabbi should plead for his student to beg Hashem to keep him here.

Did Hashem not answer us? He did answer us. For every *pasuk* (passage), every *Tehilim* (Psalm), every *misvah*, an angel was created. And all the millions of angels created by the *misvot* we did in the last six months, two years, 30 years, 60 years, and the millions of angels he created from the *misvot* of serving this community will accompany him to the Heavenly Throne and will speak on his behalf.

He will be buried at Har Hamenuchot on Erev Shabbat *Kodesh* after *hatzot* (noon). The time that one is buried is chosen by Hashem. *Hazal* say that it is a great *zechut* (merit) to be buried on Erev Shabbat after *hatzot*. A person who is buried Erev Shabbat after *hasot* is spared the suffering of the grave and the beating of the angels and goes straight to *Gan Eden*.

My father, in the last six months, two years, and the years of his illness would always apologize for making it hard for me and my brothers. I told him, "Daddy, I have the *zechut* to serve you, my brothers have the *zechut* to serve you. What *misvah* is greater than *Kibud Av* (honoring one's father)? To have long life because we served you."

I told him one day that we're going to Cleveland and that maybe we will have to make some major decisions and the brothers may have a little disagreement. What do we do? Whom do we follow? I thought maybe that since I'm the oldest, my father would tell me that I'm in charge, but he turned to me, looked me in the eye and said, "I have four sons. I raised them. It is impossible that they would disagree." This was the motto of my father's life, to unite his children and to unite his community; to make everybody one. The rabbis said that he was a zealot. He stood for what was correct and would not budge from what was correct. Nevertheless, he had the magic ingredient to unite the different parts of the community. That is what [the rabbis] mean [when they ask,] "what will we do without Hacham Baruch?"

One of the rabbis, Rabbi Murray Maslaton came to my mother's house and asked a question. No one knew the answer. Only Hacham Baruch could answer it. What are we going to do without the answers? We have to pray for *Mashiah*, for with *Mashiah* we will have *Tehiat Hameitim* (resurrection of the dead) and we will see my father again *B'ezrat Hashem*, *Bekarov* (Gd willing, soon).

On behalf of my mother, Hashem should give her long life and strength to withstand this test, and on behalf of my brothers, I would like to thank everyone who came to give him his last honor, and *B'ezrat Hashem* he will pray for you and you should see only happiness in your families. *Ha Kadosh Baruch Hu* will let him join his Rabbis, his teachers and his family in Heaven.

Of course, I want to thank all of his daughter-in-laws who worked feverishly and tirelessly the last six months and the last years of his illness to do everything to make his life easier. Hashem should reward you for many years to come. And he will pray *B'ezrat Hashem* for you and your children and your offspring that you have nothing but happiness.

He will pray for our community that we will be able to go in the right ways, in the ways of the Torah and the *misvot*. Only *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* will be able to console us and enable us to withstand the terrible loss of our father Rabbi Baruch *Rephael ben Miriam*.

Yehi *Zichro Baruch*

## Yehudah Ben-Haim

Yesterday, as my father's passing was imminent, I sat by his bedside, and I wrote up a eulogy that I was planning on delivering and Be'ezrat Hashem if I get through, I'll deliver that eulogy.

It wasn't until after my father passed away though, actually a little bit after he passed away, because I kept writing the eulogy, that I realized, of all the things that my Dad did for us, for me personally, for all of us, they're too numerous to count, of course, I can't be grateful enough, I can't be appreciative enough, and I want to tell you one thing that maybe all of you experienced, that I experienced, to a large extent.

People think that to be an angel you have to fast, you have to learn kabbala, you have to do all kinds of things – an ascetic way of life, you have to be special, you have to look special; and I want to tell you something, I believe, that elevated my father to an angelic level beyond any understanding. You know I lived with my father many years until just recently. I was dependent on him. He was the ashir (rich), I was the ani (poor); I took from him, again and again. I took his food, I took his shelter, there was nothing he would spare to help me in all my endeavors; yet, every single time that I walked into the house, and my father was sitting on the chair, and he would see me walk in, there was a smile from ear to ear, and he would say, "We're waiting to see you, we miss you. Mehakim anahnu." Oh my goodness, who am I? I'm a nothing in his house. If I was out of the house for one hour, he would give me the same greeting. "Dad, I just saw you, what do you mean you haven't seen me?" He would tell me I haven't seen you for so long.

Rabbotai, that memory made me cry many times this morning. I'm going to deliver my eulogy in Hebrew, some of it in English, time permitting and ability permitting. But, if you take anything away from what I say, remember to greet your children with sever panim yafot because that will bring you closer to them, more so than anything else. And the children, I'm guilty of not being able to fulfill this the proper way, but the children should try to learn how to greet their parents with the same smile and the same joy every time you see them, even if you haven't seen them for an hour, greet them like you haven't seen them for the last two years. That was my father. And I believe, that was very angelic of him.

**Continued on next page**



*Hacham Baruch with his four sons, Yehudah, Hacham Yaakov, Hacham Eliyahu and David*



*Hacham Baruch with his oldest brother Joe, who was hazzan at Cong. Kol Israel for many years*



*Hacham Baruch is carried on a chair at the wedding of his son Eli*

**אבא** היקר והנדיב, אבא, אבא.  
לכבוד מורי, ואבי - אהובתינו  
אוי לנו, אהה עלינו, כי ינטו צללי ערב,  
לאן נפנה? לאן?

Where are we going to turn to when we need to ask a question? We were so trustworthy of him, he knew the dikduk, he knew the halachot, he knew the minhagim.

כעורים הממששים באפילה,

Like the blind who feel their way in the dark

"מה נִדְבֵר ומה נִצְטָדֵק

What can we say? (And how can we justify ourselves?)

הא-להים מָצָא אֶת עֲוֹן עֲבָדֶיךָ" (בראשית מד, טז)  
The Lord has found the sin of Your servants.

והגנו בודדים ומבוהלים, כציפור הנלכד ביקוש,  
אבא, בציון נולדת, ושמה נתגדלת,  
ומהוריך, מרים ורבי חיים,  
ורבותיך הקדושים כמלאכים, ובראשם רבי עזרא  
עטיה עליהם השלום,  
ששאבת רוח תורתם שבדורינו אין דומה לה,  
הנהגת את תלמידיך ואת צאן מרעייתך החביבים  
במסירות נפלאה,  
כאריה עלית ולימדת תורת משה המסורה  
לתינוקות של בית רבן, למוני העם ולרבנים בחבורה  
ובחברותא,  
דייקת בקריאת התורה בקול חזקה וצלולה.

Sha'arei Tzion, he was the ba'al koreh for so many years

הנעמת זמירות מלכנו דוד בשיר ותהילה,

If anybody listens to his Tehillim tapes, they can feel the emotion,

קבלת פני כל איש ואיש, אפילו לגוי שבשוק, בפניך  
המאירות כשמש בגבורתה,  
אהבתך לבריות, לרעים, למצוות ולתלמוד תורה,  
תישאר בלבנו לעד חקוקה.

דברת עם קוניך בדרך צמודה וכלולה.  
ועם תלמידי חכמים התחברת, בכל יום ובכל שעה.  
פעם אחר פעם רצת ללא הרף בחיפזון לגמול חסד  
עם יהודי ויהודיה,  
ועם כל אדם - הן תלמידיך, הן הרופאים והאחיות,  
והן נכרים הזרים, והן הפועלים הפשוטים, כיבדתם  
הפעלת קירוב לבבות לעבודתו האצילה ולשמור  
הקדושה,

עד סופך האפשרי ואפשרות הלא יאומנה,  
הכנסת ושימחת כלה לחופתה  
השפעת עלינו חשיבות לא להטות מתורת רבותינו  
ימינה או שמאלה,  
ולעשות אך ורק לשם שמים בכל תנועה, הן גדולה,  
הן קטנה.

רדפת לקיים הצדק והיושר בכל פינה ופינה  
ולבטל את הכפירות הרעה, חיפוש אחר חיפוש  
זירות לכלותה ולבערה  
השרשת בנו אמונה מוחלטת, הנהגת אותנו בריכוש  
החכמה,  
סודות תורתו הנפלאה, בסברא ובהלכה,  
השפלת כבודך למצוות בלי היסוס ומחשבה,  
חזרת והחזרתה רבים לגאולת הגאולה ומידת  
התשובה,  
למען שמו השכבת והערכת, ומנעת מעפעפיך  
תנומה,

קבלת באהבה ייסורים מרים כגזירת א-לוה ממעלה,  
ונענעת עליהם ראש בביטחון ובאמונה,

So many times, when he was suffering, how many years he suffered from all types of yisurim, he was in bed, I remember clearly in fact many years ago, twenty years ago, he had an illness, and he was smiling; he said, "gam zeh ya'avor," everything ya'avor - such emunah.

ועם אחרים החולים בקרת ועודדת

He visited so many sick people in the hospitals and in their homes; and even when he was in the hospital he would go visit people.

והתפללת בעדם ובעד כלל ישראל תפילה אחר תפילה

כיתית רגליך בזעה בכל קיץ אחר הקהילה

Every year, my father as was mentioned went to Bradley, and then Deal, you know which workers moved him? Do you know which moving company? He himself single-handedly. He picked up the boxes, in the heat, of late June and July, and he sweated, and he picked up his legs, and he moved every single thing in that little car, in the trunk, and he found a way to fit everything, and the beads of sweat came down pouring. Like Shemuel ha-Navi, he went from place to place. And why, why did he go to Bradley?

לשמור משמרת, ולהזריק בתוך עמך ערך סגולתה  
טהרתה ותפירתה

He went to try and protect the community, every single one of us who was there, did we not go on the beach? My father not once went on the beach in Bradley beach. Where was he? He was in the k'nees (synagogue)

וחס וחלילה שאמנע רוב תודות על תפולך אלי,  
כאמא לעולל להאכילני מחיה ועל התעוררותיך  
להכניס כלתי לחופתה, וישתבה ויתפאר יוצר  
העולם ומלואה שזכיתי אני הקטן שתראה כמו  
עיניך מצוה זאת לגומרה.  
ואביע רגשי תודה, לקבוצת האחים המאוחדת, שלא  
חסכת כל טורח ויגיעה,

My brothers - how hard they worked. Over the past months, over the past years, each one played a role, each one played the role the way they knew how to play the role.

אליהו בדעתו, בכוחו העצומה, יעקב בענווה  
ובמסירות נאמנה, ודוד - הוא הגדול, בלב ובנפש  
הנדיבה.

ועל מדרגות האלו,  
How many times did my father, walk up these steps?

עלית והופעת על עם ה', לתת ולהציע תקוה וישועה.

He would eulogize, and over the past years, before three years, in one leg he had arthritis, and he would limp up. How much pain he had when he walked up those steps, but to eulogize the people of

his community, he made that extra effort. And then after three years ago, he had arthritis in one knee, and he had a neuropathy in the other knee, he was wearing a brace, how difficult it was to get him up in the morning... for him to get up in the morning, but he never hesitated, he would get up five o'clock in the morning to go to shul, and he would come up these steps, and he would walk up and down flights in order to go to weddings and in order to go to bar mitzvahs. He would go to a wedding and then he would tell me, "Take me to the bar mitzvah," I told him, "Dad, what are you talking about? You have to go home and rest." No, he would insist.

להעתיק דברי מוסר ולקח לקהילה האהובה,  
From this podium,

הזכרת כל איש ואישה לפי מעשיו המשובחים ואישיותה המהוללה.  
החיית אלפי פעמים נפש שפלה ממצבה המדוכאה,  
כן ה' אלוקינו ואלוקי אבותינו ירימך לשמי שמים למדרגה העליונה,  
והגנו משיבים נפשיך לאדמה המכפרת והקדושה,  
לארץ שכה הבבת את עפרה

My father loved Israel. How much he looked up to the talmidei hachamim in Eretz Yisrael, how much he looked forward to talking to them, to being with them; how much he rejoiced, when the talmidei hachamim in Israel were successful, and how much he exerted an effort to support the talmidei hachamim in Israel.

ועתה, and now, נבקש מנשמתך האצילה להתפלל בעדנו ובעד הכלל בשלמותה,  
לקרב את השכינה לעם הבחירה, יאמר לצרתנו - די, ולשטן ישלח גערה.  
ישלח לנו משיח צדקין, ויתגשם הגאולה.  
ולאלמנה נאמנה והגלמודה, מרת אמי היקרה והנעימה,

My mother, I don't know if any woman can be as dedicated to my father, as you heard, my father never took a vacation; my mother stood by his side all those years. Of course she was the recipient of his smile, but, she toiled the way he toiled, and she suffered when he suffered. שעמדה לידך יובל שנים ומעלה בשמחה,

And look at the joy she did it with, anybody and everybody who knows my mother, says she has the most joyful personality they ever saw, where did she get that from? Did she get it from going to Honolulu or Tahiti? She got it from standing by my father's side, and living a life of Torah.

עזר וחומה שנה אחרי שנה, הקב"ה יתן לה תוקף וחוזקה,  
ששון ושמחה תמיד יימצא בה, עד לעד תחיית המתים שנצפה לה  
ואז כולנו כחולמים, יחד נשיר ונזמר הללויה,  
לך לגורלך, תנוח לקץ הימים, לך בשלום.



**The following were adapted from speeches at the Levaya of Hacham Baruch in Jerusalem, Israel**

## **Hacham Ovadia Yosef**

Zion shall cry bitterly, and Jerusalem shall sound its voice, over this great man, that now lies in the earth.

A righteous man's departure leaves an impression. So long as the righteous man is in the city, he is its glory, he is its radiance, he is its majesty. Once the righteous man departs from the city, its glory leaves, its radiance leaves, its majesty leaves. This is true regarding an ordinary righteous man; all the more so is it true regarding a community leader, one who leads with supreme kindness, a man of stature such as this great rabbi for whose honor we have assembled.

Where will they turn? A huge gap has been left. From whose mouth will halachot [Jewish laws] be drawn? Who will instruct them in leadership? There is no one. We are left with an empty vacuum. We place our trust in the Almighty, who promised, "By the time Moshe's sun set, Yehoshua's sun rose [as the new leader]; by the time Yehoshua's sun set, the sun of Otniel – who is Yabetz – rose."

The crown of our heads has fallen. Woe unto us, for we have sinned. Oh – what has befallen us! "Moshe's face is like the surface of the sun; Yehoshua's face [his successor] is like the surface of the moon [not as bright as his predecessor's]." Who will fill his place? Who can give instruction? Who is a teacher like him? He dedicated himself to the community his whole life. They all loved him; they all revered him.

The words of Hillel the Elder served as the light guiding his footsteps: "Be among the students of Aharon the kohen [priest], who was a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, who loved people and brought them close to Torah." Everyone saw his righteous path. Everyone sensed a closeness to him; they all loved him, they all appreciated him. Oh, for those who are gone and cannot be replaced!

"I am pained over you, my brother Yehonatan; you were so pleasant for me. Your love for me exceeded the love of women." When the great author of Noda Bi-yehudah, Rabbi Yehezkel Landau, eulogized Rabbi Yonatan Eibshitz, he cited this verse in reference to him. What does this verse convey in the context

of a eulogy? Why is "the love of women" mentioned there?

About the love of women, the Gemara says (in Yevamot 63a), "He said to him: It is enough [reason to appreciate our wives] that they raise our children and save us from sin." Righteous women save their husbands from sin, ensuring that they do not take interest in other women, and they also raise the children in Torah.

This was the lifework of the great Rabbi Yonatan Eibshitz. He taught Torah to the nation of Israel all the days of his life – "You shall teach them to your children – this refers to your students." He taught them Torah with all his might. They save our children from sin and raise our children in Torah, such as through his works. Anyone who studies his work, which was sweet as honey, and his works of [halachic] rulings will see how he spoke to the people and how they obeyed him; they would all run to him to hear his guidance.

Thus, this is what it means, "your love for me exceeded the love of women." What is "the love of women"? Raising children in Torah and saving them from sin. This was the eulogy, the anguish over Rabbi Yonatan, and the same applies to the deceased. "I am pained over you, my brother Yehonatan." He loved us like a brother. The most accomplished in the group, the best of all my friends – this was the deceased. Every time we would meet together – there was such love, such adoration, such friendship. It was simply wondrous – comparable to only the love of David, love that depends on nothing. This was the love.

He exerted himself so much to increase Torah and bring the Torah to Israel. Each time I visited the United States, from one year to the next I would see an enormous difference, how the previous year was desolate, and suddenly they started studying Torah, they began growing in Torah. Today, the New York community is blossoming; it is flourishing in Torah, and it is flourishing in good deeds. Besides the good deeds, besides the donations it contributes to institutions in the Land of Israel, which was already generous, besides all this – the love of Torah and the love of Torah study; this is the greatest of them all.

He planted this in their hearts. He was the leader who guided them, he sowed



in their hearts the love of Torah. Indeed, "You were so pleasant for me. Your love for me exceeded the love of women." Oh, for those who are gone and cannot be replaced!

But this is our consolation. The Gemara says in [Tractate] Bava Batra (116a), "Hadad heard in Egypt that David had been laid with his fathers and that Yoav, the military general, had died.' Why regarding David does it say 'laying' and regarding Yoav it says 'death'? David, who left behind a son – regarding him it says, 'laying'; Yoav, who did not leave behind a son – regarding him it says, 'died'." David left behind a son like him, and so it says "laying," rather than "death." Yoav, who did not leave behind a son like him, died. The deceased left behind fine sons, righteous sons, upright sons, sons who disseminate Torah, in whose hearts the love of Torah burns. Fortunate is the one who begot them, and fortunate is the one who raised them. Therefore, he did not die. He still serves up in the heavens, he prays for his nation, Israel. We are currently in great crisis; there is no one who can save us, there is no one who will concern himself with us now. The deceased, who stands before the Almighty, shall pray that He foil the thoughts and plans of our enemies, that the Almighty shall leave us a name and remnant on earth to sustain a populous nation. And he shall earn the merit that just as the love of Israel was in his heart in his lifetime, so shall he stand before the Almighty, that He annul for us all harsh and unfavorable decrees, and send us salvation and consolation. And you, go on, at the end you will rise; and you shall rest in your destiny until the end of days, amen.

## Hacham Eliyahu Bakshi Doron

The Gemara says in Tractate Mo'ed Katan: "When Rabbi Zeira passed away, a certain eulogizer began, 'The land of Shina conceived and gave birth; the beautiful land raised its delightful ones. Woe unto it, declared Rakat, for its precious vessel is lost!'"

As we stand in the presence of Hacham Baruch – Jerusalem conceived and gave birth, Porat Yosef conceived and gave birth. But New York was privileged, and snatched from the Gates of Zion a Jerusalemite sage who took with him the Torah of the Land of Israel, who left to the Diaspora. But woe unto us, the Gates of Zion, for its precious commodity has gone. Woe unto Deal (New Jersey), which had a Hacham that was a leader, it had a posek (authority on Jewish law) who was the "precious vessel" of the Land of Israel, and has now lost its precious commodity.

We heard from his colleague, his dear friend who is his age, from our master [Hacham Ovadia Yosef] shlit"a, about his greatness. However, my friends, one who was not in the Gates of Zion on Shabbat afternoon and saw in Porat Yosef classrooms and classrooms of students sitting and studying Torah in depth, has no concept of who Hacham Baruch was. Indeed, Rabbi Yaakov Kassin was privileged to go to the Diaspora and build the great, glorious community that could have fallen apart, Heaven forbid. Rabbi Yaakov Kassin was privileged that they all returned to Torah and observed Shabbat. But he was truly privileged with a son-in-law, who epitomized the ideal, "And he sent Yehuda ahead of him, to Goshen": if Hacham Yaakov Kassin built the community and returned it to Torah and mitzvot, Hacham Baruch raised a new generation of Torah scholars in America. Hacham Baruch's students are of the type that study Rashi and Tosafot in depth each day. And this has become, thank Gd, the pride and glory of the community in the new generation. Hacham Baruch built a generation of Jews who work in business yet get up every morning to hear a Torah class; a generation of men who are all proud to be students of Hacham Baruch.

To give you an idea, yesterday, I received a call from a Jew whom I

know already for ten years here, but he comes from New York. He told me that he had just gotten a call that Hacham Baruch had passed away, and he asked whether he must tear keria (ripping one's clothes as an expression of grief) over him. I asked, "Was he your primary teacher?" He said, "He taught us – the entire class – what Rashi is, what Tosafot is. He taught the entire Shulhan Aruch (code of Jewish law), and everything he taught we obediently practiced." This is what he asked. And it's not just him – there are, thank Gd, hundreds in the new generation in America, a generation that was raised there, a generation that not only supports Torah, that not only keeps Shabbat, but a generation of Torah scholars, thank Gd, who love Torah. And Hacham Baruch was ever so close with them.

I remember that about four years ago I was in the hospital, and his condition was very grave; who would have imagined that he would recover. He could barely speak, but one thing I heard from him: he asked me how Hacham Ovadia was doing. He was in the worst of conditions, and yet this was his passionate concern – about the Land of Israel. Afterward, thank Gd, our master [Hacham Ovadia] prayed, the whole nation of Israel prayed, and a few years later I met him, last year, although in a wheel chair, he still, thank Gd, led his community, and ruled on matters of halachah. He was someone with eyes and a heart like a "wise man who foresees consequences." He stood guard to protect everything.

And therefore, indeed, as has been mentioned here, the loss is a grave one. And certainly the Gates of Zion mourn, and certainly not just the Gates of Zion. He left the Land of Israel for almost sixty years, he left the Torah of the Land of Israel; it was now [this time of year], the time of Parashat Bamidbar, that he was sent to the Diaspora, he went to devote himself to the "desert." Now, after almost sixty years Rabbi Baruch returns to the Land of Israel, he returns to Porat Yosef.

"Your righteousness shall go before you, and Gd's glory shall take you in." Thousands upon thousands of students accompany him now, thousands of fami-



lies whom he educated towards Torah, thousands upon thousands of acts of kindness that he performed in the Land of Israel. "Your righteousness shall go before you, and Gd's glory shall take you in." Thank Gd, he saw the fulfillment of [the verse], "When a righteous man walks in his innocence, fortunate are his children after him." His sons follow his path, they disseminate Torah, continue his legacy, stand guard to protect his direction and his path, and his truth, which was the light for his footsteps.

May it be [Gd's] will that – as the venerable rabbi mentioned – he should pray for us. He loved the Land of Israel, he loved the nation of Israel, he loved the Torah. Today, Israel is in trouble; the situation of Torah is very grave. Stand in prayer before the Creator of the world, arouse divine compassion, together with all the great and righteous ones, that we may merit to see the elimination of death forever, and that we hear good tidings, of salvation and consolation, amen.

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## Hacham Shlomo Amar

This day is a most difficult one. A prince, a great leader has fallen in Israel. "Prince" – for he led with force, with courage and with vigor. And he was great in Torah, he was great in fear of

Gd. He served as a shining example for the masses.

This [week's] parashah [Torah portion] is Parashat Bamidbar, which we always read before the festival of Shavuot. The Torah was given in the desert [midbar]; this teaches us that even a desolate wilderness, which is bereft of sanctity, even an empty desert, even a "desert" that is distant from Torah – if we bring Torah into it, it becomes holy. And this is our task – to sanctify the mundane, to add from the mundane onto the holy. Our job in this world is to bring sanctity to every place, such that not one place is left without holiness.

New York and America were distant, and they had no Torah and no sanctity, "until I arose, Devorah, until I arose, as a mother in Israel" – until the great, righteous and pious sage and Kabbalist, Rabbi Yaakov Kassin of blessed memory, a man above all the rest, came along. And he founded, built and established. Then, his great son-in-law, the deceased, the great, righteous and pious sage Rabbi Baruch Ben-Haim of blessed memory, continued in his sacred path and expanded the borders of sanctity. He turned this wilderness into a place filled with Torah, into a place filled with holiness, to a place of fear of Heaven, a place in which to take pride and to which to look as a shining example for all Jewish communities worldwide.

I was recently at Hacham Baruch's house. Such humility, such fear [of Gd], such derech eretz [good manners] he showed to me, to an unworthy person like me, both in his home and in the synagogue. And his mouth did not stop asking about our master [Hacham Ovadia Yosef], may he live, his colleague – may he be set apart for a good, long life – how he was feeling, how things were going, what the situation of Torah was in Israel. He would ask with such interest, while he himself was in very bad condition; he was already in a wheelchair. But all his concerns and all his thoughts were about the nation of Israel, about the Torah of Israel, for it was in this that he was engaged, in this he was involved all his life. He never separated himself from it. When he sat in the synagogue, when he sat in his home, when he taught, when he spoke – all his thoughts were focused on one thing – how to increase Torah, how to sanctify the Name of Gd, how

to expand the borders of sanctity. And through him, it was indeed expanded in that place, and it was sanctified and became glorious – at levels that had never before been known.

"And she laughed [even as she anticipated] the final day." He can "laugh" and rejoice over the final day, for he now looks over all the days he lived, and behold they are full. They are all full of Torah, they are all full of sanctity – "there is no exception and there is no exit." There is no day and there is no hour that was wasted. He brought with him all his days; he made all his days eternal, he made all his hours eternal, he made all his moments eternal, by sanctifying them with Torah and fear [of Gd].

May it be the will of our Father in heaven, that this great rabbi of blessed memory, who was a great leader in the nation of Israel, and who was the shaliah tzibur [representative of the congregation] for all Israel, shall stand before the Throne of Glory and bring there our cries, our wailing, and our entreaties. He shall not be silent or still until the Almighty arises from the Throne of Judgment and sits on the Throne of Mercy, and lead His nation with kindness and compassion. He shall ask for mercy on behalf of his wife, may she be set apart for life, on behalf of his sons and all his descendants, on behalf of his sacred community, on behalf of our master, may he be set apart for a long, good life, just as he had prayed for him during his lifetime, and on behalf of all Israel. May the Almighty put an end to our troubles and bring about our salvation, with deliverance and mercy, amen and amen.

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## Hacham Yehuda Moalem

Oh, for this great man, who is now buried in the earth! He earned merit, and he brought merit to many others, raising Torah scholars to the point where they became authorities in Torah, Gemara and the mitzvot (commandments).

In his youth, he was in Yeshivah Porat Yosef, where he studied with Rabbi Yehuda Sadkah of blessed memory, as well as with our rabbi and master, the



crown of our head, Rabbi Ezra Attia of blessed memory. They educated him, raised him, and infused him with the fear of Heaven and love of Torah. He was firmly attached to them – to both Rabbi Sadkah and Rabbi Attia of blessed memory; he absorbed from them Torah and fear of Heaven.

Regarding him it is said: "Three groups of ministering angels go out to greet him [a righteous man who departs from the world]. One says to him: Come in peace! Another says to him: He walks upright. And another says to him: They shall lie restfully." The first one says, "Peace" – "peace" refers to Torah. He studied during his youth in Porat Yosef; the delight of his childhood was in Porat Yosef. Constantly, he took in [Torah]. As friends in Porat Yosef, we would walk together in the Old City, to Bet Yisrael; we were outside the city. We would walk together each day morning and evening, and the whole way he was learning; the whole way he would speak in ethics, in Jewish thought. I remember that on several occasions they held here an assembly in Jerusalem in front of the cameras protesting the uprooting of Torah. And he stood like an iron pillar and said his words ever so pleasantly, but with force. He was afraid of no one.

He thereby earned merit not only here, but also in lands abroad, where he like-

wise guarded against breaches in the Jewish religion. He stood firm. I say about him, “the wind did not extinguish the pillar of smoke [that rose from the altar outside the Temple].” Any cloud or smoke can be dispersed by the wind. But when dealing with that which is sacred to Gd – the wind cannot scatter it. He was like an iron pillar. On several occasions I heard him; such fear of Gd he had in his inner being, his interior corresponded to his exterior. He did not say one thing with his mouth and think differently in his heart. And regarding this the Gemara says that they stand over him and say to him, “Come in peace.” This refers to the Torah that he learned, which was the guiding light for his footsteps.

Another group says to him: “He walks upright.” He was afraid of no one. When he had to speak of Gdly matters, words of admonition, he wouldn’t budge. He would admonish, and ultimately Gd would help him. One who earns divine assistance - “Fear Gd...for this is what man is all about” – if he has fear of Heaven, the Almighty assists him and grants him success.

Additionally, “they shall lie restfully.” He worked day and night. Not only during the day was he involved in communal affairs, but also during the night, even during his personal time. Both day and night he worked to bring people closer, bring students closer, make peace between husband and wife, between man and his fellow. He was a speaker capable of returning people to Torah and mitzvat.

Woe unto us, for we have sinned, that we have lost such a precious gem; the Gates of Zion have lost something tremendous, a great rabbi in Israel. As the author of Rivevot Efrayim said, there was once a king who fought a war in some country, and they came to ask him for assistance, because they felt unable to do it. They needed an army, more manpower. He went ahead and removed the chief of the army. They were all astounded: “We wanted some help – and you take our military hero from us, the one on whom we relied!” A wise man then said to them, “What he did was good. You relied on him, and you thought that he would save you, and you were confident. This king wanted you to be alert, to strengthen yourselves. And so he took him from the battle and left you by yourselves, so that you will realize that



*At the funeral in Jerusalem, thousands gathered in front of Yeshivat Porat Yosef*

you must deal independently, so that you can then defeat the evil inclination and follow the ways of the Torah.”

May the Almighty protect us and rescue us, as it is written, “When Moshe died, Yehoshua came.” May it be the Almighty’s will that he [the deceased] will help us, that his name shall rise in prayer to our Father in heaven, that he may pray on behalf of his community and on behalf of all of Israel, that the Almighty shall put an end to our troubles, and we shall merit the arrival of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead, amen, so may it be His will.

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## **Hacham Moshe Sadka**

“Will you not know, that a great prince has fallen in Israel.” My esteemed friends, the verse states, “Will you not know.” The verse does not state, “Don’t you know,” but rather in the future tense – “Will you not know.” A prince and great man has fallen in Israel – not only in New York, where they know full well that he was a prince and great man, but even here, from where the deceased has been absent for many years, perhaps many people do not know that he was a prince and a great man. The verse states, “Will you not know.” Even you here in the Land of Israel must know that the deceased, this great prince who was in the Diaspora, his influence

spread even to the Land of Israel.

Today, Friday, we eulogize him here in Porat Yosef. Yesterday, Thursday night, they studied Torah diligently [in yeshiva] until late – this, too, is in the merit of our rabbi, Rabbi Baruch of blessed memory. For good reason he is eulogized today, on Friday.

[He was] a prince and great man: a “prince” in Torah, a genius in Torah. Already in our childhood, when he would walk in his youth in the streets of Jerusalem, everyone knew that he was among the brilliant minds of the yeshiva, a great genius. And even later, when he went to the Diaspora, he was privileged to bring merit to the community with his great Torah. He was a prince in Torah and a great man in leadership. He led an entire nation, he led students, he led people to respect Torah.

I do not want to elaborate; the rabbis already eulogized, and I am not worthy of elaborating. But in honor of the rabbi who was a great friend of my master, my father [Hacham Yehuda Sadka] of blessed memory, I had to speak. The deceased had the merit that his sons follow his ways. May Gd prolong their days with goodness. May he pray and intercede on behalf of all his sons and his entire dear family, and on behalf of the entire sacred community. And may death be eliminated forever, amen and amen.

## Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Adapted from a speech at the Arayat of Hacham Baruch in Magen David Yeshiva

My friends, at the levayah, my good friend and sometimes havruta, Rabbi Eliyahu Ben-Haim, opened with one of the rabbis' minhagim, on such occasions, to quote the weekly parashah. There was another way he began eulogies, I'd like to take the liberty of mimicking the Rabbi's practice, although of course I will not be able to do it as well. This will be a short poem, using the letters Baruch Refa'el ben Miriam at the beginning of each line.

### Baruch

*With self-sacrifice he served his Master,  
He ran as a deer to the assistance of his fellow,  
And he rose with dawn to learn His Torah,  
His whole aim to sanctify the Name of his Creator.*

ברוך  
במסירות נפשו עבד את אדונו,  
רץ כצבי לעזרת זולתו  
וקם באשמורת ללמוד תורתו  
כל כוונתו לקדש שם בוראו,

### Rephael

*He subjugated his will to the will of his Creator,  
Daily he opened his mouth to praise Him,  
Aggadot, Derashot, Halachot, and Kabalah,  
He studied in depth and in breadth – everything precisely.*

רפאל  
רצונו שיעבד לרצון בוראו  
פיו פתח בכל יום להללו  
אגדות, דרשות, הלכות, וסודו  
למד בעיון ובבקיאות – הכל על בוריו.

### ben

*He grew up in Jerusalem during his childhood,  
His soul influenced by the sanctity of his surrounds.*

בן  
בירושלים גדל בימי נערו  
נשמתו נשפע מקדושת סביבתו.

### Miriam

*He raised a family of worth – humble,  
Merciful, modest, the seed of those who do hesed.  
Afflictions crushed his body with pain,  
From his faith and belief he never budged,  
today he rests in the Heavens.*

מרים  
משפחתו גדל להשכיל – אל דלים  
רחמנים, ביישנים, זרע גומלי חסדים  
ייסורים דכאו גופו בכאבים  
מאמונתו, בטחוננו, לא סר, היום שוכן  
במרומים.

**M**y friends, we come here today to pay respect and to acknowledge a debt; “et asher yeshno po imanu omed ha-yom” - all those gathered here today, “lifnei Hashem Elokeinu” before Hashem our God, “ve-et asher enenu po imanu ha-yom,” and also those who are not here today, (Devarim 29:14).

Our community, those of this generation, feel the loss. But we really don't understand the debt. Those of past generations, who are no longer with us, also benefited greatly, beyond measure from the blessing Hashem granted us – Hacham Baruch, what a berachah.

Those yet to be born, will not realize a fraction of what they will owe to the Talmid Hacham who gave all, all of his being, to the benefit of the future. Far be it from me to blame people for not fully appreciating our Rabbi. He did it to us. He concealed his vast knowledge of Torah by teaching all who came to learn: children, adults, in a simple

understandable, patient manner. When Talmidei Hachamim came to seek his advice, they were met with a depth and breadth of Torah they could never imagine when they would walk through the door. How many times would he say to me: “Rahamim, these medicines, they make me forget – I don't want to forget.”

He covered up his princely position. He was separate and apart from the masses in yihus (familial heritage). By living with and sharing the joys and sadness and the concerns of his community, he connected with them.

“Va-yigdal Mosheh, va-yetze el ehav, va-yar be-sivlotam.”

“And Mosheh Rabbenu matured, and he went out to see his brothers, and he saw their afflictions” (Shemot 2:11).

He hid his greatness behind a simple lifestyle, his home, his dress, his manner. He turned down all offers for honors and awards. I remember once when the community was in one of its battles, and



Rabbi Raymond Beyda at Hacham Baruch's Arayat in Magen David Yeshiva

there was a lot of talk going on, and the Rabbi spoke definitely, truly, to the point, to defend the masoret (true heritage), to keep us on track as the car veered off the road. And I said: “Rabbi, I don't understand. They are attacking you, they are saying things about you that are not true, with all the things they're saying – say it's not true!” He turned to me, and smiled. “Rahamim.” That smile meant, you don't understand. When it comes to Torah, mitzvot, masoret, I will fight with every ounce in my body, but never will I say one word in defense of myself. Dom la-Hashem ve-hit'holler lo” – be silent and trust that Hashem will take of it (Tehillim 37:7). That's why we trusted him, that's why we needed him. That's why we loved him.

When I entered the seventh grade, in Magen David yeshiva, I think you could have fit the whole school in this room, I don't mean the students, the whole school, I had no idea how fortunate I was, ashrei ha-ish, (fortunate is the man.) In those two years, seventh and eighth grade, with Hacham Baruch alav ha-shalom, as my teacher, as my rabbi, I not only learned Torah, I began a lifelong relationship with my Rav. I can honestly say, on my part, “nafsho keshura be-nafsho” (Bereshit 44:3) – my neshamah was bound with his.

Over twenty years later, he came to our fledgling new community, called Park Avenue, in Long Branch, and he spent

several summers with us – the flame was rekindled. I learned what values to chase, he told me, “Rahamim, gadlut ba-Torah – try to be great in Torah, yir’at shamayim, we lack yir’at shamayim - fear of heaven, chase it; tzni’ut - a modest lifestyle, and anavah – humility; everything we have is a gift from Hashem, there’s no reason to be haughty.” And most of all he taught me, that we must appreciate a value unique to the Jewish people, a value unknown to goyim, and unfortunately, almost lost even to us, a thing he culled from his youth in Yerushalayim, kedushah; how many times he told me, “where is the kedusha?” He brought it from Yerushalayim, and he passed it on to us.

He dazzled us with stories about his teachers, tzaddikim livracha Ha-Rav Lofez, Ha-Rav Yehudah Sadka z”tl for a short time, Ha-Rav Abbo, z”tl, and first and foremost how much he spoke of “the Moreh”, Hacham Ezra Attia zecher tzaddik ve-kadosh livracha. He related childhood stories of poverty, but of Torah. Standing on line to get water for the family and carrying home the buckets, Hacham Ovadya yibadel lehayyim in his swollen feet from a lack of ability to buy new shoes; but the Torah, and the way they walked home, and they learned everything by heart, and they argued pilpul, “u-ve-lechtecha ba-derech” (Devarim 6:7; 11:19 – “and when you go on the way”).

And his father and his mother; how we benefited, we owe those two so much; his father left business to go into hinuch (education), because he felt that it was a better way for his son; and his mother, I remember going to Israel, Eretz ha-Kodesh, and I went for my berachah from the Rabbi, and the Rabbi apologized and said, “Rahamim, would you mind, I have a package for my mother. I said, “Mind? It would be my honor.” And he gave me a letter, and a little package, and the address, and he said, “Rahamim I want you to know who you’re going to meet. Every night, she put me in bed, and every night she would take out “Nifla’im ma’asecha” from the Ben Ish Hai, stories, from their family’s rabbi from Baghdad, and she would read me into a deep sleep. And Rahamim, instead of dreaming of ridiculous, senseless things, I dreamt about mal’achim, angels. If I ever became anything, I owe



Morris Antebi

*From left: David Ben-Haim, Hacham Yaakov Ben-Haim, Ike (Bert) Dweck (second row), Ofer (Joe) Levy, Yehuda Ben-Haim, Raphael Aharonoff*

it to the woman you’re going to meet.” And when I met that woman, I learned where he came from.

His credo, teach anyone, teach anytime; if I tell you, I told him: “I have to go to work, Rabbi I have to learn, how about five a.m.?” “Five a.m., certainly, I’m up from three,” he told me. How many days I got up ten to five, quarter to five, four thirty, I wanted to get to the shul, I want to beat him once – never. He was always there with the gemara open and he was waiting. It’s famous the expression, “yoter mi-ma she-ha-egel rotzeh linok, ha-para rotza le-hanik” – more than the calf wants to suckle its mother, the mother wants to feed (Pesachim 112a). That’s how he taught Torah. And I can honestly tell you private things, with his reshut. In the last couple of years, when we would see him more in the house than in the shul, how often he would turn to me and say, “How are the shiurim going?” “Well Rabbi, this is smaller, this is bigger, we’re trying, you know you’re not there, and we are succeeding in your path.” He’d say, “Rahamim, the shiurim, ha-shiurim, ma yihye im ha-shiurim?” (What will be of the classes?)

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zecher tzaddik livracha, was a man who the Rabbi met and admired so much. The Rabbi always told me, “His teshuvot are hana’a (pleasure) to read, he writes like a rishon; gemara, rishonim, sevara, pesak. Rav Moshe says ‘ve-shinantam le-vanecha,’ he quotes Rashi, ‘le-vanecha elu ha-

talmidim’ (Rashi, Devarim 6:7) He asks a question, ‘rav adif me-av’ – a rav is in a greater position in regards to a student than a father to a son – why would the one who teaches Torah be reduced, to be called a father?’ Answers Rav Moshe as only he could, ‘ha-av, the father, imparts to the son his looks, his powers, his strength, his money, even an IQ; and he imparts it to him naturally, through genes, the way Hashem made it. Amra Torah, she-ha-rav tzarich le-hashpi’a al ha-talmidim she-yihyu kemoto – the job of a rabbi is to teach students to be like he was, in the way he walked, talked, and lived his life.’

Rabbotai, I’m going to cut it short, I want you to know, we have a debt to pay, we have an obligation. We have to live, and do what I’ve been doing all week – as I stop to do something, I say what would the Rabbi want me to do? That’s your next question, what would the Rabbi want me to do? If we do that, we will bring his legacy, to where it belongs. May he pray on behalf of his wife Charlotte, his son Eli and his wife Norma, his son Yaakov and his wife Aviva, his son Yehuda and his new wife Ruth, his son David and his wife Sarah, all of his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, his extended family, his students, his community, and all the people of Israel, u-bifrat be-Eretz ha-Kodesh, (and especially in the Holy Land.) Te-hei nishmato tizrura bitzror ha-hayyim. Amen. (May his soul be bound in the

bind of the living, Amen.)

## Rabbi David Ozeri

Adapted from a speech at Hacham Baruch's Arayat in Magen David Yeshiva

To try and describe the life and greatness of Hacham Baruch in a few minutes, the few minutes that's granted me, has to be one of the most difficult tasks that I have ever attempted in my life. Hashem should be with me, and Heaven should forgive me if I don't properly eulogize this true gadol be-Yisrael. About six months ago, my wife and I were sitting at the kitchen table, my youngest son, a six year old boy walks in, and he says to me, "Abba, who was my Sandak (man given the honor to holds the baby during a circumcision)?" I looked at my wife, and my wife looked at me, and we found it to be an odd question for a six year old. I said, "Who was your Sandak?" He said, "Yes, who was my Sandak?" I said, "Your Sandak was Hacham Baruch." He said, "Who's that?" It's Hacham Baruch, great Talmid Hacham, and a very big tzadik. He says, "Can you take me to my Sandak, Hacham Baruch?" I said, "You want to go to Hacham Baruch?" He says, "Yeah, I want to get a berachah (blessing) from my Sandak." I said, "Okay, when you have a day off, when I'm off, I'll take you. Fine."

A few days later he comes back to me. He says, "Can you take me to my Sandak?" I said, "Maybe some day when you don't have school, we'll go," and I was really planning to take him to meet Hacham Baruch. Hacham Baruch unfortunately that week ended up going into the hospital, Mount Sinai. From Mount Sinai to the Cleveland clinic, from the Cleveland clinic, for months, back to Mount Sinai, never ever to come home again. It will be my lifelong, everlasting regret that I did not take my child then, to kiss his hand and receive his berachah. That magical hand, how many tens of thousands of times was that hand kissed? Why? Why?

The Kaf Ha-Hayyim – who Hacham Baruch saw when he was nine years old, when he went to ask him a question on kaved (liver) – brings down in reish samech beit (article 362), that the fingers of a talmid hacham have kedushah



Morris Antebi

Rabbi David Ozeri speaking at the Arayat of Hacham Baruch in Magen David Yeshiva



Hacham Baruch, sitting with Rabbi David Ozeri and Hacham Abraham Harari-Raful

(holiness), and therefore it is a proper minhag to kiss the hand of a talmid Hacham. The talmid Hacham, with his fingers and his hands writes hiddushim (new Torah insights), writes divrei Torah, writes divrei kedushah (holy writings), and therefore the hand has kedushah. And when you kiss that hand, the kedushah emanating from that hand will have a positive effect on you. Not only Hacham Baruch's hand had kedushah, but his entire essence radiated kedushah. The proof – whenever you saw Hacham Baruch, whether it was in the street, in the synagogue, on a regular weekday,

or Yom Kippur, the natural instinct was, run to kiss his hands, because he radiated kedushah.

To understand why, one must know his roots. About ten years ago Hacham Baruch spoke, at an arayat (yahrzeit) for an elderly woman from Yerushalayim, and he spoke about the old days in Yerushalayim; and he said something that left such an indelible impression on me, and I heard the tape over and over again. He said that when he was ten years old, his mother informed him that her and her husband, his father, had made a decision to register him in Porat



*Rabbi David Ozeri, bringing a smile to his Rabbi's face, at the wedding of Hacham Baruch's son, David Ben-Haim – by "eating fire".*

Yosef; and she told him the next day I will take you to the yeshivah. She was walking up to the yeshivah, and she's telling him, "My dear son, when we open the doors of the yeshivah, you will see angels, you will see mal'achim, who have ru'ah ha-kodesh, and with them you will sit." Hacham Baruch said when he opened the door of Porat Yosef in the Old City, he had such fear, such a pahad, to look at the rabbis, that he couldn't lift his head up. He said there was two azarot in Porat Yosef, the Old City, one for nistar and one for nigleh, one where they learned kabbala, and one where they learned gemara, Talmud; and he was frightened, the fear, the eima, that he was sitting amongst people who had ru'ah ha-kodesh, who were considered mal'achim in olam ha-zeh, he couldn't lift his head, and there he stayed. And eventually in his youth, he became very good friends, with Hacham Ovadia shlita, Hashem should lengthen his lifes with good and pleasant days. And he told me, he says, "We, Hacham Ovadia and I, we lived, we didn't live in the Old City, we lived in the old section in the new city, there was no transportation to get to the Old City, so we had to walk every day," this was in the Thirties, "it was about a forty-five minute to an hour walk, and we would walk, and every day we would make

hazarah on one daf of gemara going, and one daf of gemara coming back. And this went on not for months but for years, rabbotai figure it out; they walked to the yeshivah, if they walked three hundred days a year, three hundred days a year, times two dapim a day, how much is that rabbotai, how much is it? Six hundred dapim a year, just from their walk to yeshivah, back and forth.

Hacham Baruch's diligence, was beyond our comprehension, there's no doubt about it. There was a ladder in Porat Yosef where you could get up on the ladder and get a book or put back the sefer; they tell over about Hacham Baruch that he once climbed that ladder and opened up a sefer, to take it, and he looked in the sefer, and he ended up on the ladder for five hours, not realizing that he was on the top of the ladder, so engrossed in the sefer. There was no lunch break he told us, in Porat Yosef; when you felt hungry, you walked out for a few minutes and you ate. Day began at five a.m. 'till midnight. You couldn't stay in the Old City 'til too late at night, it was dangerous to walk back; him and Hacham Ovadia would walk back early, they would get a little bite for dinner, and go back to the local shul, and there they would stay, totally engrossed in the Torah 'till midnight, go back to sleep, back up

again at five a.m. For years, for years and years this went on, throughout his childhood, his adolescence, and his early adulthood, he sat with those angels, especially with his Rabbi Hacham Ezra Attia, zecher tzaddik ve-kaddosh livracha, where he told me, "We used to sit eight, ten hours a day with our rabbis; there was no such thing as bein ha-zemanim vacations, and there was no such thing as bein ha-sedarim, a break in the middle of the day. You ate a few minutes, you prayed a few minutes, and you sat with your rabbi and just sucked in all the Torah, all the kedushah." This was Hacham Baruch.

At a young age, Hacham Ezra Attia sent him to South Africa to be the rabbi; he went. After serving that community for a year, a very wealthy community, he went back to Eretz Yisrael, he thought to stay. Little did he know that across the Atlantic Ocean, Isaac Shalom alav ha-shalom, was writing a letter, penning a letter, to Hacham Ezra Attia, asking him to please send another rabbi, that Hacham Yaakov alav ha-shalom needs some more help, send another rabbi. He immediately dispatched Hacham Baruch alav ha-shalom, to New York. Little did we know that for the next fifty-six years we would have this hatichat kedushah, this piece of kedushah, this spiritual diamond, for fifty-six years.

**מִצְאֵי הַשְּׁמַרִים הַסְּבִיבִים  
בְּעִיר הַכּוֹנֵי פְּצֵוֹנֵי נְשָׂאוֹ אֶת  
רְדִידֵי מַעְלֵי שְׂמֵרֵי הַחֲמוֹת"  
(שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ה': ז)**

("The watchmen who went about the city found me, they struck me. They wounded me; the watchmen of the walls took away my veil from me.")

What does shomrei ha-homot mean? The watchmen of the walls of the city, Midrash Rabbah on Shir Ha-Shirim says, "shomrei homoteha shel Torah" – the angelic watchmen of the walls of Torah (Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah 5:7 s.v. "metza'uni"); rabbotai, Hacham Baruch was our angelic watchman of the walls of Torah of our community. To the best of his ability, with every ounce of his strength, he would not allow a breach in those walls. He used his encyclopedic mind, to store vast amounts of information, on each and every person's lineage in this community. It was astounding, it was amazing; you would go to Hacham



Baruch and you would tell him my daughter's engaged, my son's engaged. "To who?" "So and so." "Who's the father?" "So and so." "Oh, I knew his grandfather, I knew the uncles, the brothers, the sister's married to this one, the brother's married to that one, the nephews are married to that one..." like a computer, just spitting it all out. That was vital information in this community, because if there was a tainted lineage, he knew about it, and he would not allow a breach in the walls. He did everything in his power to prevent any kind of problems.

The story, a man, not from the community, a Sephardic Jew, walked into Hacham Baruch's house with a community member, and he said this man wants to get married Hacham Baruch can you marry him off? "Were you ever married?" "Yes." "Do you have a get?" "Maybe." He asked him about the get, turns out it was not a proper get, whatever it was. Hacham Baruch didn't tell him sorry, go, goodbye. This man didn't see his former wife for years. Hacham Baruch searched out the former wife, found her, convinced her to accept a get from her former husband, went and made the wedding, a year later he went to the berit, never took a penny from the man, the man had no money. Made sure, no problems.

A man, he was involved, the Hacham Baruch, with serious medical issues in this community, issues of piku'ah nefesh, sat and worked on them, and listened, and talked to doctors, halachic ramifications involved. A man came to me this week, and he said to me, "you don't know what Hacham Baruch did for me so many years ago; my wife was older, and the doctor said she has to abort, too many complications, abort. We already had children, he said abort. I didn't know what to do. I went to Hacham Baruch. He sat down and he listened, and he listened, and he thought, and he looked, and he said, "Don't abort, do not abort; you don't have to worry, I take responsibility, will be fine." They listened to the Rabbi; today, you have a young lady in this community, who is a beautiful girl, who will get married and have children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren ledorot, because of Hacham Baruch. And there are hundreds of stories like this, hundreds and hundreds of stories, where Hacham Baruch came to the rescue.



From left: Ezra Ben-Haim (2nd row), R'Eli Ben-Haim, Hacham David Yosef, Aharon Dwek, Rabbi Shaul Kassin, Jack Hanono, Rabbi Shlomo Diamond, Rabbi David Ozeri.

Business problems – how many hundreds of people sat on Hacham Baruch's table, to settle business differences; and how many where there were two parties were fighting and both agreed you know what, let's not fight, let's go to Hacham Baruch, and where they're willing to sign, whatever Hacham Baruch says we'll do, and where he solved hundreds of business problems over the years.

Hacham Baruch's greatest virtue, Pirkei Avot says (Avot 1:1), "vehe'emidu talmidim harbeh" – educate many students. Educate many students? Talmud Torah at Sixty Seventh Street, Hacham Baruch a teacher. Magen David for thirty-five years, teacher. Sha'arei Tziyyon, thousands of shiurim, teacher. Deal, shiurim after shiurim after shiurim. People's homes, too many to count, shiur after shiur after shiur. A rabbi in this community came to me and he said, "You know, when I came to this country I was a little boy, I came from Egypt, and my father put me in the Talmud Torah, my teacher was Hacham Baruch, I was a little boy; he taught me alef beit and he taught me how to read. Little did I know, that Hacham Baruch was a giant – he knew all of Shas, all the poskim, Shulhan Aruch on his fingertips, and he's teaching me alef beit? This was the greatness, this was the simplicity, to teach in Magen David so many decades, the same gemara, over and over and over and over again. Because you know, those were the

most important gemarot that boys could learn.

He was the rabbi's rabbi. You would walk into Hacham Baruch's house, a rabbi, many of them, all the time. You would knock on the door, "Rabbi could I speak to you?" Before you walked into that door you had a problem, you were confused, you were afraid to make a decision, you didn't know what to do. You went into Hacham Baruch, you stayed for ten minutes, a half hour, an hour, you walked out with clarity – knowing exactly what to do and what to say. He was the rabbi's rabbi. We would be sitting there on the couch, which the plastic slipcovers, and another rabbi would knock on the door, and that rabbi would leave and another one would come; but you received clarity. He had such si'ata dishmaya, and the fact that he had Shulhan Aruch on his fingertips.

Rabbotai, I have to admit, I never thought Hacham Baruch would die, I thought he would march us to Yerushalayim, the entire community, to greet Mashiah Tzidkenu, especially after two and a half years ago when he was sick in Maimonidies, I will never forget that dark night, must have been one o'clock in the morning, when the head doctor of the ICU called us into a room, the family, we were sitting there, and the doctor says, "It's very bad. He has a hospital infection, rarely does anybody make it with this infection." In essence



*Among the crowd, from right, Rabbi David Sultan and Rabbi Hilsenrath, Principal Magen David Yeshiva Elementary*

what they were saying was, go home and prepare a funeral. Hacham Baruch pulled out, he pulled out, he was weaned off the respirator after so many weeks in a coma, and he came back, and we thought what would he be like, what's left off him, what they did to him months, weeks and weeks comatose, not moving, they thought he lost his voice box, and he came back, and he came back strong; two years, Hacham Baruch again; and I must say, with the help of Abe Terzi he was able to go, from simha to simha, to Arayats working again, running; I went to visit him in Deal when he came home; he tells me, "David, the mind is still young, but the body is not young any more; the mind says run, but the body says you can't, but I will." And he did, and he told me that while he was on the oxygen machine.

My personal love for Hacham Baruch, he was father to me, I feel orphaned again, he came to all my semahot, and they were numerous, Hashem has blessed me with many children; he came to all the beritot, and he came to all the weddings and all the bar mitzvahs and all the grandchildren. At the end, I used to

go to him, I was embarrassed, and say, "Hacham Baruch, I'm coming here to tell you the good news, I had a grandson, but I'm not telling you to come, don't come." He came. Then he came. Ten years ago I had a boy. I come home from the berit with my wife, and some people gave us an envelope, some gifts, lo and behold there's an envelope from Hacham Baruch. And I opened it up, there's a card from him and his wife, and he says in there some poetry in Hebrew, "le-ahuvi, ve-habibi," and there's a hundred dollars in the envelope. I told my wife goodbye. I got in my car, and I went to Hacham Baruch's house. I said, "Hacham Baruch, this is outrageous, I am not taking the money. I will not take money, I have to give you money, you're giving me money?" He says, "No, David," he became very stern, and very tough, which he could be, He said, "you have to take this money, I have a reason why I want to give you the money." I said, "I am not taking the money Hacham Baruch." I never argued with Hacham Baruch, that was the only time. He called Charlotte from the kitchen, he said, "Charlotte, David doesn't want to take the gift we

give him." Charlotte started on me, you don't start with Charlotte.

To his family, to his dear wife, eshet haver, to his loyal and devoted wife, if Hacham Baruch never went on vacation then his wife never went on vacation, if Hacham Baruch was mistapek bi-mu'at, then his wife was mistapek bi-mu'at, all I can say is Charlotte, is, that Hacham Baruch is in shamayim, and they're listing all the millions and millions and millions of zechuyot that he has, and he keeps telling them, "sheli shelah" – what's mine is hers. To his sons, to his sons, to me, yoter me-ahim – more than brothers, each and every one, a polished diamond. Look what Hacham Baruch left us rabbotai, each and every one of his sons unique in their own way, serving the community.

Hazal tell us, that the neshama hovers the entire week, is here. I'm sure Hacham Baruch's neshama is here with us, and all I'd like to say is, Hacham Baruch, we never met anybody like you, we love you, we will never forget you, and most of all, thank you. Yehi zichro baruch.

## David Ben-Haim

Adapted from a speech at Hacham Baruch's Arayat in Magen David Yeshiva

*In Jerusalem, the Holy City, he was born,  
and in Yeshivat Porat Yosef he studied;*  
*His desire was to serve the nation with devotion;*  
*And he returned many from iniquity,  
and they became Shabbat observant;*  
*His entire purpose was to bring his nation to Torah,  
without (seeking) any honor for himself;*  
*The spirit of God spoke in him,  
and on his lips its words were invaluable;*  
*A mouth which spoke pearls,  
and a heart filled with faith in service of his Creator.*  
*Woe to us!  
We have none to take his place, none to replace him!*  
*To Jerusalem, the Holy City, he returned,  
May it be His will that he ascends to the Heavens,  
(Where) he may pray for his community,  
And we will all merit the tidings of Eliyahu  
and the coming of His Mashiah.*

בירושלים עיר הקודש נולד,  
ובישיבת "פורת יוסף" למד;  
רצונו היה לשרת את העם במסירות נפש;  
ורבים השיב מעוון,  
ונהפכו לשומרי שבת  
כל מטרתו לקרב את עמו לתורה,  
בלי כבוד לעצמו  
רוח ה' דיבר בו ועל שפתיו יקרה מילתו  
פה דובר מרגליות,  
ולב מלא אמונה לעבודת בוראו  
אוי לנו!  
אין לנו חליפתו, אין לנו תמורתו!  
לירושלים עיר הקודש חזר,  
ויהי רצון שיעלה למרומים,  
ויתפלל בעד עדתו,  
ונזכהכולנו לבשורת אליה  
ולביאת משיחו.

"And Mosheh said to his father-in-law, 'For the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a matter, they come to me; and I judge between man and his fellow, and I inform them of the statutes of God, and of his laws.'"

Rabbotai, it was my father's opinion, that no ba'al ha-bayit or non-rabbi should ever speak before rabbis, therefore tonight I do not speak by choice before Rabbi Eli Mansour, so please forgive me for that, however I wanted to make that clear. And as difficult as it was for the rabbis before me to make eulogies for my father, for me, a layman, it is even more difficult.

My father was once attending a wedding, and it happened to be the first time that he was ever at a wedding together with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. It was a wedding between a Sepharadi and an Ashkenazi, and after the ceremony and the reception, a message was sent by the Lubavitcher Rebbe to my father to please speak on his behalf, and to tell the people about the importance of lighting nerot Shabbat for all single girls. My father tried to refuse to speak, but he was told by the hassidim of the Rebbe, "The

Rebbe says speak, do you have any right to refuse?" And my father quickly got up, and went to the microphone, with no need to prepare, as usual. He told them, "Le-atid lavo ba-seudat livyatana la'tzaddikim," ("In the end of days at the meal of the Leviathon for the Taddikim") when it comes time to say the zimun, each one of the people around the table will be invited to say it and each one will refuse; Adam ha-Rishon will say: "I did the het of eating from the apple," Avraham will say, "I had Yishmael," Yitzhak will say, "I had Esav," Yaakov Avinu will say, "I had two wives," and down the line.

When it comes time for David ha-Melech, David ha-Melech will answer, "Ani avarech ve-li na'eh le-varech," ("I will bless (birkat ha-mazon) and it is appropriate for me to do so"). We know that David was one of the three great modest men that existed, how is it that he took upon himself to accept the honor of zimun? There are two answers given to this question: One is – "En mesarevin et penei ha-gadol," one is not allowed to refuse something from one who is greater than him; and the other one is, "ba'al ha-bayit botze'a ve-ore'ah mevarech."



David Ben-Haim

Morris Antebi

David ha-melech was saying, all these people around the table are great and belong. However me, I am not great nor do I belong here. I am merely a guest, I should not be here. A guest must do as told. And my father said to the people, "Who am I to refuse the Lubavitcher Rebbe's request?" And he went to give a speech, explaining, according to the Lubavitcher's opinion, the importance of the single girls lighting the candles, but he made sure to tell them of course this was not the Sepharadi way.

My father was born on November 18, 1921. At the time, the last name of the family was Mizrahi. He often called the town that he grew up, Yerushalayim shel ma'alah. He grew up with gedolei ha-olam (giants of the world) - the Hazon Ish, Hacham Ezra Attia zt"l, Rabbi Yehuda Sadka z"tl, and later on the two chief rabbis of Israel, Rabbi Herzog and Rabbi Uziel, who he knew so well. He was a frequent guest by the rabbis, visiting nearly every week.

He used to hear from his grandmother about the discourses of the Ben Ish Hai in Iraq, that there used to be ten thousand people attending the speeches. He

learned from his grandparents to listen to his rabbis and many wonderful words of Torah.

My father was one of nine children, he lived in a very small home, three little rooms, maybe each one eight by ten. In the '40s when they had difficulties with the war, they had two more uncles come, each one of them with ten kids, and somehow they fit 33 people into those three rooms. Imagine the wait for one bathroom.

When he was 11 years old in Porat Yosef, his rabbi, Hacham Yehuda Sadka zt"l, covered so much ground in teaching him, that he never stopped mentioning how much he was indebted to him. Later, they became talmid haver, always keeping in contact until Rabbi Sadka's passing.

Hacham Ezra zt"l used to send him out to give speeches throughout Yerushalayim, to prepare them for the work that was ahead. For those who have seen the pictures of the greatest of his students, where would Sephardic Jewry throughout the world be today?

In 1947, my father left Eretz Yisrael to be the rabbi of an Ashkenazi community in South Africa; he remained there for two years, and after learning of the death of a brother in an unfortunate accident, he returned to Eretz Yisrael, despite the pleas of the people there. begging him to stay. Where would we be, if he had stayed in South Africa?

In 1949, after staying a few months in Yerushalayim, he decided again to leave Israel, and three choices were given to him: to go to Holland, to go to Iran, or to come to New York. At the time there was much anti-Semitism in Holland, and he decided not to go there. He made a decision, to go to Iran. He applied for an Iranian visa, and after a few weeks, he called to ask why he had not received the visa. They told him, due to the fact that your parents are Iraqi born, and Iran and Iraq are not on good terms, we must carefully check that any Iraqi-born citizens, or whose parents are citizens, are not spies for Iraq. He pleaded with them that of course he was not a spy, merely a rabbi on a mission to be a teacher. They told him to call back next week, and when he did, they told him it was still pending.

In the meantime Mr. Isaac Shalom again sent a letter to Rabbi Ezra Attia zt"l, asking for a six month assistant, for



*At the Yeshivat Porat Yosef going away party, circa 1947*

*Seated, from left: Hacham Ezra Attia Rosh Yeshivat Porat Yosef, Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, Hacham Ben-sion Auziel Rishon L'Sion, Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Herzog, Hacham Shlomo Kassin (brother of Brooklyn Chief Rabbi Yaakov Kassin).*

*Standing first row, from left: Hacham Ben-sion Abba Shaul Rosh Yeshivat Porat Yosef, Hacham Saadia Lofez, unidentified, Hacham Ezra Schrem Nasi of Porat Yosef, Hacham David Shelosh, Hacham Shabtai Atoon Rosh Reshit Hohmah, unidentified, unidentified, Hacham Yehuda Sadka Rosh Porat, Hacham Yosef Ades Rosh Porat, Hacham Abraham Schrem (son of Ezra Schrem), Hacham Sion Levy Chief Rabbi of Panama, Hacham Rephael Ades, unidentified, Hacham Abraham Harari-Raful Keter Torah Brooklyn, unidentified, Hacham Moshe Schrem (son of Ezra Schrem), Hacham Ezra Shayo, Hacham Yosef Raful (son of Hacham Abraham Raful from Israel).*

*Top row, from left: Hacham Eliyahu Abboud, unidentified, unidentified, Hacham Ezra Naemi.*

my grandfather Hacham Yaacov. Without receiving word from Iran, he continued on his way to New York. He left in December of 1949 by boat, a very difficult boat ride which took three weeks. At times the boat had tremendous storms, and they were unable to even put on tefillin on some days due to the storm. He arrived in early January 1950. Where would we be today had Iran given him the visa? I would not be here, and it would not be the same community.

Upon arriving in New York he went straight to the home of my grandfather Hacham Yaakov zt"l, and within two months, he was engaged to my mother. Lest you think she was eager to jump right into this engagement, my grandmother A"H, had to convince her that cars were not the important thing; even at that time a man with a car was a big deal. She assured her that someday this man would be something great. How right she was.

In 1951, my grandfather in Israel, my father's father, Harav Haim Mizrahi zt"l, passed on, and my family after a couple

of years made the decision to change the name from Mizrahi to Ben-Haim in his honor. I was told by Mr. Ralph Tawil that he recalls Mr. Isaac Shalom telling him, in 1951 or 1952, to interview my father for a Magen David teaching job. He was to join the yeshiva, and remain there until the 1980s.

"Hillel says: 'Be among the disciples of Aharon, loving peace, and pursuing peace, loving people, and bringing them closer to the Torah.'" (Avot 1:12)

This was my father's motto in every way, shape, and form. We know that Aharon, when he found out about a dispute, would go to one grieving party and tell him, "You know your friend feels very bad about it," and would do the same with the other party.

For the next 56 years, from 1950 until the present, my father made an impact upon this community. People never hesitated to knock on his door, right and left, Sephardim and Ashkenazim; he treated all equally, young and old, rich and poor; he attended everyone's functions, happy and sad; he taught classes non-stop to

both the learned and beginners. How often did he tell us every year, in Parashat Hukat, his derashah, how when someone was ta'me (impure), the kohen would take the water and sprinkle it upon him in order that the person should become tahor (pure). But the question was, the kohen makes himself ta'me, why should he be willing to do such a thing? The kohen, however, is not permanently ta'me; he is only ta'me for one day. The person who was impure would remain so until being sprinkled. He lowered himself to go out to the people, not staying in a room learning Torah by himself.

This was his life, always lowering himself to teach the people, on their level, "Ve-yoter she-hayah Kohelet hacham, od limed da'at et ha'am," (Kohelet 12:9 – "More than Kohelet being wise, he also taught knowledge to the nation.")

Our rabbis tell us that the word "ha'am" means the simple folks, and if it was "yoter," if every day the teacher was learning more and more, what's the big deal that he taught more? And kivyachol to give you a comparison, if Einstein sat down to teach one plus three and three plus one, I think he would go insane within two days. But that was what my father did teaching alef bet daily.

We live in a world today, of Palms, computers, cellular telephones, information at the tip of our fingers through all this modern technology; my father never needed it. He had one of the smallest sized heads you could ever find, he needed a child's size hat, and yet what information he carried in that head. He would teach the boys ta'amim, and they better get it perfect because otherwise they're not going home; he would give them bar mitzvah lessons, and how many of the people that visited us this week told us the stories over and over.

He would always give blessings to anyone who asked, and if the blessing was too short and the person complained, he gave them another one much longer, never, ever, ever taking money for such a thing. He was much against that. If

you wanted to get married, you had to prove to him that you were single and never married, you had to attend a class in his home for a couple of hours. An Argentinean born boy only today told me the story that when he came from Argentina, he never expected the reception that he got from the rabbi, and he thought it was because he was a yeshiva student, but then he learned that everyone got the same reception. My father never made differences between anyone.

He was a hazan and a shofar blower, he knew Tehillim by heart inside and out; if someone thought he made a mistake it was probably a mistake in the book and not in his reading. I recall Rosh Hashanah one year he forgot his reading glasses at home, and he told me to go look for them and I couldn't find them. I came back and he told me: "Don't worry." I said, "Dad what are you going to do, we read this only once a year?" He opened a book and

waking up the wife, she would answer the phone and he would say, "Hello, how are you?" And he would say the name of the person and say, "Did you wake him up yet and send him to shul?" He did this later on in Ohel Simhah, Park Avenue, and in Lawrence he always kept saying we need more minyanim and more shiurim, never embarrassed to make that quick phone call at four-thirty in the morning. Imagine the chief rabbi in a community at the age of seventy-five maybe, making those calls day in and day out, never feeling that it was below himself to do so.

Lest you think, that while he served the community, he neglected his own family, he never hesitated to send money to his family in Eretz Yisrael, although he was not a very wealthy man, He did so on a constant basis.

I would like to share a few short stories with you.



*With Rabbi David Cohen and staff, at the opening of Yeshivat Ohel Torah*

made believe he was reading, but he was saying the entire tefillah by heart.

He was involved with every aspect of the community. It didn't matter if you had a Zohar, a hannukat ha-bayit, you needed mezuzot placed on your wall, he was there to do it. And how much would he encourage classes and minyanim. When he was the rabbi in Bradley Beach, towards the end it was difficult to get a minyan, he never stopped to pick up the phone to call. It didn't matter if it was four-thirty in the morning and he was

I came home one time, and my father had a bag sitting by him in the room, and he told me, please take this bag upstairs and put it on the bed I took the bag upstairs and I came down. I said, "What was in the bag, Dad?" He said, "Nothing important, it belongs to someone else." I said, "What's in it, Dad?" He said, "There was a hundred thousand dollars in the bag." I said, "Dad, what are you doing with a hundred thousand dollars in the house?" So he says, "Well, there was a transaction between two people, a

buyer and a seller, and the buyer gave me the money and the seller has to deliver the merchandise, and then I give the seller his money. And I said, "Dad, what are you getting out of all this?" And he said, "I am getting a mitzvah, to assist people."

Another time, he received in the mail a one hundred thousand dollar check, a bank check, equivalent to the cash, no return address, no note, nothing telling him what to do with it. The check was held in the house for a week or so, ten days, and each day I would come back and tell him, "Dad, what's with the check?" And he would tell me, "I don't know. I got the check and no-one's called me yet." I said, "Dad, well if you need someone to help you out with that situation, I'm here." He finally received the call, and I believe without exaggeration it was about two weeks later, someone requesting for him to give some money to someone in the community.

My father, when he needed to check something out, whether it involved gittin and marriages, left no stone unturned. I recall him telling me how, in one case, he took three thousand dollars of his own money, to check out a case with a private detective, to track down the family tree. Who would do such a thing?

I'd like to say some thank-yous on behalf of the family.

My father never liked to single out individual people because he was scared of insulting others, but I feel that we should thank these people on behalf of the family, for much of what they have done for us in the last three years. Firstly, Dr. Meyer Ballas, he called him his mal'ach min ha-shamayim, a heavenly angel Doc, you never stopped coming morning and night, for the past three years, whatever my father needed, it didn't matter, four in the morning or one in the morning, never asking for money of course.

Ikey (Shemuel) Franco and Jack (Albert) Kassin you were like sons to him. It was no coincidence, that you were there for his passing on at 1:30 AM on Thursday morning, and you accompanied him to Eretz Yisrael to his resting place. You were both in a sense my dad's guardian angels watching his front and back on all communal issues so that everything was per his wishes. How much we owe to you Ike and Elise, Jack and Joyce, for all that you have done giv-

ing of your time and persistence.

His name has been mentioned before, but my father's confidante over the last twelve years, aside from being his driver, and just like a son, was Mr. Abe Terzi.

He had many other drivers, all like sons, Ofer Levy, Alan Mizrahi, Jimmy and Teddy Kassin and Uzi Shabot; the family and the community owe all of you a big thank you.

To the many doctors and hospitals, we thank you.

To the Shaare Zion security force, who took my father back and forth many times, and the New York City Police Department, who assisted us so much at the funeral.

Aharon aharon haviv, to Shaare Zion and Magen David, there were many instances my father could have left either institution, to be a rabbi in the city, in Jersey, he had many offers; he never accepted them, he stayed loyal to these institutions. We hope and pray that you follow his way, as he has led you. You know what he would want you to do.

To the entire community, who came and provided so much comfort for us, we thank you.

To my dear brothers, Eliyahu, Yaakov, and Yehudah, we did what we could.

To my wonderful wife and sisters-in-laws Norma, Aviva, Ruth, and Sarah you were like daughters. Dad will always live through us and the entire community; we know it says by David, "Va-yishkav David," instead of "Va-yamot Yoav," which is a few pesukim away. Our rabbis tell us David Hamelech did not die since he left wonderful children to follow his ways. Yoav did die. Dad will live not only through his biological children but through all his students who are like children.

Mom, three years ago when he got sick, you were his backbone to get him well. You pushed him to continue to work and always said this would keep him young. May he pray for your health now as you did for him.

My father in May of two thousand, celebrated with my mother his fiftieth anniversary, and he gave us at that time his last will and testament, "Torah tzivah lanu Moshe morasha kehillat Yaakov," (Devarim 32:4 – "Mosheh com-

manded the Torah to us, the inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov.") What I want from you is to carry on to learn Torah. I am asking from each of my children to learn one masechet of each seder, including the one of Berachot from A to Z." And particularly in Berachot he warned us to be careful, for those of you who are benei Torah, I think this would be a good thing le-ilui nishmato.

On behalf of the family, anyone who has any pictures and stories, and would like to pass them on, we would appreciate it. Dad, at the funeral I didn't have a chance to ask you for forgiveness. You know how close we are, and there were many instances where perhaps I didn't treat you with the proper respect; I ask you for forgiveness at this time, I ask you for forgiveness for anything that I did, perhaps we did not show to you the proper respect, be it at the funeral or at other times when you were with us. Please pray for the success of the future of our family and community. For seventy-five years you and Hacham Yaacob led it. Let us hope that the bridges of the future will lead to much success, just as you and Hacham Yaacob zt"l had.

"Hashem natan ve-Hashem lakah, yehi shem Hashem mevorach."

(Iyov 1:21 – "Hashem gave, and Hashem has taken away; blessed be the Name of Hashem.")



Ground breaking for MDY High School

# A Letter to my Grandfather

**A letter to Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim z"tl,  
written by his granddaughter, Cynthia (Shulamit) Ben-Haim.**

## Dear Jido,

From the time that I was young until now I have the picture of your bright smile in my mind.

I remember that when I was a little girl of seven I asked you if you wanted to listen to a song that I had learned in school. You were delighted to, of course. These were the words:

על שלושה דברים העולם עומד, על

התורה, ועל העבודה, ועל גמילות חסדים  
(On three things the world is supported, from [learning of] Torah, from service to Hashem and from acts of kindness)

I'll never forget how your face shined after that. I was a very small girl at the time and yet I felt that you were very proud of me. I don't think that I even

knew what those words meant at the time. As the years went by, however, I gained so much more of an understanding as to what you were so proud of. Jido, those words explain what you stood for. Torah, teffila (prayer), and gemilut hasadim (acts of kindness) were your entire being. You held up the world. I remember waking up in the middle of the night to the sweet song of Torah emanating from your lips. Torah and teffila filled your home. I was always proud to tell people that you were my grandfather, because everyone loved you. Your ahavat hesed (love for doing good for others) was one that I couldn't describe if I tried. You were a true example of what we all should aspire to be like. I always remember the beautiful picture with the inscription of those words hanging on the wall

of your home. You walked, lived, and breathed Torah, Avoda, and Hesed, and it was all leshem shamayim (for the sake of Heaven). Every single one of your children and grandchildren are oskim batorah ubemitzvot (busy with Torah and Hashem's commandments). You gave it over with love and happiness.

I write to you on behalf of my brothers, sisters and family. May we only make you proud. We miss you so much and can't wait until we will be reunited again by Mashiah. May it be the will of Hashem that we will be able to bring nahat ruach (pleasant spirit) to your neshama (soul) by emulating your greatness. We love you so much.

Love,

Your granddaughter, Cynthia  
May his memory be blessed



# A TRIBUTE TO HACHAM BARUCH BEN-HAIM Z"TL,

By his granddaughter, Charlotte (Shulamit) Ben-Haim, from a speech  
at her Shaare Torah Girls Elementary School graduation,  
June 8, 2005.

## Naflah Ateret Roshenu {The crown of our heads has fallen}

As you all know, my father and his family just finished the Shiva for my grandfather and the leader of our community, Hacham Baruch Rephael Ben Miriam Zt"l

Hacham Baruch's greatness in Torah and Mitzvot and his devotion and love for his community is well known. Much has been said and will continue to be said about the teacher, guide, and loving father he was for so many.

I would like, in this very short tribute, to share with you a side of him that is not so well known. I'd like to speak about my Jido, about what Hacham Baruch meant to me and my family.

Every year we looked forward to spending the Seder with Jido. He would sit at the head of the table like a true king sharing his tremendous knowledge of the Hagada. His wealth of Torah knowledge was unbelievable! Different Perushim, stories and even jokes! We sat there glued to what Jido was saying.

I remember, as a fourth grader, deciding to share a Mashal (parable) I learned in school. We always shared what we had learned and everyone always listened, but I will never forget how special I felt when I realized how my grandfather was smiling when I was talking. I could tell that he really appreciated my Mashal, even though he probably knew it already. Then, when I finished, he said, Yafeh Amart (you spoke well).

I felt like a million dollars.

Jido had the ability to make everyone feel special, young and old, rich and poor, left wing and right wing, men, women and children.

For years, we were privileged to spend summers with him in Deal. We grew so close to each other and it was during those summers that I could see, up close, how much he cared about every person's feelings.

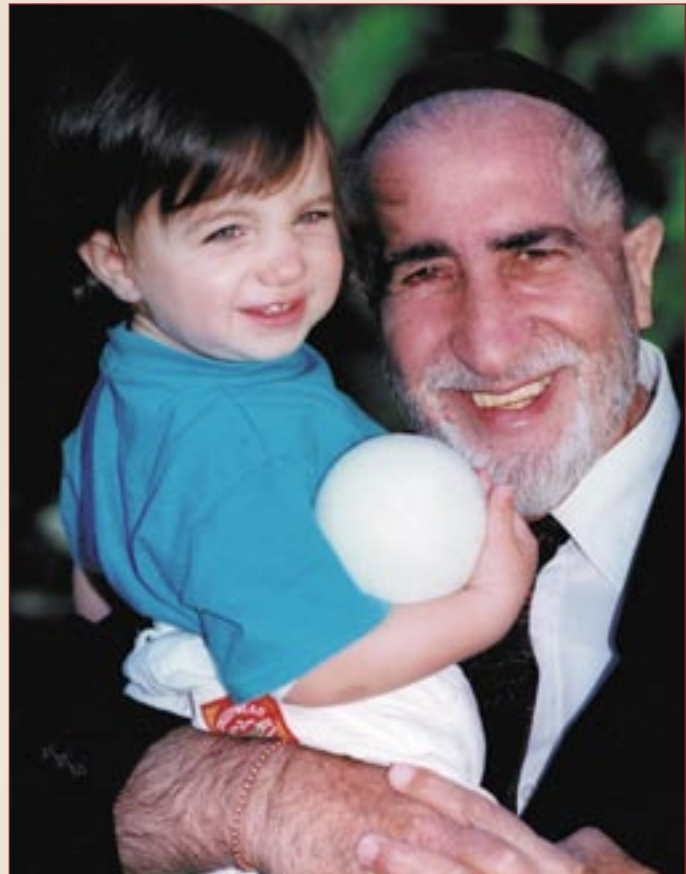
Once, my siblings and I wanted to play soccer but we needed another person to play. My Jido saw we were upset about something and asked us about it. When he heard what the problem was, he said, "I'll play with you!" Of course, this happened before he got sick, but still, he was a Rabbi! Who would expect a rabbi to play soccer with a few little kids? And he was actually good!

This, to him, was just a small hesed but it meant the world to us.

From these very short, personal memories, it's easy to tell what Jido meant to us. I think they also tell a story of a loving man who was so great, yet could relate to any person on any level. It is a glimpse of Jido - what Hacham Baruch meant to me.

There are no words to describe how lucky we are to have had Jido in our lives. The impact he made on each and every one of us will be with us forever. Any move we will make, we'll ask ourselves, would Jido have wanted this? May we be zoche to see Mashiah in our lifetime and be reunited with our special Jido once again.

May his memory be blessed.



*Hacham Baruch<sup>z"l</sup> with his grandson, Baruch (David) Ben-Haim*



*At the Shaare Torah 1st grade siddur party, January 1997*