

Rabbi Yankel Eilenberg, z"l

RAFAEL HOFFMAN

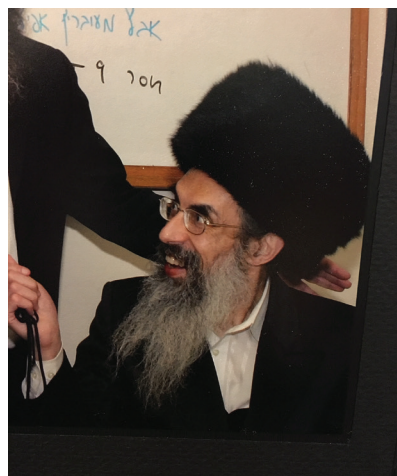
The Gerrer *kehillah* mourned the *petirah* of Rabbi Yaakov (Yankel) Eilenberg, z"l, who was *niftar* Rosh Chodesh Kislev at age 62. He is remembered as a respected *talmid chacham* who quietly performed countless acts of *chessed*.

Reb Yankel was born in 1953 in Furth, Germany, where his parents, Reb Avraham Shimon, z"l, and Esther, a"n, Eilenberg, settled after the war together with a group of other Holocaust survivors. The family was deeply rooted in Polish *Chassidus*. Reb Avraham Shimon belonged to a family of Sochatchover Chassidim and his wife's father, Reb Yaakov Schnul, z"l, was a respected Radomsker Chassid.

During this period the family enjoyed a special closeness with Harav Dovid Shapiro, who served as Rav for the community that had been established in Furth. Years later, when Reb Yankel studied in Eretz Yisrael, he was reunited with the Further Rav, with whom he learned *b'chavrusa* for five hours a day.

When he was four years old, the family immigrated to the U.S., first to Pittsburgh and then New York. The Eilenbergs developed a bond with Harav Avraham Binyomin Silberberg, zt"l, the Pittsburgher Rav.

Yankel studied in Yeshivas Karlin Stoln, where he quickly became dis-



tinguished for his brilliance and tremendous *ahavas haTorah*. He eventually traveled to Eretz Yisrael, where he was among the celebrated *talmidim* of Yeshivas Chiddushei Harim in Tel Aviv. During those years he merited a special closeness to the Beis Yisrael of Ger, zy"l, as well as with the yeshiva's *Mashgiach*, Harav Godel Eizner, zt"l.

Upon his return to America, Reb Yankel joined a group of *bachurim* studying in the Gerrer *mesivta* in Boro Park. There he heard weekly *shiurim* from Harav Elya Chazan, zt"l. With his phenomenal memory and deep love of learning, the *niftar* would often recount novella that he had heard from Rav Chazan with perfect clarity until his last days.

In 1977 he married Raizel Grape. The couple established their home in Boro Park, where Reb Yankel Eilenberg became a prominent member of the Gerrer community.

While running a successful business, he still managed to spend a great many hours learning Torah and delivered a *Daf Yomi shiur* for many years. As he remarked on several occasions, "From saying the *shiur*, I get my *chiyus* for the whole day."

Many remember Reb Yankel's *bekius* in all areas of *Shas* and *Poskim*. He was a wellspring of *chiddushim* and would discuss topics in Torah for hours with great excitement.

The *niftar* was especially careful in *shemiras halashon*. However, if he suspected that *lashon hara* was being spoken, he would not point it out directly, but rather cleverly, gently, change the subject.

At the request of the Lev Simcha of Ger, zy"l, Reb Yankel undertook the task of overseeing the refurbishing and preservation of many *kivrei tzaddikim* throughout Poland. He fulfilled the mission with great dedication, making many trips abroad.

Reb Yankel gave untold sums of money to needy individuals and worthy causes, and was always ready to bolster other Jews with words of encouragement and to visit the sick.

Reb Yankel Eilenberg not only ran from any *kavod* for his acts of *chessed*,

but he did not even need the satisfaction of seeing results. After a friend was injured in a car accident, Reb Yankel visited repeatedly and spoke to the *choleh*, who was not capable of giving a reply.

He often gave money to third parties, going out of his way not to know who the actual recipients were, and ensuring that they should not suspect the true source.

Despite suffering greatly from illness in recent years, Reb Yankel used the little strength left to him to attend *tefillos* and keep up his demanding *sedarim*. He used to finish *Tehillim* at least twice weekly.

The *levayah* was held on Motzoei Shabbos in Boro Park and continued to Eretz Yisrael. The Gerrer Rebbe, *shlita*, attended the *levayah* in Shamgar, where Reb Yankel's son and son-in-law delivered *hespeidim*. The *levayah* proceeded to the old Gerrer *beis medrash* on Rechov Ralbach, then to burial on Har Hazeisim.

He is survived by, *tbl"c*, his wife, Mrs. Raizel Eilenberg; sister, Mrs. Tammy Neuman; sons, Reb Yisroel and Reb Simcha Bunim; and daughters, Mrs. Rivky Rubinstein, Mrs. Chavy Friedman, Mrs. Bruchy Fenton, Mrs. Tammy Mermelstein, Mrs. Blimy Glukstadt and Miss Chana Toby Eilenberg, as well as many grandchildren.

Yehi zichro baruch.

Mrs. Henny Machlis, a"n

TZIYONA KANTOR

I went to the Motzoei Shabbos *sheloshim* for Henny Machlis, a"n, because I was fortunate to have met her in a *middos vaad* with, *ybl"c*, Rabbi Lawrence Kelemen. I remember when she introduced herself, although her reputation preceded her; we all felt humbled in her presence.

I am a caterer and cook for yeshivos, so I understand the work that goes into preparing Shabbos for hundreds of people. It takes me a minimum of three days of cooking, with direct deliveries from suppliers, a staff of three others, an industrial kitchen with massive fires, ovens, sinks, etc., besides the pots and pans. And we get paid! The *chessed* she performed in cooking for the number of people she did on a weekly basis is mind-boggling.

On the way home from the *sheloshim* on the bus, one of my friends commented that just like Hillel came to teach us that being poor doesn't stop one from learning

Torah, and Rabi Yehudah Hanaasi taught us that being rich is also not an excuse, Henny, who was one of us — American, not rich, with a simple kitchen and modest means — taught us that we don't have an excuse either.

What struck me most from the speakers at the *sheloshim* — her eldest daughter, Elisheva Rosenthal, her niece Sara Leah Der-showitz, and Rabbi Leib Keleman, Rebbetzin Rena Tarshish and Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller — was that the first thing they all mentioned was her smile and love for every Yid. And that is, of course, the source of her unbelievable *chessed* of feeding the poor, the sick, and the unwanted in her house on Shabbos each and every week.

Elisheva told us of Henny's devotion. "Each one of us, all 14 of us, felt she was there for us." She spoke of a very personal medical experience she had, even after she was married, and her mother was right there in every sense of the word.

Rebbetzin Heller spoke from the start with her usual candor: Henny always had a smile and made people feel it was easy to give and give. But she disclosed another side of Henny, which most people probably did not know — it wasn't easy. Henny had it hard and recognized it was hard, yet smiled and found only the good. She was on the level of Rabi Akiva, who said everything from Hashem is only good.

Rebbetzin Tarshish emphasized Henny's extraordinary ability to recognize that this world is only *sheker* — false. True happiness is in the eternity of *Olam Haba* — the world to come.

Her daughters and niece related that their mother and aunt would talk to Hashem all day, in every conversation. Her *dveikus* to Hashem was evident when she would recite the entire *sefer Tehillim* at the *kever* of Shmuel Hanavi, when she would pray for her children, grandchildren, for her guests, neighbors, students, any acquaintance — she felt it was necessary that she say

a good word to the Master of All. Henny would speak about the pain of Hashem, how He is suffering that He can't give us the *Geulah* right now. Yet all is from Hashem and all is good.

Rabbi Keleman mentioned three things: her smile, her seeing only good, and her self-sacrifice. Her ultimate surrendering to be a *korban* for others was part of her self-sacrifice.

As her niece said, she was consoled by the Machlis's neighbor, Rebbetzin Tarshish, who told a story about the Chofetz Chaim: The Chofetz Chaim was once approached and asked how it could be that a *tzaddik* of that time died young; how can we understand it? The Chofetz Chaim answered that it was either that *tzaddik* or a quarter of the world. That was Henny's last self-sacrifice: it was her or a quarter of the world.

May we learn from her ways and try to emulate her in some small measure, to give her an even higher *iluy neshamah*.

Yehi zichrah baruch.