

Birshus HaRav Feldman, Birshus HaRav Berger, Birshus the distinguished Rabbanim and members of our Kehilla.

I wanted to start by explaining how I got to know Reb Sholom and his wonderful family. Reb Sholom had been the Menahel in TA, back in the 1980s, but I did not really know him then. He lived near TA, and I think I saw him once or twice and knew of him, but our paths did not really cross.

When I really got to know him was when he moved back to Baltimore around the year 2000, and settled in to a house in our neighborhood on Cross Country Blvd. He also started davening in this shul on a regular basis. Before this, his journey took him to Cleveland, and then to McKeesport, a suburb of Pittsburgh, where he was a Rosh Yeshiva.

When he moved back here, we started spending a lot of time together. Both his and my children were not yet married. We learned together for some periods of time. Sometimes, he would make a kumzitz in his house, my boys would bring their guitars, and Reb Sholom would sing. He sang beautifully. The kumzitzes were very inspiring and uplifting.

We made Shabbos seudos together. We also made Purim seudos together for many years. In the course of time, our children started to get married. We went to each other's Chasunas, and made Sheva Brachos for each other.

I felt that he was a neshama from an earlier generation.

Over the years, we became close. I confided in him and he also confided in me.

When Dirshu started, back in 2004, I joined it. I only lasted there for about one year. I was too tired. But he stayed there till the end, for many, many years. Over the past few years, our paths crossed less. I had to move to Boston for some time, and then there was Covid, and after that his car accident, etc.

I remember once at a Sheva Brachos, he asked me to speak. His shita was that Sheva Brachos should have only one speech, and a lot of singing. Since we made the Sheva Brachos, I became the speaker. So, I made a drasha on his name - Wein Got. Wine is Simcha - Yayin Yesamach Levav Enosh. Got is Ha-Shem. So he was a man who served Ha-Shem with Simcha. It was Sheva Brachos Torah, but also Emes.

I could have added that Sholom was his essence, but more on that later.

He was always **מלא שמחה** - a happy person. Even when he was serious there was a natural smile, an underlying Simcha. But also, he always had a few Divrei Torah, Chiddushim to share. Or sometimes a joke. He was an **איש מלא** and he always wanted to share. He would often like to quote from Rav Yitzchok Hutner whom he knew personally, and who was his Rebbe.

I remember R' Sholom telling me over that once when they served Rav Hutner chicken on Yom Tov, and he was Makpid that it should be meat, LeKavod Yom Tov, he shouted "HaTzippor Lo Basar - HaTzippor Lo Basar", which is a play on words from a Pasuk in Parshas Lech Lecha from the Bris Bein HaBesarim. (note: i.e. Basar meaning split when spelled with a Sav, but also meaning meat when spelled with a Sin).

In his earliest years he was a Talmid of R' Mottel Weinberg, who had a Yeshiva in Montreal. Sholom once mentioned to me, that while he was there in Montreal, he ran into R' Pinchas Hirschsprung.

Rav Hirschsprung, for those who don't remember, was a giant Talmid Chacham, who knew everything Baal Peh. One of his common practices was that if he met you, even on the street, he would stop and ask you what you were learning. Once you told him, he would then ask you to recite it over for him Be'al Peh. If you hesitated, as most of us would, he would then say "Well either you say it to me, or I'll say it to you." Very commonly, Rav Hirschsprung ended up saying it over to the other person.

Once, Reb Sholom met Rav Hirschsprung on the street in Montreal. Rav Hirschsprung asked him what he was learning. R' Sholom told him Makos. Rav Hirschsprung then invited R' Sholom to say it over to him. Now it happened that R' Sholom had memorized a good portion of Maseches Makos by heart. So he started saying it over to Rav Hirschsprung. He went through Daf Bais. In the middle of Daf Gimmel, R' Sholom introduced a variant Nusach.

Rav Hirschsprung's eyes lit up, and he stopped and asked R' Sholom why he was saying it that way. R' Sholom told him that he had been researching it, and held it was a better Nusach. He explained to Rav Hirschsprung why. Afterwards, a friend who saw the whole thing told R' Sholom that Rav Hirschsprung was very excited. He said that it was very rare for someone to tell Rav Hirschsprung something

which was a Chiddush for him.

R' Sholom was a man who was **מלא תורה**. His whole life was dedicated to learning and teaching Torah. In his first stint in Baltimore, when he was a Menahel in TA he lived near TA. I had heard his name then but did not really know him. From there, the Hashgacha took him to Cleveland, where he spent a number of years, and then to McKeesport, a town on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, where he was a Rosh Yeshiva.

Finally, he moved with his family back to Baltimore (around the year 2000). After a few years when R' Daniel Ely started Dirshu, he picked R' Sholom to be the Rosh Kollel of his Dirshu Kollel. He was the Rosh Kollel until his Petira.

R' Sholom's day started very early. Dirshu officially started at 10 to 6 in the morning, and they would learn an Amud a day, for about one hour, before davening Shacharis. But R' Sholom would often arrive earlier, and he would get up even earlier than that to start preparing. The Kollel learns from Sunday to Friday. R' Sholom would answer questions, be involved in the Harvania of the Chavrusas. He also gave a Bechina once a week, and graded and returned it. Every week. On top of that he periodically would give an Iyun Shiur on the topic the Kollel was learning. The Kollel often had 70 or 80 participants, so this was a very demanding job. It is clear that R' Sholom was a big Talmid Chacham with a tremendous thirst for learning Torah, and he taught Torah to probably thousands of people. For many people accomplishing so much before 8AM would be enough for a whole day.

But for R' Sholom it was just the beginning. Because when he moved to Baltimore in 2000, he founded Baneinu. The idea behind Baneinu was a very smart idea. There are many children who have difficulties fitting in to schools, social settings, families, etc., and this causes them to have problems later in life, some even going off the Derech. So R' Sholom offered to intervene with children during the Middle School years - 6th 7th and 8th grade when they are young enough to be helped more easily. Every day he would head to the community schools to volunteer his time interacting with these children. The schools, incredibly, did not pay him for this. R' Sholom undertook to raise funds to pay his own salary. In the earlier years he had people who took Acharayus to help support him, but ultimately it was up to him. So, each day R' Sholom would take some special kids out of class to interact with them one on one. Interestingly, he also took some specially bright children out of class also to give them extra learning time, so that nobody needed

to be embarrassed by his taking them out of class.

I have no doubt that R' Sholom cared about Klal Yisroel. It was this care and love that drove him to do what he did. Indeed when he was teaching Yiddisher Kinder as a Rosh Yeshiva, or as a Menahel, or as a Rosh Kollel, it was not only about the Torah - even though he was passionate about Limud HaTorah. It was ultimately about his care and love for each Jew. He could see the Pintele Yid in each one and desired strongly to help each one to be all that they could be.

R' Sholom was a generous person. He gave me two books that I remember. The first book is called "The Lost Art of Listening". The second is Tomer Devorah. There is no question in my mind that the reason R' Sholom gave me these books is because he felt they were essentials. In many ways these books are his essence.

He would often speak to me about the importance of learning how to listen. "The Lost Art of Listening" teaches you how to listen. Listening, he would say, is the key to communication. So this book teaches you a technique. You listen. Then you repeat back to the speaker a summary of what they said, in your own words, showing that you've got them. It sounds easy, but it's not. R' Sholom was a master listener.

The other sefer - Tomer Devora - written by the mekubal R' Moshe Kordovero - teaches us about the מידות Midos HaRachamim HaElyonim based on the pasuk in Micha that we say in Tashlich - "מי קל כמוד נושא עוון" etc. The sefer talks about each Midah of Ha-Shem and explains how we can be like Ha-Shem and express that Midah in our own lives. **מה הוא אף אתה**. Examples are **לכבוד הנבראים**, **כולם**, and teaching others according to his Koach. It is clear to me that R' Sholom took on himself to embody these Midos of Ha-Shem in his own life. He was Mechabed everyone, and wanted to share his wonderful Chochma with everyone.

His self-funded program to help Klal Yisroel's children - Baneinu - did not stop with his time spent in the schools. Very often, the problems reached beyond the children, to the parents, and the larger family. Very often, he made appointments in the evening to meet with parents to help them - both with their relationships with their children, and also often there were Sholom Bayis problems between the parents themselves. In fact he often met with parents here in this very shul in the evening. This shul became like his office.

When a person or a family is suffering, it is like they have no hope - they are living

in darkness. But Chazal say - מעט מן האור דוחה הרבה מן החושך - a little bit of light can push away a lot of darkness. R' Sholom was not just a little bit of light, but a blazing light, illuminating the darkness and suffering of children and parents. He was a משיב לב אבות על בנים ובנים על אבותם. He brought the parents closer to their children and children closer to their parents. He always encouraged parents to learn to listen to each other, and to their children. He believed that the key is to learn how to listen.

Besides all of this, R' Sholom also had an amazing voice. He was a wonderful Baal Tefila, who lit up the whole shul with his davening and his niggunim. He loved to make a Kumzitz and sing for hours with a group. He knew all the popular Nigunim.

Not only that, he created many of his own poems and songs. Every Purim he made special Grammen for his family and others at the Purim Seuda. He was gregarious and outgoing to an extreme. Every Purim, hundreds of people would stop by his house to hear a Dvar Torah, a song, or to share a LeChaim. Usually all three! He thrived on this interaction with others, just as everyone else thrived on interacting with him.

He was able to see the good in everyone, and to have a good relationship with Yeder Yid. It is not surprising, therefore, that each of his children is very special. He and his Rebbetzin raised a wonderful and very special family. Yet his children are very different from one another. Each of them has very special Kochos, and R' Sholom and his Rebbetzin were able to bring out the unique Kochos of each of his children, just as he did for Klal Yisrael's children.

We were all shocked when, two years ago, he suffered a terrible car accident. He went through months of hospitalization and rehab. Yet surprisingly this experience only strengthened his Bitachon. While in the hospital and later in rehab, since it was the dark days of Covid and family members and others could not visit, he increased his Bitachom in the Ribbono Shel Olam. Even while in Rehab, he found the opportunity to give Shiurim to staff members, and increase their love of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

After he miraculously came out of rehab, he started a new program in Baltimore called Chizku. Once a month on Wednesdays, he invited people to come to Bnos Yisrael. Each month he would take a Pasuk from Tehilim about relating to the Ribbono Shel Olam, set it to music, and bring musicians. He would tell a story, and

sing, and show the audience how to have greater closeness and trust in the Ribbono Shel Olam. He shared with me that a number of people told him that this changed their lives.

This was besides returning to Dirshu and his other activities. He went back to giving Chaburas at Dirshu. This last year he was in hospital for a few weeks with Covid. But he recovered, and was back on his feet again.

I know that I was shocked that he died so suddenly A week before he was Niftar, he davened Kabalas Shabbos and Maariv right here in this shul. He had gone through so much and overcome so much, that I am sure that many of us believed we would have him back again very soon.

One of his many facets was that he was a Baal Eitza. Many people would go to him to pour out their hearts to him, and he was MeChazek them. He would hug many a man, and tell them that he cared. Just knowing that there was a place to go, that it was possible to have a listening ear, an Eitza, an expression of love and care, was a giant Chizuk for hundreds of people. Sometimes one doesn't even have to go. It's enough to know that he is there.

So Reb Sholom we shall miss you. How we shall miss you!

You were the מעט מן האור שדוחה הרבה מן החושך.

You were the huge Talmid Chacham who always wanted to share Divrei Torah.

You were the משיב לב אבות על בנים ובנים על אבותם.

You were bringing Sholom Bayis to many.

You were the wonderful father to your family and husband to your Rebbetzin.

You were the delightful Baal Nigunim and Baal Tefila.

You were the Baal Eitza sought after by so many.

You listened.

And to me personally and to hundreds of others, you were my good friend.

You were a man whose whole life was Chesed.

שלום ויינגוט זצ"ל

בס"ד

We all benefited from this Tzaddik in our midst.

Reb Sholom, you lived to give to others! **יהא זכרך ברוד!**

May we speedily greet you again with the coming of Moshiach and Techiyas HaMesim.

במהרה בימינו אמן !!!