

Video/Audio/Pictures: Greatness, Wisdom and Concern: HaRav Shteinman zt"l's Legacy Crystallized at Agudath Israel Kinus Hisorerus

Hundreds, including scores of leading Roshei Yeshiva and Rabbanim, braved the frigid cold on Sunday evening to attend a Kinus Hisorerus V'Hesped following the recent petirah of Hagaon HaRav Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman zt"l. The Kinus was sponsored by Agudath Israel of America and held in the Novominsker Yeshiva in Boro Park, whose cavernous Bais Medrash was filled to capacity. In addition, countless others participated in the Kinus at satellite locations across the country, or from their homes via phone or LiveStream.

Although Rav Shteinman resided in Bnei Brak – his greatness, influence and leadership were intimately felt across the world, including in the United States where he had a close relationship with many of the gedolim and askanim affiliated with Agudas Yisroel. Rav Shteinman would personally attend Agudath Israel's annual Yarchei Kallah in Yerushalayim, where he delivered divrei chizuk and interacted with participants.

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The void left by Rav Shteinman's petirah is acutely felt on our shores. The Gedolei Yisroel who addressed the Kinus helped crystalize Rav Shteinman's greatness and the depth of our loss – as well as the proper manner in which we can perpetuate his vision and leadership for the future.

Although Rav Shteinman's stature was more known in recent years, few have a true grasp of just how lofty a Gadol he was. The Novominsker Rebbe shlit"a, Rosh Agudas Yisroel, recounted how Rav Shteinman stayed in his home one night – when he was already in his 90s – and, at 3:45 am, was learning Maseches Zevachim with a chavrusa.

Rabbeinu Hakadosh and Rav Chanina ben Dosa had special powers to support their generations and have their tefillos answered, due to their otherworldly avoidance of earthly materialism. Rav Shteinman's exclusive relationship with divrei ruchniyus gave him similar powers in his generation, both in Heaven and on earth, where he influenced yidden across the globe during his many travels. "This is a loss for the entire generation; we lost our captain," the Rebbe cried out.

Speaker after speaker mentioned Rav Shteinman's now-famous tzavaah where he requested that no hespedim be delivered following his petirah. Still, this Kinus and others were held with the encouragement of HaRav Chaim Kanievsky shlit"a. HaRav Yeruchem Olshin shlit"a, Rosh HaYeshiva of Bais Medrash Govoha, explained that in addition to the aspect of kavod for the niftar, the goal of a hesped is to bring hisorerus to the audience.

Rav Olshin explained that Klal Yisroel's unique madreiga is acquired through mesiras nefesh for Torah. The main concern of our Avos and manhigim was always to perpetuate Torah. Rav Shteinman was a leader who did not waver in his role as the father of bnei Torah and the 'protector of Torah'. "Now we need to be nis'orer towards more Torah and more kedusha," The Rosh Yeshiva implored.

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HaRav Moshe Hillel Hirsch shlit"a, Rosh HaYeshiva of Slabodka, explained that beyond Rav Shteinman's extraordinary madreigos in Torah, he was pure in so many other ways. One could tell

that his entire existence on this world was for avodas Hashem, yiras Shamayim and Torah. These all resulted from his complete bitul to Hashem and His will. "We all have a chiyuv of hakoras hatov," Rav Hirsch explained. "We need to work so that everything we do leads to more kvod shamayim."

Before introducing the final speaker, Rabbi Shlomo Gottesman, Co-Chair of the Torah Projects Commission of Agudath Israel of America, pointed out that Rav Shteinman requested in his tzavaah that yidden should learn Mishnayos in his memory. Agudath Israel will be coordinating limud of Mishnayos by the public culminating in a Siyum Shisha Sidrei Mishnah to be celebrated at the upcoming Yarchei Kallah in Yerushalayim, b'ezras Hashem. (The public can participate by contacting Agudath Israel at 212-797-9000 Ext. 267 or TorahProjects@AgudathIsrael.org.)

The final speaker, HaRav Avrohom Schorr shlit"a, Marah D'Asrah of Bais Medrash Nezer Gedalyahu, shared how Rav Shteinman – as a young bachur in Switzerland, shortly after World War Two – stated that his goal in life was to become a "merkava l'Shechina" (vehicle for the Shechina). Rav Shteinman indeed lived his life with that goal in mind, not even indulging in the "pleasure" of even unsweetened yogurt for decades or bending his view of the truth due to any material pressure.

Yet this purity did not prevent him from being able to relate to the heart and mindset of any other yid, even a bachur nearly a century younger than him. Just several years ago, a bachur related to the Gadol Hador that he wished to join the Lag B'omer festivities in Meron, but he was afraid it was against the rules of his Yeshiva to do so. Rav Shteinman took out a pen and paper and wrote a note testifying that he requested that the bachur travel to Meron in order to daven on his behalf.

Needless to say, the bachur was able to go to Meron without consequence. More so, the Gadol Hador imparted to our now

orphaned generation with yet another lesson to carry us into the future. Yehi zichro boruch.

The participants left the kinus not only inspired but with great resolve to aspire to live up to the high standards that the rosh hayeshiva set.