

Belkin Overcame Hardships Served As A Great Leader

When a true leader has fallen there is left a void and the rest of us are left enshrouded in a cloud of helplessness and insecurity with no sense of direction. "Dr. Belkin's death," remarked Professor Irving Linn to his English class last week "is the kind that will be felt more and more as time passes." For here stood a man who singlehandedly developed and molded Yeshiva University, and consequently,



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Dr. Belkin as instructor and 11 years later as Chancellor.

one might be led to say, the modern Orthodox Jewish community.

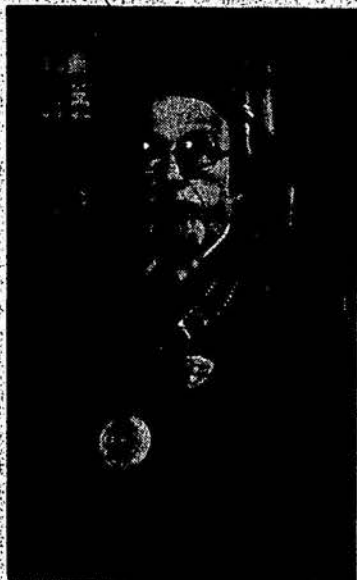
Samuel Belkin, born December 12, 1911 in Swislicz, Poland was the son of Solomon, a rabbi, and Mina Belkin. Of his early childhood, we know little, but his later life, we know to have been scarred with tragedies, and so it might seem reasonable to expect much of the same when he was a youth. His father who was also his first rebbe was dragged off and murdered for being a "Communist." When Samuel was 6 his mother, brothers and sisters were barely able to sustain themselves by scrounging in the woods for berries and mushrooms. One can easily understand Dr. Belkin's reluctance to speak about himself or his childhood.

On his own already at the age of 13, he learned under Yisroel Hakohen, a leading scholar in Europe, and a man whom Dr. Belkin only recently said "left the profoundest influence on me of anyone." He went on to learn at the yeshivas of Mir and then Radin where he received semicha from the Chofetz Chaim at the age of 17.

To America

Sensing the new crushing wave of anti-semitism he decided to leave Europe and with the aid of relatives in Canada, he arrived at Windsor, Ontario only to come to the US a year later in 1929. Only 18 years old, he could speak Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew, but no English. Five years later, having mastered the language, he was accepted to Harvard and a year later in 1934 he was awarded an honorary fellowship to Brown

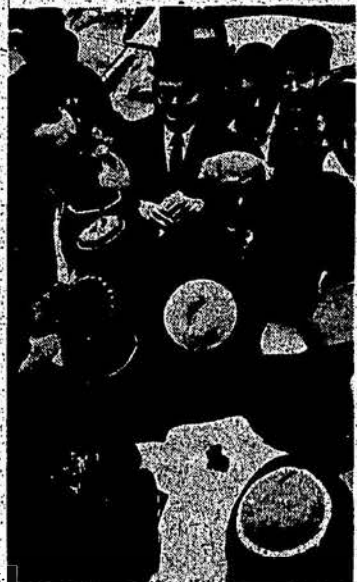
where he soon received his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Greek, his fifth language, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.



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Appointed an instructor and later full professor at Yeshiva College, he soon became a rosh yeshiva in RIETS under Yeshiva's founder, Dr. Bernard Revel, first president of Yeshiva College and the seminary.

With Dr. Revel's death in 1940, Dr. Belkin became Dean of RIETS and three years later on May 25, president. He began an expansion program that led to the granting of university



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Dr. Belkin with his students.

status to Yeshiva by the State Board of Regents in November, 1945.

As an instructor of Greek and as the school president, Dr. Belkin formed indissoluble bonds with other faculty members and students, many of whom are faculty members today and recall his warmth and sincerity. He knew all his students and referred to them by their first names. It was perhaps the most

painful part of being president of a rapidly growing university, and though he tried, it became simply impossible to maintain close personal relationships. It hurt him greatly, as Prof. Linn put it, that his students now had to make appointments weeks in advance to speak to him, and that his time was no longer his own. Now he had new obligations to the school and the community and the simple life of Torah and scholarship and the direct transmission of knowledge to the next generation was past. For here was a man of extraordinary genius and talent and charm. Gritting his teeth, he endured the formalities that the presidency of a growing institution called for and all the protocol which he hated so. With single mindedness and steadfastness of purpose he forged on ahead with an aggressiveness that bordered on "arrogance."

Expansion

Under his leadership the university rapidly rose to gain prominence in the worlds of religion, science, and liberal arts. In 1954, Stern College, the first liberal arts college for women under Jewish auspices was established. A year later, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the first medical school in history under Jewish sponsorship opened its doors in the Bronx. In the past twenty years it has mushroomed into an expansive campus with a mark of excellence and achievement noted around the world, all under the watchful eye and guiding light of Dr. Belkin. This past year, AECOM was rated by medical school deans as being one of the top ten medical schools in the United States. The list of "firsts" goes on and on.

Dr. Belkin's famous "Blueprint for the Seventies," adopted on YU's 75th anniversary in 1961 ended in 1970 and the univers-

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Rav Delivers Belkin's Eulogy Analyzes The True Individual

The following are excerpts of the eulogy delivered by Rabbi J. S. Soloveitchik at Dr. Belkin's funeral, April 20, 1976 in Lamport Auditorium. The excerpts were selected from a WYUR recording of the Rav's remarks at the discretion of the Editors. All errors in transcription and selection are those of the Editors. A full transcript will soon be available from the Alumni Office.

There are two books, the open book and the Sefer Hachasum. The two books are concerned with two different questions, the Sefer Hagahul the public book, the open book asks a very simple question. What did this particular individual do? What did he accomplish for society? What are his accomplishments. The private book, the Sefer Hachasum, asks a different question. It doesn't ask what did man do for society; it asks, who was he; not his accomplishments, but who was the individual himself?

The private book of Dr. Belkin remained a safer hachasum, a sealed mysterious book. The first question of the private book is "Who was he?", not what did he accomplish; who was he? I don't know. A certain verse, I would like to use a certain verse from sefer D'varim Deuteronomy, in order to portray Dr. Belkin. It is a verse consisting of five words, but I believe those five words tell the story of Dr. Belkin.

We just read those four, . . . five words in the haggada; "Arami ovald avi vayered mitzraima." I will interpret it in accordance with the ibn Ezra. A straying, wandering restless Aramean was my father and he went down to Egypt. Let me paraphrase this pasuk. A restless Lithuanian yeshiva talmid, student, who was my friend, Dr. Belkin. He also dreamt. He also became a visionary. Whenever I entered his room unannounced (I didn't do it frequently) I used to find him dreaming. I simply saw the dream in his eyes. His gaze used to be fixed on something far: it was something unknown, to me at least.

Now the question is what did he dream about? He was an arami ovald, a restless Lithuanian. What did he dream about? He dreamt of a generation of young American Jews who combined the good components of both an excellent secular and Torah education. Let me tell you, Dr. Belkin's standards of lamdus, of halachik scholarship were very high. I repeat, he dreamt of a generation of young American Jews who would combine both an excellent Torah education with the capability of participating in the scientifically oriented and technologically minded complex American economy.

However, Dr. Belkin, the restless spirit, the arami ovald, the restless nomad, had another dream. And this second dream was bolder, more daring than the first dream. This was his original dream. No one shared his opinion, not even people who were very close to him. . . . He wanted to show the Jewish, as well as the

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The Rav listens intently to Rabbi Belkin's shiur.

Fondest Memories Of Dr. Belkin Members Of Faculty Reminisce

RABBI ROMM

I knew Dr. Belkin when we were both teenagers learning in the Skolim Yeshiva. He was certainly one of the outstanding students of the yeshiva, a prodigy, a talmid and a sweet man. After two years, Dr. Belkin left to learn in Radin under the Chofetz Chaim but we corresponded in divrei Torah quite regularly. We were reunited briefly in Mir in 1929 when Dr. Belkin was on his way to America.

In 1948 when I came to the United States, Dr. Belkin received me as a close friend and offered me a position as an instructor and Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshiva University.

Dr. Belkin was a genius in Torah as well

as mada; furthermore he was a great builder of Torah and mada in America. But in reality, his greatest virtues lay in his personality. He was a 'Tov U'mativ,' he was good and he exuded good. He constantly sought opportunities to do favors for others, never looking for the chance to take any sort of revenge on his enemies. In the words of the Talmud, he was "among those who are insulted but do not insult, who hear themselves shamed but do not answer." It is unfortunate that the student body of Yeshiva did not understand him fully to appreciate him or to honor him both during his lifetime and after.

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Belkin Overcame Hardships; Served As Inspiring Jewish Leader

(Continued from Page A, Col. 3) ity, which at the time consisted only of the one domed structure in Washington Heights, now consisted of four complete campuses. Rubin Residence Hall was followed by Furst Hall and Morgenstern Residence Hall. In the spring of 1969 the Mendel Gottesman (central university) Library was completed and a half year later, the \$20 million Belfer Graduate School of Science was dedicated. The Brookdale Graduate Center at 55 Fifth Avenue consists of the Ferkauf Graduate School of Humanities

Jewish boy reaches the age of thirteen, the father has completed his obligations, but while he may not control the child, he still has responsibilities to him; he must give them guidelines. The failure of the American family is due to a lack of cohesiveness in this country on wheels.

Dr. Belkin reflected on the problems man faces in this age. "Our modern age has produced many tools, new things, but the modern age cannot produce a new man, a new woman. The destruction which can be

consists half of Hebraic studies and less than half of Greek studies." He studied and wrote extensively on the works of Philo, and is the author of Philo and the Oral Law published as part of the Harvard Semitic Series. He was an acknowledged leading authority on the Greek contribution to Western civilization.

Dr. Belkin discussed the relationship between the Jewish and Greek contributions to the Western world. "The Greeks were philosophers. They were interested in theory, metaphysical speculation . . . Plato, Aristotle." They were interested in the nature of man, the universe, G-d, the body, the soul. But they lived in ivory towers; they were not interested in the community in its totality, in the average man. The Hebraic heritage is one of moral activism . . . his brother's keeper. And the difference between philosophy and religion is that religion tries to do something about it. Therefore Judaism became the fountainhead of all the great religions, and Greece became the fountainhead of all the great philosophical schools. One was interested primarily in theory, and one was interested in translating theory into practice.

A self-declared "divine optimist," Dr. Belkin advocated a return to family life. "The fall of the Roman Empire was primarily due to the fact that the family had disintegrated. Once the family had disintegrated, the entire empire became disintegrated. We must go back to the family, we must go back to the home. If the home will become better, parents will become teachers, and teachers will become parents." Seven years later, in an interview with Mr. Kendrick last January, Dr. Belkin attributed the quiet campus-

es to a growing sense of pragmatism. "They realize that those who were engaged in destructive activism never found a place for themselves, and they are now concerned only with stud-

ies." Somewhat remorseful, he added that the new approach is also harmful. Students find society filled with corruption and come to the conclusion that

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A meeting of great minds — Dr. Belkin and Albert Einstein.

and Social Sciences and Wurzel School of Social Work. Its newest addition is Dr. Belkin's final work, the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. The Midtown Center (Stern College) was expanded from one to three buildings. AECOM's center was expanded and various research centers were added: the Ullman Research Center for Health Sciences, the Rose F. Kennedy Center for Research in Mental Retardation and Human Development, and the Educational Center for Health Sciences. Ground has also been broken for the \$8.5 million Irwin S. and Sylvia Chanin Institute for Cancer Research.

Almost everything a visitor sees standing on any one of YU's four campuses is the product of Samuel Belkin; this is a Belkin University. While ultra-rightists, who couldn't possibly understand, angrily maintain that "synthesis" is impossible, under Dr. Belkin's eyes, YU grew never too big for its "britches," and he sternly admonished YU's schools, from RIETS to AECOM to keep this in mind.

Reflections

While the American campus was a scene of unrest in the 60's, YU remained calm. As Dr. Belkin put it during a CBS-TV interview with Alexander Kendrick in 1969, "students have the right to protest, to criticize, to demand . . . but no violence — because violence produces violence, when the sword ascends, the book descends. So the violence of the sword cannot live together with the reason of the book." If today's child had been taught to love his parents first, then relatives, the people among whom he was born, then the country, and after these particulars, the universals, instead of the other way around there would not have taken place the insurrections of the day. Yet, Dr. Belkin never advocated authority or possessive rights of a parent over a child. When a

produced in the modern age in our day would have taken thousands of years in previous ages. So whatever man has created by his ingenuity can be used for his benefit and for his destruction, for his service, and for his disservice."

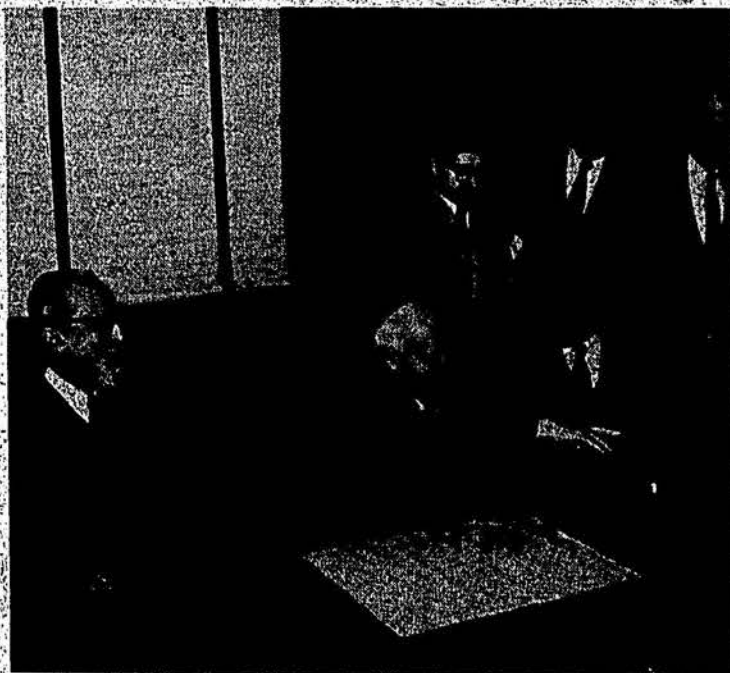
Dr. Belkin's achievements in the world of Torah, his remarkable insight into the Talmud and his dissemination of its teachings, greatly overshadowed his second love Hellenistic literature. "You see this library?" he remarked to an interviewer. "This library

Rav Mourns Dr. Belkin

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non-Jewish community that the Orthodox Jew is as capable of establishing scientific, educational institutions as the non-Jew or the secular Jew is.

He told me once, when he presented the plan of a medical school, under the auspices of the Yeshiva, to an internationally known Jewish abdominal surgeon, that the latter became so indignant that he said the whole project is not only impractical, but arrogant as well. And perhaps he was right, the surgeon. It was arrogant. Well let me tell you, the restless Yeshiva student of Lithuania was indeed . . . tough, tough and arrogant. However,



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Dr. Belkin, the Rav, and Ben Gurion enjoy private joke.



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Dr. Belkin, Joseph Rubin and grandson at dedication of Rubin Dorm.

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his arrogance was translated into reality. And isn't a Jew an arrogant person, defying for thousands of years the whole world? And isn't little Israel an arrogant nation, defying the united nations of the world?

Who was he? Answer number one: He was a restless, arrogant, impudent student from Lithuania. He dreamt of moons and suns, of heaven and earth . . .

Let me give you the second answer. The arrogant dreamer, the restless Yeshiva bochur, the arami ovoid, was a great teacher, a rosh yeshiva. . . . I spent my life in teaching, I know teachers. He was a magnificent teacher. He was, perhaps, the teacher par excellence. . . . His disciples were the best trained boys in the yeshiva. . . .

He always moved in a straight line. He knew neither of angles nor of curves nor of corners. His thinking was two dimensional. His code, so to say, his coat of arms, his lamdus, the symbol of his lamdus was the geometric plane. He did not engage in so-called analysis of depth. He had no trust in the thin abstractions of three dimensional thinking. But whatever he said, it was logical, it was plain, it was understandable. . . .

He is responsible for the fact, only he, that Yeshivas Rav Yitzchak Eickman, now, as of today, is a great center of Torah, and that as far as the attainment of lamdus, good lamdus, good, real genuine scholarship is concerned it is the best place in the United States. You don't have to believe me, just take a look at the young roshel yeshivas who sit right over there to my right. They were trained right here. They are the finest roshel yeshivas any institution, here or in Israel, any institution, now, at present or a hundred years ago. . . .

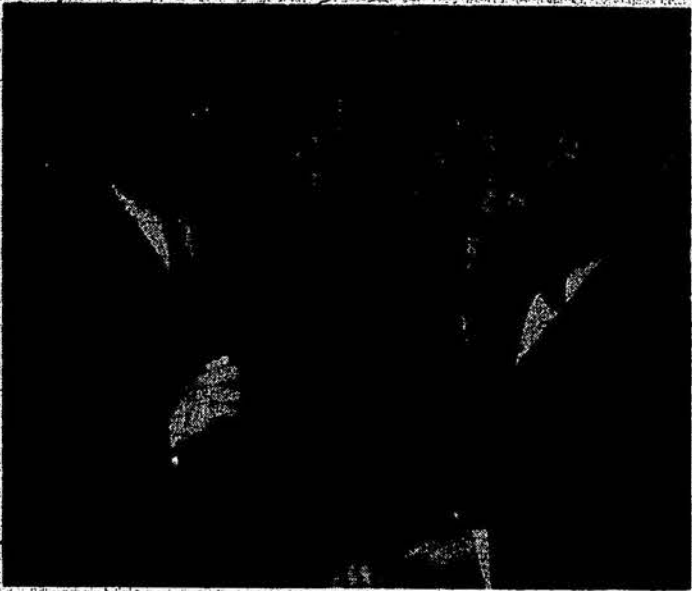
Answer number two to the question who was he. He was a restless dreamer, who was an excellent teacher and who was in love with Torah. He had a romance with Torah.

Dr. Belkin was a charming person. He radiated, I'll use the biblical expression for it, Chaine. Chaine is charm. The restless teacher, the lover of Torah, like Joseph of old, again, attracted people. He was, indeed, charming. He enchanted them with his magnetic personality even those who disagreed with him, and quite often I disagreed with him, quite often. Even those who disagreed with him succumbed to his powerful charm.

The charisma Dr. Belkin possessed was precipitated by two basic virtues. Virtue number one, let me use the Biblical expression

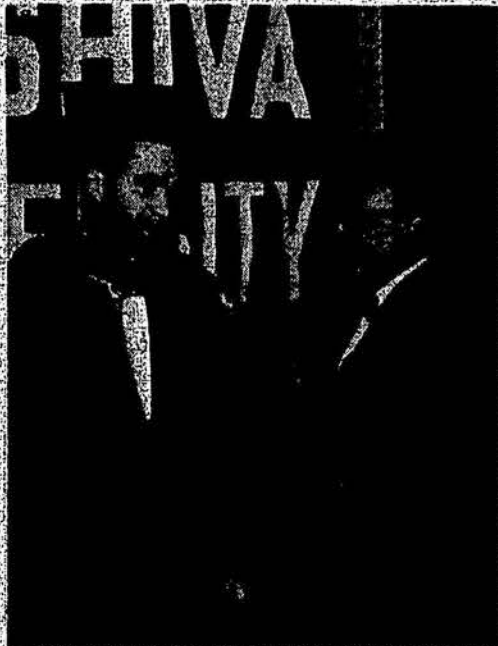
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Dr. Belkin At YU: Life In Pictures



left: the President of Yeshiva University presents Justice William O. Douglas with the YU Award for Public Service in 1950. Justice Douglas was but one of a long list of dignitaries, scholars, and officials to be so honored.

bottom: Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson receives an honorary doctorate in 1961.



above: Yeshiva University awarded then-Vice-President Richard Nixon with an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters in 1957.

right: Two friends and neighbors, Gov. Carey and Dr. Belkin gaze out over the sea of 1975 graduates on Danciger Campus.



Students Grieve At Belkin Grave Thousands Bussed To Ceremonies

Approximately two thousand YC, Stern, and YU High School students paid their respects to the memory of Dr. Belkin in a visit to his grave this week. The visit, on Monday, May 3, was arranged by the various student councils to allow students, most of whom were unable to attend Dr. Belkin's funeral, held during Pesach, to express their gratitude to the late Dr. Belkin before the end of the first month of mourning.

Twelve hundred students from YC and the Yeshiva High Schools for Boys of Manhattan and Brooklyn were at the first of the

day's two eulogies. The event was also attended by the members of Dr. Belkin's immediate family, as well as by most of the Rebbeim from the University's religious studies divisions. Stan Frohlinger, President of JSSSC, told the crowd of the debt they owed Dr. Belkin as the guiding spirit and master builder of the University.

After Tehillim were recited, Phil Kazlow, SOY President, delivered the main eulogy. Comparing Dr. Belkin to Job, he said that both suffered greatly, and pointed out that despite his hardships, Dr. Belkin's spirit had never been broken. Mr. Kazlow

said that Dr. Belkin was also like Moses, in that he was able to accomplish all he tried to do. Mr. Kazlow stressed the fact that Dr. Belkin's major interest had been in the religious studies divisions where he had been a Rosh Yeshiva, and stated that no achievements of Dr. Belkin were greater than the founding of EMC and JSS.

Tehillim and the Azkarah were recited after the address, and the male students left. Shortly after, eight hundred Stern and Yeshiva High School for Girls students visited the grave and heard Stern's Dean David Mirsky eulogize Dr. Belkin.

Rav Mourns Dr. Belkin

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for it, he was a baal chesed, he was a man of lovingkindness. He was a kind person. And let me say his kindness was not due to character weakness. Sometimes people are kind because they are weak, or character softness. Sometimes people are kind because they are soft. Dr. Belkin was not a weak person. He was tough, I said before, and firm. He was a man who exercised power and he liked power. He practiced what the Talmud calls gemilus chasadim b'namono ubigfo. Kindness as far as money is concerned and kindness as far as physical efforts are concerned. If there was a person who was not appreciated by his own friends, this was Dr. Belkin. He was the most unappreciated - restless dreamer an excellent teacher and kind person. The most unappreciated in the world . . .

. . . I'll tell you something. He was, and this will come as a surprise to many of you in the hall, he was a saintly person. He possessed saintliness. I don't say holiness I say saintliness. Kindness alone does not generate or precipitate charismatic chains, unless it is tightly knit with saintliness. And Dr. Belkin was a saintly person. And I understand if you ask me in what manner, in what respect did he manifest saintliness. I'll tell you. He felt it in four respects.

First, he was a sonch betza, he hated gain. You know the Biblical expression sonch betza, to hate gain, to hate profit, to hate money. The saintly person is a sonch betza. And, Dr. Belkin while he knew the importance of money as far as the institution was concerned, he had no concept of, he had no desire for money as far as he himself was concerned . . . He died a poor man. He died a poor man because he was a saintly man. He was a saintly man because he was a great man, and he died a great man. He simply was a sonch betza who raised so much money, who was a wizard, a wizard as a fund solicitor . . .

Dr. Belkin was a saintly person for a different reason. Dr. Belkin lived a simple life. It's very hard to find people nowadays who are satisfied with a simple life, plain simple life. Dr. Belkin lived a simple life because he was a simple man. A great man, but a simple man. . . . There was a streak of asceticism in him, a streak of prisha min hachayim. He lived not to enjoy life, because he hardly enjoyed it, but to create, to serve and to sacrifice and to die on the altar of Torah. He had saintliness. He could live a life stripped of all manner of frills and petty, petty enjoyments. He hated the formalities. I know that some people misinterpreted, misunderstood it. He hated the formalities and the protocol and the public etiquette even though from time to time he had to go through it. But he never enjoyed it. . . .

. . . Dr. Belkin was a saintly man for a third reason. He had, what shall I say? I'll use the Hebrew term, a lashon nikah, a dignified speech. Judaism has always emphasized the significance of the word. The latter, if uttered with dignity and sanctity may create a world. The latter, the word uttered with vulgarity, may destroy a world. Dr. Belkin's speech was clean and dignified. I've never heard him malign anybody, ANYBODY, or make some derogatory remarks about people. Enemies, who indeed wanted to destroy him, indeed wanted to destroy him, physically and spiritually, he never said a bad word about them.

He was also a saintly person in his relationship to Yisroel. Dr. Belkin knew how to accept suffering; he suffered with dignity. Dr. Belkin knew, as I said, to suffer, how to meet crisis and how to confront disaster. He never complained. For all the time that I knew Dr. Belkin I've never heard a single complaint from him. He never complained. He never asked any questions. He never engaged in self-righteous monologues. Vayidom Aharon, and Aaron said nothing. A great man, a saintly man says nothing. He was silent, Dr. Belkin. A saintly man must possess the heroic quality of being mute at a time when one is ready to talk. . . .

. . . We prayed for miracles. Apparently we were unworthy of a miracle, it happened. We ask just, we bid you farewell. Lech Lishalom, visannach bikaltz hayamin kechol chal. We promise thee that Yeshiva will be guarded by us and it will continue to be a great center of Torah. Your name will never be forgotten.



Fondest Memories Of Dr. Belkin

(Continued from Page A, Col. 5)

RABBI PESACH ORATZ

My Rebbe, Dr. Belkin, was a unique man in our time. When I was still learning in the Yeshiva, I was in his shiur, but that was not the extent of our relationship. Dr. Belkin at that time was a Bochen (test giver), and even before I reached his shiur, he took an interest in me, as well as in many other students of that time.

Rabbi Belkin gave a very lucid shiur, explaining everything well and analyzing the Gemora deeply. Everyone enjoyed going to his shiur, and even if you were confused, he would aid you with a complete summary of what was learned previously.

I had the distinct honor numerous times of

his students. He was in those days, warm and sociable with his students, who came in to talk to him not only about their learning problems but about other matters as well.

After the death of President Bernard Revel, Dr. Belkin was appointed to be a member of the Executive Committee to run the College until a new president could be named. The location of his office was changed, but students were free to drop in on him as before. When Dr. Belkin became head of Yeshiva in 1943, he took up his new duties but did not relinquish all of his old ones, especially his morning Talmud classes. His secretary had explicit orders not to bar the President's office to students. With the passing years, the drain on Dr. Belkin's time became enormous, especially when after World War II the widely acclaimed expansion



TUPA

walking to the Yeshiva from the subway at 181st Street (pre-limousine days) with Dr. Belkin. Dr. Belkin not only took an active interest in my learning, but always questioned me about my secular studies and other material facets of life. He was a truly concerned individual.

One fond story I like to recall was on one of the pre-shiur walks. Dr. Belkin asked me about my learning. When I mentioned having some difficulty in the "Or Samech's Kuntras Haikah," Rabbi Belkin, in trying to make me feel better, said that he too had trouble with that piece. You can certainly believe that if he was having trouble at all, it was certainly on a different level.

One last story I'd like to relate came after I was already a Rebbe in JSS. I was teaching a senior class in conjunction with Rabbi Chait, and we wished to hold a siyum on the Gamara. We invited Dr. Belkin, but his secretary said he was booked for the day. However, she said she'd mention it to him and maybe he'd stop by for five minutes. When the day came for the siyum, we weren't really expecting him to show up, but sure enough, he did. He came in with a cigarette and sat down. One of the boys gave a Dvar Torah, and Rabbi Belkin asked him about it. Then, Rabbi Belkin gave a Dvar Torah. Slowly, you could see the pressure of his office fade, as his face lit up with his true Torah love. He didn't smoke or look at his watch for the next 45 minutes, so great was his involvement. When he finally did look at his watch, you could see the transformation again as he thought about his office tensions.

Now, at the time of mourning, I remember with nostalgia, fondness, and a deep sense of loss, my Rebbe, Dr. Belkin, z.l., a man whose first love was Torah and whose concern for talmidim was total.

DR. IRVING LINN

In 1937, when Dr. Belkin and I first came to Yeshiva—he as instructor in Greek and I as instructor in English—we were assigned offices that adjoined each other. In his room there was a large brown leather sofa in whose luxuriance he would frequently curl up to rest from his morning Talmud sessions and prepare for his afternoon Greek classes. Within a short time he was sharing the comfort of his sofa with

program got under way. But because of the warm pleasure he felt in personally knowing the members of the student body and their families, he was reluctant to erect a barrier between himself and the undergraduate in spite of the urging of his advisors, who saw the practice as debilitating.

The change in policy about student visitation was almost abrupt. It came with the building of Furst Hall, the establishment of Stern College for Women, the inauguration of Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and the removal of the Ferkauf Graduate School from rented quarters on Fifty-seventh Street into the University-owned building at 55 Fifth Avenue, where space was also found for the Wurzweller School of Social Work—all in a short time.

Dr. Belkin, who theretofore had been the rebbe to so many generations of Yeshiva students, who had guided so many of his "boys," as he called them, from college freshmen to semicha, became the symbol of Yeshiva University leadership. Today's undergraduate body, therefore, could hardly be expected to feel the intimacy of Dr. Belkin's passing, the tragedy of which was so closely present for the generations of older alumni who assembled for the services on Tuesday.

RABBI JACOB RABENOWITZ

"Rabbi Belkin's hapiest days were those when he was saying shiurim at Yeshiva. He was the model of organization, enormously perceptive and a pedagogical genius. I recall that he was my only Rebbe at that level to end the shiur with such concise summary that focused everything sharply into our minds. The shiurim themselves were not simply pilpul but rather solid analysis of the foundations and definitions of the Gemora.

When Rabbi Belkin lived near the Yeshiva on 170th Street, his students were constantly invited to his home for Shabbos. Unfortunately, when his administrative responsibilities grew too large he hesitatingly was forced to stop saying shiur, and he was very unhappy after he had done so.

It being so close to his death, I am at a loss as how to properly express my thoughts on Rabbi Belkin. For all that he was, none can really replace him."

Belkin Overcame Hardships Served As A Great Leader

(Continued from Page B, Col. 5) there is no purpose in rebelling; so they become isolated and choose to "live in an ivory tower and forget the needs of the community in general. If this is the case, I think it is almost as bad as destructive activism."

Israel and the Jew

Was it ironic or purposeful that Dr. Belkin never visited Israel since his arrival here 46 years ago? Speaking on Zionism on CBS-TV last fall, Dr. Belkin felt that a Jew in America is not a Zionist "in the sense that his loyalty is to the government of Israel. He has loyalty to the land of Israel, but not to its government."

In his essay "What Makes a Good Jew" Dr. Belkin explained that a good Jew is one who observes the Torah not merely as a book of theological dogma but follows its design for living, "a harmonious blending between his moral obligations to humanity and his divine attachment to God; a synthesis between his contemporary environment and his sacred heritage."

The Talmud prescribes the basic philosophy of the Jew, the emphasis on the individual. "When one man causes a single soul to perish, the Torah imputes to him the destruction of the world . . . a single man was created to proclaim the greatness of God, for man stamps many coins with one seal and they are all alike, but the King of Kings has stamped every man with the seal of the first man, yet not one of them is like his fellow. Therefore, it is the duty of every man to say,

"for my sake the world was created."

Dr. Belkin, who was quite fond of quoting this passage, wrote, "These immortal words of our sages, concerning the immortal dignity and worth of the human soul, contain the basic philosophy of the Jew, and such a philosophy, which is the essence of any democracy, helps toward the making of a good Jew!"

To us, today, "synthesis" means little more than Jewish studies in the morning and secular studies in the afternoon. To Dr. Belkin, though, it was his greatest goal in life. Social activism was very noble indeed, but could not succeed without these social responsibilities being based upon Divine laws, the authority of one's heritage. Today's houses of worship make distinctions, he claimed, one as a social part and the other as a religious part, with the result that "we have a dichotomy that will not serve any good."

"Let us hope and pray that, in the not too distant future, the world will rid itself of tyranny in every form, and that every individual and every nation will be able to proclaim: 'For my sake the world was created!'"

On April 18, 1976, the scholarship, dreams and energy came to an end. Dr. Samuel Belkin died at the age of 64 at the Hospital of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. A giant in Torah scholarship in our day, his tragic loss, which represents the stilling of one of orthodox Jewry's most brilliant and eloquent voices, will be keenly felt.



TUPA

A final tribute — Rabbi Belkin's casket being carried by those who loved him.

Wednesday,
May 5, 1976

The Commentator

In Memory Of Our Beloved Teacher And Leader

MEMORIAL ISSUE
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Rav Delivers Belkin's Eulogy Analyzes The True Individual

The following are excerpts of the eulogy delivered by Rabbi J. S. Soloveitchik at Dr. Belkin's funeral, April 20, 1976 in Lampport Auditorium. The excerpts were selected from a WYUR recording of the Rav's remarks at the discretion of the Editors. All errors in transcription and selection are those of the Editors. A full transcript will soon be available from the Alumni Office.

There are two books, the open book and the Sefer Hachasum. The two books are concerned with two different questions, the Sefer Hagulul the public book, the open book asks a very simple question. What did this particular individual do? What did he accomplish for society? What are his accomplishments. The private book, the Sefer Hachasum, asks a different question. It doesn't ask what did man do for society; it asks, who was he; not his accomplishments, but who was the individual himself?

The private book of Dr. Belkin remained a safer hachasum, a sealed mysterious book. The first question of the private book is "Who was he?", not what did he accomplish; who was he? I don't know. A certain verse, I would like to use a certain verse from sefer D'varim Deuteronomy, in order to portray Dr. Belkin. It is a verse consisting of five words, but I believe those five words tell the story of Dr. Belkin.

We just read those four, . . . five words in the haggada; "Arami ovald avi vayered mitzraima." I will interpret it in accordance with the Ibn Ezra. A straying, wandering restless Aramean was my father and he went down to Egypt. Let me paraphrase this pasuk. A restless Lithuanian yeshiva talmid, student, who was my friend, Dr. Belkin. He also dreamt. He also became a visionary. Whenever I entered his room unannounced (I didn't do it frequently) I used to find him dreaming. I simply saw the dream in his eyes. His gaze used to be fixed on something far: it was something unknown, to me at least.

Now the question is what did he dream about? He was an arami-ovald, a restless Lithuanian. What did he dream about? He dreamt of a generation of young American Jews who combined the good components of both an excellent secular and Torah education. Let me tell you, Dr. Belkin's standards of lamdus, of halachik scholarship were very high. I repeat, he dreamt of a generation of young American Jews who would combine both an excellent Torah education with the capability of participating in the scientifically oriented and technologically minded complex American economy.

However, Dr. Belkin, the restless spirit, the arami ovald, the restless nomad, had another dream. And this second dream was bolder, more daring than the first dream. This was his original dream. No one shared his opinion, not even people who were very close to him. . . . He wanted to show the Jewish, as well as the non-Jewish community that the Orthodox Jew is as capable of establishing scientific, educational institutions as the non-Jew or the secular Jew is.

He told me once, when he presented the plan of a medical school, under the auspices of the Yeshiva, to an internationally known Jewish abdominal surgeon, that the latter became so indignant that he said the whole project is not only impractical, but arrogant as well. And perhaps he was right, the surgeon. It was arrogant. Well let me tell you, the restless Yeshiva student of Lithuania was indeed . . . tough, tough and arrogant. However, his arrogance was translated into reality. And isn't a Jew an arrogant person, defying for thousands of years the whole world? And isn't little Israel an arrogant nation, defying the united nations of the world?

. . . Who was he? Answer number one: He was a restless, arrogant, impudent student from Lithuania. He dreamt of moons and suns, of heaven and earth . . .

Let me give you the second answer. The arrogant dreamer, the restless Yeshiva bochur, the arami ovald, was a great teacher, a rosh yeshiva. . . . I spent my life in teaching, I know teachers. He was a magnificent teacher. He was, perhaps, the teacher par excellence. . . . His disciples were the best trained boys in the yeshiva. . . .

He always moved in a straight line. He knew neither of angles nor of curves nor of corners. His thinking was two dimensional. His code, so to say, his coat of arms, his lamdus, the symbol of his lamdus was the geometric plane. He did not engage in so-called analysis of depth. He had no trust in the thin abstractions of three dimensional thinking. But whatever he said, it was logical, it was plain, it was understandable. . . .

He is responsible for the fact, only he, that Yeshivas Rav Yitzchak Elchanan, now, as of today, is a great center of Torah, and that as far as the attainment of lamdus, good lamdus, good, real genuine scholarship is concerned it is the best place in the United States. You don't have to believe me, just take a look at

the young roshel yeshivas who sit right over there to my right. They were trained right here. They are the finest roshel yeshivas any institution, here or in Israel, any institution, now, at present or a hundred years ago. . . .

Answer number two to the question who was he. He was a restless dreamer, who was an excellent teacher and who was in love with Torah. He had a romance with Torah.

Dr. Belkin was a charming person. He radiated, I'll use the biblical expression for it, Chaine. Chaine is charm. The restless teacher, the lover of Torah, like Joseph of old, again, attracted people. He was, indeed, charming. He enchanted them with his magnetic personality even those who disagreed with him, and quite often I disagreed with him, quite often. Even those who disagreed with him succumbed to his powerful charm.

The charisma Dr. Belkin possessed was precipitated by two basic virtues. Virtue number one, let me use the Biblical expression for it, he was a baal chesed, he was a man of lovingkindness. He was a kind person. And let me say his kindness was not due to character weakness. Sometimes people are kind because they are weak, or character softness. Sometimes people are kind because they are soft. Dr. Belkin was not a weak person. He was tough, I said before, and firm. He was a man who exercised power and he liked power. He practiced what the Talmud calls gemilus chasadim b'mamono ubigfuf. Kindness as far as money is concerned and kindness as far as physical efforts are concerned. If there was a person who was not appreciated by his own friends, this was Dr. Belkin. He was the most unappreciated restless dreamer an excellent teacher and kind person. The most unappreciated in the world. . . .

. . . I'll tell you something. He was, and this will come as a surprise to many of you in the hall, he was a saintly person. He possessed saintliness. I don't say holiness I say saintliness. Kindness alone does not generate or precipitate charismatic chaine, unless it is tightly knit with saintliness. And Dr. Belkin was a saintly person. And I understand if you ask me in what manner, in what respect did he manifest saintliness. I'll tell you. He felt it in four respects.

First he was a sonch betza, he hated gain. You know the Biblical expression sonch betza, to hate gain, to hate profit, to hate money. The saintly person is a sonch betza. And, Dr. Belkin while he knew the importance of money as far as the institution was concerned, he had no concept of, he had no desire for money as far as he himself was concerned . . . He died a poor man. He died a poor man because he was a saintly man. He was a saintly man because he was a great man, and he died a great man. He simply was a sonch betza who raised so much money, who was a wizard, a wizard as a fund solicitor . . .

Dr. Belkin was a saintly person for a different reason. Dr. Belkin lived a simple life. It's very hard to find people nowadays who are satisfied with a simple life, plain simple life. Dr. Belkin lived a simple life because he was a simple man. A great man, but a simple man. . . . There was a streak of asceticism in him, a streak of prisha min hachayim. He lived not to enjoy life, because he hardly enjoyed it, but to create, to serve and to sacrifice and to die on the altar of Torah. He had saintliness. He could live a life stripped of all manner of frills and petty, petty enjoyments. He hated the formalities. I know that some people misinterpreted, misunderstood it. He hated the formalities and the protocol and the public etiquette even though from time to time he had to go through it. But he never enjoyed it. . . .

. . . Dr. Belkin was a saintly man for a third reason. He had, what shall I say? I'll use the Hebrew term, a lashon niddah, a dignified speech. Judaism has always emphasized the significance of the word. The latter, if uttered with dignity and sanctity may create a world. The latter, the word uttered with vulgarity, may destroy a world. Dr. Belkin's speech was clean and dignified. I've never heard him malign anybody, ANYBODY, or make some derogatory remarks about people. Enemies, who indeed wanted to destroy him, indeed wanted to destroy him, physically and spiritually, he never said a bad word about them.

He was also a saintly person in his relationship to Yisroel. Dr. Belkin knew how to accept suffering; he suffered with dignity. Dr. Belkin knew, as I said, to suffer, how to meet crisis and how to confront disaster. He never complained. For all the time that I knew Dr. Belkin I've never heard a single complaint from him. He never complained. He never asked any questions. He never engaged in self-righteous monologues. Vayidom Aharon, and Aaron said nothing. A great man, a saintly man says nothing. He was silent, Dr. Belkin. A saintly man must possess the heroic quality of being mute at a time when one is ready to talk. . . .

. . . We prayed for miracles. Apparently we were unworthy of a miracle, it happened. We ask just, we bid you farewell. Lech Lishalom, visanuvach bikultz hayamin kechol chal. We promise thee that Yeshiva will be guarded by us and it will continue to be a great center of Torah. Your name will never be forgotten.