

R' MOSHE YANOFSKY Z"L

It was 5:00 AM one wintry morning in February of 1964. With a smile on his lips and a spring in his step, twenty-two-year-old Moshe Yanofsky entered his home.

Joyously returning from the hospital following the birth of his first-born son Eliyahu (Yingy) z"l, his mind was in over-drive. Arrangements needed to be made, friends and family informed, baby items purchased, *sholom zachar* organized, and so much more.

But there was a more pressing matter; something of infinitely more importance that needed to be addressed first. 6:30 AM found R' Moshe pacing back and forth outside a home on a nondescript East Flatbush street.

Shortly after seven, the door opened and Rav Aharon Schechter Shlit"a, Rosh Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, exited his home and began making his way to shacharis.

"Rebbi," said R' Moshe as he approached. "I am just returning from the hospital. My wife gave birth to a boy," he continued.

Not waiting for any congratulatory response, nor effusive well-wishes, he continued on, getting to the pressing matter at hand.

"Can *Rebbi* give me some tips, some *eitzos*, how to best raise him?" he concluded.

Such was R' Moshe Yanofsky z"l. He lived, breathed, ate and slept *chinuch*. It was his passion. It was his essence. It was his life's mission. And it was something which he excelled at. Greatly!



R' Moshe was born in 1942, to R'

Chaim Tzvi and Miriam Yanofsky A"H. Living in the spiritual wasteland of post-World-War-I America, R' Chaim Zvi was renowned for his extreme *ehrllichkeit* and impeccable integrity. With herculean tenacity that not all of that era were fortunate to possess, he stood strong and refused compromise on his *yidishkeit*. Indeed, he was one of those special *yidden* who, refusing to work on Shabbos, would lose his job each and every weekend, only to begin Monday morning once again searching for a job. It was in this home that R' Moshe was born and raised, absorbing foundations in *ehrllichkeit* and *middos tovos*.

Growing up in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, NY, Moshe, together with his sister Chanie (Neiman), lived in abject poverty. As a young teenager Moshe would go away to work in a hotel for Yom Tov - not just as to make a few dollars, but simply in order to have food to eat.

When it came time to enroll them in school, there was simply no way to afford them both a Jewish education. A choice had to be made. After consulting with *da'as torah*, it was decided that Chanie would attend Bais Yaakov, and Moshe would attend the local public school, making do with attendance at a Jewish afternoon program ran by Rabbi Avner German.

And so it was until the third grade. Rabbi German constantly inquired as to why he didn't want to attend Yeshiva full time. The answer was always the same: I would love to! Its just simply not affordable.

One day, Rabbi German took young Moshe to meet Mr. Alex Fruchthandler, then President of Mesivta Yeshiva Rabbi

Chaim Berlin and father of R' Avrohom Fruchthandler, current President. Mr. Fruchthandler was taken by the young child's sincerity, and agreed to accept him into the Yeshiva, setting a tuition rate of one dollar a week! Furthermore, Mr. Fruchthandler instructed his staff that the tuition rate was to remain the same for as long as Moshe was in the Yeshiva.

R' Moshe would forever feel indebted to Alex Fruchthandler and Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, and would express this in public on many occasions.

Young Moshe Yanofsky began attending Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin, and so began a life-long connection with the Yeshiva and its Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Hutner. The strong connection that developed continues on to this day, as the Yanofsky family and Yeshiva Chaim Berlin remain inextricably connected.



Although born in February of 1942, R' Moshe would often say that his life really 'began' in April of 1963. It was then, at the young age of 21, that he married his *eishes chayil*, Tzivia *shetichye*, daughter of Rav Aaron Shaul and Pesha Chaya Sinensky.

Together they were a team, a single unit. For the next sixty years, Moshe and Sharon, as she is known to all, would form an invincible team, tackling life's challenges together. Each one complemented the other, pushing one another, guiding, coaxing, and growing together. Sharing similar ideals and a mutual vision, together they would raise a beautiful family.



A brilliant mathematician, R' Moshe walked away from a promising career and turned down numerous job offers - ones that would guarantee a life of prestige and financial stability. But this was not what he wanted. Math was in his brain; but *chinuch* coursed through his veins.

Two short years after his marriage, R' Moshe began teaching at Bais Yaakov under the leadership and direction of Rav Boruch and Rebbetzin Vichna Kaplan.

It would be the beginning of a long and fruitful career. Moshe Yanofsky would dedicate the next half-a-century to *chinuch habanos*. In truth, 'career' is not just a poor choice of words, but inadequate and distortive. *Chinuch Habanos* was not a career choice. It was his passion. It was his essence. It enveloped every fiber of his being.



A cursory review of K'lal Yisroel's history, a study of its most notable dignitaries, sages, and lay-leaders - brings forth an interesting anomaly.

There were those who throughout their life-time were highly effective people: *Roshei Yeshiva* with multitudes of *talmidim*; Members of the Rabbinat who affected far beyond their own communities; Public leaders and *askanim* with signature accomplishments. These were people who were innovators in their field. Visionaries who positively impacted Torah Jewry on a global scale. Household names that enjoyed the highest accolades of public appreciation.

Yet, it was often these same people who after their passing were relegated to the dustbin of history, destined for anonymity and obscurity. Little remains

known about their accomplishments. The deeds themselves remained of course, but their origin became unknown, the connection to its designer obscured.

Then there are others. These individuals were relatively unknown throughout their lifetime. Men of similar great attributes and accomplishments, yet their innovative activities and revolutionary ideas remained largely unnoticed, unrecognized or simply taken for granted.

It is not until years after their passing that the magnitude of their activities begins to be realized. It is only in hindsight that the general populace becomes aware of, and begins to appreciate, the great deeds which his peers and beneficiaries already recognized. The ripple-effect first begins after their *petira*, revealing the true extent of their impact which remained hidden throughout their life.

Reb Moshe Yanofsky would sooner fit into the latter category than the former. Yes, the name Moshe Yanofsky is well known by so many. Yes, thousands upon thousands of students adored him, respected him and admired him. Yet the full scope of his pioneering efforts is yet to be told. His life's history is, well, history. His life's story, however, is yet to be voiced and appreciated, explained and studied.

A trailblazer and innovator in the area of *chinuch habanos*, we can first now begin to reflect on the full impact he has made. The field of *chinuch habanos* was a landscape which would be forever changed, bettered and enhanced over the course of close to half-a-century of his fruitful labor of love.



A mere two years after he began teaching at Bais Yaakov, Rebbetzin Kaplan, impressed by his passion and competence, placed him in charge of the entire school. At the young age of 25 he was the principal of the entire Bais Yaakov, over one thousand students!

Approximately twenty years later in 1985, with the permission and blessings of Rebbetzin Kaplan, and under the guidance and encouragement of Rav Pam and the Novominsker Rebbe, zichron tzadikim l'vracha, he left his position to open his own school - Machon Bais Yaakov, where he remained at the helm until his retirement approximately twelve years ago.

Machon Bais Yaakov was his life. It became an extension of his family. Indeed, on more than one occasion, he mortgaged his own home so as to ensure that the Machon would not default on their financial obligations!

Machon girls were not just students; they were like children. He wouldn't merely teach them. He lived their lives alongside them, sharing their joy and feeling their pain. At every step of their lives, even decades after they graduated, he was there for them - guiding and counseling, comforting and encouraging.

He would attempt, as much as he was physically able, and despite many hardships, to attend each and every girls *chasuna*, often times enlisting the help of his wife Sharon to drive him and wait outside as he went from *simcha* to *simcha*.



R' Moshe was enveloped by a constant inner drive to accomplish, to do, to build. He didn't live a moment for

himself. Self-enjoyment was a foreign concept. He would give over this value to his children as well. Never would he simply ask them how was your day, but rather what did you do today, what did you accomplish.

A typical day began when he left the house at 7:00 AM, making his way to Kingsborough Community College, where he taught four classes of advanced mathematics. He would then make his way back to Boro Park where his work, his real work, began in earnest. The remainder of his day would be spent tending to the needs of the school - the girls, the staff and the parent body.

After a full day's work, he would return home and take care of his family. His children remember the home as one always filled with love and *simcha*. And then, each evening, he would walk over to his parents' home to tend to his father who was incapacitated and of failing health.



R' Moshe took the concept of caring and concern for others to the next level. It was the 'little things' that indicate more than just a natural tendency and predisposition to help others. They reflect an inner essence, a heart bursting with concern and compassion for others.

It was the week before the school *Shabbaton*, and, knowing the financial stress that a family in the school was going through, he called over one of his students and handed her a cash-filled envelope. "Go buy yourself some new

outfits for *Shabbos*," he told her, "So you shouldn't feel uncomfortable and second-class in front of your friends."

Another student confided in him that her parents were struggling financially and, despite her greatest wishes simply could not afford the cost of sending her on the *Shabbaton*. R' Moishe called the parents and assured them that he would personally take care of the finances and they had nothing to worry about. But that wasn't enough. The next day he called over the girl and handed her a sealed envelope with her name on it. The envelope contained a single dollar bill, he explained. Hand it in when they collect the envelopes today, he told her. This way no one will suspect anything....

On his desk at home forever lay a notebook. Each page was headed, in succession, with a different year, and on each one was a list of all that year's graduates who were not yet married. There was no greater joy for him than being able to cross a name off the list...



As he got older and his health began failing him, he realized that he was no longer as effective as he wished to be, and decided to retire his position and hand over the reigns to the younger generation.

Here as well, his unyielding dedication and unique sense of *achrayus* manifested itself. Despite declaring his intentions to retire, he continued on working, and then abruptly stopped in February - right in middle of the school

year. The timing raised a few eyebrows, but it wouldn't be until years later that the mystery would resolve itself. That February, it was later learned, the very last mortgage payment would become due. It was only after the building was paid in full, that R' Moshe felt comfortable handing over the reins.



R' Moshe is survived by his ever-devoted wife Sharon, and leaves behind a wonderful family of *talmidei chachamim*. He was predeceased by his oldest son, Eliyahu, from the chashuvei talmidei Bais Medrash Govoah, and founding Dean of the Lakewood Seminary in Lakewood, NJ. After his untimely passing in 2018, the seminary was renamed *Aliyos Eliyahu* after him. R' Shimon spent close to twenty-five years as the S'gan Menahel at the Yeshiva K'tana of Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, and is currently the founder and active Menahel of Mesivta of Chestnut Ridge. Noson holds a PhD in mathematics and is a Professor at Brooklyn College. R' Meir Leib is a long-time employee at Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, recently being installed as its Executive Director. His daughter, Golda Baila (Feigenbaum), is raising a large, beautiful mishpacha of *bonei torah*.

The Yanofsky family proudly continue in his path, carrying on his work and perpetuating his legacy. May he be a *meilitz yoisher* for all of us.

Yehi Zichro Boruch.

