

# *Hespid for my Father*

by Noson S. Yanofsky

(This is a slightly edited and elucidated version of what I said at my father's funeral.)

Contrary to what you probably heard; my father did not die yesterday in the hospital. No. My father died about five and a half years ago. I remember the day vividly. It was the day after my brother Eli got a trak and he could no longer speak anymore. I took my father to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, my father was crying. He was sad. He was angry. When we got to the hospital, he saw Eli and he understood that he would no longer be able to talk to Eli. They had a very close relationship. They spent their whole life talking and laughing together. This was over. My father broke down. I had to take my father out of the room. Eli was hurt more by this than anything else. Eli could not watch the pain he gave his father. We left the hospital. On the way home, my father did not say anything. He did not cry. He was not alive anymore. The next five years he was a ghost. He was a shell of a man. Anyone who knew my father before, can attest to the fact that he was not the same person. He received a *potch* that he did not accept. It was a *potch* that he did not understand. It was a *potch* that was constantly in front of him.

I do not want to talk about my father as a ghost. I want to talk about my father when he was alive. I would like to give you a little biography of my father. My father was born in February of 1942. He had a fantastic childhood. He had loving parents and a wonderful sister, Tanta Chani. They were all close. My father told me that on *Shabbosim*, cousins came to his house and on Sundays they went to cousins' houses. Everyone took care of him, and everyone loved him.

My father's life really began in April 1963 when he married my mother. They were a unit. They were together in every single aspect. They had the same ideals and the same goals. But more! They pushed each other. They grew together. They built together. My mother took care of everything. My father always said, "If not for Mommy, I would have been a tenth-grade math teacher in Tildon High School for my entire life." They made each other.

These two events --- marriage to my mother and my brother's illness --- bracketed my father's life. I want to tell you about my father's life between these two events.

His biography is very simple. When he was twenty-one, he got married. When he was twenty-three, he started teaching at Beis Yaakov. When he was twenty-five, Rebitzen Kaplan asked him to become English principal of Beis Yaakov. At that time, Beis Yaakov had a thousand girls. There were three branches of the school. There was South Eighth Street in Williamsburg, Fifteenth Avenue in Boro Park, and there was a branch in the Bronx that closed soon after. Rebitzen Kaplan trusted his competence to deal with a thousand girls at the age of twenty-five. We all know twenty-five year olds. They do not have that competence. They are not worthy of *nemonous*. Rebitzen Kaplan felt that he did have that *nemonous*. That is what he did. For eighteen years he was in Beis Yaakov and then in 1986, he started Machon Beis Yaakov. He was there for twenty-four years. And then in 2010, he felt he was too sick to give over to the girls and so he retired. He "got off the ladder" as he put it. That was his whole life. He spent his whole life dedicated to Beis Yaakov girls and MACHONE Beis Yaakov girls. He spent the rest of his life dedicated to you girls. He used to

say “I have to marry off my girls! I have to marry off my girls!” He worked hard to help you in many ways. He loved taking care of you.

Rather than tell you what my father did, I want to share with you a typical day in the life of my father. My father was out of the house at 7AM. [He went to Kingsborough Community College where he was a math professor.] For five days a week he taught four classes every morning. He taught from 8 to 9, from 9 to 10, from 10 to 11, and from 11 to 12. Anyone who ever taught knows that after you teach for four hours, the only thing you want to do is lay down. My father did not lay down. He never stopped. From there, he went to Boro Park or to Williamsburg to his real job. His real job started after teaching four hours. He drove an hour and arrived at Beis Yaakov to be in charge of hundreds of girls. There he dealt with teachers, parents, and the *hanallah*. He did not stop. At some point he wanted to have a better relationship with the leaders of future generations, and he taught a calculus class for elite girls. So, he taught another two hours. He would be there till 7, 8 or 9 at night. Then he would come home and deal with us. We were five kids. We are five. We were not easy. He learned with us. He taught us. He took us to dentist appointments, etc. He did everything he was supposed to do. Still his day was not over. Then he would walk a few blocks to my grandparents. We would go with him. My grandfather was double amputee. My father used to pick up my grandfather and put him in the bath. He would take him from the bath to the bed. That was his nightly activity. My father set the bar on *kivod av* far higher than anyone can bear. In the later years, my grandfather got harder to care for and my grandparents went to Aishel Avrohm in Williamsburg. My father would go back to Williamsburg to visit his parents. After my grandparents died, my father would spend his nights learning and going to the weddings of his Machon girls. He had the idea of going to every single girl’s wedding. My mother would drive him and sit in the car while he went to the wedding. That was my father’s day.

If you listen to his daily schedule, you will see that he did not have a moment for himself. His whole life was working for and helping other people. My father did not enjoy himself in life. He did not have hobbies. He did not have things that he enjoyed. He only enjoyed helping people. He was a real *Litvak* who could not enjoy himself in this world. I used to tell him that he does not know how to smell the roses. He didn’t. He was accomplishing things in this world.

It is not easy summing up my father. He was a complex man. But if I was forced to describe him, I would say that he was a man with a deep sense of obligation to accomplish. He had to accomplish. He was a doer. He was a builder. When there was a problem, he would not just talk about the problem, he got involved and help solve the problem. When we came home, my father did not ask “How was your day?” Rather, he asked “What did you accomplish?” When he spoke badly of someone, he would say “*Vos tuen zei ah ganze tag?*” “What do they do all day?” This need to accomplish was constantly in front of him. And it worked. Look how much he accomplished.

This obligation to accomplish was his legacy to my siblings. My father never forced us to be anyone we were not. Rather he led by shining example. He was the leader of the band, and we sang his song. Not me. But my siblings followed his path. Look at what my brothers Eli, Shimon and Meir Leib accomplished. Look at who they are. They build and run schools. They spend their entire lives doing *chesed* and helping people. They follow my father and spend their lives working for *klal yisroel*.

I want to close with a story about my father. About fifteen years ago, I had to take my father to a store on Thirteenth Avenue. It was late August or early September. Everyone was getting clothing and stuff for school. Thirteenth Avenue was packed. As you know from today, parking in Boro Park is not easy. We could not find parking nearby. I had to park five blocks away and walk to the store. My father was healthy then and had no problem walking. It took us an hour and a half to walk those five blocks! Every ten steps, someone else stopped my father. "Hello Mr. Yanofsky, I graduated in 1976. These are my children." "My mother was in your class, she told us amazing stories about you." "Do you remember when our class did this?" etc etc. He would say to them, "I don't recognize you with your sheital. You all look alike. What was your maiden name?" Then he would proceed to ask them questions "Your aunt was sick. How is she now?" "Your cousin had a problem with a child. How is the child?" "How is your father doing? I loved when he came in to pay tuition. Please tell him I said hello." "How are you doing?" etc. He was genuinely interested in every person. He asked out of concern. Every ten steps another conversation.

I learned three things from this event. First, my father had a giant tree in his head of every *litfisher* family in Boro Park. He was in the chinuch habonos for almost three generations. It was all connected for him. He knew how people were related. This tree was amazingly large but my father had it in his head clearly. Secondly, he loved it. He wanted to hear from you. After we were done in the store, I offered him to get the car and pick him up with the car. He declined and said he wanted to walk. He loved you girls and wanted to see you. He got tremendous nachas when he heard how his girls were doing. And finally, the most important thing I got from this story is how much he was loved. The man was genuinely loved by his students and every person who ever met him. He was not just their principal from years ago. Every girl felt that he cared for them. He did care for them. And he was loved because of that.

There are many people to thank. And Shimon is going to thank them. There is certain people I have to thank myself. Over the past few years, we had three aids who became part of the family and they saw the family in action. Dowight, Fidel and Wilner. They knew that he was alive inside and they would talk and to him and make him laugh. He treated everyone with total respect. Dwight and Fidel wrote a few words asked me to read this from them.

Good morning to everyone. May you suffer no more. May he live long and rest in peace.

Fidel, Wilner & Dowhyte together have served Rabbi Marvin Yanofsky a total of seven years.

Personally I never called out sick. I served him joyfully with all my love, care and energy because he was good man with a sweetheart ❤️

He was very loving and caring. He was generous, genuine with a gorgeous smile.

Rabbi was a man of faith. He was very humble and while we served him he always shared his wealth of knowledge and experience with us.

Marriage, Money & Women.

He told you he met his wife Sharon when she was age 7 and she was the only girl he went out with.

I asked him many times what was the secret of his marriage of almost 70 years and he told me ..." When a woman is talking never try to stop her. Let her shop, let her cook and give her all the diamond errerings & gifts and she will talk less"

As Aides we saw a perfect marriage. An outstanding family life. He loved his wife Sharon and he could never sleep if she was not home...Sharon! Sharon! Sharon! Where the hell are you?

They were very loving , caring and graceful together....we have never seen so much love demonstrated at such age until his passing. If Love, care and money could have kept him to live to age 120 he would still be alive.

What a wonderful and caring wife, children and grandchildren...May Hashem reward you all for showing so much love and care to his servant Marvin Yanofsky....we congratulate you all on a job well done

Working with this family as Aids we were all treated with respect. We were well paid and cared for. A place was always set at the dining table for every mean. We were never told to sit in kitchen, porch or basement to eat we were treated as members of the family.

Rabbi Marvin Yanofsky was the King of his home. His wife Sharon was the Queen. She had a full time job to take care of Marvin's wellbeing. She was not only his wife but she was his secretary to make all the phone calls and set up all doctors appointments and she tried everything humanly possible to have kept him alive until his passing. She is a strong woman. A wife of great tenacity. A devoted wife. A wife who set the example for better or worse, sickness or health, richer or poorer, good or bad medical reports she loved and care for him never drop. She fought with doctors and nurses to make sure that her King got the best...

I have never seen such a woman/ wife before. The material that made her no longer exist. Sharon Yanofsky we salute you, we congratulate

you. You were the life of the party. You make the home happy & pleasant. We will miss your cooking and jokes.

What a journey it was...

What a life experience it was....

What an outstanding family to have worked with....

Precious memories...

What a great legacy....

Marvin touched so many lives especially women as he served as school principal for many years ..he touched a special life and heart ❤️ of Sharon and he touched the hearts of us the Aides and we grew to love him and now he is no more but we thank God we had the best....

Dowhyte, Fidel & Wilner

There are other people to thank too. My father had many tremendous *schusim* and about 40 years ago Hashem sent our family a *malach Elokim* to take care of our family. I cannot describe a *malach* and I cannot tell you all the good deeds that she does for us, but her name is Aviva Yadaikin. The family never did a thing. We never had a conversation. We never made a decision without Aviva. She helped my father so much. She helped Yingy so much. She helps everyone in the family so much. Other families think that Aviva belongs to their family. They are welcome to that illusion. She belongs to our family.

And last but not least, my mother. As I said, she made my father and my father made my mother. My father was a very sickly person. He had many illnesses. When we were children, he used to point to the end of his nose and say “This is the only part of me that does not hurt.” When he was thirty-five, my father went to a doctor and was told he would not live beyond forty. My mother does not listen to such things. My mother never met a doctor that she did not fight with. She dragged my father from doctor to doctor to get him healed. She made him healthy. She cheered him up. She fought off the *malach hamovis* for as long as she possibly could. So, I want to say thank my mother. Not only was she a mother to us, but she gave us our father for forty years. Thank you, Mommy!

When Eli spoke at Bubby’s *levaya* and he asked Bubby to be a *Meilitz Yosher* for the family, he said “Bubby, you know what is wrong. You know the *yeshhuas* and the *refuas* that we need.” My father is now up there with Yingy. They are laughing and cackling together. Abba, Yingy, you know what is wrong! You know the *yeshhuas* and the *refuas* that we need! You both spent your life dedicated to helping people. You spent your life working for *klal yisroel*. You both have tremendous *schusim*. Cash in your chips now. You should be a *melitz yosher* for us, for the whole *mishpacha*, and for all of *klal yisroel*.