

The Chaim Berlin Rosh Hayeshiva, R' Aharon Schechter, שליט"א, came to Baltimore to be מספיד the Ner Yisroel Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Weinberg, זכרונו לברכה. Although I can't remember the details of the הספד, I believe that I heard him express how the נקודה, the pivot around which the Rosh Yeshiva's עבודה revolved was his incomparable קאפ, the השגות that he attained in learning and in ידיעת השם and ידיעת התורה and what he did with them. Giveret Steinhardt had so many facets to her, starting with her tremendous pride in her משפחה – the great תורה leadership from whence she came, and that she was זוכה to further in her own progeny. But what made her so unique – and so irreplaceable in our school – was her vast Torah knowledge, and even more – her love for learning and for giving over תורת ה'. People wondered – why give over נביאים that are not part of everyday life? To her, they were the life of our people, as expressed through the holy words of חז"ל, or of our historical experience. They were life itself, and you felt it in the חיות with which she gave it over. She came to me with pride and simcha with every new פרשה completed in חומש שמות. Her joy was matched by her students' joy – they were mastering real Torah knowledge. To her, literacy, mastery, knowledge was like the breath of life itself, and she generated within her students this love of תורת ה' and this excitement and pride in its acquisition.

The students were sure she must know all of תנ"ך, בעל פה. Every project – Exhibit, convention, yearbook, color war, Eretz Yisroel bee, לא אלמן ישראל, summoned up her vast reserves of knowledge. She could spot a spelling error, a grammar issue, a usage question, like an eagle sees its prey, from miles away. זו, התנהגות is really זכותים. זו (zu) is really זו (zo). Every critique offered with a mild reprimand, with her trademark charm, and with pride and a smile. A parent told her daughter – Giveret Steinhardt was niftar. "Is it possible that it's נפטרה?" was her response. She wanted to teach every strong ninth grader Ivrit herself because she so badly wanted each student to have the strongest possible foundation in לשון הקודש, as reflected in her own brilliant Ivrit חבור. To visit her Chumash or Ivrit class was an exciting chance to observe American students listening to Ivrit on the same high level they would be following a lesson in ארץ ישראל. Giveret Steinhardt, like a queen at her desk, with great humor and a sharp back and forth, making every lesson come alive with peerless structure, clarity, and the vigor of teachers forty years her junior! And she led the Ivrit department with the same level of excellence for close to forty years.

Humor and vigor and so much more. Who would expect that someone past eighty could relate to today's students so well? Could teach with such excitement? Could run such a remarkable classroom? Could be so sharp and on the ball? Could model excellence and create a desire for it among those more than sixty years younger than she! She was the teacher constantly receiving calls from seminarians in Eretz Yisroel. She was the one so many rushed to bring משלוח מנות to. She was the one whose students' parents nursed a dream that one day she would also teach their grandchildren, giving another דור the rich, exciting Torah and language experience unique

to her. She was strict and she was demanding, but her charges knew how much she cared about them, how she loved to reconnect years after they finished school, how happy she was with their simchas – indeed, what they meant to her. Our grief today is matched by deep sadness across the world among those who were raised by her sights and moved by her dedication to them and their learning.

Giveret Steinhardt was an old-timer – from a different דור that nurtured a keen sense of what it means to be דערהויבען – exalted, a צלם אלקים, a mentsh in the highest sense. Her sense of אחריות meant utter punctuality at work and expectation of the same from others – students and teachers. She would not tolerate deficiencies in derech erez. Her ehrlichkeit and integrity were absolute, and she was incapable of being בלב ואחד בפה ואחד. She always looked right and her bearing reflected the אצילות, the aristocracy of her forebears. צניעות in dress was a given – and was expected of her students. She was happy to give up time for extra projects, without necessarily seeking remuneration. She assumed rigor. She would not tolerate errors stemming from lack of effort, or a shabby product resulting from indolence, laziness. She taught the highest standards of personal conduct not only in word but through personal example. She displayed גבורה in coping with the challenges of widowhood and giving the school her all.

Finally, there is a great חנוך lesson which was being absorbed daily by her students without anyone actually articulating it. Mrs. Tendler, ע"ה, expressed the idea that very young children are not necessarily capable of understanding יראת שמים because it is too abstract for them. But teaching them reverence and יראה for their parents extends and generalizes to יראת שמים as they get older. The ruach of our world is one that is virtually diametrically opposed to this – it is one of entitlement, one of what the world owes me rather than what are my obligations. We are blessed that our Bais Yaakov graduates reflect a special חן. I believe it goes much beyond their politeness, their חסדים, and their ability to relate to people. It is rooted in ביישנות – a reticence that reflects a חנוך that the world does not revolve around the individual but around our responsibilities, our service of Hashem and His higher expectations. In Giveret Steinhardt's class, a yawn would receive a sharp reprimand for lack of derech erez. Students raised in the prevalent culture suddenly faced in the Giveret Steinhardt experience, the teachings of the old world – what is derech erez? ... What is the value of absorbing Torah? ... What is the value of listening rather than speaking? ... What is the need to conform to expectations rather than having those expectations and standards lowered to my comfort level? Decades ago, bochurim at Yeshivas Ner Yisroel initially repelled the shmuezin of their new mashgiach, R' Dovid Kronglas ז"ל, for being too far from their limited השגות. But the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Ruderman, ז"ל, endorsed his efforts. Though he then tempered the message, R' Dovid was able to raise up a new American generation to the standards of previous דורות. So did Giveret Steinhardt, with her native sensitivities, honed in the world of her elders, raise her students' behaviors and attitudes, ideas and ideals, playing a pivotal role in turning them into most beautiful Bnos Torah that stand apart, in a confused and degenerate world, with the shine and grandeur that Sarah

Schenirer dreamt for them. Indeed in this intergenerational educational enterprise, the פטירה of Giveret Steinhardt is a very great 'klop' – a singular loss Bais Yaakov and for the entire community. May Hashem help us deal with this loss.

I wish to add a comment that I did not prepare but that occurred to me several minutes ago. At the closing faculty meeting two weeks ago, without planning to beforehand, I spontaneously thanked Giveret Steinhardt for all that she gives us. I believe this was an instance of ניבא ולא ידע מה ניבא. There was no real reason for me to do this, and I just found the words coming out of my mouth. It was not in my notes prepared for the meeting. It seems as if it was in the script of the Ribono Shel Olam.

מי יתן תמורתה

תהא נשמתה צרורה בצרור החיים