

With Torah & Grace: Remembering Rabbi Moshe Hauer upon his Shloshim

-by Rabbi Moshe Schwed, Director All Torah

I worked with Rabbi Moshe Hauer zt"l closely for 5½ years. I constantly shared with people how unique an individual he was, and how much I admired him. In my opinion, these three distinct qualities defined him and were the catalyst for the high esteem in which he was held by so many.

He never left the *Beis Midrash* and was anchored to the Torah. He had a fierce passion for *Yidden* and *Yiddishkeit*. Finally, he interacted with people in a uniquely refined and regal way. These qualities were fused so well and manifested themselves in practically everything he did.

Rabbi Hauer brought to life the words of *Chazal*, *Divrei Chachomim B'Nachas Nishmoim*. His soft tone, sometimes even hard to hear, carried the words of a *Chochom* spoken *B'Nachas*. And that's why they were heard, listened to, and respected by so many.

One would not expect an involved shul Rabbi with a packed schedule of over 25 weekly *shiurim* to leave his *Kehilla* and transition to a role as the face of a national organization, where the responsibilities and time spent would be mostly out of the *Beis Midrash*. Rabbi Hauer often shared with me, "You think I took this job to fight antisemitism, to speak to politicians, write articles, and do TV interviews? I came to work with you - to be involved in inspiring, enabling, and encouraging Jews to learn Torah daily."

And he never stopped learning and teaching. He always had a *sefer*, a *Gemara*, a *Chumash* with him. He never stopped saying *shiurim*. He'd call in to deliver or join his early-morning *shiur* from the Amtrak train en route to NYC.

Rabbi Hauer was a deep thinker whose natural *mehalech* in learning was not learning quickly and not learning what we'd colloquially refer to as the "light *seforim*." Aside from the *Amud Yomi* and *Daf Yomi shiur* he gave daily, he gave an array of *shiurim* on *sifrei machshava*, *meforshei Chumash*, and more. He was especially proud of the seven years he spent with his shul focusing on one *aliyah* per year - focusing all his weekly *shiurim* on that *aliyah* until completing the *parsha*. Every *pasuk*, every word had a lesson. As much as he recognized the need and demand for quicker or more exciting *shiurim*, he always encouraged me to create opportunities for people to learn on a deeper level. He loved taking on topics and exploring them from *Chazal* all the way down to the latest *baalei machshava*.

Every conversation, message, and statement was Torah-based - either explicitly sourced or clearly emerging from Torah.

You couldn't get him to say a bad word about any person or any organization, even if they were causing him tremendous angst and were challenging. I once shared with him a picture of someone who I'd told him was about to cause him significant *agmas nefesh*. His immediate response, with complete sincerity: "He looks like a nice person, a really nice person."

Back in 2020, there was an eighth grader in Teaneck, NJ who was inspired at the *Siyum HaShas* to start learning *Daf Yomi*. As soon as COVID arrived and school was canceled, he started learning with his friends on Zoom daily. He'd listen to a *shiur* on All Daf and then learn with his friend on Zoom. We made a video of Charlie sharing his story, which was viewed by thousands and inspired many.

Fast forward two years - Rabbi Hauer and Charlie were both dancing on *Simchas Torah* in the Mir *Yeshiva* in *Eretz Yisrael*. Rabbi Hauer noticed a familiar face (he'd never actually met Charlie). He walked over and asked, "Are you Charlie?" "Yes, that's me." He smiled, picked him up, and gave him a kiss. He stood there, smiling and looking at him with such pride. "Keep bringing *nachas* to our people. I'm proud of you."

At a *Siyum Yevamos* we made in Manchester in 2022, I vividly recall Rabbi Hauer pulling the boys in attendance into their own circle and dancing with them. To him, other *Rabbanim* and *mesaymim* were there and celebrating, but the kids needed to be part of the celebration - and at the center of it.

I once mentioned to Rabbi Hauer that I was in Toronto for a wedding of Bentzion Zlotnik's daughter. He immediately said, "Oy, I didn't wish him *mazel tov*," and jotted down a reminder to call him, which he subsequently did. He didn't get through but left a beautiful message. Every *simcha*, every opportunity to positively impact someone, moved him.

The morning of my son's *Bar Mitzvah* this past June, Rabbi Hauer left me a text message that he would be coming, *be'ezras Hashem*. I was pleasantly surprised, as he had a very hectic schedule, and traveling to Lakewood for my son's *Bar Mitzvah* was quite meaningful. I subsequently asked him if he'd be *mechabed* us with a few words in honor of the *simcha*. Since I anticipated his response, I added that I'm not asking because I feel obligated - rather, it's a true *kavod* for us. He replied, "If you truly do not feel obligated, I will consider it an honor to do it. One question I need you to answer when you have a chance."

He proceeded to leave me a two-minute message beginning, "Perhaps this is just a friendly thing to say before a *Bar Mitzvah*," explaining that during his Rabbinic career, he'd always spend time with the boys before their *Bar Mitzvah*, getting to know them, especially before he spoke - as this is a time when a boy could lose his identity. He said, "I know your father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, but I don't know your son. Please

share his *maalos*, his personality, and anything that will allow me to speak to your son at his *Bar Mitzvah*."

At the *Bar Mitzvah*, Rabbi Hauer walked in holding two *seforim* in his hand and apologized that he didn't have a chance to get them wrapped. Upon noticing the titles - Teshuvos Divrei Yatziv - I looked at him with a puzzled expression. There was no way he went to the store to purchase these *seforim* for this young *Bar Mitzvah* boy. There had to be a story.

He leaned over, opened the cover, and now I was really confused. The name of my grandfather, R' Yehoshua Brisk, was written in the *sefer*. Rabbi Hauer told me about his yearly custom to speak about a Holocaust survivor who later made an impact on *Yiddishkeit*. The year 5771, he was speaking about the Klausenberger Rebbe. He spent time with my grandfather - a close *talmid* of the Rebbe who lived in Baltimore - speaking with him. Upon leaving, my grandfather handed him these two *seforim*, suggesting he might find more anecdotes for his *shiur*.

After *Tisha B'Av*, Rabbi Hauer called my grandfather to thank him and arrange to return the *seforim*. My grandfather said he should keep them. Feeling uncomfortable keeping the *seforim*, he always wondered how he'd get them back to the family. Fourteen years later, Rabbi Hauer figured this was his opportunity. He gifted them to my son, my grandfather's great-grandson, at his *Bar Mitzvah*. He penned a beautiful two-page message with this story, a heartfelt *bracha* to the *Bar Mitzvah* boy, and titled the note: Moshe (Hauer) kibbel miYehoshua (Brisk) u'masarah l'Yeshaya (Schwed). That was trademark Rabbi Hauer - a clever way of making us smile while showing the *Bar Mitzvah* boy how special his great-grandfather was.

This was Rabbi Hauer. Anchored to the *Gemara*, an internal fire for *Yidden* and *Yiddishkeit*, and a regal, refined person.