

every
soul
A WORLD



A Life Lived with Joy

In tribute to Mr. Heshy Mermelstein

His was a life that was lived with a full heart. Whether it was his passion for learning, his love for his fellow man, his exceptionally close relationship with his family or his tremendous *simchas hachaim*, Heshy Mermelstein was someone who didn't do anything halfway, and his passing leaves behind a tremendous void that extends far beyond the Flatbush community that he called home.

The oldest of five children born to Reb Shalom *a'h* and Chana *tblc't* Mermelstein, Heshy lived the first four years of his life in a Boro Park duplex that was also home to the Chusta Rav and his shul. The families shared a close relationship, and the seeds for Heshy's exceptional capacity for *hasmadah* were sown in his youth in the Rebbe's shul. His father would often pair him up with the talmidei chachamim who came to learn and he spent several summers as a teenager enjoying a *chavrusashaft* with Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel Bick. His brother, Pinny, recalled being sent to wake Heshy for shul one Shabbos morning, only to discover that he was already awake and surrounded by seforim. Pinny's efforts to get his brother's attention were completely fruitless — Heshy was so deeply immersed in his learning that he didn't even realize that someone else was in the room and trying to catch his attention.

Heshy's talents as a masterful orator were also evident early on. While some

find public speaking daunting, Heshy was a natural and by the time he was 17 he was teaching bar mitzvah boys their *pshetls*. As a high schooler at Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, Heshy gained a reputation as someone who was both resourceful and bright, and his high school yearbook lauded him as someone whose "stamina and determination will lead him to great heights." Heshy continued on at Torah Vodaath for *beis medrash* as well, moving on to Rabbi Yisroel Zev Gustman's Netzach Yisroel-Vilna Ramiles Yeshivah in Rechavia, and even years later, he was still able to explain Rav Gustman's *pshat* when discussions arose on particular *sugyos* that he had learned there.

"It clearly was the most impactful year of learning," said his eldest son, Binyomin Mermelstein. "Abba had written every *pilpul shiur* over word for word, and each one had lasted for three hours."

Heshy married his *eishes chayil*, Bluma Steinmetz, in 1978 and the young couple settled in Flatbush where they raised their four children. He went on to become a CPA and also sold insurance, taking a personal interest in every client and developing lifelong friendships with them, his work a natural extension of who he was. Heshy was a people person, through and through, someone who saw the good in everyone and loved to make people feel better about themselves. His ever-present *simchas hachaim* was evident in his perpetual smile and he took a genuine interest in people's lives, making it clear that he cared for everyone he met, their mutual encounters leaving everlasting impressions.



"Growing up, we all knew that whenever we went anywhere with Abba, he was bound to find someone he knew from elementary school, high school or camp, and would strike up a conversation with them," recalled son Dovi Mermelstein. "If he didn't know anyone there, it wasn't long before he got to know a few people. Abba always made people feel really good about themselves and that is a *chesed* that is so important in our times when people aren't *b'simchah* for many different reasons."

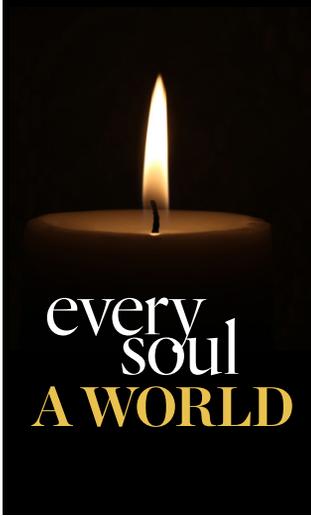
Heshy's chavivus for Torah was another of his defining characteristics.

In his younger years he was a fixture at Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's Motzaei Shabbos Navi shiur, adding multiple others to his schedule as time went on, and he was never embarrassed or afraid to raise any questions no matter where he was and how many people were there. He was a regular at Rabbi Gedaliah Weinberger's 6:20 a.m. *daf yomi* for well over 20 years, walking about a mile each day to attend the *shiur*, both for the health benefits and to avoid having to look for parking. When Heshy broke his ankle some years ago, he called into the *shiur* every day, refusing to miss even a single day of *daf yomi*. He never hesitated to point out if Rabbi Weinberger had presented a particular *daf* differently during the previous *daf yomi* cycle and refused to let the *shiur* continue if a particular point was unclear, something that Rabbi Weinberger said ultimately benefited the entire group.

Not satisfied to be learning just for himself, Heshy would always ask his

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nephews what they were learning and he could speak to someone about any *sugya* at any time. As a Partners in Torah mentor, he learned with his *chavrusa* for twelve years and two months until his partner passed away. He tried everything he could to convince surviving family members to bury the *niftar k'halachah* and was heartbroken when the family carried through on their plan for cremation. That incredible *ahavas Yisrael* was evident in other facets of Heshy's life as well, including his complete refusal to become involved in any kind of *machlokes* and his *ayin tovah* that truly had him seeing the good in every person he met.

In addition to being an integral member of the Flatbush kehillah, Heshy's presence was equally valued at Twin Bridges Estates in Hurleyville, where he and Bluma summered for 33 years. Looking ahead to their retirement, the Mermelsteins bought a home at the Enclave in Lakewood, spending Shabbosim there to be closer to some of their grandchildren, all of whom

called him not Zaidy, but Abba. And indeed, Heshy was an involved father to the next generation, pushing them tirelessly on the swings, getting down on the floor for playtime, learning with them, and drawing on seemingly endless reserves of energy as he made priceless memories with his grandchildren.

Heshy leaves behind his wife, Bluma, his children Binyomin and Naomi, Ita and Yossi, Dovi and Sari, and Bryna and Aryeh, and his *ka"h* many grandchildren. Adding to the family's tremendous loss is the knowledge that they did not have the ability to say a final goodbye to the role model who shaped their lives and taught them to use their *kochos* to better the world and gladden the hearts of others.

“You were a healthy man, full of love for life on that last Friday that I spoke to you,” said Dovi Mermelstein, directing his words to his father at the *shloshim*. “We don't know what Hashem's calculations are but we beseech you to be a *meilitz yosher* for the entire family to beg the Ribon Hakol to give Mommy the strength to lead the *mishpachah* for many more years to come in good health. May we be reunited in the immediate future with the coming of Mashiach.” 