

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

For just shy of 16 years, I had the immeasurable zechus to interact with Maran HaGaon HaRav Chaim Yisroel HaLevi Belsky, Zatzal, in his capacity as a Senior Poseik with the Kashrus Division of the Orthodox Union (“the OU”), in which I serve as a Rabbinic Coordinator. I would like to share here some of my experiences with Rav Belsky—some of the stories, the pesakim, and the hadrachos. Unless otherwise noted, I record here Rav Belsky’s behavior as I myself was zocheh to witness it and Rav Belsky’s guidance as I myself was zocheh to hear it from him.

By the time the OU hired me in 1999, they had interviewed me and informed me broadly of what the position entailed. Certainly, renewing and reinforcing the kesher with my Rosh Kollel, Maran HaGaon HaRav Hershel Schachter, Shlita, a Senior Posek with the OU, would be an invaluable “side-benefit” of my OU work. What the OU failed to mention is that I would be hopelessly and utterly captured by the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas.

It’s all true. What I’ve seen in the articles about how he comported himself is all true. He was regal and majestic, dripping with greatness and gravity. His confidence in his Pesakim was rock-hard, whether L’Kula or L’Chumra. But all of this **with no airs and no arrogance**. He was so easy to talk to; he would smile; he would tell you a story, or even a joke (delivered with the same dignity that he demonstrated in every other aspect of his functioning). There was naturalness and simplicity and humanity. He was relaxed and calm, and he put **you** at ease, as well. **Never** was I made to feel that my being Sho’eil was bothering him or that my Shailah was foolish. I have no doubt that I was not alone in this. When you felt the fear and trembling of Yiras HaKavod, it was because **you** knew you were speaking to a Torah personality of **the highest caliber**, but it was **not** because of how **he** spoke or acted.

In his Hespel for the OU’s Sheloshim Hazkarah, Rabbi Eli Gersten, the Rabbinic Coordinator charged with recording the rulings of the OU Poskim, pointed out that Rav Belsky never issued or imposed his OU Pesakim from “on high,” as a patrician would address a plebian. Rather, when you came into his office to ask a Shailah, he turned it into *a conversation*, and he would solicit *your* opinion just as you had solicited his. Of course, ultimately, it was his decision, but you were a *participant* in the halachic process, not a mere spectator.

I think it worth mentioning a conversation I once had with Rav Belsky at, of all places, an OU water-cooler.

There is a water-cooler in-between the room in which the OU has its first Minchah and (what was) his office. Once, as I walked him back from Minchah to his office, he detoured to the water cooler. Before he swallowed, he told me that he wasn’t making a Shehakol because he had made a Shehakol on something else, or maybe he said he was mid-Seudah. I do not recall. I do recall saying something like, “Does the Rosh Yeshivah think I would be Chosheid him for drinking without a Brachah?” He responded: It’s good to avoid Cheshad. Apparently, he was *not* thinking, “I’m the great

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

Rav Yisroel Belsky and I am beyond Cheshad.” Of course, in reality, he **was** the great Rav Yisroel Belsky, and he was **not** someone you’d be Chosheid!

I experienced first-hand (admittedly, the tip of the iceberg) of the depth and breadth of his knowledge of Torah and of science and the humanities. For example, I once saw the need to make a short instructional video in Spanish for an OU factory whose workers spoke Spanish. With some assistance, I put together a script and sent it to my contact at the factory for review. My contact told me that the workers were Christians and would relate better to *Jewish* dietary laws if I mentioned some of *Christianity’s* dietary laws in the video. I was not sure that I could mention a practice of a religion of Avodah Zarah. I told Rav Belsky the whole story and asked him if it was Muttar to mention some of Christianity’s dietary laws. His response was, “*Habla espanol?*,” which, of course, is Spanish for, “Do you speak Spanish?” I told him that I remembered some of my high school Spanish. He then told me that he had studied Spanish and French and that one of them was still good but the other was “rusty.” [P.S. He was Mattir.]

It was either on this occasion or another when he told me that he had taught himself Russian. [It’s obvious that teaching oneself *any* language is an amazing feat in and of itself. However, unlike the parallels between Spanish and French, or between Yiddish and Lashon Kodesh, Russian has no parallel to the non-English languages we usually come across. His accomplishment is all the more amazing.] He told me that the summer following his learning of Russian, two Soviet fellows came to Camp Agudah. They knew no English and the only one able to communicate with them was Rav Belsky. It was then, Rav Belsky told me, that he understood why Hashem put into his head to learn Russian.

I again saw his all-embracing knowledge when the OU produced a video on what is done to meat after the Shechitah. At the time, I was Zocheh to be involved with kashrus *education*, in addition to my work in kashrus *certification*. I had the pleasure and privilege of working hand-in-hand with Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, a veteran educator and author who was then Senior Rabbinic Coordinator and the Kashrus Division’s Vice-President for Communications and Marketing (and now retired after a magnificent career of singular Mesiras Nefesh, creativity, and productivity). Filming this video was Rabbi Safran’s idea, and of course, the natural choice for the Maggid Shiur in the video was Rav Belsky. I asked him if he would participate, and he agreed. I subsequently asked him what he would need for the filming. He told me he’d need an apron, sharp kitchen knives—and **the front half of a calf**.

This being the OU, procuring the front half of a calf was actually not that difficult. One of the OU Shechitah facilities wrapped and sent half of a calf to an OU meat restaurant very close to the OU office. On the day of the filming, I went to pick up the calf. Baruch Hashem, it was well-wrapped, so I did not have to see it as-is. I brought it up to where we were filming, Rav Belsky unwrapped it, and told the OU staff in attendance that it was actually...the **back** half of a calf.

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

If you were told you had to go to 184 Main Avenue for a Sheva Berachos, and discovered that it was actually 186, you would probably not feel terribly overwhelmed or irritated. Instead, you'd take it in stride. *With that same level of calmness and confidence*, Rav Belsky announced that he would instead discuss what happens to the *back* half of a calf after Shechitah. From one sleeve, he shook out the halachos; from the other sleeve, he shook out the anatomy and physiology. I still marvel at it when I think about it.

We also produced a video for the home consumer about recognizing Treifos in raw chicken pieces. Rav Belsky was no less dazzling; he demonstrated that same level of comprehensive knowledge and the same utter calmness and confidence as he described the various parts of the raw chicken we provided. At one point, we had to stop filming so that the cameraman could re-load. As we conversed, it came out that he had been having a certain medical problem and used his knowledge of anatomy to advise his doctor.

As I think of the years I worked with Rabbi Safran, it occurs to me it captures another aspect of Rav Belsky's make-up: He was so ***spontaneously helpful***. I do not remember Rav Belsky *ever* turning down our requests to record educational audios and videos. He recorded **10** audio Shiurim, **2** full-length videos, and he and Rav Schachter appeared in **12** live webcasts. Over the years, I became involved in two Tzedakah projects in Passaic, NJ, where I live. Rav Schachter told me that we needed Haskamos so that people would rely on the funds' being disbursed appropriately. He wrote them, and when I asked Rav Belsky to write them, he agreed. Did either of our Poskim ***owe*** me any letters? Certainly not. Whenever I asked Rav Belsky to write a note to one of my daughters upon reaching Bas Mitzvah, he agreed. I once wrote a Chibbur on Hilchos Basar B'Chalav. He did not have time to examine it, but agreed to sign a "generic" Haskamah that I wrote up. What I call a "generic" Haskamah is a Haskamah in which the Maskim states that he could not read the work cover-to-cover but he knows the Mechaber well and MiStamma, the Chibbur is worth learning. When I wrote a Chibbur on Hilchos Kibbud Av V'Em, I went into his office to ask him if I could "recycle" the generic Haskamah. *His Middah of spontaneous helpfulness took over*. He was always so ready to *give*, to *help*, to *support*, he interpreted my words as a request for a *brand-new full-fledged Haskamah!* And far be it from to turn down such an offer from a Gadol HaDor! And so it was that we went to press—with a letter that is now a family heirloom. I must add that this was *not* the only time that I came into his office to ask a Tovah and came out with a far greater Tovah *that was his idea*.

To further illustrate Rav Belsky's singular constellation of qualities, I would like to share the words of Dr. Avrohom Meyer, the OU's Senior Overseas Field Representative, internationally-recognized as a first-tier expert on the scientific aspects of kashrus certification. Dr. Meyer's words appeared in an article entitled, Interactions With Rav Belsky, ZT"L – Redefining The Word "Irreplaceable," written by Rabbi Avrohom Gordimer, a highly-esteemed Rabbinic Coordinator with the OU. Rabbi Gordimer writes that, after Rav Belsky's passing, Dr. Meyer described Rav Belsky as "the most amazing man I have ever met, and I have been around for a quite a while." Dr. Meyer

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

explained: ‘One of the most remarkable memories of my life was having lunch at [an] OU conference with Rav Belsky, discussing kashrus and microbiology. The intellectual speed (truly a supersonic thinker); the interest in and understanding of a complex science and technology; the innovative thinking; the whole range of conceivable halachic approaches at his fingertips. It was wonderful and excellent for my humility. Plus all that a lovely, caring person. I can’t even achieve that.’”

This is an e-mail recently received from the *non-Jewish* former plant manager of an OU factory. I have no doubt that it is representative of what many others felt, as well:

From: Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2016 12:49 AM To: Katzenstein, Howard; Bistricher, Dovid; SHIMON YOFFE; Perlmutter, Moshe Subject: Passing of Rabbi Yisroel Belsky, 78, Leaves Deep Void in World of Kosher

Just found out about his passing, he had a profound impact in me with his wisdom to analyze and solve problems. May his memory be eternal.

To this, I can only add the words of the Gemara in Yoma 86/a:

”ואהבת את ה' אלהיך שיהא שם שמים מתאהב על ידך שיהא קורא ושונה ומשמש תלמידי חכמים ויהא משאו ומתנו בנחת עם הבריות מה **הבריות** אומרות עליו אשרי אביו שלמדו תורה אשרי רבו שלמדו תורה אוי להם לבריות שלא למדו תורה פלוני שלמדו תורה ראו כמה נאים דרכיו כמה מתוקנים מעשיו עליו הכתוב אומר ויאמר לי עבדי אתה **ישראל אשר בך אתפאר**,”

*What follows is a selection of Hora'os, Hashkafos, and Hadrachos. I believe this selection not only features the breadth of Rav Belsky's knowledge and understanding, but also his **wisdom**, his **insight**, and his **caring** when it came to a person's relationship with his co-workers, his wife—and himself.*

His Impact on OU Policy

Although the amount of Shailos Rav Belsky paskened for individual factories is innumerable, there are certain rulings that have had a much broader impact. Here is a sample:

- Even if a food requires Bishul Yisroel when made in a style befitting a state dinner, it does *not* require Bishul Yisroel when it is *not* made in such a way, e.g., a fancy potato dish *vs.* a potato chip. [Rav Schachter agreed with this.]
- The anisakis worm found in salmon and other species of fish is one of the kosher worms that Chazal and the Shulchan Aruch describe. [Rav Schachter agreed with this.]
- What is sold today as a “Mezonos roll” is Pas Gamur, and therefore requires washing and bensching. If OU rolls are jointly-certified with a Hech'sher that holds that it is actually a “Mezonos roll,” no label may appear that says, “Birchaso Mezonos.” [This is Rav Schachter's view, as well.]
- Even if a piece of factory equipment is *never* placed on a heat source, it will have the Din of a Keli **Rishon** if a hot liquid inside it saturates the walls with

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

heat, i.e., if the liquid makes the walls as hot as they can possibly ever get. This is a **Chumra** in terms of a utensil **becoming non-kosher** (because any Kula applied B'Di'eved to a Keli Sheini is inapplicable) but a **Kula** in terms of **kashering** a utensil (because you can accomplish the kashering as if the utensil were a Keli Rishon even though it was never on a flame). [Rav Schachter told me that he had heard Maran HaGaon Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, Zatzal, discuss this, as well.]

- The permanent presence of a light bulb or “glow rod” in an oven does not create Pas Yisroel or Bishul Yisroel, despite having been turned on by a Jew. It is not comparable to Hashlachas Kisam. [Rav Schachter agreed with this, but not necessarily for the same reasons as Rav Belsky.]
- The OU did not accept Rav Belsky's leniency with respect to the copepods in New York City's tap water. The OU endorsed Rav Schachter's more stringent position, and OU restaurants in New York City are required to filter their water.
- The OU did not accept Rav Belsky's requirement for tuna to be canned **only** with a Mashgiach in the cannery ensuring that each fish being canned had Kaskesses (the type of scale that is a Siman of a kashrus). This approach echoed that of Maran HaGaon Rav Moshe Feinstein, Zatzal. The OU endorsed Rav Soloveitchik's position that a Mashgiach Yoitzei V'Nich'as is acceptable **after** the establishment of an Umdana D'Muchoch that all they can in the factory is tuna.

At a Sheva Berachos, 5760

Rav Belsky spoke and cited the Gemara that links the word “Shochad” to the word “Chad.” He said that a bribe creates Achdus between the giver of the bribe and the receiver. He then said that *marital* His'achdus requires a husband and a wife to do Chasadim—even tiny ones—for each other. In **April 2004**, I heard him offer other advice for fostering Achdus in marriage:

- Develop a habit to smile very often:
 - It shows approval of your wife
 - It shows you feel good when you're with her
- Say a lot of meaningful compliments:
 - Saying, “That was good soup” is a regular compliment
 - Saying, “That was good soup; I see you worked hard on it, and I appreciate it,” is a meaningful compliment.
 - Saying, “You handled that situation real well,” is a meaningful compliment.

He declared that “passionate love” will be the result when she realizes that you “notice the little things” and are Makkir Tov for them.

March 2005

The directive, “V'Asisa HaYashar V'HaTov,” has no Miutim (e.g., “Amisecha”), and therefore applies to our interactions with non-Jews, as well. [On a separate occasion, he told me that kindness shown to a non-Jew is a Kiyyum Mitzvas V'Halachta B'Derochov,” because Hashem is described as, “Tov [] LaKol V'Rachamav Al Kol Ma'asav.”]

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

March 2005

Rav Belsky said that a person is Melameid Chov when they are “upset,” “shocked,” and “angered” by what he sees. He said that the antidote is Hillel’s summary of the Torah: “That which is hateful to yourself, do not do to your fellow Jew.” The one prone to Limmud Chov maintains that if *he* needed *his* actions interpreted, the onlookers would know he’s a fine person and Mekavein L’Tov. [Hosafah: I understand Rav Belsky to be saying that you ought to interpret the other fellow’s actions the way you maintain (want?) *your* actions to be interpreted.]

August 2005

Some years ago, there was a public, somewhat heated, discussion about apparent contradictions between descriptions of physical reality as found in Chazal and the descriptions found in contemporary science. I spoke to Rav Belsky about this, and he told me that when it came to Gemaras that seems to contradict science, “I never got stuck” on them. He told me that he could explain *every such Gemara*. [Hosafah: In Einei Yisroel, Rav Belsky writes that one cannot say that Chazal were ignorant or ever intended to convey an absurdity as truth. He also states that it is “presumptuous and highly improper to attempt to assess the wisdom of Chazal...”]

May 2007

I asked Rav Belsky about dealing with a subordinate whose work habits I thought needed correction and whose performance I found very irritating. He told me to write an e-mail with no holds barred, expressing my irritation any way that I wanted to, but to NEVER send such an e-mail. Rather, I should *re-write it the next morning*. When I re-write it, he told me to think about the following: *If I was on the receiving end, what would motivate **me** and encourage **me** to follow the advice?*

May 2007

I was working on a particular area in Shemiras HaMitzvos and was not consistently successful. The danger inherent in being Makkir the need for Teshuvah is a diminution in the Hakarras Erech Atzmo (a Hakarrah advocated in the sefer Sha’arei Avodah). I asked Rav Belsky about the co-existence of these Hakarros. He told me that constructive self-criticism was valuable, but criticism is **destructive** when it gives no “hope or direction,” and when it “tears out courage” and “enthusiasm.” He told me that on a good day, I can say, “I performed so well today, Hashem, thanks **solely** to your Siyaita D’Shemaya.” He described this as a “balance of Anivus and pride” that is devoid of Ga’avah. He also said that on a not-so-good day, I can say that I’ve tried my best and that I’m on the way; that “I’ve seen progress through Siyaita D’Shemaya;” that I should say, “I thank you, Hashem, for the Siyaita D’Shemaya.” He conveyed to me that recognizing the need for Tikkunim *in the future* ought to co-exist with recognizing that Tikkunim have *already been made*. [On a separate occasion, he would convey that Cheshbon HaNefesh should be reserved for the times that are “Meyuchadim” for it (e.g., Yom Kippur Katan). He held that guilt, shame, and negative self-appraisals due to past deeds had *no place after* doing Teshuvah (and receiving Mechilah for any issues Bein Adam LaChaveiro).]

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

c. February 2012

Rav Belsky said that the Umanus Kallah V'Nekiah that Chazal advocate is an Umanus with the following traits:

- An Umanus Kallah is an Umanus which allows you to be Kovei'a Ittim. It's not a "heavy burden that's carried day and night." It's an Umanus that leaves your mind "clear" so that you can "concentrate on great things."
- An Umanus Nekiah is an Umanus in which you function honestly, with "a clear conscience."

September 2014

It used to be that wearing Techeiles (the kind that became available around 1990) was unique to the religious Zionist camp. In recent years, it has made inroads into parts of the Chareidi world; although (I am reliably informed that) Maran HaGaon Rav David Feinstein, Shlita, opposes wearing them, (I am reliably informed that) Maran HaGaon Rav Elyah Ber Vachtfogel, Shlita, does wear them. It is no secret that Rav Belsky wore them.

At the request of a friend's son, I asked Rav Belsky about his approach to Techeiles. Rav Belsky told me, "It's the real thing...there are Kama V'Kama Rayos..." When I asked him if he *recommends* wearing them, he said that, in general, he doesn't tell people what to do, and did not want to become the "public advocate" of Techeiles.

In the sefer Nefesh HaRav, Rav Schachter writes that Rav Soloveitchik *opposed* attempts to restore lost elements of the Mesorah *via* scientific or other means. The Chilazon, like any other Cheftza in the Mesorah, must be identified *exclusively* by the Mesorah itself. This, reportedly, was the Beis HaLevi's objection to the Radziner Techeilis. I asked Rav Belsky about scientifically restoring lost elements of the Mesorah. He said that with solid Rayos, it's "K'Ilul there is a Mesorah."

*During his tenure, Rabbi Safran arranged a series of **live webcasts** with Rav Belsky and Rav Schachter answering Shailos on a given topic. The OU would publicize the webcast in advance and people would send in Shailos. Below is a small collection of Rav Belsky's responses to various questions.*

Hurricane Sandy

- There is indeed a measure of tzedakah-obligations on Aniyyim themselves.
- If one has more stringencies in his kashrus observance than the refugees he has taken in, the rules of conduct should be diplomatically explained to them.
- One ought not take in refugees if it will be deleterious to one's Shalom Bayyis.
- One must recognize one's dependence on Hashem, and the Chasdei Hashem, involved in any Tovah we have; even the most basic needs are not to be taken for granted.
- We must learn from Tzaros even on the other side of the world (earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.) and that these Tzaros are a call for reflection on one's need for Teshuvah and self-improvement.

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

Health Issues

He (or Rav Schachter [I don't recall]) said that if one is looking to take on a Chumrah as a Zechus for someone's Refuah, it should be in an area where he (the Mekabeil) is weak. Rav Belsky added, "The first Chumrah he should take on is to acknowledge that he has a weakness."

"Ask the Rabbis"

Question: Is there a kashrus problem created when a gene from a non-kosher species is spliced into a kosher food? For example, genes from Arctic fish are being spliced into tomatoes so that the tomatoes tolerate the frost better.

Answer: This procedure does not fall within the parameters of Kelai Zerayim and Kelai HaKerem, nor was it included in the Issur of Harkavas Ilan. "If it looks like a tomato and grows like a tomato, it's not a fish."

Tzedakah

- Supporting your son in Kollel is considered Tzedakah, but no more than ½ of your Tzedakah monies should go to family.
- A girl who plans to marry a full-time learner can save up all of the Ma'aser of her single years and use it to support her husband in learning.

Chinuch

- The most important aspect of chinuch is Middos.
- There are basic criteria for choosing a yeshiva for your son:
 - You want a "whole" chinuch.
 - You investigate the actual learning, the right Derech HaLimmud, the right blend of Iyyun and Bekius.
 - They should also learn Neviim Rishonim, Dikduk, and how to lail.
 - The chinuch should have an "emphasis on Middos Tovos."
 - He needs to be given "a feel for Klal Yisroel."
 - You'll want to look at the "products" of the yeshiva.
- You "murder" your children by "bouncing" them from one school to the next.
- A "sullen" and "angry" family will create children who are "monsters." And what if a family faces problems? Happiness is an "attitude," a state of "soul and mind," and is not dependent on solving all problems
- He said that a boy who does not turn out to be the Gadol HaDor is not a failure! He needs to be built up and made to feel like a success. If a boy is made to feel like a failure, he'll look on the Torah as "his enemy" because it made him "less than human."

In or around September 2009, I discovered (on TorahDownloads.com) recordings of three truly invaluable shiurim given by Rav Belsky on the topic of Chinuch. These are some of the highlights:

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

- A home has to be happy if you want to raise normal children—and that includes “jokes” and “laughter.”
- A happy home includes an atmosphere where “nothing’s wrong.” Don’t complain about anything; the atmosphere should be one described by a famous old song: “...never is heard, a discouraging word...”
- **NEVER EVER** say that it’s “Shver Tzu Tzein a Yid”!
- Your child must know that you are there for him, that you will never let him down, that you will give them Chizzuk when they have a Tzarah (even if/when you have to be Madrich them).
- Be “a mountain and a fountain of strength” for your child.
- Never disappoint your child when he “spills his heart out” to you—rather, comfort him, and don’t criticize him.
- Never belittle your child or his accomplishments. “Build up” your child; make them “confident and strong.”

In the office, we in Kashrus would typically ask Rav Belsky to give us Divrei Chizzuk V’Hisorerus around the time of the Yamim Nora’im. Below is a small sample of what he shared with us.

[#1]

- A person should be Mitz’ta’eir that K’vod Shamayyim and Gilui Malchus Shamayyim are lacking.
- The Bakashah *Ikkaris* on Rosh HaShanah is, **Let there be K’vod Shamayyim.** Bakashos for our own Tovos are Bakashos *Tefeilos*.
- We must be concerned with the Tza’ar of the Shechinah [in not being revealed, i.e., the Galus of the Shechinah], not just our own pains and sins.

[#2]

- The Yesod of Cheit is, *confusion*. If you saw clearly what was Tov, you wouldn’t do a Cheit. Confusion leads to seeing Ra as Tov and leads to Nisayon.
- Yom Kippur is a time of *Birur*—Yom Kippur *clarifies*.
- Our Keilim for Avodas Hashem are Dibbur, R’iah, and Mach’shavah. These are the Keilim that we use to be Metakein ourselves, and they must be clean and pure.

[#3]

- Unlike the Tzadik and the Rasha, the Chasimah of the judgment of the Beinoni occurs on Yom Kippur.
- Who is the Beinoni? He is someone ruled by the Yetzer HaTov **and** the Yetzer HaRa. Under the dominion of two rulers whose edicts are contradictory, the Beinoni is directionless.
- The Tzaddik and the Rasha do have direction. Each is driven mainly by one force.
- The Tzaddik is driven mainly by **Tov**. His sole commitment is to Tov and this is what he’s made his life’s purpose. His dreams and plans revolve around Tov.

Rav Belsky: Recollections, Reflections, and Records
by Rabbi Eliyahu W. Ferrell
Passaic, NJ
Adar Aleph 5776 – March 2016

Even when the Tzaddik has a lapse, it doesn't change his direction or his fundamental Metzui. He will be regretful for a lapse and do a copious amount of Teshuvah.

- The Rasha is driven mainly by **Ra**.
- What is the Beinoni's Avodah? *To deepen his commitment to Tov and diminish the amount and depth of his lapses.*

This is an explanation of certain Inyanei Teshuvah that I heard from Rav Belsky in or around Tishrei 5776/2015.

How do we define Selichah, Mechilah, and Kapparah?

Selichah and **Mechilah** are two types of forgiveness that Hashem offers. **Selichah** is comparable to a judge's dropping of charges against you for violating one of society's laws, e.g., littering. **Mechilah** is comparable to a judge's dropping of charges against you for a *personal* offense against *the judge himself*, e.g., breaking *his* window. When Hashem grants **Kapparah**, He is "expung[ing] the record;" He is "wip[ing] the slate clean."

Rav Belsky added that the verb „מ – ח – ל” does **not** mean “forgive” in Lashon Kodesh—it means “forgive” in a different language!

מי יתן תמורתו
יהי זכרו ברוך