

I was a masmid in Camp Agudah for only one season. But it was enough for me to form a strong bond that spanned many decades, with my rebbe, Rav Belsky, zt'l. The shiurim, the gentle mussar, the "tishen" with Rav Belsky's special nigunnim, as well as the unforgettable all-night campfire where Rav Belsky would speak to us for hours on end until it was time to daven vasikin. Stories, mussar (see those embers? That's what they place on the tongues of those who speak lashon hara...), divrei torah, how to properly build a fire..., and of course, looking up at the sky and identifying every single constellation...

So when Haley's Comet came around, I was privileged to join for a "viewing" with Rav Belsky. His family packed into the old station wagon and we all met at the tip of Coney Island to see the comet. Rav Belsky took a quick glance at the skies, and announced, "Well, there's the North Star, there the moon, etc. so...THERE is the comet, and pointed at a spot in the sky. ... But there was nothing but blackness! Puzzled, Rav Belsky asked for binoculars. Still nothing. One of his children pointed out what seemed to be the comet, slightly distant from Rav Belsky's point. "Can't be". Lifting the binoculars, Rav Belsky peered then laughed. "Here, look, it's an airplane"! After about a half hour, we all gave up! NO comet! Rav Belsky was puzzled! I was shattered. My faith in my Rebbe, who to me knew everything, was challenged. I had a troubled sleep that night. But the next morning, the news announced, "Scientists are puzzled by the fact that for unexplainable reasons, Haley's comet was not visible at all last night"! Whew! Rebbe was right again!

I'm sure the boys remember this experience. It is one of my favorites!

Yehi zichro boruch!