

Rav Belsky used to come to the OU every Wednesday and Thursday, but when Rav Pam was niftar and Rav Belsky took over as rosh yeshiva, he could only come to the OU once per week.

Rav Belsky always brought with him to the OU a group of talmidim from Torah Vodaas who were learning Yoreh Deah. Rav Belsky bought the talmidim in order to give them real-live shimush in answering kashrus shailos. He would break down the issues and provide an overview of the metzius in order for these talmidim to be able to follow the discussion.

Rav Belsky always replied to the shailos with tremendous depth, piercing to the heart of the issue with great sevoros and lomdus - never presenting a superficial or a "cheshbon" approach to psak. His total mastery of the entire corpus of Halacha, both in breadth and depth, as well as his stunning mastery of the technical metzius, both in terms of its intricacies and its inner workings, were mind-boggling.

Every time we asked a shailah, we received a mini-shiur on the topic, a detailed explanation of the mechanics of the metzius, and answer that was so compelling that we knew it was pure emes and not something based on an "ukimta" or an approach that we felt was subject to question. Rav Belsky, would read aloud from the relevant seforim when replying to shailos, in order to show us the mekoros and the leshonos and make us feel part of the masa u'matan. After rendering a decision, he would show us inside how the psak was in truth what the Gemara, Shulchan Aruch, Remo, Nesei Keilim and relevant ShuT seforim meant. It always came forth so decisively clear that the psak was emes, as if Rav Belsky had read the minds of the Mechaber, Remo, etc. Totally compelling teshuvos of dizzying depth, with pashtus that fit the words of the mekoros and we knew reflected their true intent, was what Rav Belsky always presented.

Once, I had an urgent shailah, and the answer really needed to be in writing. It was during the summer, when Rav Belsky was away at Camp Agudah and officially on vacation from the OU (even though he always made himself available to the OU staff as much as possible). Despite his unbelievably busy camp schedule, Rav Belsky faxed me a detailed teshuva immediately and left me a kind and detailed voice message, resolving the situation on the spot.

Rav Belsky was intense about Torah, yet he sat at his office in the OU, explaining and answering all shailos, with a smile and usually a story about the issue at hand - he was never tense and always appeared relaxed. He certainly made everyone who posed shailos feel relaxed, as he dealt with them with chumminess, a very warm "Sholom aleichem", and laid out the Halacha with clarity, background and seder.

However, I once came to ask Rav Belsky about a new eiruv that was erected on my block and beyond, which I knew that Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Aharon Kotler, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik and his brother Rav Aharon, my rebbeim and the local rabbonim of K'hal Adath Jeshurun ("Breuer's") would have/did oppose. I had read Rav Belsky's teshuva on the new Brooklyn eiruv, and I asked him if it pertained to the new eiruv in neighborhood as well. I was not going to not use this eiruv - my question was merely for limud.

Rav Belsky closed the door, stood up, and became red and firm. He never otherwise acted in such a way. His jovial manner transformed to one of utter solemnity and intensity. He needed to stand, which he never did when answering shailos, as he was so worked up. He proceeded to explain why the eiruv in my neighborhood was invalid, he told me in detail the reasons, and said that his p'sak about the new Brooklyn eiruv applied to my neighborhood as well. Rav Belsky permitted me to copy his written teshuva from his sefer on the issue and to disseminate it. He also explained with such emotion how wrong it was for an outside rov to have come in and set up this eiruv - he was so forceful like I had never seen.

Such is a person who loves Torah and cares with every fiber of his being.

Rabbi Genack, head of OU Kashrus, told me on several occasions that food company executives related to him that Rav Belsky, after visiting factories for kashrus purposes, understood the equipment and processing mechanisms better than they themselves did, and taught them things about their own operations of which they were unaware.

The OU's most senior overseas field representative, who is both Chassidish and has a PhD from the world's most advanced science academy, is one of, if not THE, greatest kashrus experts in the world today, due to his mastery of food science, production technology and machinery, and much more. He told me after Rav Belsky was niftar that Rav Belsky was "the most amazing man I have ever met, and I have been around for a quite a while".