As the Shloshim of the Rosh Yeshiva Harav Belsky Zt"l approaches, I see it fitting to express some of my thoughts that have been flooding my mind ever since the day of his petirah when the world as we have known it would cease to exist for those of us who knew the Rav in life more than in passing. When I joined the Camp Agudah Masmidim program some six years ago, I was privileged to come in close contact with Harav Belsky ZT"L for the first time in my young life. in truth, this was by no means coincidental as in fact I had come with the intent of spending the summer with the greatest gadol to have ever made himself available to bachurim in such an informal and accessible manner.

So while basking in the Rav's presence fell within my expectations, what came as the greatest surprise of all was that aside from his gadlus in psak, his bekius niflah in כל, התורה כולה, and his expertise in kashrus and "real world" issues, there was gadlus in mussar, machshava, middos, and avoidah. We quickly came to the realization that the gadlus of our great Rebbi stood on its own, independent of his סמה מחל and his broad and eclectic knowledge and expertise in areas that spanned science, medicine and practically any other area to face humankind. Had the R"Y not been a פוסק and had he not been involved in kashrus, he would have been known as a gadol simply for his greatness in mussar and hashkafa, not to mention his innumerable מעלות including but by no means limited to his unbelievable Hasmada. [This last point was not as obvious to us at the outset, since due to his complete availability to the bachurim, we rarely caught him hureving over a gemara, but it is sufficiently clear to all that he was in fact an extremely great masmid.

Some have said that the motivation that drove the R"Y to learn כל התורה כולה, was his "Ahavas Yedios", an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. This explanation was supported by the myriad subjects that the R"Y was familiar with, such as his knowledge of astronomy, stories of gedolim, and his ability to lein the weekday קריאת התורה without preparation. I can add to this his familiarity with Latin and his knowledge of Greek mythology, the European train routes that these gedolim took, and his ability to lein all the complete parshios with the haftoros without preparation. We may therefore fall prey to the false belief that perhaps the R"Y's learning כל התורה כולה may have fallen under the general heading of "why not know it all", that לימוד התורה נותניה for him came from an innate need for acquiring colossal stores of knowledge rather than from ...

I can state unequivocally, and all those who knew the R"Y will agree without any hesitation or doubt that this was simply not the case. The R"Y's אהבת התורה and אהבת התורה was almost palpable. When he spoke about Rabeinu Yerucham and the Baalei Hatosfos, he had tears in his eyes and he choked up with emotion as if he was discussing a beloved relative. Nothing made him happier than teaching תורת ה and he was truly annoyed by a קרומ'ע פשט.

In my capacity as a yeshiva bachur it would be no less than presumptive of me to even dare describe in words the immense השיבות the rosh yeshiva had for תורה, but I firmly believe his worldly knowledge, as immense and broad as it was, can never הם שלום be compared even remotely to his ידיעת התורה as the former was acquired אגב while the latter by way of ימנו, פשוטו כמשמעו of the latter by way of ימנו, פשוטו כמשמעו of the latter by way.