



ברוך דיין האמת

*Hesped for Rabbi  
Moshe Kahn z"l*

Written by  
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Birshut Rabbanim and teachers, Rebbetzin Kahn, Eli, Chavi, Tzvi, and the whole family, my fellow students of Rabbi Kahn, and everyone assembled.

I am humbled to be representing the thousands of students of my dear Rebbe, and also deeply afraid of not doing justice to the giant that he was. I will do my very best.

**חֵבֵל עַל דְּאֲבָדִין וְלֹא מִשְׁתַּכְּחִין**

It's so deeply deeply sad that our Rebbe is gone. I can't believe it.

I was a student of Rabbi Kahn for years, at both Drisha Institute and Yeshiva University's Stern College. He was my Rebbe Muvhak, the teacher from whom I learned most of my Torah, and certainly my derech halimud. I want to try to share with you from his students' perspective how important he is in our world.

It seems to me that Rabbi Kahn is the father of women's Gemara learning in the US. Almost every woman I know who learns Gemara had him as a teacher. And if they did not, they had a student of his as their teacher. He taught thousands of women, and he inspired many of his talmidot to become teachers, exponentially growing his influence. He did this all with a humility that is unparalleled. He never became famous. He just got up every morning for 40 years and taught the sugya to the women in front of him who wanted to learn it.

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Rav Kahn taught us a derech halimud that was uniquely his. He was a student of Rav Soloveitchik and the Brisker derech, but while in many Gemara shiurim the conceptual ideas took precedence, Rabbi Kahn insisted that conceptual analysis must spring from a close reading of the text of the Gemara and the Rishonim. "Every word, read every word," he would say to us. "What are the two points Tosfot are making? No, you got the first one but not the second one, read it again." Because of his influence, thousands of women and girls have learned Gemara with a focus on close textual reading – I think they think that's the way everyone learns. He has brought us all back to the text. I asked Rabbi Kahn recently how he came up with that method, and he said it was from a colleague in YU's JSS program who had that approach to Tanach, "every word," and he said he would try it for Gemara. And so generations of women learned to approach Gemara in this way as well.

Rabbi Kahn believed in us. He held us to a high standard, never let us get away with an imprecise formulation or a confused idea. There was no soft bigotry of low expectations. He would gently but firmly lead us to a clear understanding, no cutting corners. He was at once demanding but patient, brilliant but humble. "Rashi is not making a mistake, you are," he said. He once shared with me with a chuckle when I visited him at Stern, "Do you know what they call me here? Killer Kahn, can you believe it?" His shiurim made you come prepared, his tests were universally feared, but when you met him, he was the sweetest father-grandfather figure you could imagine. He was the perfect Rebbe for a generation of women starting out in the world of Gemara, which was a new thing at the time – totally committed to halacha, totally faithful to the words on the daf, high expectations, but endless patience. We are all so thankful that Hashem sent him to this calling. No wonder so many of us decided to continue his derech and teach the next generation the Torah that he loved.

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He cared not only about learning, but he cared about each of us personally. When I got engaged, my future husband and I spent a Shabbat at his rebbe and a Shabbat at my rebbe – BH they both approved of our choice, and they both made brachot at our wedding.

But it was not just deep and meaningful Torah that we learned from Rabbi Kahn. The Navi Malachi writes, **כִּי שִׁפְתֵי כֹהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ דַעַת וְתוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ, מִפִּיהוּ כִּי מִלֶּאךָ ה' צְבָאוֹת הוּא**

The Gemara in Chagiga says that this pasuk teaches that we should learn Torah only from a rebbe who is like an angel of God. Rabbi Kahn was a paragon of impeccable middot. Humble, kind, patient, soft-spoken, thoughtful – he was a malach Hashem Tzvakot we wanted to emulate.

I think his humility was the most striking midda about him - **והאיש משה - ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה**. The Torah says that about Moshe Rabbeinu in the story where his siblings speak lashon hara about him and say that Hashem spoke to them as well. Hashem calls Moshe to witness the rebuke of Miriam and Aharon, but why? It seems that He wanted Moshe to hear what He would say – **פה אל פה אדבר בו, בכל ביתי - נאמן הוא** – Moshe had a level of nevuah that far surpassed anyone else's. But yet in that same passage it says that Moshe Rabbeinu was the most humble man in the world. I thought about this recently when I went to visit Rabbi Kahn in Teaneck in November. There had been a Zoom last year where his students from over 30 years expressed their hakarat hatov to him. But when I asked Rebbetzin Kahn when we saw each other, whether Rabbi Kahn realized the impact he had, she said he didn't really fully realize it. I think even after hearing it many times, he was just too humble to be able to accept it. Like Moshe Rabbeinu, who heard that he was the greatest navi ever but was still just the most humble person in the world.

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כל המקיים נפש אחת מישראל כאילו קיים עולם מלא - every person is a whole world, the Mishna in Sanhedrin says that we learn from the fact that Adam was created alone. Rabbi Kahn was one person but he taught so many women and so many of those women became teachers who taught more people – I told my students today, he is responsible for my learning, and for your learning - שלי ושלכן שלו היא.

Every person who leaves this world lives on through his family and in the people he touched. I say to Rebbetzin Kahn and to entire family – this loss is yours first and foremost, and also a loss to his students and to the Torah world. But Rabbi Kahn lives on in the incredible legacy he has left, in the Torah that he spread and continues to spread through his students and grand-students and so on. We have lost a giant. תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים.



**משה אמת ותורתו אמת**