

Gershon Hausman

(eulogy delivered at כינוס תשובה on 9/19/85,  
at Yeshiva University)

Early last year, a dear friend of mine whose rabbi I had been for a number of years at The Jewish Center, Mr. Gershon Hausman, told me that he missed the annual כינוס תשובה שיעורים that the Rav, שליט"א, used to give in this season, בין כסה לעשור.

Born in Antwerp, and also a member of the Moriah Shul on the West Side, he was a great admirer of the Rav, who had an affiliation with that shul. Because of his esteem for the Rav and the tradition of the כינוסי תשובה inaugurated by the Rav and continued by him for many years, Mr. Hausman created a perpetual endowment at Yeshiva for these שיעורים תשובה to be given every year, between ראש השנה and כיפור, both here at our Main Center and at the Gruss Institute in Jerusalem. He endowed these lectures, which begin today both here and by Reb Dovid Lifschitz in ירושלים, in honor of the memory of his late parents, Moshe and Chava Hausman ע"ה, and of the parents of his beloved wife Judy, may she live and be well, Elias and Mary Stern, ע"ה.

He looked forward eagerly to this שיעור, but the השגחה willed it otherwise. This summer, Gershon Hausman returned his soul to his Creator at his home in ירושלים. Indeed, תשב אנוש עד -- before these שיעורים תשובה could begin -- שונו בני אדם -- he performed the other תשובה, that of תשב אנוש עד דכא, the inevitable "return" from whence we all come.

Gershon Hausman dealt in diamonds -- and he became identified with them. He was himself a blue-white gem of a human being, possessed of many brilliant hues and intriguing facets, and precious beyond words.

He was a צנוע and an ענו, unassuming and understated.

He loved Israel, went there as often as he could -- and wrote a beautiful עברית.



I was a friend of the family, and knew him especially as a תלמיד of mine in גמרא. He had a good head. What he lacked in formal education, he made up for with an astute intellect and an inquiring mind. Upon his retirement 3 years ago, he urged me to organize Talmud classes in Midtown for retirees who were still vigorous. And, at the age of 70 he enrolled in college classes working for his B.A.

He was a very devoted and loving family man. He encouraged his wife's artistic career, and his daughters' professional interests -- whether law or mathematics or raising a wonderful Jewish family.

Our Sidra this coming שבת שובה begins with the words וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה, "and Moses went." Where did he go? That we are not told. The Ramban suggests that he went to take his leave of his fellow Jews before his death. Earlier, אֵלֶּן עֲזָרָא spelled out where Moshe went. He went, אֵלֶּן עֲזָרָא says, to each and every שַׁבָּת to take his leave of them and to give them each a בְּרָכָה. Later, these בְּרָכוֹת were collected and written down by him as the Sidra of הַבְּרָכָה.

Of Reb Gershon we may say too: וַיֵּלֶךְ גֶּרְשׁוֹן -- he went to all his family and dear ones before his פְּטִירָה and left them each a בְּרָכָה. To his wife, to his 3 daughters, to his son-in-law Sylvain, a graduate of Yeshiva, to his grandchildren -- to all he left an unutterably precious בְּרָכָה. And to us too, the Yeshiva and the Jewish communities of New York and יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, he left this blessed legacy of כִּינוּסֵי תְּשׁוּבָה which will, we hope, continue in perpetuity.

It is in this sense of gratitude and affection for him, that we dedicate this first שְׁעוֹר to his memory. יִהְיֶה זַכְרוֹ בְּרוּךְ.