

Remembering Rabbi Dworken

■ I want to express my and my family's deep sense of gratitude for the beautiful way the Orthodox Union treated the memory of my husband, Rabbi Steven M. Dworken, *z"l* (Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, "A Look at Leadership," spring 2004). The tribute is testimony to the OU's *mentshlichkeit* (decency) and adherence to the fundamental concept of *hakarat hatov* (appreciation). Steve was particularly elated when Rabbi Weinreb took over the reins of the OU. He felt that in him there was a model for all in the Modern Orthodox world to emulate. How justified he was in his perception!

I know Steve would feel honored by the recognition Rabbi Weinreb has given to his efforts. He believed in the mission of the Orthodox Union and felt that its *hashkafah* (general outlook) was needed for the survival and perpetuation of Torah Judaism. He worked hard with "his" rabbis because he believed in them and in what they stood for. It is most gratifying to know his efforts were valued; we hope they

will be remembered and built upon.

**Susan H. Dworken
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Rabbi Weinreb's moving tribute to Rabbi Dworken was all the more poignant because it was framed within an analysis of Jewish leadership. In the many *hespedim* (eulogies) of Rabbi Dworken, much was said about his having been the "rabbi's rabbi." But to me he was much more than that: He was *my* rabbi.

Rabbi Dworken made an impact on so many people, and none more than a seventh grader in the Congregation Anshe Chesed Hebrew school, testing the waters of *Yiddishkeit* and Torah. Rabbi Dworken knew from his own experience what it was like to be a young boy who had become enchanted with Judaism, and he was a loving guide in the early years of my odyssey toward becoming observant. His plain, good sense helped smooth the inevitable tension of a home in which a teenager is becoming *frum*. I vividly remember the conversation that took place in his study, during which my parents agreed

to *kasher* the house. He helped my parents and me work out the challenges, while emphasizing my obligations of *kavod* (giving honor), a trait that was his hallmark in his interactions with every person, from shul janitor to chief rabbi.

A deeply emotional person, Rabbi Dworken was never reluctant to shed a tear. He once asked me to help make a minyan at a funeral. Someone with a tangential connection to the shul had lost her mother. The mourner was over seventy, and the deceased well into her nineties. Rabbi Dworken didn't know either of them. When we got back to the car, I saw that he was crying. In the cynicism of youth, I asked, "What are you crying about?" He answered softly, "A Jewish person died."

Rabbi Dworken once said to me, "After 120 years I don't think they'll say I was the *gadol hador* (the leader of the generation), but I hope they'll say I was a good rabbi." He was a great rabbi, friend and role model, and I miss him.

**Rabbi Jeffrey Saks
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