

Gerald Eli Naiman (Yaakov Eliyahu Ben Dovid), *a"h* was born in Baltimore, Maryland on 19 Kislev, 5688 (December 13, 1927). His parents, Russian immigrants David and Fanny (Dovid and Fayga) arrived in the United States in the early teens of the 1900's and settled in Baltimore. His father was a butcher and because of the difficulty in working as a *frum* employee in those times, he opened his own shop on Oswego Avenue. He was one of the few truly kosher butchers during this time period. Gerald went by several names in his younger years that carried well into adulthood. He was known to his family as Nonny and to his customers as Jerry.

He enjoyed playing sports and especially stick ball with his friends and other neighborhood children. He was always there with a helping hand. The family did not realize the impact he had on people until stories we heard after he passed away. One such story came from a neighborhood boy that our father grew up with. Tony, who was not Jewish, ran a paper route in the neighborhood. He became close to our grandparents and would always take care of their Shabbos needs. He would come into the house just to make sure the lights were taken care of and anything else that he could do to help. He did this without be asked or told. It was something he wanted to do. Our father would deliver meat orders for his father to help defray the cost of delivery. There were times that Tony and our father would help each other if one could not do their job for whatever reason. Our father would deliver newspapers and Tony would deliver the orders. Tony told us after his passing how he made him feel and accepted. To Tony, our father was a true *kiddush Hashem*.

He attended the Talmudical Academy until eighth grade. Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro *z"l* suggested to his parents that it would be best for him to continue his Torah studies at Torah VaDaas in New York. This was a huge undertaking in those times, but they thought it would be good for our father. He attended the Yeshiva for many years, where he forged life-long relationships with HaRav Shraga Feivel Mendolowitz, *z"l* and HaRav Yaakov Moshe Kulefsky, *z"l* just to mention a few. He became the Rosh HaYeshivah's driver and was always listening to the *Divrei Torah* spoken in the car as he transported some of the greatest *Gedolim* of that time.

After spending those years in the New York, he came back to Baltimore and began looking for a job. Our father was very outgoing and social and he thought he would be good at sales. He ran into a lot of difficulty since most employers wanted him to work on Shabbos. He finally found a job in sales with a *Shomer Shabbos* employer, Morris Siegel & Company, a wholesale operation that sold notions, school supplies, etc. to small retail stores throughout Baltimore. In this position, he went out to the retail stores to determine their needs and develop new business relationships. This was very natural for our father and throughout the years he made many life-long friends. They shared the good times and sadly the bad times as well. Of course, he was never seen without his cap.

During this time, at the end of each day, our father would drop off the orders at Mr. Siegel's home so he could go straight out on the road the next day without having to stop at the store first. Every now and then, when he came to the door, our mother, Deborah Siegel, would take the order forms from him. They began dating and they became engaged in 1951. However, our father was soon to be drafted, so the wedding was put on hold.

Our father was drafted to Korea in 1951 and was placed with the M.A.S.H. unit on the front lines. A main concern was how he was going to be able to eat. During this time, he contacted Rabbi Yitzchak Chinn z"l of McKeesport, PA, a friend from his Torah VeDaas days. Rabbi Chinn worked with the Red Cross and made sure that our father would have kosher food, and it worked this way for the over a year time spent in Korea. [During the *shivah*, Rabbi Chinn told us that HaRav Shrage Feivel had told our father, "You might never be a Rosh Yeshivah, but you should be the president of a shul."]

Our father returned home at the end of 1952, and he and our mother married on March 22, 1953. They began their married life living around Agudath Achim Shul until they moved uptown in 1958. For most of our father's life, he attended the Chofetz Chaim Adas Bnei Israel Congregation located on West Rogers Avenue. This was the shul that our grandfather, Morris Siegel, helped establish and although, not the *nusach* of our father, he still enjoyed the shul. We remember always attending shul when he felt we were old enough to sit and we all always sat around him. He trained us to come on time by his example, and by his shouts of *vayavo!* to chronic latecomers. All of our Bar Mitzvahs were held at the Adas, and the Shul always had a special meaning to him. He always had a smile greeting people as they walked into the shul, and he would invite them over his house for *kiddush* after davening.

After our youngest brother was born, our parents decided that it was time to move to a larger house. In October 1969, they moved a few blocks away. The walk to the shul was now about a mile, but our father would never miss the minyan at the Adas even though there were minyanim closer to his home. He attended the minyan throughout the week and always made everyone feel welcome, especially the children. After a number of years, he became the candy man of the shul and he felt it was important that children learn proper courtesy and he would insist on "please" and "thank you" when giving out any candy. The children were all the better for it.

Our uncle Buddy (Paul - Pinchas Chaim), was never married and my father was very close with his brother. After their father Dovid passed away in 1968, our grandmother, Fayga, and our uncle would come for dinner every Sunday night. It was always an enjoyable time for all of us. Even after our grandmother passed away in 1978, Uncle Buddy would still come every week. Our father made a commitment to our Uncle that he would never place him in a nursing home.

As the years went by, our father's desire for traveling to Eretz Yisrael increased. Finally, in 1987, our parents booked their flights and rented a place in Yerushalayim. Unfortunately, the day before they were to leave, his brother, Buddy, had a massive stroke. They cancelled their trip, because family was of the upmost importance to them. Due to the stroke, Uncle Buddy was primarily in a coma for about two years with round o'clock nurses attending him. This became a full time job for our father and mother – making sure nurses were there and basically giving their house over for his care. He passed away in February 1991, 8 Shevat.

Our parents did eventually travel to Israel in 1995 and they had a wonderful time. My father was specifically moved seeing the *kevarim* of the *Gedolim* and saying Tehillim there. He kept a diary of everything that they did and it was hard for them to leave.

In his later years, he was blessed to have grandchildren who lived in Baltimore and became part of their Zayde's life. He was *zocheh* to attend a few of the Bar and Bas Mitzvahs of his grandchildren and that meant the world to him. A simchah was everything to him and he enjoyed them to the fullest.

During the past nine years of his life, he was dealing with a number of medical issues. During this time he never complained. He went about his business, learning in the mornings, going to shul, doing the shopping, laundry, etc. In 2004, he took a major turn for the worse after fracturing his hip. During the next six months, he was in major pain and very uncomfortable. However, he still went through his life as he felt he should. He would still greet people with his smile and was genuinely happy when people would stop by even up to a couple of days prior to his passing. He would take one day at a time, slowly making his way to the living room, where he would daven, learn his daily *sedarim*, and then have breakfast with the newspaper.

Every year since our uncle's passing our father would host a *siyum* on the *yahrzeit*, with his sons and eventually grandsons taking part. He was very concerned that we remember our uncle's *yahrzeit* when he was no longer here to host the *siyum*. The *hashgachah* was that our father passed away on 8 Shevat, the same day as our uncle, so that we would never forget either *yahrzeit*.

יהא זכרו ברוך