

Pinny Rosenthal

We are gathered here today to offer our **kavod acharon** to **Rabbi Reuven Mann, ז"ל — הרב ראובן שמואל בן צבי יטא**.

Beloved husband to **Rebbetzin Linda**, devoted father to **Shaye and Naomi, Moshe and Deborah, Jacob and Nicole**, and a proud grandfather to six grandchildren: **Jessica** and her husband **Jonathan, Yehoshua, Daniel, Avi, Yosef**, and the newest addition, **Henry Leo**.

Rabbi Mann was our cherished **Rebbe, Menahel Emeritus**, and **co-founder of Yeshiva Bnei Torah**, as well as a **co-founder of the Masoret Institute of Judaic Studies for Women**. He served as Rabbi of the **JCC of Inwood, Rinat Yisrael of Plainview**, and the **Young Israel of Phoenix**.

For more than **fifty years**, he taught Torah to hundreds of **talmidim** and **baalei batim**. But his influence extended far beyond those he taught directly. Thousands were shaped by his Torah — through his weekly **parsha sheets**, through his writings, and especially through the many **rabbanim** he taught, who went on to teach their own students.

Just yesterday, at the airport, we met someone returning to Israel who said simply: *"I know Rabbi Mann — I read his weekly parsha dvar Torah."*

We often speak about a **gadol baTorah** — someone with complete mastery of Torah. But Rabbi Mann was something else entirely: **a gibor baTorah**.

He grew up in Brooklyn and attended **Yeshivas Torah Vodaas** through twelfth grade. He once shared that he left feeling uninspired and considered leaving yeshiva life altogether. He wanted to attend Brooklyn College and move on with a professional career.

At that point, his mother, **Yetta**, made him an offer that only a Jewish mother could make. She said: *"If you go to Yeshiva University — we'll get you a car."* That car changed the trajectory of his life — and, in truth, the lives of all of us here.

Just last month, he spoke about how transformative his years were in the shiurim of **Rabbi Yerucham Gorelick** and **Rabbi Dovid Lifshitz** — shiurim known for clarity, discipline, and rigorous lomdus. A young Rabbi Mann would walk out of a shiur and **reverse-engineer it**: *How did the rebbe get there?* That discipline shaped the mind and method that so many of us came to know — alongside the profound influence of the Rav - **Rabbi Soloveitchik**, whose public shiurim left a lifelong imprint.

There was a defining moment. He struggled with reading Gemara; it did not come easily. He worked hard, with little success. One day, riding the subway, he told himself: *If I can't do this on my own, I'm throwing in the towel*. That day, something clicked. From that point on, perseverance became part of his identity.

That was Rabbi Mann — **quiet determination**, inner strength — a true **gibor**.

One summer in the Rockaways, looking for someone to learn with, he noticed **Rabbi Israel Chait** and **Rabbi Morton Moskowitz** learning together. Though shy, he asked to join them. They welcomed him warmly. From that chavruta emerged the partnership that would give birth to **Yeshiva Bnei Torah**.

Together, they immersed themselves in the lomdus of the Rav, the philosophical depth of the Rambam, and the enduring chochmah of Chazal. Rabbi Mann loved this Torah deeply and held a profound admiration for the originality, clarity, and intellectual brilliance of Rabbi Chait's insights. It was Rabbi Mann who encouraged Rabbi Chait to found the yeshiva — and for more than **fifty years**, he taught there faithfully, **transmitting not only Torah, but the Derech itself**, shaping generations of talmidim. This quiet vision, loyalty, and lifelong commitment reflect the essence of a true **gibor baTorah**.

Together with my father, **Rabbi Daniel Rosenthal**, he co-founded the **Masoret Institute of Judaic Studies for Women**, and for over **thirty-three years** poured his heart into teaching there. He opened the depths of **chochmat haTorah** to women who were seeking serious, thoughtful, and rigorous Torah learning, and he did so with the same care, patience, and integrity that defined all of his teaching.

The Navi **Yirmiyahu** describes the anguish of one who knows that speaking truth will bring pain and resistance: **וְאָמַרְתִּי לֹא אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ וְלֹא אֶדְבֹּר עוֹד בְּשִׁמּוֹ — וְהָיָה בְּלִבִּי כְּאֵשׁ בַּעֲרַת עֵצִר בְּעֶצְמֹתַי, וְנִלְאַיְתִּי כָּלִכֵּל וְלֹא אוֹכֵל.**

“I said I would no longer speak in His name — but it was like a burning fire in my bones, and I could not hold it in.”

The Rambam writes explicitly in the Moreh Nevuchim that a true navi may attempt to suppress the truth — but he cannot. Once the emet burns within him, silence is no longer possible.

That was Rabbi Mann's relationship with Torah. Whether it was popular or not, conventional or not, comfortable or not — **he spoke it**. He never pandered for approval, and he never diluted truth for position or prestige. When standing for Torah came at a personal cost, he accepted that cost quietly and with dignity. **Those of us who knew him well can point to more than a few moments that bear this out.**

He loved Torah. He loved teaching Torah. It was a fire in his bones — and it never dimmed.

Marie and I had the great privilege of hosting the Manns for two Shabbatot this past November. I asked Rabbi Mann to give a Friday night shiur each Shabbos. At **eighty-one**

years old, he delivered these shiurim filled with clarity, depth, and passion — exactly as I remembered from the very first time I walked into his shiur in **September 1985**.

That fire never dimmed.

That voice never softened its commitment to truth.

And that Torah will continue to live on — through his talmidim, and through all of us who were shaped by his strength and his integrity. **Yehi zichro baruch**.

I am sure that all of us have been mourning Rabbi Mann in our own way and reflecting on his exceptional qualities. My relationship with Rabbi Mann was not as long as some of you who are here, but it did span about 45 years. In that time, I experienced and benefitted immeasurably from Rabbi Mann's wisdom and his kindness. He left a lasting impact on my learning and my own maturity. What I would like to share today is what I see as Rabbi Mann's most defining quality. One that he pursued daily, with seemingly endless energy and enthusiasm.

Rabbi Mann enjoyed solving problems. Not easy ones. But those that were difficult and complex. And there was one great, big, gigantic, difficult problem that he enjoyed working on, it seems to me, more than any other. What fascinated Rabbi Mann above all things was the problem of man. The human struggle. Particularly, how does a person live a meaningful, moral, enjoyable life when he is challenged with so many deep, powerful, hidden drives and desires, that make the living of a good life almost impossible? This was what he labored to solve, for himself and, to our great benefit, for those of us who sought out his assistance with our own particular battles.

For Rabbi Mann, the answers were found in Torah. We all know that Rabbi Mann had broad knowledge and studied many subjects, such as psychology, philosophy and history. But it was Torah and its wisdom and instruction in every area of human endeavor that Rabbi Mann continually searched, to find the answers. He found many of them there and every day searched for more. In the family conflicts of the Chumash, such as with Yaakov and his sons, he found solutions that applied to issues in our own lives and those of our families. In the Rambam and the Talmud he uncovered great insights and expertly applied them to help all those who came to him with seemingly intractable problems. The solutions could be directly related to Talmud Torah and how to improve one's derech of learning, or it could be through applying the Torah's insights to issues of

relationships, parenting, marriage, business or really almost anything at all.

When Rabbi Mann published his commentary on the Chumash, he titled it “Eternally Yours, God’s Greatest Gift to Mankind”. In thinking about this title, it seems to me very accurate in describing Rabbi Mann’s perspective on Torah. Torah was for Rabbi Mann, the greatest gift to mankind because it was and is the guidebook of how to live a good life and to manage our difficult drives- our selfishness, our foolishness; and the self-delusions that we continuously wrestle with. How can we bring to the fore, our reason, our sense of justice, our mercy and our ability to live a meaningful life in service to God. Rabbi Mann pursued and solved this problem for himself. I believe, in most ways that mattered, he used Torah to solve the problem of man for Rabbi Mann. He was successful, it seems to me, in living that good life. Our loss is that he was also our wise teacher, our great advisor, and often the key to solving our own human problem. And now we much struggle, as best we can, without his wise guidance. Rebbe. We will miss you deeply and forever.

Bruce Hershenov

Rabbi Mann was a multi-faceted person, yet in all of his roles; rebbe, teacher, chavruta or friend he was always consistently himself. He had strong convictions and ideals rooted in Torah which were evident in every single conversation and relationship that he had.

Rabbi Mann and I became close friends, spending much time together learning and discussing life. He had a unique ability to incorporate the practical aspect of halacha into every issue. The theoretical was posited and then the practical would be applied. We spent hours discussing, analyzing and applying Torah concepts.

He was the most approachable person. There was not a thing that any talmid could not discuss with him. There was a time when I spent more time in his house than I did at my own home. And I guess this is where I should thank Mrs. Mann and the boys for sharing Rabbi Mann with me and for always being such a sport about the time I took him away from his family and her.

Summer days after davening hanetz, a group of us would meet and enjoy the solitude of the early morning hours at the beach before the crowds came. Rabbi Mann with his thermos of coffee in hand, was always relaxed, and we would hang out, sitting on the beach, shmoozing about life, but always with an undercurrent of political analysis and Torah ideas constantly being discussed.

All of his talmidim knew that he was the go to person to review and discuss and evaluate life's decisions. Rabbi Mann considered every action to be an expression of the correct Derech Hachaiim, so whether the issue was about starting college, choosing a career path, even dating decisions, he gave every person his time and his expertise, always based upon a rational Torah perspective.

He was a political pundit in his own way, and all of his opinions

and insights of politics and daily life were based upon his commitment to Halacha and Torah philosophy. He was a history buff and an expert on Israeli and world politics. It was a pleasure and enlightening to learn from and discuss issues with him.

In recent years whenever we would go to Israel, of course I would make time to visit and be with Rabbi Mann, but even when we didn't have a specific appointment it was inevitable that if I was walking through the Hadar Mall, I would find him seated at a coffee shop with a sefer. It actually was an incentive I had to see him when I went to that mall. I would say hello and he immediately would engage me in the thoughts or ideas that he was pondering. I got a kick out of seeing him engage in conversation with random strangers who were impressed with what he was reading and stopped to talk to him about it. There were never superficial social visits with him, he always had an insight or chiddush to share.

This past year was the first time in more than 50 years that I did not daven at YBT for Yamim Noraiim. We were in Israel for family smachot and the timing was such that we were in Jerusalem. I was apprehensive about spending the time away from Yeshiva, but having the Manns within walking distance of our apartment really made the difference. I walked over to daven Hanetz with Rabbi Mann and then spent the rest of the morning learning with him until Chatzot. I really enjoyed the time with him so much but I did not realize just how special that time was, sadly it will not happen anymore, but the love, friendship, and influence that he had on me and my family will be with us forever.

What Rabbi Reuven Mann Meant to Me

- by Rabbi Matt Schneeweiss (published on rabbischneeweiss.substack.com on 1/2/26)

“Anyone who is lazy in eulogizing a *chacham* is fitting to be buried in his lifetime.” ([Shabbos 105b](#))

This morning (Friday, 1/2/26), at 7:30am, I turned on my phone after being off the grid on my annual solo cabin retreat, totally disconnected from the outside world since Sunday (12/28/25). One of the first emails I saw was the terrible announcement sent out on Monday (12/29/25), reporting the sudden and untimely passing of my former Gemara rebbi and co-founder of my yeshiva, Rabbi Reuven Mann zt”l.

I just made the three-and-a-half-hour drive from upstate New York and began writing this with three-and-a-half hours remaining until Shabbos. I have not yet had time to listen to any of the eulogies. I wanted to express some of my personal thoughts about Rabbi Mann upon hearing the tragic news. What follows is not a proper *hesped* of a *chacham*, nor an attempt to paint a full portrait of Rabbi Mann himself, but an effort to share publicly what I gained from him. I wanted to write as soon as I could, so as not to violate the spirit of the Gemara cited above.

Undoubtedly, the biggest impact Rabbi Mann had on me was his role in founding Yeshiva Bnei Torah. A friend recently reminded me of how it all began. I do not recall where or when it was, but Rabbi Israel Chait (our Rosh ha’Yeshiva) had been learning in a chavrusa with Rabbi Morton Moskowitz zt”l (my rebbi). Rabbi Mann approached them, not knowing who they were, and asked if he could learn with them. The rest is history. Rabbi Chait and Rabbi Mann went on to found our yeshiva, a decision spearheaded in many ways by Rabbi Mann, as conveyed in legends that I will not write about without first doing some fact-checking. Were it not for that decision, countless lives would not have been lived. My students, many of whom have never even heard of Rabbi Mann, owe their Torah and its impact to him.

I was in Rabbi Mann’s Gemara shiur for the first of my seven years in yeshiva. He introduced me to the Brisker Derech, which became the central focus of my learning for that chapter of my life. He is the one who taught me the basic Brisker terminology of *cheftza*, *gavra*, *challos shem*, etc. I hope it does not come across as disrespectful to say that I feel toward Rabbi Mann what many people feel toward their elementary school teachers: this is the person who gave me the basic tools from which I was able to develop further. His teaching proved foundational.

I was also in Rabbi Mann’s Rambam shiur. It was the first time I had actually *learned*, not just *read*, the Mishneh Torah. I have a vivid memory of the first shiur, on Hilchos Teshuvah, in which he introduced me to the classic question: What is the single mitzvah in Hilchos Teshuvah according to the Rambam? It had never even occurred to my young mind to scrutinize the Rambam’s formulation with that degree of attention, seeking that level of clarity. My relationship with the Mishneh Torah has evolved over the years and continues to do so, but it began with Rabbi Mann. And when I began teaching at our yeshiva in 2020 and launched my own Rambam shiur, I saw myself as continuing that tradition of Mishneh Torah exploration with the next generation of YBT *talmidim*, as an heir to what Rabbi Mann left me.

Rabbi Mann was also the co-founder of the Masoret Institute of Judaic Studies for Women. Many of my friends, former *talmidot*, and current *talmidot* have learned so much Torah from him. When I launched my women’s shiurim in 2021, some people questioned (or complained about) my decision to keep these shiurim exclusively for women. I told them my reasons for why I think it is important to have dedicated shiurim just for women, and I consciously looked to Rabbi Mann’s Masoret as my precedent.

Sometime in the mid-2000s, we flew Rabbi Mann out to my shul in Seattle, where he served as scholar in residence. What I remember most was not the shiurim he gave, but the Shabbos meals we had. I enjoyed seeing Rabbi Mann interacting with my family and the members of my community. This was the first Shabbos I had spent

with Rabbi Mann, and I got a kick out of seeing how much he ate and how thoroughly he enjoyed his food. You see, Rabbi Mann was the first person to introduce me to intermittent fasting, specifically the OMAD (“One Meal a Day”) method. I remember him explaining to me in my first year of yeshiva that during the day he only drank coffee and water, but at night he would eat one meal of whatever he wanted. As a result, I never saw him eat until that Shabbos, and when I did, I witnessed that what had initially struck me as a form of asceticism was anything but. It was an enjoyable Shabbos on many levels, not the least of which was getting to spend time with my old Gemara rebbi.

One of the perhaps lesser-known roles Rabbi Mann played was in service of the Noahide community. For decades, he gave shiurim to Bnei Noach, offering them exactly the same learning experience he gave to his Jewish students. I will always remember the “Bnei Noach Shabbaton” that he invited me to help organize and facilitate at his shul, Congregation Rinat Yisrael of Plainview. It was an intimate group, but we had a ton of fun and learned a ton of Torah.

Speaking of which, I am also thankful to Rabbi Mann for giving me an opportunity I did not end up taking. I was on the precipice of starting my first year as a full-time Judaic studies high school teacher when I got a call from Rabbi Mann, who offered me the job of succeeding him as the rav of his shul. I knew he was planning to move to Arizona, but I did not see this offer coming. I also knew I would likely say no. I had dreamed of being a high school teacher and was just about to start, and I had zero desire to be a congregational rabbi. But I told him I would think about it, and I really did before turning it down. Still, the fact that he offered me that weighty position was a vote of confidence in my ability, which meant a great deal to me at that very early stage of my teaching career.

To my mind, what stands out most about Rabbi Mann is his youthfulness. I am not just talking about the fact that he did not seem to age, a quality that he and others often joked about. I am talking about the excitement he had in learning, his sense of humor, the impish twinkle in his eye, his uncensored remarks in the earlier years, and his jokes about censoring himself in the later years. His love of the eternal Torah kept him forever young.

Only now, as I write these reflections, am I realizing for the first time how much I have unconsciously related to Rabbi Mann as a role model. If you had asked me at any point other than my first year of yeshiva whether I considered him my rebbi, I would have said no. And yet, it is now clear to me how much I have looked to him as a paradigm of what it *means* to be a rebbi.

A good friend of mine (and *talmidah* of Rabbi Mann) shared the last photo she had of her rebbi. It shows him holding a sefer to the camera with some lines highlighted. She explained, “he asked some *chayalot* (female soldiers) to take this photo so we could have sources for our Halachic Concepts class.” His life was about teaching. He taught, and taught, and taught, and Hashem took him mid-teaching. That is how I hope to go. “תָּמַת נַפְשִׁי מוֹת – יִשְׁרִים וְתֵהִי אַחֲרֵיתִי כְּמֹהוּ – *May my soul die the death of the upright, and may my end be like his!*” (Bamidbar 23:10).

“Anyone who is lazy in eulogizing a *chacham* will not prolong his days (*eino maarich yamim*)” ([Shabbos 105b](#)).

Rabbi Chait explained that *arichus yamim* (length of days) does not refer to the quantity of years but their quality. What matters most is not how long we live, but what we do with our limited days.

May we, the students of Rabbi Mann and beneficiaries of his Torah, merit to live a life as full as our rebbi.

Tehei nishmaso tzerurah bi'tzror ha'chayim.