

Marking Rabbi Dr Twerski's first yohrzeit

The 19th of Shevat marked the first yohrzeit of Rabbi Dr Avraham Twerski ztl.

As reported in the JT, a centre has been set up in his memory, The AJT Learning Centre which is based in Menorat Hamaor in Ramat Beit Shemesh.

For the yohrzeit, many family members made the trip to the Eretz Hachayim cemetery, which is just outside Beit Shemesh. In the evening prior, a memorial event was held under the auspices of the AJT Learning Centre. Over seven hundred people over four continents online, as well as those in the live event, participated.

The evening was chaired by Dr Mort Barr, executive director of the centre, and the speakers were introduced by Rabbi Myers, Rav of the Shul and stepson in law of Rabbi Dr Twerski.

The first speaker was Rebbetzin Gail Twerski. She spoke about losing a soulmate, Rabbi Twerski's last conversation with Rabbi Myers about not being a "chazir" in terms of the life span given by HKB'H, and Rabbi Twerski's view that a person's greatest love is for the Ribono Shel Olam. Rabbi Twerski had a love for all of Am Yisrael which was non-judgemental.

Reb Ben Zion Twerski (grandson) spoke next, giving divrei chizuk. He spoke on the role of a teacher and expounded on angels not leaving footprints. He related how Rabbi Twerski lived his life for others and turned down lucrative offers of private practice, so that he could help more people.

The next speaker was Rabbi Michel Twerski (a brother, known as the Hornosteipler Rebbe of Milwaukee), who despite infirmity stood to give his thoughts.

Reb Michel began by explaining that previously he had seen a

beautiful mountain with his parents and siblings being the vista. As he got older, part of it became barren due to bereavements, but "*lehavdil bein chayim*", the other side of the mountain developed with the births of children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. But now, it is difficult to look at the mountain. It was obvious to all how much Reb Michel misses his brother.

Reb Michel spoke of Rabbi Twerski's openness to learn, and the immigrant community in which they grew up in the 1940s, and the various Chassidic Rabbonim in their formative years and chassidus.

He emphasised the importance of the AJT Learning Centre in perpetuating Rabbi Twerski's legacy in learning, being opened to learn from many sources and enriching your life through other people.

Rabbi Twerski integrated all his learning to help so many people and, in the process, become a better person.

Dr Yaakov Freedman, a local psychiatrist, was mentored by Rabbi Twerski.

He related that accolades were not important to Rabbi Twerski; rather it was more important to make a "Kiddush Hashem" in all you do. Rabbi Twerski achieved 100% of his potential and did what was needed without regret. The book "The Shame Borne in Silence" was referenced during the evening.

Dr Freedman told the story of a drunkard who had been ostracised by his shul and community, who then changed his life around, but was still ostracised by the community. Rabbi Twerski explained that as a "baal teshuva" he should be welcomed back; he



managed to succeed. He mentioned Rabbi Twerski's use of the twelve steps programme and the massive success he had in treating patients, compared to the 90% failure rate of other therapies.

He concluded by saying that Rabbi Twerski had left very big shoes for us to fill

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, Vice President Emeritus of the OU and a long-time professional colleague, was the final speaker. He highlighted Rabbi Twerski's self-esteem and the relationship between it and courageous communal leadership.

Rabbi Weinreb related how they were both in the same shul one Rosh Hashanah when Rabbi Twerski davened Maariv and you could feel the *yerusha* of his ancestors in the davening.

He referenced "Mi yaaleh" going up a mountain and "Mi yakum" the ability to stand up against the tide and the denial of opponents. Rabbi Twerski's inner strength was highlighted in his ability to write all the books, give talks, shiurim and attend conferences. Then there

was the encouragement given to Rabbonim to deal with alcoholism in the community and domestic abuse.

Rabbi Twerski was able to glean information from so many sources, including Snoopy cartoons and how to use all of them to better serve the Ribono Shel Olam. Rabbi Weinreb concluded by quoting Mesillas Yesharim (a favourite of Rabbi Twerski) and the question of what is Chassidus. It is someone who has concern for the whole generation.

The next event at the AJT Centre will feature Rabbi Berel Wein who was a close friend of Rabbi Twerski for 75 years and attended yeshiva together. Rabbi Wein will offer inspirational insights on "Development of Different Streams of Chassidus".

This will take place on

Wednesday, February 16, at 7:30 pm Israel time, 5:30 pm UK time, 12:30 pm EST and 11:30 am CST.

Registration is available via the website.

<https://twerskicenter.org/#upcoming> for live streaming, and is free of charge. The yohrzeit evening will be uploaded to the website soon.

Rabbi Yisroel Twerski, a devoted grandson, will be speaking on Wednesday the 23rd March 2022. The topic will be "Preparing for Passover: "From Bondage to Freedom, Commitment to Minhagim".

NB - the website is spelt center - USA style, not centre.

Snowmen in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM REFLECTIONS
AKIVA AARONSON

Over here in Eretz Yisrael at this time of year we've turned the corner in winter, and are more than half way through. The time for *neitz* recently reached its latest, at about 6:40am, and sunset its earliest, at 4:40pm. This means Shabbos comes in at 4pm on Friday afternoon, as the custom here is to keep forty minutes before the *shekia*. Now the days are already getting longer, taking the rush out of Friday afternoon!

Although winter started late here, it's been marked by *gishmei bracha*, most places receiving considerably more than their average rainfall. If it continues this way, the hope is to open the Degania dam at the southern end of the Kinneret, sending much needed water down to the Dead Sea. In a country where we do not even expect rain during the long, hot summer, you learn to appreciate the blessing.

Last week in Eretz Yisrael set records! Our

famous weather forecaster Uri Batz - you can hear him giving the latest *mezeg avir* (weather) on a recorded hotline - was busy providing updates as the week progressed. His cheery voice and sense of humour can turn the darkest day into sunshine, but this time it was for stormy weather ahead. Temperatures were to fall to close to freezing at night, with snow likely for the end of the week.

Wednesday, however, started with blue skies. But by lunchtime they were thick grey. Heavy rains and strong winds in the afternoon turned to rain and snow about 7pm, and by 8pm it was only snow, falling heavily and soon settling. On Mt. Hermon and the Golan in the north, snow is no surprise, but this time Jerusalem was to get its fair share.

By early afternoon the capital had already gone into fever mode as shops and schools closed early in order to allow everyone to

get home in good time. Soon buses were offering only a reduced service, since driving conditions would become treacherous.

Fever also reached further afield, the race on to find somewhere to stay, with family or friends in Jerusalem, for those determined not to miss out. Yeshiva *bochurim* were already returning home as it was Shabbos *Mevarchin*, adding to the congestion. Those who couldn't climb aboard a bus hitchhiked instead. It's called 'taking a tramp' over here - nothing to do with anyone who lives outside - but an American expression which has entered common Israeli jargon.

Usually, snow in Jerusalem is short lived, melting soon afterwards. This time, however, it remained on the ground well into the next day, buses not able to return to their daily schedule until late afternoon. The current week continues to be cold, with the prospect of



snow once again. You may be saying another *shehecheyanu* sooner than you think. But try Uri Batz first. You don't want to say a *bracha l'vetalah*!