

# Extraordinary success through integrity and humility

## Kollel pays tribute to illustrious graduate ztl

Elyakim Feder

“His unusual *siyata dishmaya* can only have come through his *mesirus nefesh* in being prepared to suffer insults and mockery for the sake of Hashem’s honour,” said Dayan Dunner of his brother-in-law Rabbi Eliyohu Falk, for whom *hespedim* were delivered in the Gateshead Kollel, the recently departed *posek’s* alma mater.

Sharing the grief of those gathered, the Dayan commented on how it was from this very *Beis Hamedrash* that Rabbi Falk had reached his greatness, when as a Kollel member he would seek to draw the correct halachic application of what he was learning, and to clarify the facts to which the *halochos* apply, as the *Vilna Gaon* says, a ‘*chochom*’ knows the *halocho*, whilst a ‘*pike’ach*’ also knows the facts.

His immense *Yiras Shomayim* and sincerity, with no agenda and in rising above partisan politics meant his view was accepted, and although he was dealing with issues of *chumra*, this was not a reflection of any limitations of character traits, as he was a most friendly, pleasant and approachable character – even complete strangers would be directed to him and he would take the time to think through their problem and advise them on how they could best fulfil their responsibilities.

At so many stages in his various projects he was subjected to at best discouragement, and at worst ridicule and insult, being called a fanatic or receiving criticism for the subjects he

was delving into such as his research into vegetable infestation. But Rabbi Falk was “filled with fire” to guide and enable Klal Yisroel to fulfil Hashem’s will.

“How did he merit that of so many authors of halachic and ethical works, his *seforim* have become classics, and have been accepted as authoritative internationally across so many communities that comprise Orthodox Jewry?” asked the Dayan. “It is because of his clear integrity – his *ehrllichkeit* – that shone through.

But also because of his *mesirus nefesh*, in suffering embarrassment for *kevod Hashem*.”

The *niftar* epitomised the three keys to Torah success stated by the *Ohr HaChaim* in his commentary to the *parsha* of *Matan Torah*, said Dayan Dunner, namely that: (a) he learned thoroughly and worked through the subject until he had gained complete clarity; (b) he was not looking for *kovod* or titles, and with his great humility *davened* among the people and associated

with them on their level; and finally (c) he would continually review his learning, preparing *shiurim* on topics that he had been teaching for tens of years.

Rabbi Shimon Hirschler, who worked alongside Rabbi Falk for many years in the *Yarchei Kallah*, described Rabbi Falk as “an expert in ‘*ko somar l’Beis Yaakov*’, in his ability to educate and influence the girls who would go on to be the *mainstay* of their homes, as the *principal nurturers* of *emunah* and *Yiras Shomayim* in their children.

Chazal tell us that the Torah should be presented “like a set table”. To set a table one must first prepare the meat, with all the intricate and complex details of slaughtering and *koshering* it, cooking, adding ingredients for flavour, then adding the cloth and cutlery to create the *ambience* and comfortable surroundings which make the food served perfectly enjoyable, attractive and palatable. Rabbi Falk’s *shiurim* were far more than just the huge amount of research which had gone into reaching clarity in the actual subject matter, but also presented the topic in the clearest manner possible and in a way that the listeners could not help but achieve clarity.

His clarity in having understood the depths behind the *halocho* gave him the *siyata dishmaya* to also understand the new inventions to which these *dinim* should apply.

On behalf of the Kollel, senior member Rabbi Shaul Beaton expressed the loss felt by the members who benefited from the company of Rabbi Falk daily at *Shacharis*, and especially on *Shabbos* when he would join the *kiddush* as one of the members and discuss current issues of *halocho* or *hashkofo*.

He had the beautiful talent of being able to give appropriate words of encouragement and praise and to take an interest in every person, which served to bring out their best and strengthen their confidence and feelings of self-worth, just like the sun, whose brightness reveals the world in a different and more positive light.



Rav Falk ztl

PHOTO: YLR

## Federation Rebbetzins spend a day in Gateshead

A group of *rebbetzins* from a range of Federation *kehillos* travelled to Gateshead for a full day of learning and *chizuk*. Whilst some are graduates of Gateshead seminary, some had never visited the area before and were intrigued to learn more about this unique *mokom Torah*.

The group were graciously hosted by Rav and *Rebbetzin* Zimmerman. Upon arrival, the *rebbetzins* enjoyed a beautiful lunch with *Rebbetzin* Zimmerman, who spoke candidly about life as a *Rebbetzin*, offering advice, support and wisdom. Her dedication to the *kehillah* shone through, as did her commitment to her family, and her practical and approachable nature.

Rabbi Todros Miller delivered a *shiur* about the connection of *Purim* and *Pesach*, which was followed by a spirited discussion regarding the balance between striving for constant growth and settling into routine or

habit to reinforce attainments in *ruchniyos*.

Rav Zimmerman led a Q&A session, exploring a huge variety of questions which had been submitted by the *rebbetzins*. The session provided insight into the Rav’s approach to analysing the question itself before getting to the heart of each issue. He blended worldly understanding of contemporary issues with halachic expertise and wit to address the dilemmas posed.

The group were also treated to a *shiur* by Rav Yaakov Sipper, who spoke with passion about the interplay between family, *kehillah* and self, reminding the women of their unique and precious role as mothers above all. This undiluted approach was a refreshing contrast to conflicting messages often in the media encouraging women to juggle many roles and gave the group much food for thought.

Mrs Dassy Adler concluded the day on an uplifting note by sharing a presentation entitled ‘Making lemonade out of lemons.’ Generously and bravely sharing her personal story of loss and grief, she provided guidance and *hashkofo* in dealing with challenges and pain. Displaying mastery in Chazal, interpersonal skills, depth of character and *Emunah*, Mrs Adler was a real inspiration to the *rebbetzins*, who agreed they would certainly draw strength from her messages in the future.

Above all, the trip provided the opportunity for the *rebbetzins* to interact with Rav and *Rebbetzin* Zimmerman, following their move to London and Rav Zimmerman’s appointment as Rav and *Rosh Beis Din* of the Federation, and to receive a preview of the guidance and support that the *Zimmermans* will *iyH* be able to offer the *rabbonim* and *rebbetzins* of the

Federation. The *rebbetzins* reported feeling ‘recharged,’ ‘energised’ and ‘refocused’ after the trip, which was organised as part of the Federation’s ‘*Sharsheres*’ programming. *Sharsheres* was set up in 2017 to create a support and training network for Federation *rebbetzins* and represents a commitment to maintaining high standards.

Rav Zimmerman commented, “The *rebbetzins* are an important force within each *kehillah*. It was important to recognise their contribution, to be *mechazek* the group and to provide them with a forum for raising difficult issues and receiving a Torah perspective, in addition to fortifying themselves with Torah *shiurim*. It was a tremendous privilege for my *Rebbetzin* and I to host this trip and I wish the *rebbetzins* ongoing *hatzlocho* and *siyata dishmaya* in their communal endeavours.”