

Moreinu Horav Nesanel HaKohen Quinn zt"l

5670/1910 – 5767/2007

With Torah Vodaath from 1922-2007

Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz once stated, "I have produced one straight person, and that is Nesanel."

Rav Nesanel HaKohen Quinn zt"l was the quintessential student of Rav Shraga Feivel, living with his Rebbe as his guiding light until the end of his long life. For the decades that he served as Menahel in Mesivta Torah Vodaath, as well as the summers he spent in Camp Ohr Shraga, he was a model for his students as well as others, to catch a glimpse of the American Yeshiva Bochur that Rav Shraga Feivel hoped to mold. Through his tzidkus and temimus, he transmitted the teachings of Rav Shraga Feivel to several generations. His story is one with the tale of Yeshiva and Mesivta Torah Vodaath.

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Rav Nesanel Quinn's parents, Zalman Pinchos and Miriam Devorah (nee Gordon), lived in Dvinsk, and were neighbors with the Rogatchover Gaon. In 5605 (1905), Zalman Pinchos deserted the army and fled to the United States. Upon the advice of the Lubavitcher Rebbe (the RaShab), Miriam Devorah joined her husband in the United States. Their son Nesanel was born on 8 *Sivan*, 5670 (1910). He learned with a private melamed, Rav Chaim Lashinsky, until age eleven, and when this melamed passed away, young Nesanel was registered in Torah Vodaath. He arrived when the class was learning Bava Metzia 44, the exact place where he left off with his melamed. In 5683 (1923), Rav Shraga Feivel joined Torah Vodaath, and he left his mark on the entire Yeshiva. Nesanel cleaved to him and followed his path throughout his entire life.

In Sivan, 5694, Rav Shraga Feivel was diagnosed with Tuberculosis, and he asked Rav Quinn to assist him with running the Yeshiva. When Rav Shraga Feivel's health improved, Rav Quinn remained in the Yeshiva as the first Kollel *yungerman* in America, learning in the Bais Medrash. During that time, Rav Shlomo Heiman arrived and taught 135 talmidim in the Bais Medrash. From 5636 through 5638 (1936-1938), Rav Quinn taught in Yeshiva Rabeinu Yaakov Yosef (RJJ), and then returned to assume the position of Sgan Menahel in the Mesivta.

After the passing of Rav Shraga Feivel, Rav Quinn assumed a position in the Hanhalla, and he began saying shiurim in Sefer Tehilim. In those lessons, he felt he could instill in the talmidim the foundations of Emunah and Bitachon, and he used them as a vehicle to deliver the concepts that he learned from the Tehillim Shiurim of Rav Shraga Feivel. In the days leading up to Tisha B'Av, during his shiurim on Sefer Yirmiyah, torrents of tears would flow freely he bemoaned the fate of Klal Yisroel during the era of the destruction, and as he read the Haftorah of Chazon.

Despite the frequent display of his deep feelings while lecturing on such topics, he nonetheless had control of his emotions. When one of his young daughters passed away on Shabbos, he held himself back from grieving, and continued celebrating Shabbos as was required. Only after Shabbos was over did he allow himself to mourn his loss.

In 5755 (1995), he was chosen as guest of honor for the Yeshiva's Annual Dinner (which he only accepted so the Yeshiva could benefit from it). That week, his young grandson was tragically killed in a car accident. To the disbelief of the organizers, Rav Quinn arrived at the dinner and addressed the hushed audience, encouraging them to join those who helped put the Mesivta back on sound financial footing.

Just as he was in control of his emotions, so, too, he was in control of his time, making sure not to waste any precious moments. Often, when he was exhausted after a long day at work, he would ask his wife to wake him after he napped for exactly six or seven minutes.

In 5726 (1966), he established Camp Ohr Shraga, with the intention of capturing the ruach of the old Camp Mesivta from Rav Shraga Feivel's days. Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky would stay in camp for about three weeks every summer, where the talmidim would have the opportunity to watch him up close, and hear his words of Torah and Mussar by Seuda Shlishis. On the other Shabbosos, Rav Zelig Epstein would speak. Only if neither of these Roshei Yeshiva were present would Rav Quinn agree to speak.

On Shabbos, he would encourage the talmidim in Camp Ohr Shraga to sing zemiros, which he considered to be part of the Avodah of Shabbos. When he had strength, he would dance with them, as his Rebbe, Rav Shraga Feivel, did with him in his younger years. When he grew older and could no longer participate in the singing, he would lead them with his hands, and the onlookers would observe as he fulfilled the verse, "*All my bones shall say, Hashem, who is like to you*". (Tehillim 35:10)

In the same regard, Rav Quinn was the paragon of tefillah. When he served as the Baal Shacharis on the Yomim Noraim, his every nuance of the nusach was in line with the words he was reciting. When the text mentioned the majesty of *Hashem*, his voice rang out with triumph; when he recited Yaaleh V'Yavo, his tear-drenched sobbing tore through the hearts of all present.

He himself never showed any anger, yet marveled regarding Rav Pam by saying, "I knew him for more than sixty years, and never saw him angry." In addition, he mentioned that in all that time, he never heard a word of lashon horah from Rav Pam.

In his later years, Rav Quinn dedicated himself to helping Torah Vodaath in many ways. Besides lending a hand to help alleviate the financial strain of the Yeshiva, he would also give a shmuez to the Mesivta after davening, as well as saying a shiur in Chumash on a weekly basis. In addition, his very presence was a source of inspiration for the new generation of talmidim, as they were able to visualize and experience the spirit of Torah Vodaath that Rav Quinn embodied.

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On 27 Shvat, 5765 (2005), his family read Krias Shma with him, which he said with great concentration. Early the next morning, on 28 Shvat, he returned his neshama to Hashem, at the age of 95.

His levaya was held in the Yeshiva, where he had served as a guide for the better part of a century. But as he instructed his son, it was to be “*getrugen un gegangen* – carried and leave”. No eulogies were said, just as by his Rebbe. The path of his life was set out by Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz zt”l, which he followed this until his final day.