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I had originally planned on writing this year about some of the lifelong lessons that our teens and graduates should bear in mind throughout adulthood. But our community recently suffered the loss of a man who touched so many lives over the course of many years, and the way he lived his life provided important lessons from which we can all learn. If you would have been at West Park and not have known whose levaya it was, having to make an educated guess based upon the large number of people in attendance, the incredible number of rabbis representing a cross-section of schools and shuls from the community, and the many communal leaders who were present, you would have thought that it had to be a famous rabbi, a community leader, or a wealthy benefactor of Jewish causes who had passed away. Allan Karp (Aaron Shimon ben Tzvi), a"h, was none of these things. He was a gifted teacher and principal who over the years taught at Beis Yaakov, Hirsch Lyons Boys High School, Hirsch Lyons Girls High School, King David Linksfield, Shaarei Torah, and Toras Emes – as well as at Boston College's Ivy Academy High School programme.

He was, in the words of Rosh Beth Din, Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, "A gut-nik" – a good person, who didn't spend time chasing after his own interests or his own gain. In fact, just the opposite, he often inconvenienced himself if it meant that others, especially our children – his students – would benefit, viewing himself as the one who gained the most from such interactions. When his wife asked him why he had to shlep across town to teach a single class, once a week, he answered: "They're such a special group of girls!" As Rabbi Yechezkel Auerbach emphasised at the levaya, Allan was that rare person who both rooted for other people's success and then shared in their joy when they achieved it.

Anyone who met Allan can attest to the beautiful smile that was always on his face – a smile that stretched from ear to ear and lit up his entire face...and the room along with it. Positivity and joy didn't just radiate from him, they gushed; he always had a kind and encouraging word and couldn't wait to share it with you. There are people from whom you walk away from an encounter with them and you feel happier, lighter, better for having been near them – Allan was that type of person. And he possessed what are some of the most important qualities in a teacher: the ability to see the good in every student, to believe sincerely in each student's ability to succeed, and to stand side-by-side with his students, inspiring them and cheering them on.

Our Sages¹ teach that there are three crowns – the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship – but the crown of a good name is superior to all of them. What does it mean to have a good name? It means that a person not only possesses good deeds, but he is also renowned because of those deeds. Why should such a crown be superior to all of the rest? Because each of the other crowns is incomplete without that crown! If someone possesses one of the other crowns, but lacks the crown of a good name, then he is not deserving of the honour that would otherwise be due to him as a result of holding one of those other crowns alone. Allan left this world with the greatest crown of them all: the crown of a good name.

May Hashem comfort Allan's wife Beverly, his son Tzvi, and his brother Michael and Michael's extended family, along with his many students, who were profoundly saddened by his sudden passing. With his loss, the world has become a bit darker. May we each take a lesson from the life that he lived, changing our own lives for the better and, in so doing, fill that darkness with some much-needed light.

On behalf of everyone at JL, congratulations to the class of 2016 and best wishes to all of our students in the coming year!

ROBERT SUSSMAN,
EDITOR

¹Pirkei Avos 4:13 based on the peirush
of the Bartenura



Allan Karp



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