

How does one speak of someone who has done so much good, someone who has helped build Reform Judaism in Israel and around the world?

I first met Rabbi Hirsh when I lived in Israel in the mid-1980s.

You see, prior to that, my father Maurice Miller ל'ט, was a member of the board of directors of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) for several years and came to know Rabbi Hirsch through the World Union. Both of my parents had been active in Temple Emanu-El of Montreal for many years, served the congregation in various capacities and participated in numerous World Union events in Israel and elsewhere.

Even though I grew up in Montreal and have lived most of my adult life in Ottawa, I had and have lots of connections to Israel including family. I had my Bar Mitzvah in Haifa with Rabbi Bob Samuels ל'ט officiating. I spent a summer after graduate school at the ulpan of Hebrew University. And in 1984, I decided to spend a longer time in Israel beginning with the ulpan at Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael.

My Dad spoke highly of Rabbi Hirsch (and his wife Bella) and suggested that I look him up when I was in Israel. This I did, and in the process also came to know Terry Hendin, his assistant who has remained a dear friend over these many years.

At the time, Rabbi Hirsch was working on the creation of a centre for Reform Judaism in Jerusalem -- I remember listening to him describing what he had in mind.

In fact, a few years later, after I returned to Canada, Rabbi Hirsch led a group of people to Ottawa, to see the creations of Moshe Safdie, who designed the new National Gallery of Canada and extensions to the Ottawa City Hall, and was a serious candidate for designing the Jerusalem campus. That was the last time I saw Rabbi Hirsch. Of course, Safdie did get the commission and the rest is history.

I wish to convey my deepest condolences to Hirsch family and friends and, especially, to my good friend Terry.

ברוך דיין האמת Baruch dayan ha'emet

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