



This week was spent in endless meetings trying to explain to members of Knesset and the Government of Israel why it is so important that Israel be the Jewish country for all Jews. It sounds simple. In fact, it is one of the greatest challenges facing Israel and all of us today.

Lobbying or educating members of Knesset is not much different in principle than doing so with Members of Congress or your state legislature. One makes an appointment, keeps the appointment, and does ones best to review the particulars of a bill being considered. The difference in Knesset is that it is done in the dining room.

The Knesset Members dining room is a rectangle. The only large table is a round one at the back of the room. It was there that members would be shlepped by our lobbyists to discuss the pending conversion legislation. At other times one or two members of our team would sit with an MK privately. All of this is in plain view of everyone in the room. Over the course of the week we engaged with over 85 members.

David Twersky died on July 16, 2010. Obituaries and stories of his death can be found in the New Jersey Jews News, New York Jewish Week, The Atlantic, The Forward, and Ha'aretz, to name but a few. The condensed version is that David was a Jewish journalist, Zionist, activist, and trusted political confidant on two sides of the ocean.

David Twersky's untimely death was often a moment in my own conversations this week at the Knesset. David was well known in the Labor party and by former laborites now in Kadimah. More than a dozen times, an MK, after realizing that we had shared being one of David's legions of friends or admirers would share a personal memory of David themselves.

One very senior laborite chuckled how only David could broker a conversation with the then head of the party and the young Turks. Another remembered being one of those who helped David struggle with his decision to return to the States, leaving behind what was sure to be a safe seat in Knesset and many believed in short order being a Minister.

In his eulogy JJ Goldberg said, "There were lifelong friends who broke with him because they disagreed with him, but he never broke with anybody because they disagreed with him." So often this week an MK whispered - 'you know I had a real fight with David and still he loved me.' He would be on your side in this fight to keep Israel a Jewish state for all Jews.

David would have loved the action this week, the schmoozing, the telling of tales of previous battles, the strategy. He did it all in his time in Israel- and before cell phones. The Rotem bill is now in abeyance. On this Shabbat of Comfort, I am comforted that we did the right thing for the right reasons to once again try to prevent a tear in our people. It was the right course of action for all Jews, even for those who disagree with us.

David loved the Jewish people and Israel and all our warts, maybe too much. His life was lived in order that Jews and especially Israel could someday be safe in this world. Some months ago, a group of us discussed the phenomenon that there are now those even in the Jewish community who speak of a Jewish life without Israel. David's response was that the bigger danger was an Israel with out the variety of Jewish lifestyles.

I missed shivah in West Orange. I shat shivah for David in the Knesset, sharing stories of his life while doing our part to keep Israel safe and available for all Jews.

Danny