

CONNECTIONS



Message from the Presidium

Dear Alumni,

תקע בשופר גדול לחירותינו ...
וקבצנו יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ ...

Golus is subordination; it is displacement; it is also separation. Three times a day we pray that we be redeemed, reunited and that we be brought back Home.

The deepest part of the human soul suffers from separation and yearns for connection. A child yearns for his mother. We all yearn to reconnect with our past. And on the very deepest level, we all yearn to reconnect with the Source from which we all came forth.

Approximately a year ago the concept of Ner Michoel Alumni Association was conceived. This past Elul, at a *siyum l'iluy nishmas* HaRav Michoel Weiner *zt"l*, which took place in Lakewood, the idea was transformed to a reality.

Since then we have had the opportunity to launch Ner Michoel in six communities - *kein yirbu*. We have *b'siyata d'shmaya* been successful in establishing seven Ner Michoel committees. Ner Michoel, Boruch Hashem, has already produced a good number of Torah materials and events. We look forward to producing many more.

**Our Hearts Beat
Connected-As-One.**

But perhaps most important is the *chizuk* which we have received while reconnecting, over the last year, with our fellow alumni. Business people, professionals and *klei kodesh* have impressed and inspired us with their big-heartedness and sincerity. Having produced such an accomplished group of people would make any yeshiva proud.

Connections is our next endeavor, in attempting to keep our alumni bound-together. In Connections you will read of fellow alumni (i.e. Rabbi Rafi Fuchs) and their current projects, of great Torah personalities (i.e. our "grand-rebbi" HaRav Shlomo Brevda *zt"l*), of current events in the Yeshiva and of recent Ner Michoel events and happenings. Please keep us notified regarding events in your respective families. (May we all share in *simchos*!)

In this season of mourning we all yearn for the day that we will all, once again, be **truly** connected, with Yerushalayim, with the Bais HaMikdash, with all Klal Yisroel, and mostly with Our Father in Heaven.

We pray that Ner Michoel serve as a part of that process, reuniting us while we still live apart, each in his respective city and community. Yet, our hearts beat connected-as-one.

May the physical distance that separates us soon shrink...

בביאת גואל צדק במהירה בימינו



Daniel Sinowitz

Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz



Shmuli Weiner

Rabbi Shmuli Weiner

Ner Michoel in Eretz Yisroel

Inaugural Melave Malka Emphasizes Reinforcing the Connection Early On

"Often, it is only after one leaves yeshiva that he recognizes the need to 're-connect'". With these words, Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz addressed a gathering of Kollel members at a special Melave Malka held several months ago, launching Ner Michoel's presence in Eretz Yisroel. "While we're still here," said Reb Daniel, "we tend to take for granted the warm feelings of family and sense of belonging that truly nourish and enrich our daily lives."

"A Yeshiva, of course, is much more than a place where people sit and learn together – sometimes not even the same *masechta*," Rabbi Sinowitz continued. "There's a powerful emotional tide of *chizuk* and *achdus* flowing between us. Together we comprise a *chaburah*, united by the strong *chinuch* and *mesorah* we collectively drew from our esteemed *rebbeim* during the time we spent here. If we put a bit more focus on this now, while we're still here in yeshiva, then instead of trying to 're-connect' as alumni, we'll just have to make sure we keep holding on to the existing connection, and not let it go."

Most of us are quite familiar with Toras Moshe's Alumni Association, better known as Ner Michoel, established as a conduit for Talmidim to continue their relationship with the Yeshiva, *rebbeim*, and friends. After successful alumni events in various communities in America, efforts have also begun on establishing a Ner Michoel presence in Eretz Yisroel. The Melave Malka was its first major event, demonstrating in a powerful way what this sort of gathering can accomplish.

"Whether you're 6,000 miles away or just a few minutes away, you sometimes lose track of how much time slipped by since you touched base with your *rebbeim* and friends," says Rabbi Daniel Brody, a Kollel member who attended the Melave Malka. "Slowly, the *kesher* starts to grow thin and wear, until you're totally 'disconnected'. The alumni in various *yeshivos* here have a tremendous interest in getting together to hear a *shmuess* from the Rosh Yeshiva and meet all the *chevra*, it gives them tremendous *chizuk*. When there's a *simcha* or other event it's always wonderful, so why can't we arrange to have this more often, you know, 'without an excuse'? It's really very exciting that Ner Michoel is providing the opportunity for everyone to keep growing by remaining connected to their *rebbeim* and the Yeshiva."

"During the two years between my time as a *bochur* in Yeshiva and when I moved back to join the Kollel, the highlights of each year were the times that Yeshiva stuff was going on, like Dinner season, or the annual Shabbos in Lakewood with the

...continued on page 2

Reflections on my Rebbi,

HARAV SHLOMO BREVDA ZT"l

By Rabbi Elchonon Fishman



HaRav Shlomo Brevda zt"l

In His Revelation to Moshe at the burning bush, Hakadosh Boruch Hu introduced Himself as “the G-d of your father (Amram), the G-d of Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov”. The Medrash adds that Hashem even spoke to Moshe using Amram’s voice. We can explain that while Moshe received his entire *mesorah* from his father, Amram – the quintessential father and Rebbe – had successfully transmitted to his son all the distinct *derachim*, the individual pathways in perceiving Hashem, that each of the Avos uniquely personified.

So it was with our great Rav, Rav Brevda zt"l. He was faithful and uncompromising to each of the unique *derachim* he was privileged to absorb from his great Rebbeim. He successfully fused the *lomdus* of Brisk – he was the first *bachur* enrolled in the Brisker Yeshiva in Yerushalayim – with the *mussar* of Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, and the *da'as Torah* and *dikduk b'Mitzvos* of the Chazon Ish. In the connoisseur’s blend that emerged in his *shmuessen*, one gained an apprecia-

“In spite of all the affection I have for your Torah eminence, the truth is most beloved of all”.

tion of the wealth of wisdom and *lomdus* that lay below the surface of *mussar*.

How did the Rav achieve this? What was the secret of his success? It was his burning love and unyielding quest for the pure, unadulterated truth, regardless of how far he would have to go and discover it. On the final Erev Shavuot of his life, he recounted how fifty-eight years earlier he came upon a letter written by Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, the leading Gadol and Posek in the pre-WWII era. In response to a request from a revered Rav and personal acquaintance, Rav Chaim Ozer - his refined character and respect for Talmidei Chachomim notwithstanding – responded that he could not honor a request that was “false to the core”. In closing the letter, Rav Chaim Ozer makes

the following statement: **“In spite of all the affection I have for your Torah eminence, the truth is most beloved of all”.**

“Those words made an impression on me for the rest of my life”, Rav Brevda said. “That statement had the greatest effect on my future. It rings in my ears until this very day”.

Rav Brevda continued with what I believe should serve as his *tzava'ah* to all his *talmidim*:

“If I can get each and every one of you to accept that the most important accomplishment of a Jew in his life would be the total appreciation of anything which is true, and the total non appreciation of anything which is not true, that can bring the greatest happiness and feeling of accomplishment to each and every one of your lives, I will have accomplished a gigantic task!”

Let us never forget the words of the Rav zt"l as we try to emulate the great lessons he taught us.

Ner Michoel in Eretz Yisroel

...continued from page 1

Mashgiach and Rabbi Abramowitz,” said Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Katz, another Melave Malka attendee. “This was even before there was any Ner Michoel at all. I’m super excited for anyone currently in a similar situation in America, because a real full time alumni association will make it so much more. On a personal note, I’m happy to know that the groundwork is being laid so when I move back, we will still feel like we’re part of the Yeshiva family.”

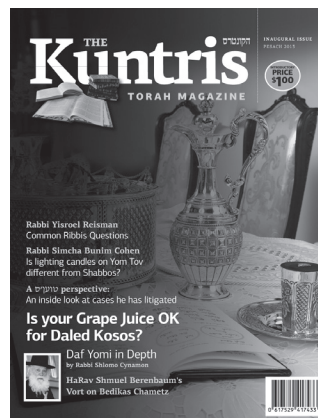
Ner Michoel invites alumni to share their ideas and input for projects or programs that can be implemented under its auspices on both sides of the Atlantic.

TORAH HEADLINES

Success of Kuntris Publication a Source of Pride to Toras Moshe Alumni

“Kuntris’ – the name of this publication says it all. The Rosh Yeshiva, HaGaon Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, zatzal, inspired so many by serving as a living role model of “Torascha Sha’ashuai – the exhilarating delight of Torah”; his every gesture exuded its beauty and sweetness. Similarly, The Kuntris, published by his dear Talmid, Rav Raphael Fuchs, presents readers with a kaleidoscopic perspective of the radiance and joy of Torah discussion, and is certainly bringing the Rosh Yeshiva much nachas...”

– from Rav Elya Brudny’s Michtav Bracha, published in the Kuntris vol.2



The Kuntris, a new magazine for Bnei Torah whose inaugural issue appeared just before Pesach, features stimulating articles from world-renowned *rabbanim*, *poskim* and professionals discussing various subjects in *halacha* and *hashkafa*. Items of interest include the exclusive interview with Rav Michel Shurkin on his Rebbe, Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zatzal, Divrei Torah from the Shabbos *tisch* of Rav Gershon Ribner, as well as captivating Halacha discussions covering the recent meat scandal in LA, a *Toen's* perspective on cases he has litigated and the *minhag* of visiting Meron on Lag Bomer.

Toras Moshe *talmidim* are especially enthusiastic about the Kuntris, whose founder and publisher, Rabbi Raphael Fuchs,

is a fellow alumnus. Rabbi Fuchs learned in Yeshiva for three years, during which time he received *semicha* from Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg. He then studied in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn where he became a close *talmid* of Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, zatzal. He currently learns in Kollel Bais HaTalmud.

“We all know how much effort Ner Michael invests to maintain a vibrant, meaningful relationship between the Yeshiva and its alumni,” Rabbi Fuchs notes. “Every issue of The Kuntris features a *shmues* from the Rosh Yeshiva, which he personally reviews and annotates prior to its publication. What better way to stay connected than to hear the Rosh Yeshiva’s timely Torah message on a regular basis? Toras

Moshe alumni are well represented in the ‘Letters to the Editor’, in addition to their incisive responses to our ‘Kushyos Atzumos’ feature.”

For more information on the Kuntris, please contact Rabbi Fuchs at rabbirfuchs@gmail.com.



Inaugural Melave Malka in ארץ ישראל



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NESHEI TORAS MOSHE

A Key Dynamic in the ToMo Family

When we think about the trademark warmth, camaraderie and sense of belonging that are synonymous with “the ToMo family”, the Neshei and its role in ensuring that the women enjoy the same supportive structure is most natural, indeed. This is was the lofty goal of Rebbetzin Meiselman when she founded the Neshei many years ago, starting with the monthly get-togethers held in members’ homes. The Neshei’s scope was augmented about eight years ago, when Mrs. Daniella Warren and Mrs. Aliza Rosen (with the party planning skills of Mrs. Shoshana Seif) initiated the annual Melava Malka, a major event geared to all the women in greater Toras Moshe family, past, present and future. The Melave Malka program features a panel discussion by the Yeshiva Rebbetzins, who present their answers to pre-submitted questions on a given topic.

The most recent Melave Malka was held this past January 12th, Motzei Shabbos Parshas Bo. “Dealing with Life’s Challenges” was the topic for the panel. Responding were Rebbetzin Meiselman, Rebbetzin Fishman, Rebbetzin Shurkin, Rebbetzin Abramowitz, Rebbetzin Klein, and Rebbetzin Samber.

In keeping with the Melave Malka’s goal of “making it personal”, the panel discussion is followed by an informal “getting to know you” session. While enjoying dessert and playing a game, the women *schmooze* and become acquainted with the wives of the very *rebbeim* with whom their husbands spend their day and discuss all their *shailos*. The Rabbi-Talmid relationship now becomes a dual one, as the Rebbetzins provide leadership and guidance to the women, giving them a perspective and understanding of everything happening on the “men’s side”.

This year’s Melave Malka also featured the initiation of the Neshei Phone Tree, an automated phone messaging system to ensure that no one misses hearing about a *simcha* or other important news that needs to get out quickly. Indeed, the last few months have seen the wonderful success of this program, as we all shared much exciting *simcha* news without troubling individuals to make repeated calls.

With the number and individual size of our families continuing to grow *bleh*’r, we look forward to rolling out the new Meals Program. Rather than placing the entire burden on the immediate neighbors, the Neshei will shoulder the communal re-

sponsibility of preparing and delivering meals to families with new mothers, shiva homes *r”l*, and other situations where such service is essential.

Other Neshei programs include periodic series of weekly *shiurim* from Rebbetzin Meiselman on various topics. While the Rebbetzin likes to refer to these as “group therapy” for adjustment to Kollel and Israeli life, they are truly much more than that. The attendees get to see how approachable the Rebbetzin is, and a lifelong bond is established. Then there are the twice-yearly *shabbatonim*, where the *Rebbeim* and *talmidim*’s entire families spend Shabbos together. The rich program of meals and *shiurim* provides the younger women with an “up close and personal” view of the Rebbetzins and older members in a familial environment. They get to see how nice and “normal” everyone is, and the connection truly becomes durable and meaningful.

“A happy and satisfied wife is the key to a fulfilling and productive Kollel experience”, says one Neshei member. “I have friends in other *kollels*, and while many things are the same, they don’t seem to have a Neshei like ours, which is another great thing that makes Toras Moshe really special”.