



# CONNECTIONS

הרב אדוננו רבי יצחק לוריא זכרונו לברכה כתב "ואשר לא צדה והאלקים 'אנה' 'לידו' 'ושמתי' 'לך'..." ראשי תיבות אלול, לומר כי חודש זה הוא עת רצון לקבל תשובה על החטאים שעשה בכל השנה. (קיצור שולחן ערוך סימן קכח)

The Arizal derives from the *posuk* which tells us that a **עיר מקלט** can save himself by taking refuge in an **עיר מקלט בשוגג**, that there is a special time of year, Chodesh Elul, which is a refuge of sorts. It is a time of **רצון** – a special closeness, during which *teshuva* is most readily accepted.

For us at Ner Michoel Headquarters this Arizal strikes a resonant chord, for as we write these words, we are presently “taking refuge” in an aircraft above the Atlantic Ocean, en route to participate in an event marking the beginning of Ner Michoel’s fifth year. Ner Michoel itself is meant to be an embassy, a refuge of sorts, through which our alumni can “touch back” to their years in Yeshiva.

In this issue you will read of the various Ner Michoel events and projects, which concluded Year #4. You will read of the Memorial Day Yarchei Kallah on the topic of **עני המהפך** **בחררה**. You will also read of its new Israeli counterpart: On Yom Ha’atzmaut this year, an number of alumni gathered in Yeshiva to participate in a Yarchei Kallah on the topic of **דינא דמלכותא דינא** – with special attention given to Eretz

Yisroel. You will read of Ner Michoel’s newest project in which *talmidim* are welcomed into the ranks of Ner Michoel, as they take leave of the Yeshiva’s Beis Medrash. And of course, most importantly, you will read about “us” – the alumni – two special individuals who have recently made the transition of resettling in the United States and another who recently celebrated a monumental accomplishment, a Siyum HaShas.

Wishing everyone a **גוט געבענשט יאר** and a **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**.



*Daniel Sinowitz*

Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz



*Shmuel Weiner*

Rabbi Shmuel Weiner

## WELCOMING NEW ALUMNI TO NER MICHOEL

As a way of welcoming each new alumnus and acquainting him with Ner Michoel’s many programs and benefits, the alumni association has begun presenting every departing *talmid* with a special gift package. Included is a *sefer* with a personal inscription, a handwritten letter from the *rebbe* in Yeshiva with whom this particular *talmid* was especially close, and a signed note from Rabbi Weiner and Rabbi Sinowitz warmly welcoming

him to the Alumni Association. Currently, the integral part of the gift is the *sefer* Nefesh Hachaim, which signifies the *talmid’s* connection to the Vilna Gaon through the Rosh Yeshiva’s *rebbeim* and lineage.

“This recent initiative is the brainchild of Ner Michoel’s Project Director, Rabbi Aryeh Wielgus,” Rabbi Sinowitz explains. “Up to now, a *talmid’s* departure would be honored with the traditional *mesibas preidah* – which is still ar-

ranged by his friends as a memorable and meaningful event – but that is not related to Ner Michoel. What we want to convey with this gesture is actually a beginning of sorts; we are expressing our desire and commitment to keep the *kesher* strong by making sure the alumni stay connected with the Yeshiva and with each other. We confirm the *talmid’s* contact information and enter it into Ner Michoel’s database so we can keep in touch. Not long afterward, we begin



to follow up with emails, mailings and the like.”

“When leaving Yeshiva, it’s easy to feel like we’re entering an extended *bein hazmanim*,” says Shmuel Soleimani, who joined the ranks of Toras Moshe’s alumni just before Pesach. “From now on, staying connected will require a conscious effort on my part. It wasn’t until I received the gift that I actually realized, ‘Now I’m an alumnus!’”

“The *sefer* is a beautiful token that I have prominently placed on my bookshelf, so I will see it frequently and have the Yeshiva on my mind,” says Moshe Goldstein, another recipient of Ner Michoel’s new gift. “I want to remain focused on what the Yeshiva means to me and how much they have given me. Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz, with whom I was very close

while in Yeshiva, is one of the *rebbeim* who wrote me a personal letter. It was a very beautiful and touching letter.

“Tisha B’av just passed and I got the special *divrei Torah* email from Ner Michoel. It evoked such warm feelings of connection to the Yeshiva. I visited the website and watched the video of the Rosh Yeshiva from beginning to end; I then read all the latest *mazel tovs*. The greatest feeling came from the menu of *shiurim* they offer from all the *rebbeim*. It’s truly amazing that even after leaving Yeshiva, I can still hear their Torah and *mussar* as if I was still there. I truly feel like I’m still part of Toras Moshe and I know they’re still there to help me with whatever I need.”

“I greatly appreciate what Ner Michoel does to help keep us connected in a

real way,” Shmuel agrees. “In particular, I want to thank Rabbi Ariel Katz who makes all the *shiurim* available, and keeps them current. Through the recordings, I’ve become a *talmid* of some of the *rebbeim* even though I was never in their *shiur*! When I see the *mazel tovs* and other news, I feel like I’m still part of the family. I also enjoyed the live video of the Hachnosas Sefer Torah. When I attended the Yarchei Kallah and spoke with the Rosh Yeshiva, it was unbelievable. He asked how I’m doing and picked up right where we left off in our last conversation. It’s very reassuring to know that the *rebbeim* are there for us – even from halfway across the world – and that we can still benefit from their Torah and knowledgeable advice.”



Rabbi Danny Fast

## INSPIRED ACHIEVEMENT: SIYUM HASHAS BY ALUMNUS RABBI DANNY FAST

“When we celebrate a *siyum*, the *simcha* is not about finishing; we are joyous about the opportunity to start again on a more advanced level.” The Rosh Yeshiva repeated this insight in the name of his grandfather, Harav Moshe Soloveichik, *zt”l*, at the recent *Siyum Hashas* by his *talmid*, Rabbi Danny Fast.

The Mashgiach and many of the *rebbeim*, as well as a large crowd of friends from Toras Moshe and elsewhere came to partake in the *simcha* of Rabbi Fast’s completion of *Shas Bavli*, including the *mishnayos* of those *masechtos* for which there is no Gemara. The *siyum* took place on Rosh Chodesh Iyar, at the Mishkan Esther *shul* in Sanhedria.

Danny grew up in Seattle, where his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Fast, volunteer much effort on behalf of the community *kollel*, a major influence on Yiddishkeit in the area, as well as the early years of Danny’s *chinuch*. Danny was still learning in the local high school when he finished his first *masechta*, *Makkos*. For eleventh grade, he went to Ner Yisroel in Baltimore, where the *ruach* of *hasmodah* inspired him to begin what he would continue for many years – covering the *perakim* that were not being learned during the *sedorim*, so that he would know the entire *masechta*. After graduating, he arrived in Toras Moshe, where he spent the next four years. Enthralled by the vibrant *kol Torah* even outside of *sefer* time, Danny joined a *chabura* learning *masechta* Shabbos during the afternoon *bein hasedorim*, and started *mesechta* Brachos with a *chavrusa* after night *sefer*.

During his six years in BMG-Lakewood, Danny was privileged to learn second *sefer* three times a week *b’chavrusa* with the Rosh Yeshiva, Harav Yisroel Neuman. He also learned *b’chavrusa* with a number of Toras Moshe alumni, continuing to complete

the *yeshiva mesechtos* each *zman*, plus several additional ones during lunch and late at night.

Following his marriage, Rabbi Fast returned to Yerushalayim where he joined *Kollel Rischa D’Oraysa*, under the leadership of Rabbi Shabsi Zimmerman. At this point, there were only about six *masechtos* left for him to complete *Shas*. It took another four years until he celebrated this milestone with a beautiful and inspiring *seudas mitzvah*.

“When I would visit Yerushalayim, I would make sure to spend one *sefer* a day in Toras Moshe,” Mr. Stephen Fast fondly recalls. “I used to watch the many *talmidim* who approached our son Danny and his *chavrusa*, Shalom Tuvia Gordon, with their questions in learning; they knew they would get their answers and explanations in a patient, thorough manner. Later on, I would visit him in Lakewood and see almost the same scene repeat itself, except that this time, of course, he was sitting with the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Neuman. Boruch Hashem, we now have a son and a son-in-law who have completed *Shas*. I believe these are the *peiros* for our many years of effort on behalf of the Seattle *Kollel*.”

For Reb Danny, the dividends for his accomplishment have come in the form of another endeavor he had wanted to begin. He always had a special affinity for the Torah of the Rogatchover Gaon. Together with several others, he was hoping to work on a collection of the Rogatchover’s unpublished manuscripts. The day after the *siyum*, Reb Danny got in touch with those currently working on the manuscripts – a final hurdle that allowed the project to move forward.

Together with his fellow *avreichim* at the *Kollel*, Rabbi Fast is currently learning *Mesechta Brachos*, and a second *siyum* on *Shas* beckons.



# Morning of Learning

## for Working Alumni in Eretz Yisroel

“Spending a full *seder* immersed in an *iyun sugya* is a treat that I don’t get to enjoy on a regular basis. The opportunity to do so in Yeshiva made it even more exciting,” says Eli Julian, one of the organizers of the recent Morning of Learning, which took place in Toras Moshe’s *beis medrash* on Thursday, May 12th (Yom Ha’atzmaut).

“When I attended the *Melave Malka l’zecher nishmas* Rabbi Twersky, zt”l,” continues Eli, a software engineer living in Rehovot, “I noticed that of the eight years that I spent at Toras Moshe, there were an extremely small number of alumni who were still here in Eretz Yisroel but no longer in a Yeshiva framework, either as a *kollel yungerman* or as an educator of some sort. Alumni who chose to pursue a full-time job outside of *chinuch* almost always did so in Chutz La’aretz. I wanted to be *mechazek* the community of alumni who were *baalei batim* here in Eretz Yisroel, firstly as an end in itself, but also with the purpose of showing the student body at Toras Moshe that those who choose a life path in the working world have ample ways to do so while still living in Eretz Yisroel. I spoke with

Rabbi Sinowitz, who recommended that we try to organize some kind of event that would bring the working Israeli alumni together. After some time, and with the wonderful input of Rabbi Aryeh Wielgus, it was decided to host a Yarchei Kallah type session in the Yeshiva on Yom Ha’atzmaut – a day on which all us working folks would have off and be able to attend. We had our own designated section of the *beis medrash*; I sensed that the excitement and enthusiasm I felt while we learned the *sugya* was shared by the other participants. Seeing old friends and acquaintances and reconnecting with people who I had not been in touch with for a while was very meaningful, too.”

After enjoying a special breakfast, there was a half-hour of *divrei p’sicha* from the Mashgiach, followed by a learning *seder* from 9:30 to noon. Before long, everyone was deeply immersed in the opinions of the different *rishonim* that the Rosh Yeshiva had assigned as *mar’ei mekomos* for the upcoming *shiur*. Close to seventy attendees were at the 45-minute long *shiur*, with additional alumni and the regular participants of the Rosh Yeshiva’s daily *shiur* joining.

After another 45 minutes of lively Q&A and *chazarah*, a gala lunch was served, with many alumni reconnecting and conversing with *chaverim* who share similar life situations.

Aryeh Simon – another one of the organizers who works in currency services – recommended the *sugya* of *dina d’malchusa dina* in Eretz Yisroel, which seemed a good fit for alumni working in Eretz Yisroel. It offered not only rich *lomdus* and much to gain from the *sugya* itself, but a great deal of practical relevance in the daily lives of the participants.

“I was really pushing for this,” Aryeh adds, “because we heard so much about the success of the Yarchei Kallah in America. The situation here, though, is a bit different. Sunday is not an off-day here, and all the other days off are *chagim*. This is the one *yom chol* of the entire year that you can spend with your family, so we decide to make it a condensed, half-day program. People were very excited to return to their roots, and are looking forward to the next event – whose time and venue is yet to be determined – in the near future, *b’ezras Hashem*.”

# 3rd Annual

## US Yarchei Kallah in Flatbush

“The Yeshiva’s third annual Yarchei Kallah took place on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30th, at Khal Kol Torah in Flatbush. Alumni from across the Northeast – spanning different eras in the history of Toras Moshe – utilized their day off to prepare for *kabbolas haTorah* by participating in a full day of learning focused on the topic of *Ani ha’Mehapech b’Charara* – Competition in the Free Market.

An energetic morning *seder* from ten o’clock to noon was followed by an exciting *shiur* from Rabbi Yehuda Abramowitz, who clarified the different opinions of the *Rishonim* on the *sugya*. Following a delicious catered lunch, there was a second *seder* from 1:30 to 3:00 PM, followed by a highly interactive, in-depth *shiur* from the Rosh Yeshiva, Harav Moshe Meiselman. Everyone gained a clear and deep understanding

of the *sugya*, as well as its practical application, not only in business matters, such as bidding on a building that someone else is already negotiating on, but also in the realm of *shidduchim* and other areas of everyday life.

The final segment of the day was a spirited question and answer period, where the Rosh Yeshiva responded to questions posed by the *talmidim* on any topic they chose. Some of the topics discussed were the renewal of the *techeiles* question, vaccinating children, and how the day’s topic of *Ani ha’Mehapech* might apply to opening two *yeshivos* in close proximity.

The Yarchei Kallah was greatly enhanced by the participation of Rabbi Avrohom Meiselman, with whom many of the *talmidim* enjoy a close connection. Throughout the day, he could be seen

discussing *divrei Torah* as well as general matters with groups and individuals.

“We’re out in the big world now,” explained one participant. “Trying to keep our moral compass aligned with the lessons we learned in Yeshiva can sometimes be very challenging. Hearing the Rosh Yeshiva once again, with his grasp of world events and issues that is strongly rooted in Torah, goes a long way in putting things in perspective.”

“What I truly enjoyed about the day,” said another, “was the way it carried everyone back to the time when we were completely surrounded by our *chaverim*, shared goals and values, the *rebbeim*, and a genuine Torah atmosphere while immersed in a *sugya* together. After you leave Yeshiva, that’s what you miss the most; the Yarchei Kallah makes it happen again, even if for just one day a year.”



# CARRYING THE TORAS MOSHE LEGACY INTO THE FUTURE

When the time comes for a *talmid* to leave Toras Moshe, the Yeshiva's impact and influence truly come to the fore. Two alumni who recently returned to the United States credit the Yeshiva's *hadracha* – specifically the firm conviction that learning Gemara means obtaining a clear, in depth understanding of the *sugya* – for enabling them to navigate the challenges of transition and continue their personal growth in their new surroundings.

Rabbi Yitzchok Goldsmith is a native of Columbus, Ohio, who became *frum* in the upper grades of elementary school. At the urging of his *rebbeim* at Yeshivas HaKayitz – a summer program affiliated with the Skokie Yeshiva – he attended high school in Skokie, where he developed an unquenchable *cheishek* for *limud HaTorah*, eventually leading him to search for a suitable *beis medrash* in Eretz Yisroel.

“When I heard that Toras Moshe was a very serious, growth-oriented Yeshiva, I was somewhat apprehensive because at that time, I considered *bekius* to be a top priority,” Rabbi Goldsmith recalls. “Still, I was impressed by its reputation as a strong *makom* Torah, and my *rebbeim* at Skokie recommended it very highly, so I figured I’d try it out. Initially, I found the emphasis on in-depth *iyun*, and lack of an official *bekius seder* very challenging. After several months, however, I realized I was gaining something very vital that I had been lacking. The Yeshiva helped me recognize that taking the time to understand the Gemara is critical to successful growth and development in Torah. It was Rabbi Abramowitz’s *shiur*, and the guidance of Mayer Rosenblum – my *chavrusa* for almost my entire six years in Toras Moshe – that got me started on the path of developing *chiddushim* and writing extensive notes that I maintain to this day. I spent four years in the *shiur* of Rabbi Twersky, *zt”l*, who challenged me to set higher goals for myself. Observing the way he stayed in the *Beis Medrash* late into the night, answering questions, taught me that a *rebbei* must always be there for his *talmidim*.”



Rabbi Yitzchok Goldsmith

Yitzchok was approaching his sixth year in Yeshiva when Rabbi Avi Lowenstein arranged for him to meet his *bashert*, the former Shira Stein of Atlanta, Georgia, who was in Eretz Yisroel at the time. After a year in Toras Moshe’s Kollel, Rabbi Goldsmith joined Kollel Pilpul Chaverim (led by Rabbi Aryeh Reich) in Beitar, where he and his wife had settled.

“Leaving Toras Moshe after six years wasn’t easy,” he explains. “I didn’t want to leave my *chavrusa* and Rabbi Twersky’s *shiur*. But the daily commute was becoming difficult; ultimately, the change in my learning environment brought on a new dimension of *shteiging*. We all know the famous Rashi at the beginning of Vayikra about *revach le’hisbonen* – the ‘pause for contemplation’ between one *parsha* and the next – that is essential for learning Torah. The Rosh Yeshiva said this once about the purpose of *bein hazmanim* as a time for contemplation between distinct periods of learning. After I left Yeshiva, the time had arrived

for me think about everything I was *mekabel* and let it take root; I had to make it a part of my future learning, part of my life. One of the things the Rosh Yeshiva always stressed is the need to have an ongoing *keshet* with *talmidei chachomim*. This propelled me to forge a meaningful connection with my esteemed neighbor in Beitar, Rav Chaim Ackerman [Rosh Yeshiva, *posek* and], *rav* of my shul.

“After four years, we moved to Har Nof, where my wife was working; I joined Rav Yitzchok Alster’s Kollel Nachalas Tzvi for what would be our final year in Eretz Yisroel. We began looking into possible opportunities in the US; ideally, we sought an arrangement where I’d able to continue learning full-time with some involvement in teaching. This would provide me with the experience and qualification needed for a teaching position when the time came to leave *kollel*.

“From my younger days in Skokie, I recalled that the Yeshiva maintained a small *kollel* of *avreichim* who lived on campus and

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## TALMIDIM



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interacted with the high school and Bais Medrash *bochurim* by giving *shiurim* on Shabbos, learning *b'chavrusa* with them, and the like. After some research, I felt that Chicago in general - and Skokie specifically - had many advantages for us over the out of town *kollelim* in small communities that we were considering. I had been a *talmid* there, was familiar with the community and the *rebbeim*, and knew there were many *talmidei chachomim* and a lot of *limud haTorah* there; I would also have a chance to teach and be *mashpia* on older *bochurim*. My wife, too, had been in Chicago for the latter part of high school, and returned there after seminary for another two years as a teacher. We discussed all this with the Rosh Yeshiva, the Mashgiach, and Rabbi Samber, who agreed that it was a sensible choice.

"We arrived in Chicago after Pesach; although I would not be officially in the *kollel* until Elul, we heeded Torah Umesorah's advice to come several months before the next school year. My wife began 'subbing' in various schools, which helped her secure a position in the resource room at Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi. I utilized my spare time during these months to work on another *harbotzas Torah* effort. I am hoping to create and maintain a database that identifies topics and *sugyos* currently studied by *bonei Torah* around the world, enabling them to connect to each other for enhanced *pilpul chaverim*, and to share *kashyas* and *chiddushim* on their mutual area of interest. This would also bring a great deal of benefit to someone learning independently such as a *baal habayis*, a *rebbei*, or even members of a small *kollel* who seek the benefits of interaction with a group or additional *mar'ei mekomos*.

Mr. Saadia Zakarin of Monsey came to Toras Moshe after graduating from Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim of Monsey. After close to four years in Yeshiva as a *bochur*, he returned after his marriage and spent another two years in *kollel*, before returning to Monsey and joining his family's party goods business several months ago.

"I *shteiged* a lot in Rabbi Klein's *shiur* and Rabbi Shurkin's *shiur*," Saadia points out, "but my greatest leap of growth was during my years with the Rosh Yeshiva. I had exceptional *chavrusos*, most notably Reb Moshe Jacobowitz, who was also my *rosh chabura*. It was Reb Moshe who infused me with the desire to 'see the full picture' in many *sugyos* of Shas; he showed me how to follow the opinions of the *rishonim* that thread uniformly through all of the *mesechtos* with a consistent, overall *mehalech*. This was a huge advance in my ability to clearly understand the topic at hand, as well as my general development in learning.



"It was time for me to go to Lakewood, where I joined the *chaburos* led by Rabbi Yehuda Eisenstein and Rabbi Dovid Lock; they were comprised almost completely of Toras Moshe alumni. In this tremendous environment, I further honed my ability to recognize training in what potential *chiddush* is valid and what isn't; when the words of an *acharon* remain *shver* and when they can be resolved.

"During my two years in the *Kollel*, I decided to go to Rav Twersky's *shiur*; I had never had him as a *rebbei* before. While none of us imagined that this would be the last Pesach *zman* of his life, I cherished every minute I had with him. His eye-opening explanations made every Tosafos into a completely different Tosafos; every Ramban into a different Ramban than

the one you thought you understood. When Rabbi Naftali Meiselman started his *chabura*, I found my place there; he gave me a *derech halimud* that I still follow today. It was a fantastic group: my *chavrusa* Dovid Bogopulsky, Aryeh Dauber, Yitz Goldman, Avrumi Krupka, and others. We all gained from the highly spirited *pilpul chaverim* there. For second *sefer* during those two years, I learned Chullin with the highly relevant *halachos* under Rabbi Shmuel Weiner and Rabbi Shmuel



Mr. Saadia Zakarin

Yaakov Raymon.

"Now that I'm working, I truly appreciate the sense of *chiyus* that I have in my learning, which is the greatest gift that Toras Moshe gave me. I learn in the morning before I head out to work, as well as in the evenings when I return. The *chiyus* is what makes the learning hours into 'quality time'; it allows me to recognize that it's more important than my job. The Yeshiva has ignited within me a thirst for clarity in my learning; when I achieve that clarity, after much effort, there's a tremendous sense of satisfaction unlike anything else in the world."

Both of these alumni are shining examples of how the *ahavas Torah* and *yiras shomayim* instilled by Yeshivas Toras Moshe accompanies its *talmidim* throughout life's journey. Whether they are in the *koslei bais hamedrash* or in the workplace, Torah remains their primary focus.

Rabbi Goldsmith can be contacted about his Torah sharing initiative at [talkinlearning@gmail.com](mailto:talkinlearning@gmail.com) or 847.312.0212.