Chesed Program Expanded at Yeshiva

"Being in Yeshiva is an experience in which the focus is on trying to personally progress in learning, but even while in Yeshiva, it is important to give," states Ezra Frazer from Teaneck, NJ who studied at the Yeshiva from '96-'99 and has returned after two years in YU. "The year in Yeshiva tends to be a totally spiritual existence, like when Bnei Yisrael were in the desert, however, talmidim should be aware that they are in a real country and should see what society is about – what are the problems and how can they contribute."

Thus, Ezra took it upon himself to coordinate the Chesed Program at Yeshiva this year, building upon the efforts of Hillel Maizels '95 from last year, adding more Shabbat programs, more volunteer activities in Gush Etzion, and in general, responding positively to any request for help.

"Whenever a sign-up sheet is posted for a given project, I always have many more people than I need," Ezra smiles.

The Shabbat programs take place at various locations throughout the country where the students run activities with both educational content and entertainment value, livening things up and making the kids happy. The first group which spent Shabbat with Russian olim at Yeshivat Kfar Haroeh, through YUSSR, has already been asked back. Other groups will be spending Shabbat at the Youth Village in Yemin Orde, with Ethiopian and Russian olim, with Ethiopian olim through Kedma’s Achy project (location not yet finalized), and at the Children’s Home (Beit Hayeled) in Bnei Brak.

Closer to home, talmidim give shiurim in Parshat Hashavua on a rotation basis at the Alon Shevut Golden Age Club, including wheelchair assistance to a homebound person to get to the shiur. Others serve as Big Brothers to young men from Gush Etzion, in a program coordinated by local social workers, and others learn b’chavruta with children from Alon Shevut and Elazar in the Yeshiva’s Beit Midrash on a weekly basis. Fifty talmidim ran a lively Chanuka Mesiba at the Children’s Home in Geula in Jerusalem.

After the Motzai Shabbat terror attack on Ben-Yehuda in Jerusalem, food snacks were collected for the injured and their families to be delivered to Jerusalem hospitals. "We put up a notice in the Beit Midrash and asked around the dining room," says Eliezer Shaffren, a Shana Aleph talmid from Yonkers, NY. "We filled up an entire duffel bag, including an impressive contribution by Shana Aleph guys from their personal stock of tuna, cereal, and chocolate bars."

Since not everyone had food to give, many donated money instead. "A friend and I were asked to go to the makolet and buy 370 shekel worth of snack..."
Suna Family

Suna Family

honor of the

second time around for him!!

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able to lift the spirits of those who have been touched by tragedy was a truly rewarding experience,” said Jonny Steiner, Shana Bet talmid from University Heights, OH.

“I felt a very strong kesher with everyone there. In one room I went to, there were two victims, one an Israeli chiloni man and one a new immigrant from the Ukraine. We all sat there as brothers, feeling each other’s pain,” said Etan Hindin, Shana Bet talmid from West Orange, NJ.

“My two favorite parts were seeing the pile of gifts in the victims’ rooms and seeing a smile on their faces when we came in to talk to them and sing to them,” added Yonatan Freedman, Shana Aleph talmid from Manhattan.

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Mazel Tov to Warren Sher, Shana Aleph MTA talmid from South Africa, on making a sigum on Shas Mishnayot, the second time around for him!!

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New Positions in Chinuch and/or the Rabbinate

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Michael Balinsky ’74, Director of Professional Development, Florence Melton Adult Mini School, Northbrook, IL

Bini Freedman ’81, Israelite Institute, Boca Raton, FL

Dror Kleitman ’86 Hesder, Bnei Akiva Shalich, Johannesburg, South Africa

Simi Chavel ’87, Writing curriculum in Torah for the primary school at Mt. Scopus College in Melbourne, Australia.

Moshe Shpeter ’89 Hesder, Rosh Kollel, Kollel Tzioni, Silver Spring, MD

TZvi Engel ’92, Rabbi, Kesher Congregation, Tenafly, NJ

Benji Balint ’93, has been appointed Assistant Editor at the prestigious American Jewish intellectual journal “Commentary.”

in avodat Hashem in general and simchat HaTora in particular.

Chesed - continued from page 1

News from the Yeshiva

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food,” he recalls. “It was actually a lot of fun going on a shopping spree and buying every type of candy, chips, cake, cookies and chocolate in the store.”

“I really wanted to go deliver the food myself and put a smile on the face of those who were injured. I asked a few friends if they would join me – in just a few minutes I got 12 guys; I was told that if I had 25, it would just pay to charter a private bus. I asked around some more and 51 people signed up! We took about 15 shopping bags of food and split it up among the groups that went to the different rooms. 13 guys went to Sharei Zedek and the rest to Hadassah Ein Karem. Some guys brought guitars and we sang for the patients. I met a high school kid from Paris and asked his mom if she is considering taking him home and she said absolutely not, we have bitachon in Hashem and he is staying where he is (of course the kid said the same thing).

We met an injured man whose wife and kids were with him. He had a gash in his head and his foot was in a cast but he was nonetheless ecstatic that we were visiting. One of the guys pulled out his guitar and 10 guys piled into the room, sat down between the six beds and sang Chanukah songs. When it came time to leave, he wouldn’t let us go – ‘just one more song’.

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Ramim in England

Rav Moshe Aberman (’76 Hesder), Ram in the Yeshiva, traveled to England in the beginning of November where he gave a presentation in London about the Yeshiva and met with prospective students at the Engelsman home, parents of Shana Bet Talmid, Udi. Rav Aberman gave shiurim at the Hasmonean and Emanuel College high schools, and a shiur for alumni on the relationship between Yishuv Eretz Yisrael and Kibud Av Va’Em.

Rav Mordechai Friedman ’79, Ram in the Yeshiva, visited England at the end of November where he interviewed prospective students for next year. He noted that, for the past two years, the number of applications from England has been 50% higher than in the past, a reflection of the dedication of the students and their families. Thanks to Jonny Newman ’97 for organizing the interviews. A Shabbaton was held at the Ner Yisrael Congregation in Hendon, attended by close to 40 alumni and their spouses (when applicable). The atmosphere was very warm and many alumni expressed interest in attending such a Shabbaton on an annual basis. “The high turnout demonstrates a lasting connection to the Yeshiva and commitment to the Yeshiva’s values,” commented Rav Friedman. Special thanks to Daniel Hofbauer ’98 for organizing the Shabbaton.

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Couples on Campus

In the course of his extensive interaction with American pre- and post-college students at Yeshivat Hamivtar in Efrat, where he has been teaching for the past 20 years, Rav Menachem Schrader ’72, also Rav of the Tiferet Avot shul in Efrat, became aware of an important need on college campuses in the U.S. “There seemed to be a certain lack of direction and lack of a supportive Torah community,” he explains. Thus, in conjunction with several senior educators from the United States and Israel, he became involved in developing an innovative concept designed to help fill this void – matching qualified, dedicated couples with a specific university where they serve as teachers, advisers, personal counselors and role models. Rav Schrader emphasizes the need to send married couples because “the women also need leadership.” The goal is to address the entire student body, from the Orthodox to the non-affiliated and everyone in-between, with exciting programs and educational opportunities, thereby invigorating the Jewish intellectual and spiritual life of college students.

Rav Schrader’s initiative has received the warm encouragement of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, who has expressed the hope that “properly directed, this program can, without undermining existing structures, significantly enhance the quality and scope of Jewish commitment on American campuses.”

The idea became a reality in September 2000 when Har Etzion alumnus Rav Todd Berman ’90 and his wife, Naomi, became the “couples on campus” at Brandeis University, whose president has personally thanked Rav Schrader for this initiative. Other couples were sent to Cornell and Yale, followed by a couple to UCLA this year (handpicked by Rav Yosef Blau and Rav Michael Rosenzweig ’73).

Officially called the Jewish Learning Initiative, the program works in conjunction with the Orthodox Union, Hillel and Torah MiTzion and is funded mainly by private donations. “Ideally, I would like to see a couple on every campus where there are at least 1,000 Jewish students and/or an Orthodox minyan,” says Rav Schrader.

If you would like to apply as a couple-candidate or if you are interested in contributing to this program, please contact Rav Menachem Schrader: or call 02-9932844. You can find the JLI at jewishlearn.org.

The Bermans at Brandeis

“Naomi and I are the Jewish Learning Initiative Scholars-in-Residence and also advisers to the Brandeis Orthodox Organization which has over 200 members,” says Rav Todd Berman who studied at Yeshivat Har Etzion in 1990 and previously taught at Midreshet Lindenbaum in Jerusalem. Rav Berman received a B.S. from Columbia University and a B.A. from List College. He studied at Harvard University Graduate School and received his semicha from Yeshivat Hamivtar in Israel. Naomi has taught at various institutions in Israel, including Talmud and Halacha at Midreshet Lindenbaum, and offered pre-marital counseling for many years. She received her B.A. from Stern College where she was a Max Stern Scholar and studied Talmud at Bar-Ilan University’s graduate school and at Midreshet Lindenbaum in the Bruria Scholars Program.

The Bermans give a host of shiurim on all levels in Tanach, Talmud, Halacha and Jewish Thought, both on weekdays and on Shabbat, and also learn b’chavruta with approximately 20 students on a weekly basis. They organize major programs and speakers, such as a special learning and Chesed program, distributing hundreds of Purim kits, running a huge Yom Ha’atzmaut barbecue as well as a variety of other programs. This year, they ran a Yom Limud on topics dealing with the Yamim Noraim, featuring 12 speakers, including Rabbi Naftali Bier, Rosh Kollel of the Boston Kollel and Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, principal of Maimonides. They also hosted Rabbi J.J. Schachter for an enjoyable and meaningful Simchat Beit HaShoeva. In the wake of recent events in Israel, the Bermans organized an Atzeret Tefillah bringing together over 150 students representing every Jewish student group on campus.

Rav Berman explains: “We made the decision to come to campus believing in the potential of the program. Now that we have seen the great challenges Orthodox students face, it is hard to understand why the Orthodox community at large has waited so long to support this type of critical endeavor. Every day we spend working with students presents another opportunity to make a genuine impact on the future of the Jewish community.”

Rav Todd and Naomi Berman and their four daughters
Rav Medan and Prof. Gavison Awarded Avi Chai Prize - 5761

The 5761 Avi Chai Prize was awarded to Rav Yakov Medan. Rav in the Yeshiva and graduate of its first macktor, and Professor Ruth Gavison, Professor in the Faculty of Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and senior fellow of the Israel Democracy Institute, for their proposed “Foundation for a New Social Pact between Religious and Secular Jews in Israel.”

For the past two years, Rav Medan and Prof. Gavison have been engaged in a dynamic, in-depth dialogue about the main points of contention between religious and secular Jews in Israel, motivated by a sense of public responsibility and deep inner conviction. Underlying their work are basic principles that both accept: the importance of assuring the viability of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and the need to minimize government intervention with regard to how individuals conduct their lives with respect to religious observance. Hence, they both believe that an agreed-upon political and legal framework must allow for the full expression of a variety of identities and ways of life, while maintaining the Jewish character of the state. The collaboration between Prof. Gavison and Rav Medan was conceived, coordinated and aided from the start by Yisrael Harel.

Rav Medan was born in Jerusalem in 1950 and has been a resident of Alon Shevut since its founding. He has taught at the Yeshiva since 1976, including in its rabbinical training program, and teaches Tanach and Makkhet Yisrael at the Herzog College and at the Beit Midrash for Women in Migdal Oz. He also teaches at Michlala, Yiud, Efrita, Midrashet Lindenbaum, Yeshivat Ohr Etzion, Sha’alvim, Yeruham and the Midrasha for Women at Bar Ilan University.

He is one of the editors of Megadim, the Tanach journal of the Herzog College, and has published hundreds of articles in a variety of periodicals and journals - primarily religious publications - on Talmud, Bible, Jewish philosophy and Eretz Yisrael. His public activity includes membership in the national administration of Bnei Akiva, membership on the board of the Joint Institute for Jewish Studies (the joint conversion-preparation school recommended by the Ne’eman Commission), and membership on the YESHA Council.

He and his wife, Ruth, have seven children.

Harav Lichtenstein in U.S.

Rosh Hayeshiva Harav Aharon Lichtenstein traveled to the U.S. in December for the annual NY Alumni Shabbaton (Parashat Vayishlach) at the invitation of Rabbi Marc Penner '88. Rav Lichtenstein spoke in shul and gave a shiur after lunch. During seuda shlishiit, Rav Lichtenstein gave a sika to a packed room on “Our Station and its Duties: Perspectives on the Current Situation in Eretz Yisrael.” Thanks to Zev Berman and to Alma and Andrew ’75 Klein for all their efforts in arranging the Shabbaton and to the community for their gracious hospitality.

Rav Lichtenstein also met with parents of current students at the home of Joseph and Anne Gontownik, parents of first-year student, Ari, in Englewood, NJ. There was a large turnout and a lively discussion following Rav Lichtenstein’s presentation.

On December 4, Rav Lichtenstein was the honored guest at an evening hosted by Laurie and Ezra Merkin in their home. Rav Lichtenstein, who was introduced by Rabbi Sol Roth of the Fifth Avenue Synagogue, gave a short talk on “Perspectives on Fundamentalism” in which he addressed the meaning of fundamentalism and how it relates to us. There were about 40 people in attendance who had the chance to ask questions and speak to Rav Lichtenstein informally before and afterwards.

On Tuesday night, December 5, Rav Lichtenstein spoke to a crowd of about 200 men and women at Congregation Ohab Zedek in Manhattan. He first gave a shiur on “Talmud Study for Women: Prohibition, Permission or Obligation”, analyzing the mitzvah of Talmud Torah in general, and its ramifications regarding women, and finally, the whole issue of Talmud study with a focus on the Rambam and contemporary discussions. After Ma’ariv, he delivered a lecture on “Religious Parties and Religious Legislation in Israel: Have They Outlived Their Usefulness?” The event was coordinated by Rabbi Nati Helfgot and Mr. Ruby Taub of Manhattan, an avid supporter of the Yeshiva. The rabbi of the shul, Rabbi Allen Schwartz, a childhood friend of Rav Mosheh Berman, senior fellow of the Yeshiva and supporter of the Yeshiva. The rabbi of the shul, Rabbi Allen Schwartz, a childhood friend of Rav Mosheh Berman, introduced Rav Aharon. The talks were very well-received in the community.
“Memphis has a very vibrant Jewish and Orthodox community and it is a pleasure to be a part of the fabric of a total community,” says Rabbi Joel Finkelstein ’81 who has been serving as rabbi of the Anshei Sphard–Beth El Emeth Congregation there since 1997. “I have hopefully helped many people live a more Jewish and meaningful life.

Rabbi Finkelstein has initiated an institute of Jewish learning, called the Akiva Institute, dedicated to Adult Education, including a selection of classes and a lecture series. He has created a series of children’s plays and comic performances on the parasha and the holidays. Some of his plays and weekly thoughts on the parasha can be found at the shul website at ASBEE.org.

His wife, Bluma Zuckerbrot, an expert on Middle Eastern Affairs, is teaching classes on Zionism at the local University and Orthodox Day School. They are the proud parents of Asher, 4, Natan, 2, and Akiva.

Before Memphis, Rabbi Finkelstein was Assistant Rabbi at the historic Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, the oldest congregation in America, founded in 1654. A leader in the community outreach, education and youth programming both here and in Israel, he also served as principal of the Polonies Talmud Torah School. Prior to that, Rabbi Finkelstein served as Rabbi of the Young Israel of Lawrenceville, NJ. He has also taught Judaic Studies at SAR in Riverdale, NY and at Stern College for Women. He earned his BA in psychology from Yeshiva College and received his semicha from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in 1989, where he studied with the Rav z”l. He is currently completing a Ph.D. in medieval Jewish History at Yeshiva University’s Bernard Revel Graduate School, where he is writing on the Medieval Talmudist and biblical exegete, the Rashbam.

“It is amazing how I have been able to keep my connection with the Yeshiva over the years. In my years at YU, I kept in touch through the dinners and shabbatonim, Rav Lichtenstein’s visits to YU, and the like. Since being in Memphis, I continue to keep in touch by receiving the various resources of the VBM. I took my shul on a mission to Israel last year and we visited the Yeshiva, and Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein came here as a scholar-in-residence. I have also instituted dancing in my shul after Yom Kippur as they do in the Yeshiva. I am so glad to have that continuing link to one of the foundations of my upbringing.”

The Israel Koschitzky www.Virtual Beit Midrash

Some of our favorite VBM quotes

“Even though Hakadosh Baruch Hu knew at Har Sinai that this type of website would one day exist, it is almost inconceivable that we could come so far in the world of Torah. I want to personally thank you for everything you put on the web. Tizku L’Mitzvot.”

“Rav Chanoch Waxman’s shiurim consistently occupy the rarified space between excellent and gevaldig.”

“Please pass on my thanks to David Silverberg for his daily SALT divrei Torah. It adds so much to my day to start with a d’var Torah. Yashar Koach and keep up the great work.”

“Thank you very much for the weekly Parshiyot. I am a professional woman who grew up in communist Hungary - with really no meaningful Jewish education - I was able to fill some of the gaps during my adult years through reading, so the weekly text from you is always a welcome addition - even if I only grasp one Aleph!”
Choref Z’man Impressions

Chaim Aryeh Schramm
Talmid Shana Aleph from Ohio, USA

When I first got here I thought I would keep a diary of my feelings. It’s too bad that I didn’t, because now the first few days are all a blur. Getting off the plane, trying to find my way around campus, meeting my roommates, finding a chavruta - all of these memories have started to fade.

One thing I do remember clearly is a feeling of majesty and awe as I realized that I was in the Holy Land, complicated by a sense of melancholy at all that I had left behind.

The first Shabbat for chutznikim was nice, heimishe and quiet before the arrival of the whole Yeshiva. Admittedly it takes time to get used to thinking of “The Shuffle” as dancing, but the Friday night ruach is a highlight of Shabbat. Together with the changes in the nusach of davening, visits to the Kotel, and the intense learning, it makes for an awesome experience of kedusha. The Yamim Nora’im were the epitome of this feeling. Standing in the packed Beit Midrash, pouring out my heart to Hashem, I felt that I had reached a higher level than ever before.

When bein ha’z’manim rolled around, it was hard to believe that six whole weeks had passed. I didn’t really want to leave; I was afraid of losing the momentum. But I guess I really needed the break more than I realized, and I enjoyed spending Sukkot with my cousins.

Simchat Torah was another amazing experience - especially for the handful of us who did it all over again the next day. Finally, we topped off the vacation with a tiyul to the Golan which was a lot of fun. We spent one day hiking Nachal Zavitan and one day rafting down the Snir. We also learned a lot about the geography and history of the Golan, courtesy of Rav Leibtag.

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Gideon Morrison-Wood
Talmid Shana Bet from Edgware, England

Sweating from the warm August morning and dragging a suitcase weighing close to my body-weight behind me, I managed to muster a cheery “Boker Tov” to the security guard at the Old Gate of Alon Shevut. “Shana Bet,” I thought to myself. “I must be mad.” But I was back; back for what? The question resonated in my head as I walked through the familiar campus. No doubt it would be clear soon.

Elul z’manim brims with more energy and activity than any other time during the Yeshiva year. A new Shana Aleph infuses new life, enthusiasm and motivation into the student body. Rosh Chodesh Elul is the Rosh Hashana of the Yeshiva world; a day that exudes potential, a day pregnant with opportunity, every bit as auspicious as its Tishrei counterpart. This year was no exception. Sitting in the beit midrash, I couldn’t help but feel bittersweet as neither my former chavruta, Dr. Aaron Cypess, (MD/Phd) nor my roommate, David Berger, was able to make it back. Udi Engelsman, my Shana Bet chavruta would arrive tomorrow, though, and his reputation preceded him as an outstanding matmid. It was a new year - would I cut ice, I wondered.

I looked around the room and realized anew how lucky I was to be here; the seats were the same and the syllabus had been sealed 2,000 years ago. As I turned to Daf Bet Amud Aleph, I heard someone say, “Excuse me”. Instinctively, I looked around and saw a Shana Aleph guy holding a Gemara opened to the same page, bookmarked by Rav Moshe Aberman’s mekorot.

“Can you help me?” he asked. I laughed and told him that he was confusing me with someone who was actually familiar with the Gemara - surely there was an Israeli Shana Heh or a Kollelnik? “But you are Shana Bet aren’t you?” he persisted. As undeniable as the truth was, it came as a shock to me. “Well, yes,” I managed to reply. “So try,” he said. I glanced at the Vilna typeset, preparing to be well and truly humiliated. He walked away about two minutes later, satisfied for now with the passable p’shat I had given him. Perhaps not everything was the same. I was back, and now I knew why.
A Room with a View

by Hillel Langenauer (‘97-’99, 2001)

Twisting paths, intricate gardens, picturesque dormitories of Jerusalem stone mantled with blossoming shoots of flowered greenery. Images from my first walk through the yeshiva’s campus – over six years ago, now – still remain fresh in my memory. The physical beauty gracing campus inspires the yeshiva’s students, as well as swarms of visitors each year. But during those first days I spent in yeshiva, and throughout the years I have been blessed to study here, one feature of the yeshiva’s futuristic architecture has particularly captured my imagination: the windows of the beit midrash.

Windows adorning the walls of a beit midrash or a synagogue are not, of course, an unusual phenomenon. The Talmud, followed by the Shulhan Aruch, dictates, “A person should pray only in a house which has windows,” and commentators have revealed numerous thematic underpinnings to this halachic norm. Yet, for me, the window-pierced walls of the Har Etzion beit midrash hold additional symbolic significance, depicting in physical form the complexity of outlook toward which the yeshiva educates.

Towering above the students’ heads, thick walls of stone firmly gird the room’s perimeter. These walls confine and delineate, disciplining students by creating a closed space in which they may draw their energies to a focus and concentrate on their studies. Here, in the peace of seclusion, students can garner the passion necessary to unloose the knots in sugyot that confound them. Yet at every angle, window panels of varied shapes and sizes slice the imposing walls. Creating paths of vision that lead outward, the windows serve as symbolic links between the beit midrash and the world in which it resides. The walls drive students to found a home within the four cubits of halacha, driven by the faith that every text they penetrate reveals a glimmer of the Divine will. The windows remind students of their place in – and responsibilities to – society, beckoning them to recall that while listening to the sugya whisper the will of Hashem, they must also peel their ears to hear the pleas of others around them.

Taken together, the walls and the windows serve as a concrete symbol of the double entendre identified by Chazal in the verse, “Torah tova lanu Moshe, morasha kehilat Yaakov.” Traditionally the first pasuk taught to infants as they begin to study, this short formula conveys the dual relationship that Jews share with the Torah. On the one hand, a Jew’s meeting with Torah should take on the character of a personal, even intimate encounter. “Read not ‘inheritance’ (morasha),” the Talmud instructs “but ‘betrothed’ (meorasa).” The image of betrothal here stresses the individual connection that each Jew should strive to develop with the Torah, challenging the student to not only become engaged with Torah, but also engaged to Torah.

But woe to the student who, while betrothing the Torah to himself, forgets that the Torah is in fact the wedding contract between Hashem and the entire Jewish people. For, even as it incites the student into a unique, singular relationship, the Torah remains morasha kehilat Yaakov, the inheritance of the whole congregation of Jacob.

Even the individual who has most cultivated his personal connection to the Torah ultimately holds a claim to the Torah only as a member of the collective. Moreover, the Torah calls its devotees not to introversion or to a presumptuous sense of distance from those remaining outside the doors of the beit midrash, but rather to a feeling of fellowship with all factions of the Jewish community. Indeed, as an educative force revealing the Divine vision for the universal ennobling and refining of humanity, occupation with Torah should, ideally, sensitize students to society’s needs and concerns and motivate them to respond to those needs.

To some, the combination of an other-directed commitment to service with an intensely inward devotion to unearthing the treasures of the Talmud may seem a contradiction. Others may hold it a difficult, though workable, compromise between two independent ideals. I feel deeply humbled and grateful for the opportunity to learn from Roshei Yeshiva and Ramim at Yeshivat Har Etzion whose teachings and actions communicate the message that the two prongs of this would-be paradox constitute two inseparable aspects of Torah life, organically linked and integrally related.

The unique devotion of the Roshei Yeshiva and Ramim to their students serves as a living model of the value of concern for others and provides an inspiring lodestar for those students who plan a future of service through Jewish education. Moreover, the lectures – and lives – of these mentors consistently reinforce the understanding that an unquenchable passion for Torah study should not stifle, but rather stimulate a sincere concern for community, for the State of Israel, and for humanity at large. Like its windows, the yeshiva’s education facilitates a vision that transcends the walls of the beit midrash.

This year, the lesson of the windows seems to reverberate through the halls of the yeshiva with particular resonance. An impressive expansion of the chesed program offers students varied and substantive opportunities for communal service in Gush Etzion and throughout the country. Moreover, of course, the year’s tragic events of terror and war – in Israel and abroad – have amplified the call of attention to events outside the walls of the yeshiva. During these days especially, I feel grateful to receive the guidance of the Roshei Yeshiva, who, with sensitivity, raise students toward a mature and balanced way of conceiving the complexity of the world and of the place of a bein Torah within it.

It has become a commonplace among students of Har Etzion to sum up the ethos of the yeshiva by referring to a favorite story of Rav Amitai’s. According to this legend, the first Rebbe of Lubavitch reprimanded his son for allowing his deep absorption in a Talmudic discussion to prevent him from hearing – and responding to – the wails of a baby in the next room: “If learning Torah deals you to a baby crying, then there is something wrong with the way that you are learning.”

On Rosh Hashanah this year, a brief incident drove home for me the extent to which our teachers have striven to make the moral of this story set the context of the yeshiva’s spiritual service this year. From my seat, within earshot of the Rosh Yeshiva, I overheard a gabbai ask Rav Amitai a procedural question about the tefilla l’shlom ha-medina, a special prayer for peace in Israel. After answering the gabbai’s query, Rav Amitai gently reminded the student: “All of the prayers we offer in the yeshiva are for peace . . .”

Still meditating on Rav Amitai’s words, I waited for the chazan to begin tefillat mincha and peered for a moment out a window of the beit midrash. Taking in the historic landscape of Gush Etzion’s Judean hills, I thought of the birth pangs of redemption that characterize our epoch. How many ways with these times, the proverbial baby seems to cry. How many ways we are challenged to answer those cries. Hearing the chazan begin to daven, I turned my glance from the window’s panoramic view to the tiny print of my machzor: Ashrei yoshvei vritecha. Indeed, I thought, how fortunate to dwell within the walls of a house of Hashem, in a beit midrash. But more than that – how fortunate to dwell in a beit midrash whose spiritual furnishing incorporates windows in its walls.

Raised in New Haven, CT, Hillel Langenauer received a BA in history from Yeshiva University and is currently studying in the Post-College Program at Yeshivat Har Etzion.
ENGAGEMENTS

Daniel Yolkut ’92 and Anna Adelski
Betzalel Pasy ’92 and Shana Frankel
Elon Weinreb ’93 and Carine Strassberg
Josh Draper ’94 and Susie Helft
Barry Kislowicz ’95 and Kally Rubin
Ari Heller ’95 and Aviva Freudenstein
Shlomo Strongblad ’95 and Ronnie Klapper
Josh Drazen ’94 and Susie Helft
Benji ‘96 Zimmerman and Alisa Rhein (special mazal tov
to Rabbi Danny and Tova Rhein)
Yehuda Cohen ’97 and Rivki Barron
Laurence Rau ’97 and Esti Mandelberg
Jeremy Rosenblum ’97 and Jessica Kaplan
Josh Wunder ’98 and Sarah Shifra Kaiserman
Reuven Lavi (Harding) ’90 and Rochelle Goldberg
Zvi Engel ’92 and Laurie Spender
Zev Jacobson ’93 and Sada Cooper
Yossi Kra (’95 Hesder) and Atira Kayam
Yehuda Arnowitz (Edward ’79 and Susan) Weisberg, Efrat
Yitzchak Nathan Friedman (Mordechai ’79 and Debby), Alon Shevut
Aharon ’75 and Leora), Efrat
Ben-Zion Shlomo Ferziger (Adam ’82 and Naomi), Kfar Saba
Yitzchak Natan Friedman (Mordechai ’79 and Debby), Alon Shevut
Alon Shevut (David ’75 and Shira), Efrat
Yocheved Aliza Koppel (David ’75 and Shira), Efrat
Oriel Ze’ev Bejell (Aharon ’75 and Leora), Efrat
Yitzchak Nathan Friedman (Mordechai ’79 and Debby), Alon Shevut
Eli ’84 and Judy Clark, boy, Beit Shemesh
Yehuda ’84 and Adina Rothner.
- Zerachia David and Avraham Shalom, Cleveland, OH
Larry ’85 and Naomi Pinczower, David Hai, Toronto

BIRTHS

Daniel ’81 and Varda Brief, David Matanel, Jerusalem
Joel ’82 and Bluma Finkelstein, Akiva, Memphis, TN
Nati ’82 and Ra’anan Heifetz, boy, NYC
David ’82 and Alexandre Stokar, Dalija Mina, Edison, NJ
Elia ’83 and Judy Clark, boy, Beit Shemesh
Ben White ’95 and Alanna Jacobs
Benji Rickman ’96 and Emily Prowler
David Rabinowitz ’98 and Romy Brozin

MARRIAGES

Reuven Lavi (Harding) ’90 and Rochelle Goldberg
Zvi Engel ’92 and Laurie Spender
Zev Jacobson ’93 and Sada Cooper
Yossi Bloch ’95 and Yael Rose
Alan Moss ’95 and Naomi Eisenberg
Ben White ’95 and Alanna Jacobs
Benji Rickman ’96 and Emily Prowler
David Rabinowitz ’98 and Romy Brozin

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Yocheved Aliza Koppel (David ’75 and Shira), Efrat
Oriel Ze’ev Bejell (Aharon ’75 and Leora), Efrat
Yitzchak Nathan Friedman (Mordechai ’79 and Debby), Alon Shevut
Elan (Larry ’79 and Susan) Weisberg, Efrat
Ruchama Devora Winiarz (Yossi ’79 and Haya), Efrat
Baruch Yoel Sherer (Carl ’79 and Adina), Jerusalem
Aviva Rachel Weinberg (David ’82 and Bonnie), Nof Ayalon
Aviva Shaul Berger (Shalom ’83 and Rachel), Alon Shevut

ALIYA

Alan ’82 and Debby Lutkowitz
Steven Lauder ’92
Neil Greenbaum ’94

CONDOLENCES

To Steve Kiitser ’75 on the loss of his father, Mr. Marvin Kiitser z”l
To Herzl Heffter ’75 on the loss of his mother, Mrs. Chana Heffter.
To Alan ’90 and Zev Jacobson ’93 on the loss of their father.

Please send your news to:
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