On the Front Lines

As in each of Israel’s battles since the foundation of Yeshivat Har Etzion, the students of Gush have been taking part in the current fighting in the Gaza Strip. About 50 of the Yeshiva’s hesder and kollel students were in the combat zone, including several overseas students who have made aliya. They were joined by many Yeshiva alumni who were called up for reserve duty. The students, who serve in the Paratroopers and Golani Infantry brigades, the Armored Corps and other units, participated in combat operations in Shijaiyah and in Khan Yunis, fighting terrorists and locating Hamas tunnels intended for terrorist attacks on Israel.

Throughout the fighting, the Yeshiva worked to support our students in every way possible. When the soldiers had short rotations out of the combat zone before returning to battle, the Roshei Yeshiva and Ramim journeyed to see how the talmidim were faring, to hear about their experiences and what they needed, and to share words of Torah and chizuk.

Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi, who was there, reports, “The Rambam writes in Hilchot Melachim: ‘And when he goes to battle, he must rely on the Hope of Israel, and their Savior in time of trouble. And he must know that he is fighting for the unity of God’s name.’ Our students’ participation in the fighting is an expression of our core beliefs as a Hesder yeshiva, our mission to combine the study of Torah with sharing our national responsibilities with our fellow Jews. What has been special about this period has been the sense of complete unity within the Jewish people and the sense of inner strength shown both in the front lines and in the home front as well.”

Israel Prize Awarded to HaRav Lichtenstein

On Israel Independence Day Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein shlit”a was awarded Israel’s most prestigious honor, the Israel Prize, which recognizes exceptional achievements in the arts, humanities and sciences. In the presence of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, then-President Shimon Peres, Speaker of the Knesset Yuli Edelstein, Supreme Court President Justice Asher Grunis, and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, HaRav Lichtenstein was honored for his contribution to Torah literature. (continued on page 5)

Extraordinary New Sefer Published

Minchat Aviv, published by Maggid Press, is a comprehensive collection of HaRav Lichtenstein’s original writings on topics in the Talmud and halacha (“Aviv” is an acronym for Aharon son of Yechiel and Bluma). The 36 essays span a period of forty years of scholarship, and cover topics ranging from how soldiers should light Chanuka candles while out in the field to the concept of lishmah throughout Torah literature. This monumental sefer, almost 700 pages long, includes both a source index and a topical index, and was carefully edited by Rav Elyakim Krumbein ’72. It can be ordered from the Yeshiva at office@haretzion.org.il
Overseas Students

Tzfat Shabbaton

The Tzfat shabbaton was built around the theme of spirituality. It started on Friday with a climb of Har Arbel and continued with a dip in the Ari’s mikveh (for the more adventurous), and a quick walk around the city. On Friday night talmidim took part in a spirited davening at the Breslover shul, which was followed by dinner, a walk, and a late night tish with Rav Ezra Bick. The highlights of Shabbat day included a shiur, another walking tour and Rav Bick’s inspiring sicha at seuda shlishit. After Shabbat, the talmidim attended a melave malka led by alumnus Rav Simcha Mirvis ’89, now a Breslover chasid.

Poland Trip

As in previous years, Har Etzion overseas students visited Poland right after Zman Choref ended, just before Pesach. This time, in addition to visiting sites of former Jewish life and death, they also visited a living Jewish community in Poland. Alumnus Rabbi Avi Baumol ’88 is the Rabbinic Representative of the Chief Rabbi of Poland in Krakow, as well as an emissary for Shavei Israel. The students visited him and his community, sharing meals and prayers. The culmination was a Shabbat afternoon joint study of the haggada that concluded with tefillat Arvit and a joyous havdala ceremony.

Rabbi Baumol said, “For some of my students this was their first interaction with Yeshiva students and first havdala service. How fortunate were they to experience it together with a group of fantastic, open-minded and intelligent students who understand the value of helping to show a young Polish Jew a glimpse of Shabbat on another dimension.”

Wrapping Up

As the year comes to a close, Eli Weber ’81, Head of the Dr. William Major Overseas Students Program, shares some thoughts on the last holiday celebrated in Yeshiva. “From the outside, Shavuot in Yeshiva resembles Shavuot in chutz la’aretz – davening, eating, learning etc. But having spent a year or two involved in intensive Talmud Torah, the celebration of Zman Matan Torateinu takes on an entirely different feel. Like the modern holidays of Yom HaAtzma’ut and Yom Yerushalayim, it has a personal feel to it. It is not merely a celebration of an event that occurred some 3327 years ago. It is a celebration of what occurred this year and includes within it an incredible sense of accomplishment. There is a sense that we have a piece of Ma’amad Har Sinai and that we experienced an echo of that historical event this year. In a way, Shavuot served as a form of graduation ceremony for the year.”

To celebrate Yom Yerushalayim (which is also the day that Gush Etzion was liberated), the overseas students staged an early morning run from Yeshiva to the Kotel. Here, they triumphantly enter the city gates.

Hesder

Israeli Shana Bet talmidim were inducted into the army in two drafts this year - one group in March and a second group in July. They will be serving in paratroopers, tanks, and military intelligence, the navy and the
Spokesman’s Office. The Yeshiva organized a one-week program to help prepare them for their army service, including shiurim on halachic issues that may arise in the course of their service, and sessions on practical issues such as dealing with pressure and preventing injuries. Their July induction took place in the midst of Operation Protective Edge and the Yeshiva recruits, undeterred, inspired everyone at the induction center – religious and secular alike – to join them in spirited singing and dancing to the tune of Shomrim Ha’Ked b’Ircha. We wish them a peaceful service and thank them for their contribution to Am Yisrael’s safety!

At the IDF Induction Center in July, from left to right: Head of Overseas Program Eli Weber, Yoni Nouriel, Sam Glauber, Rav Amnon Bazak, Zach Rosenthal, Jonny Brull

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Encouraging intellectual curiosity: Yossi Klein Halevi’s recent book “Like Dreamers: The Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation” (Harper/Collins, 2013) won much critical acclaim as well as a National Jewish Book Award. One of the paratroopers featured in the book is Rav Yoel Bin Nun, one of the first teachers at Yeshivat Har Etzion and famed Tanach teacher who lectures at Herzog College. The overseas students, many of whom have read Halevi’s book, invited Rav Bin Nun to speak at an in-Shabbat about the book and his memories from the Six Day War. The students were very inspired by the talk, and asked Rav Bin Nun to lead them on a walking tour through Jerusalem’s Old City, which he did. They then asked Yossi Klein Halevi to speak about the process of writing the book. Halevi was delighted to visit the Yeshiva and remarked that he was impressed by the serious questions the talmidim posed to him.

VIP visits

Rav Shmuel Rabinowitz, Rabbi of the Kotel, visited the Yeshiva recently, where he met with Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein, Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi, Yeshiva CEO Yoni Holzer ‘79H and Rosh Yeshiva Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein and toured the Yeshiva and Herzog campuses.

At the invitation of the Roshei Yeshiva, MK Yitzhak “Buzhi” Herzog, Chairman of the Labor Party and Leader of the Opposition, visited the Yeshiva in April to discuss issues concerning the future of the Hesder program. The conversation was very positive, and both sides expressed an interest in continuing to meet and discuss both specific issues connected with the Hesder program, and more general issues concerning religion and state.

We salute the overseas students from Canada, US, England, South Africa and Australia who volunteered to serve in the IDF this year together with their Israeli friends from the Beit Midrash: Yosef Brander, Yoni Lazarus and Yoni Weisen joined the March draft, and Yoni Nouriel, Sam Glauber, Zach Rosenthal, Jonny Brull, Jason Greenspan, Shlomo Rand, Avigdor Rosensweig, Ezra Ives and Yoni Segal were drafted in July.

As part of his visit, MK Herzog toured the Amsterdam Room, which houses the Yeshivat Har Etzion Library’s collection of rare books. Head librarian Aharon Bejell ‘75 showed MK Herzog a selection of volumes from the collection authored by his
ancestors, including his namesake, Rav Yitzchak Isaac Herzog z”l, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel. MK Herzog was especially moved by the sight of a handwritten inscription by Rabbi Shmuel Hillman z”l, Herzog’s great-grandfather, in a sefer which Rabbi Hillman had authored and gifted to a groom on his wedding day in 1941. The following day, MK Herzog mentioned on Israeli radio that he had greatly enjoyed his recent visit to Yeshivat Har Etzion.

In May, Rav Asher Weiss visited the Yeshiva and gave a shiur on edim, which coincided with the Yeshiva-wide study of Masechet Sanhedrin. Rav Weiss is a widely-respected Av Beit Din, Rosh Kollel, and posek. The talmidim greatly enjoyed the shiur and Rav Weiss commented, "...looking at your young enthusiastic faces, I see the future of klal Yisrael."

During the difficult days when all of Am Yisrael was praying for the wellbeing of Gil-ad Sha’er, Naftali Fraenkel and Eyal Yifrach, zichronam l’vracha, Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi Rav David Lau visited the Yeshiva and delivered words of chizuk in the Beit Midrash, which were greatly appreciated.

The Yeshiva is honored to have hosted both of the Chief Rabbis of Israel this year – Chief Sephardic Rabbi Rav Yitzchak Yosef was at the Yeshiva on Chanuka to attend the Revava Yemei Iyun devoted to the legacy of his father, Rav Ovadia Yosef z”l.

New! The Educational & Rabbinic Placement Initiative

Thanks to the generosity of Basheva and Murray Goldberg of Teaneck, NJ (parents of Rabbi Dr. Judah Goldberg ’96), a new initiative has been established which aims to place alumni of Har Etzion and Migdal Oz in significant positions in Jewish education and rabbinics in Israel.

Program Coordinator Rav Jonathan Snowbell ‘98PC is also the Director of Alumni Affairs in Israel, and hence well-positioned to make connections between alumni of different machzorim. He reports, "In the initial phase of this project we have made many connections with current students and alumni who are seeking to advance their employment, and we’ve also made contact with alumni and friends of the Yeshiva who are well-placed in the worlds of chinuch and rabbanut and can help facilitate this advance. This is an excellent start for this much-needed initiative, and we look forward to seeing the Har Etzion derech reach new communities across the country."

Yoel Weiss, Executive Vice President of the Etzion Foundation, adds, "HaRav Amital z”l frequently spoke about the importance of taking the Torah of the Yeshiva beyond the walls of the Beit Midrash and this initiative is a perfect fulfillment of that vision. The Yeshiva is very grateful to the Goldberg family for their support and forward-thinking commitment."

Are you looking for a position in chinuch or the rabbinate? Do you have employment to offer? Please contact Rav Snowbell at jsnowbell@gmail.com

Pesach Prep

This year, as in years past, Har Etzion sponsored a pre-Pesach evening seminar for talmidim and their parents – both fathers and mothers. The program offered participants a choice of shiurim relating to halachic and conceptual aspects of the holiday, which were delivered by senior lecturers, including Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yakov Medan, Rav Benny Lehman and Rav Yoel Bin Nun. The classes, which took place on a Thursday night, were followed by the final mishmar of the winter session (zman choref).

The event’s purpose was to enable students to share their Yeshiva experience with their parents, spiritually prepare for Pesach and finish the zman on a high note, with much material for further thought and learning.

Guests at Yeshiva

Children from the Carmei Yehuda elementary school in Alon Shevut, named after HaRav Yehuda Amital z”l, participate in a regular learning program in the Yeshiva. The program is headed by the Coordinator of Hesder Students, Moti Gutman ’06H, and is in memory of Yisrael Eliyahu Mintzer z”l, who was a longtime friend of HaRav Amital and a devoted supporter of Yeshivat Har Etzion.

The Yeshiva was pleased, for the third year running, to host the Ilan Summer Camp for disabled children. The camp, which runs for a week, is staffed by volunteer youth from Alon Shevut in memory of Amital Ron z”l (son of alumnus Justice Alexander Ron), who was tragically killed in a car accident.

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During the Protective Edge military campaign, the Yeshiva guest house offered a week of free accommodations to fifteen families from Moshav Shuva in the northwestern Negev, which was under frequent rocket attack. Alon Shevut youth ran activities for the visiting children to keep them busy and entertained, and everyone enjoyed the quiet respite.

Sara Shani wrote a thank you note on behalf of all the visitors, in which she said, “The reception we got, the concern for every little detail, the attention and good will were priceless. Thank you to the Roshei Yeshiva, the guest house staff and this wonderful place – Yeshivat Har Etzion.”

Israel Prize Awarded to HaRav Lichtenstein (Continued from page 1)

The judges’ explanation said that HaRav Lichtenstein’s “multifaceted work is characterized by its depth, scope, well-developed logic, sharp intellect, sensitivity and imagination” and “HaRav Lichtenstein’s work encompasses the entire realm of Torah literature: Bible, Mishna, Talmud, Halacha, Midrash, responsa, and the rulings of the early and later halachic authorities.” The panel of judges also singled out the combination of original thought and logical analysis in HaRav Lichtenstein’s works, and they cited his intellectual honesty, and willingness to fully engage with all points of view.

In addition, “The exemplary order and method that characterizes [HaRav Lichtenstein’s] Torah scholarship…allows the student to acquire proficiency in learning, and grants him…the skills for dissecting topics, and frameworks for understanding the deeper level of halacha. HaRav Lichtenstein has transformed in-depth learning from the province of isolated geniuses to a method that any dedicated learner can apply.”

HaRav Lichtenstein’s commitment to the Jewish people and the State of Israel received special mention, too. “HaRav Lichtenstein is one of the pillars of the Hesder yeshivas. He has endowed his Torah and unique method of learning to thousands of students, who are currently engaged in every type of endeavor…in Israel and the world.”

On May 1st, the Yeshiva hosted a gathering for talmidim and alumni in advance of Yom HaAtzma’ut, which celebrated HaRav Lichtenstein’s upcoming award and the publication of HaRav Lichtenstein’s new sefer, Minchat Aviv.

Speakers at the event included the Rosh Yeshiva of Otniel, Rav Re’em Hacohen ’75H, Israel Prize winner Prof. Yaakov Blidstein, Supreme Court Justice Neal Hendel, and Rosh Yeshiva Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein, all of whom spoke about HaRav Lichtenstein’s derech limmud and his accomplishments in the world of Torah. A film produced for the occasion was screened at the event. The film was followed by tefillat Arvit, a light supper, and a panel discussion on “Israel’s Independence Today” with Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yakov Medan, Prof. Aviad Hacohen ’80H, Dean of Sha’arei Mishpat College, and Ram and VBM Director Rav Ezra Bick.

Andrew Borodach ’87, President of the Etzion Foundation, flew to Israel in honor of the occasion. He relates, “I felt a palpable energy in the Beit Midrash, which was filled to overflowing capacity with current talmidim as well as hundreds of bogrim and other dignitaries who had all come to express their hakarat ha-tov to HaRav Lichtenstein on his receipt of the Israel Prize. The award is not only a well-deserved honor for HaRav Aharon. It also is an acknowledgement by the broader Israeli community of the value of the core religious, moral and ethical principles espoused by Yeshivat Har Etzion…that we constantly strive to deepen our personal relationship with Hashem while never losing sight of our mission to work for the betterment of all Jews and, indeed, all humanity.”

Videos of the Israel Prize, photos from the pre-event at Yeshiva, and the video screened there, can all be accessed via the Yeshiva website at www.haretzion.org
Leading up to the Etzion Foundation Annual Dinner, Rosh Yeshiva Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein arrived early to visit Gush alumni in Boston and Cleveland. He spent Shabbat in Brookline, MA speaking at both the Maimonides Minyan (led by Rabbi Yaakov Jaffe ’98) and the Young Israel of Brookline. He connected with alumni, parents and friends at a tish Friday night and at Shabbat dinner and lunch in private homes. The visit was planned by alumnus Raphi Schorr ’93.

Rav Mosheh then visited Cleveland, a community with which he has a long history from his days at the local Torah MiTzion Kollel. He spoke to a group of alumni and supporters at a small fundraising supper at the home of Gary and Hindee Weiss (parents of incoming student Seth ’14). The crowd then moved to the Stark Beit Midrash at the Young Israel of Cleveland, where many more alumni, parents and community members came together for a thoughtful and compelling shiur entitled Reflections Upon the Ebb and Flow of Contemporary Halacha, as Pesach and the Shemittah Year Approach.

Alumni of both Gush and Migdal Oz joined Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi at New York University for the annual spring shabbaton. Bogrim and bogrot had the opportunity to enjoy insightful shiurim and discussions with Rav Gigi, and to reconnect with peers representing many college campuses. The shabbaton was organized in partnership with Rabbi Gideon Black ’01 of the Bronfman Center for Jewish Life at NYU.

The following Sunday morning, Rav Gigi delivered a Hebrew-language shiur to a full house at Congregation Rinat Yisrael in Teaneck, where he is a perennial favorite.

On the morning before the Annual Dinner, Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein and Rav Baruch Gigi visited alumni at Yeshiva University and delivered shiurim.

In May, over a dozen alumni joined Deputy Chairman of the YHE Board Rav Shlomo Brin ’72H for lunch at Yeshiva University on Yom Yerushalayim. Rav Brin gave an inspirational talk about his experience as a child in Yerushalayim during the Six Day War, and the emotional celebration of Shavuot at the Kotel after its liberation. He also briefed the group on news from the Yeshiva, including the joyful return of Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein to the Beit Midrash after a hospital stay. Lunch concluded with the singing of L’shanah ha-ba’ah b’Yerushalayim. Rabbi Shaul Seidler-Feller ’06, who helped coordinate the program, commented, “It was a zechut to have Rav Brin with us for this visit, and everyone who came enjoyed.”

Rav Brin spoke at a Lunch & Learn at the “Beechwood Re” offices of Meir Nordlicht ’86 on the topic of City of Gold: the Uniqueness & Sanctity of Jerusalem.

On Shabbat Parshat Naso, Rav Brin was Scholar in Residence at Congregation Etz Chaim in Queens, NY, which is led by Rabbi Moshe Rosenberg, father of Yair ’08. Rav Brin was hosted by Laurence ’80 and Deena Rabinovich, parents of Ari ’06 and Eliseva ’12MO.

Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi was in South Africa in May, where he met with alumni and the broader Jewish community in both Cape Town and Johannesburg. Rav Pini Cohen, Head of the MTA Program, says, “The Yeshiva has a special relationship with the South African community, where many alumni are in key rabbinic, educational and leadership positions.”
Rav Moshe Taragin visited South Africa in June. His first stop was in Johannesburg where he delivered a pre-Shavuot father-and-son shiur at the Mizrachi School, and took part in a panel discussion on educational issues. He spent Shavuot in Pretoria, where he spoke at the Hebrew Congregation, and to the Chabad kollel housed by the congregation.

In July, Rav Moshe Taragin visited England for three action-packed days, during which he spoke eleven times. In London, he was hosted by the Kinloss, Alei Tzion and Ner Israel communities. Rav Taragin spoke to a full house in Manchester about the Three Weeks, in a shiur titled Are We Crying Crocodile Tears? The event was hosted by Shema Manchester, a learning initiative run in association with the London School of Jewish Studies.

Azkara for HaRav Amital zt”l

On Thursday, July 24 the Yeshiva marked four years since the passing of its founding Rosh Yeshiva, HaRav Yehuda Amital zt”l. Family, friends and talmidim gathered in the Beit Midrash for a shiur in the footsteps of Rav Ami tal’s Torah by Rav Michael Edrei ‘90H, centered on halachic issues that may arise on Shabbat during wartime. This was followed by a touching personal remembrance of HaRav Amital by Rav Amichai Gordin ‘91H, the learning of mishnayot by grandson Nadav Gilad, and the recitation of E-l Malei Rachamim. The aliya l’kever was on the yahrtzeit the following day, 27 Tammuz.

Yehi zichro baruch.

CTL Conference

The Center for Torah Leadership (CTL) held its third annual conference this April for alumni who work in the rabbinate and Jewish education. The conference, timed to immediately precede the Yeshiva’s annual dinner in New York City, once again provided a valuable opportunity for learning, networking and professional development. The conference attracted alumni of the Yeshiva and Migdal Oz from many locations, and the CTL was especially honored that Rabbi Saul Paves ’91 of Sao Paulo, Brazil flew to New York in order to attend.

Chair ed by Rabbi Dr. Aaron Ross ’92, this year’s conference opened with a lunch workshop led by Rav Mordechai Friedman ’79 which focused on the challenges of teaching Gemara to teenagers. Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi, Rosh Yeshiva Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein and Rosh Beit Midrash Esti Rosenberg reflected on current difficulties facing Israel in an enlightening panel discussion. Rabbi Leonard Matanky (father of Yaakov ’99 z”l and Yitzi ’05) then introduced the keynote address by UK Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis ’76, who spoke about Shepherds and Sheepdogs – Models of Rabbinic Leadership.

In the final session of the day, all participants had the opportunity to share their most successful practices in focused groups. Rabbi Gedalya Berger ’90 and Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Rosenblatt ’77 led the communal track, while the educators’ track was led by Miriam Coren ’00MO and Rav Menachem Leibtag ’77.

Grandson Nadav Gilad made a siyum mishnayot in HaRav Amital’s memory
Rabbi Robbie Sassoon '96 is the Executive Director of Crossroads Jerusalem, (www.crossroadsjerusalem.org), a center for English-speaking youth-at-risk in Israel, based in Jerusalem. He holds a BA in Psychology from Yeshiva College, an MSW from Wurzweiler School of Social Work, and Rabbinic Ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University.

Robbie enjoyed working in Jewish education as an administrator and teacher of Gemara in Jewish day schools in the US, but found that he was drawn to working with youth at extreme risk. "In my second year of social work school I asked for a field placement in the toughest environment, with the toughest kids. When, instead, I was sent to the most mainstream Jewish organization, I sought out volunteer work doing street outreach. I got to know kids involved in drugs, prostitution and criminal activity on the streets of New York. I have to admit that I was even more surprised to discover that many of these teens come from my own English-speaking community."

The center works with about 1,000 teens aged 15-22 and is located in the center of Jerusalem, close to the main hang-out spots. The majority of the teens come from a religious background. The center provides individual therapy and counseling, crisis intervention, and a clubhouse that offers a safe alternative to the streets. The center helps the teens to turn their lives around by helping them find shelter, employment, therapy, and ongoing educational support. Crossroads also runs its own GED program where teens can receive an American high school diploma. In addition, Crossroads tries to help teens qualify for army service, which brings them back into the Israeli mainstream and is often a prerequisite for gainful employment in Israel. After 14 years of operation, the center has earned the trust of street teens, who know that Crossroads staff are non-judgmental and always supportive and caring.

Robbie feels that his desire to make a difference in Israeli society, and his commitment to all Jews, are a reflection of the values of Yeshivat Har Etzion. "Rav Amital zt"l and Rav Aharon Lichtenstein always spoke about giving to all of Am Yisrael. I received the message that we should take the Torah from the Beit Midrash and let it drive everything we do when we step outside the Beit Midrash. My current career path was determined by the desire to use my strengths and find a way that I can give to Am Yisrael and the world. I find my work deeply driven by the constant message received in Yeshiva of deep commitment to the Jewish people."

There is no doubt that youth-at-risk in Jerusalem are benefiting daily from Rabbi Sassoon’s heartfelt commitment.
When Shira Lorentz ’10MO, who grew up in the small Israeli town of Nechalim, did her second year of Sherut Leumi (National Service) in Memphis, Tennessee she had a lot of adjusting to do. “Everything was new,” she recalls. “There was the language, there were cultural assumptions, and there was a whole different community structure. Plus, there were practical things – how to get health care, which foods were kosher, understanding mail from the bank…and on top of all that was being really far from home for the first time.” Shira adjusted fairly quickly and was able to devote herself to helping the local community in multiple ways, but the experience opened up her eyes to the difficulties of doing service in a foreign country.

Fast forward to Migdal Oz, where Shira spent the next two years in the Beit Midrash. There she befriended many American students, some of whom decided to follow up their year of study at the midrasha with Sherut Leumi in Israel. They were facing a lot of the same difficulties that Shira had experienced – cultural, technical, and emotional. Shira explains, “The system in Israel is based on the fact that everyone goes home for Shabbat, but the girls who come from overseas don’t have a home to go to where they can do their laundry, pick up some food from Mom for the week, and just generally recharge their batteries with friends and family. They’re really on their own. And whereas in Israel there’s a whole system in place for lone soldiers (chayalim bodedim), there was absolutely nothing for Sherut Leumi girls. Nothing.”

Shira and another friend from the Midrasha, Naama ben Pazi, turned to Rosh Beit Midrash Esti Rosenberg and said, “We want to help these girls.” Esti was all for it and immediately put them in touch with Gush Etzion founder Moshe (“Moshko”) Moskovic, who guided them through the process of forming a non-profit and put together a board of directors to help them strategize and fundraise. Dr. Tovah Lichtenstein agreed to be President of the organization, and Beshvil was born. The organization is run on a day-to-day basis by the highly competent 22-year-old Lorentz, currently a student in both Migdal Oz and Herzog College. She also credits her father, YHE alumnus Shmuel Lorentz ’82H, for his expert advice – he’s the Chairman of Yedidim, an organization that provides mentors for kids at risk.

Beshvil, an acronym for “bat sherut bodeda b’Yisrael”, has just completed its second year of operation, in which it provided comprehensive support for 140 volunteers from overseas. Next year the numbers are expected to be between 170 and 200. Everything is done with the full support of Migdal Oz. Migdal Oz staffers are on the board, and the midrasha generously provides the facilities for shabbatot and other gatherings for the girls. In short, it’s a Migdal Oz initiative from start to finish.

The organization has a staff of fourteen, most of whom are dedicated volunteers. The Sherut Leumi girls come from a variety of countries including America, Canada, Russia, Ukraine, France and Australia. They also come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, so that they have different needs. Beshvil checks up weekly on the girls, sponsors regular gatherings for holidays and events, sets the girls up with adoptive families, visits them at work and in their apartments, provides financial and bureaucratic aid where needed and even arranges for therapy or buys them washing machines if necessary. Beshvil has created a feedback system which enables the organization to continuously update the services it offers in accordance with the needs of the young women it serves. At the end of the year, Beshvil holds a major event to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the Sherut Leumi girls from abroad.

Shira summarizes, “It’s a game changer, and corrects a longstanding injustice in the system, in which young women came from overseas to volunteer in Israel and did not get the facilities, support or recognition that they richly deserve.” Thanks to the students and staff of Migdal Oz, that’s no longer the case. For more info, visit http://naamabenpazi.wix.com/bishvil

Shira Lorentz and Naama ben Pazi, in purple shirts, with Beshvil girls at Yom HaAtzma’ut picnic
Annual Dinner

On April 2, 2014 nearly 600 members of the Gush family – alumni, parents, and friends – gathered in NYC for the Etzion Foundation Annual Dinner. This year’s dinner, the most successful ever, was themed “From Generation to Generation”.

David and Dassie Schreiber – parents of Rav Doniel ’86, Dean of CTL, Rav Avie ’88 and grandparents of Chani ’10MO, Devora ’11MO, and Rivki ’13MO – were presented with the Dor L’Dor award; Rella Feldman and her daughter, Mindy Hecht ’04MO received the Gemilut Chasadim Award; and Rav Mordechai ’79 and Debby Friedman were presented with the Keter Torah Award. All of the honorees have a deep connection with the Har Etzion Institutions, and Shirley Schuster, Executive Director, noted that, “it was very fitting to pay tribute to their dedication, generosity and commitment to both the Yeshiva and Migdal Oz.”

Debby Friedman said, “The event ran beautifully, and it was moving to see all the people who came, and how enthusiastic they were about being there.”

The Dinner’s keynote speaker was Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis ’76, Chief Rabbi of United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. Not only is Rabbi Mirvis an alumnus of the Yeshiva, but his four sons are also alumni, and son Rabbi Danny Mirvis ’03 is Director of the CTL program, further emphasizing the Generation to Generation theme.

The Dinner began with a delectable buffet, followed by videos and presentations which paid tribute to the contributions of the honorees. Presentations were made by Rosh Yeshiva Rav Moshe Lichtenstein, Vice President of the Etzion Foundation Mrs. Harriet Seif, and the Rosh Beit Midrash of Migdal Oz Esti Rosenberg.

Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi spoke about his longstanding chavruta with Rav Friedman, gave a brief update on the advances at Yeshiva, Herzog College and Migdal Oz, and introduced Rabbi Mirvis. Rabbi Mirvis spoke about the important role the Yeshiva has played in his family’s life, and described the profound effect the Yeshiva has had on him, both personally and professionally.

The Dinner ended with spirited dancing and a sumptuous dessert reception. Dinner videos can be seen at www.thegushdinner.org
Bridging Two Worlds

The Ethiopian Leadership Training Program of Herzog College, now in its fourteenth year, continues to fill a vital need by investing in the religious leadership of the Ethiopian community in Israel. The unique program trains a select group of talented, idealistic young men who are completely integrated into the world of Torah in modern Israel, yet dedicated to preserving an attitude of respect and honor toward their rich Ethiopian heritage.

The program has produced over 70 alumni who today hold key positions in Ethiopian communities throughout Israel. The graduates work in synagogues, schools, youth groups, conversion programs and absorption centers, as well as in the army.

**Kaflayo Bugale** is a current student in the program. Kaflayo was born in Ethiopia, studied in a hesder yeshiva in Rechovot and was a paratrooper in the IDF. He has completed a degree in education and is now studying for the rabbinate. He is married and a father of three boys, aged three, two, and one. Kaflayo is also serving as the volunteer community rabbi at the Shivat Tzion synagogue in Rishon LeZion.

Kaflayo explains that the position is as complex as it is vital. “We are coping with a significant generation gap. In Ethiopia, the father was the undisputed ruler of the family, children were expected to toe the line and they did. Disobedience was customarily dealt with by corporal punishment. In Israel, it is just not like that. When parents are faced with misbehavior, they know that they cannot use force, but they don’t have other tools. They don’t know what to do so they may throw up their hands. The children need boundaries and meaning and when they don’t get what they need from their parents they turn to the street.”

“I serve as a bridge. In my Shabbat classes in Amharic for the parents, I focus on childrearing and work to give the parents practical tools, as well as an understanding of the world in which their children are growing up. Perhaps most importantly, I help them to understand that their children need the strength and faith that they have inherited from their ancestors. The faith that enabled them to hold on through the exile, and the strength that gave them the courage to cross the Sudanese desert to get to Eretz Yisrael.”

“In my classes to the youth, which I give in Hebrew, I build the other side of the bridge. I try to show them some of the spiritual riches of faith and courage that their parents have to offer. I teach them to look forward and not to be dragged down into self-pity when they encounter discrimination and racism.”

“I am also a bridge between the traditions and customs of ‘the old country’ and halacha. You simply cannot tell a Jew that a tradition that he has received from his father is wrong. You have to learn where these practices come from and what stands behind them. The program has taught me not only to respect these traditions, but to lead change within a community gradually, peacefully, in a way that does not harm the community.”

**Tanakh Summer Study Days**

Thousands of people attended Herzog College’s annual Yemei Iyun b’Tanakh, featuring the world’s top bible lecturers. This year the classes coincided with Operation Protective Edge so some of the attendees included soldiers doing reserve duty in the area and doctors from Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon, who came for a small respite from the line of fire. Every day’s first session included the recitation of Tehillim for the safety of Israel’s troops.

As usual, many visitors also came from abroad. Shimmy and Pearl Lopian of Manchester, England said, “The Yemei Iyun have been really inspiring. It’s been great seeing so many people learning Torah. The teachers through their excellent shiurim exhibit a true love of Tanach and love of Torah, connecting the then and now. Our hearts go out to all of the soldiers and their families. As Yael Ziegler said in a class today, ‘Every birth is a miracle and every child has a divine purpose.’”

**Herzog College**
MIGDAL OZ

Cultural Encounters
Every year, the overseas students (bnot chul) host an evening on North American culture in the Midrasha. The evening features pizza, apple pie, posters and presentations in which the North American students explain to the Israeli students what their lives and Jewish communities abroad are like. This year, the educational staff of the Midrasha initiated their own presentations, and the annual evening was followed up by a morning seminar devoted to Diaspora Jewry with Rabbi Dr. Judah Goldberg ‘96, Dr. Shlomo Fisher and Dr. Shmuel Wygoda ’73H.

Sanhedrin Seminar
This year the Beit Midrash studied the third chapter of Masechet Sanhedrin. Upon completing the chapter, and before moving on to Masechet Pesachim, the Beit Midrash hosted a fascinating seminar with Rav Shlomo Ison, Justice Tzi Tal, Na’ama Set and Rav Yitzchak Brand ’82H that dealt with legal and economic topics related to the masechet.

Volozhin Week
by Jennifer Van Amerongen ’13MO
Sometimes in Migdal Oz we get the feeling that the day isn’t long enough for everything we want to learn. We wish there were more hours in the day, more chavrutot we could set up, and that we could start more sefarim. On a regular week we can’t really make all of those things possible and that’s why we have Shavua Volozhin, an idea initiated by a few girls in the Beit Midrash.

Signs were hung outside the Beit Midrash where girls could sign up for three-hour slots of mishmar, to make new chavrutot, and to learn perakim of mishnayot for the siyum we would make at Parents Evening. I participated and it was an amazing experience. The hurry to get back to the Beit Midrash after eating lunch, instead of taking a break, felt great. Then at the end of the week I stayed up all night and even video chatted with my parents as the sun was coming up! It was great to learn new things with friends who I don’t usually get to learn with and I think it really had an impact on everyone’s learning.

Tochnit Miriam
This year saw the opening of Tochnit Miriam, an initiative to encourage leadership among young women from the Ethiopian community. The program is led by Rav Netanel Buchs ’02H and third-year student and Israeli madricha Einat Maoz. The goal of the program is to integrate the students into the singular experience of the Beit Midrash while providing assistance in completing their matriculation exams, thus enabling them to enter university. A handful of students participated in this year’s pilot and, now that it has been shown to be successful, the program has plans for expansion in the coming year.
Encountering the Holocaust

On Wednesday, April 2nd, a day before Zman Choref ended, twenty-two overseas students boarded a bus in Migdal Oz and headed off to Ben Gurion Airport for what would be an intense, thought-provoking and meaningful trip to Poland. The Migdal Oz group was joined by students from the Nishmat and Ein HaNatziv midrashot. They were accompanied by Migdal Oz madrichot Chani Meyer ’10MO and Tikva Shore ’09MO, Rav Matanya Yedid from Nishmat, and tour guide Pe’era Feldman.

The group visited not only cemeteries and concentration camps, but also former schools, shuls and yeshivot. They mourned and prayed, sang and danced, and even made a siyum at Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin.

Yehudit Dashevsky ’13MO wrote in her diary, “Seeing the places in which Jewish communities once thrived, walking down the same roads they walked, feeling the same fresh air of the forests in which they were murdered, suddenly turned a piece of history, however much a part of our lives before, into something tangible... This drove home the point that has always been made but never felt as real nor as urgent: it happened on this earth, it can happen again.”

Hiking to the Holy City

In honor of Yom Yerushalayim, the overseas students participated in a Migdal Oz tradition – aliya ba’regel. Following the morning Hallel, the talmidot set out on foot, hiking through the Judean hills until they reached the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. Leeea Hirt ’13MO said, “The hike was long but wonderful. It was exhilarating to actually walk to Yerushalayim, Ir HaKodesh.”

National Holidays

In Israel, Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzma’ut follow one another in quick succession, creating an intense period of national mourning and celebration. This year, the Beit Midrash honored these special calendar days with a series of lectures spread over five days covering topics such as “Jewish Leadership in the Holocaust”, “1948: The Battle for Gush Etzion”, “Ethical Codes in the Israeli Military”, and “Secular Israeli Identity”. Featured speakers included Moshe Moskovic, founder of Gush Etzion, Rabbi Ronen Neuwirth of Ohel Ari Synagogue in Ra’anana and the Beit Hillel organization, Gonen Reicher of the Sde Boker Mechina, Miri Shlissel, Supervisor of Tanach Studies in Israel, Rav Yuval Cherlo ’75H, Rav Yoel Bin Nun and Har Etzion Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yakov Medan.

Migdal Oz was pleased to host MK ayelet Shaked in May. The dynamic young Knesset member took a tour of the campus with Rosh Beit Midrash Esti Rosenberg, Deputy Chairman of the YHE Board Rav Shlomo Brin, and VP of Herzog College Rav Shuki Reiss ’81H. Shaked spoke to the talmidot about how she got into politics and the importance, especially as a woman, of standing up and fighting for one’s beliefs.

We salute the overseas students who will be serving Israel next year: two in the IDF, and three in National Service (Sherut Leumi)!

MIGDAL OZ ALUMNAE NEWS

Marriages

Rikki Nots ’08MO and Meir Dardashti ’07
Gilana Keller ’08MO and Raanan Cohen
Shira Marder ’10MO and Jason Saibel
Hanna Baderman ’12MO and Herzl Amoyal

Births

Divra Benhamu ’06MO and Oded Horovitz, Amishav Yisrael
Reva Lockshin ’06MO and Elie Tradburks, Nadav Tamar Katz ’07MO and Dovid Halpern, Yeshayahu Aharon (Shai)
Rivka Witty ’09MO and Haim Rosner ’04H, Devora Riva
Se’i ’04MO and Jonathan ’02 Hefter, Avraham Yechezkel

Aliya

Sarah Lazarus ’08MO
Dalya Arussy ’09MO
Ilana Barta ’09MO
Hannah Baderman ’12MO
Sophie Satloff ’12MO
Keshet Eklove ’13MO
Elana Greenbaum ’13MO
ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

- Rav Alan Yaniger ’78 assumed the position of Rabbi of Kehillat Shirat Shlomo, Efrat

- Mazal Tov to David Freudenstein ’79 and Dr. Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein, whose daughter Sofia placed 6th in the International Chidon Tanach on Yom HaAtzma’ut in Jerusalem, and mazal tov to Rabbi Joel Finkelstein ’81 and Bluma Zuckerbrot whose son Asher tied for 9th place.

- Rav Mayer Lichtenstein ’81H was appointed Rabbi of Beit Knesset Ohel Yona in Beit Shemesh

- Rabbi Yaakov Blau ’88 published “Medieval Commentary in the Modern Era: The Enduring Value of Classical Parshanut”

- Dr. Michael Roth ’90 has been appointed Director of Psychological Services for the Beit El district


- David Shyovitz ’99 will be spending a year doing research at the Hebrew University as a Yad Hanadiv/Beracha Foundation Visiting Fellow in Jewish Studies

- Dov Aharon Goldstein ’03 graduated Medical School at the Technion University in May 2014

- Shlomo Klapper ’10, Intern Speechwriter at the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations

Harel Tubi ’94H was appointed General Director of the President’s House, where he will serve under President of Israel Reuven ("Ruby") Rivlin. President Rivlin declared Tubi the best candidate for the job on both personal and professional grounds and said he was very pleased with the appointment. Tubi, who at the time of his appointment was doing reserve army duty as part of Operation Protective Edge, thanked the President for the faith placed in him and said that he would do everything in his ability to serve the national interests of the people of Israel.

ALUMNI EVENTS IN ISRAEL

The Yeshiva maintains an ongoing connection with alumni in Israel through a variety of events and shiurim across the country. Here are some of the events that took place in the last few months:

Givat Shmuel: 400 people attended a panel discussion in honor of Rav Amnon Bazak’s new book “Shmuel II: The Davidic Dynasty” at the Heichal Rachamim synagogue, where they heard divergent points of view on the story of David and Batsheva from Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yakov Medan, Rav Yisrael Rosen of Machon Zomet and Rav Bazak’84H.

Modi’in: Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Gigi spent Shabbat Parshat Pekudei in the city, where he spoke at several batei knesset. An overflow crowd attended his Friday night talk on the controversial issue of “shivyon b’netel”, the equitable division of army service within Israeli society.

Petach Tikva: Yeshivat AMIT of Kfar Ganim hosted an evening of pre-Purim learning with staff from Har Etzion, including Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yakov Medan, Herzog College President Rabbi Prof. Yitzhak Kraus, Rav Meir Nehorai ’84H of Migdal Oz and Rav Amichai Gordin ’91H.

Ra’anana: Jono ’87 and Tamar Koschitsky hosted a shiur with Rav Ezra Bick in honor of his new book Siach Yishi which examines the Shemona Esrei prayer in depth.

Chutznikim from 1972-83 who live in Israel are graduates of Migdal Oz. The program, which started at the Migdal Oz campus and then moved to the Yeshiva campus, included chavruta learning, shiurim, a musical workshop, a short tour of the area and meetings with the Roshei Yeshiva.

A New Bat Mitzva Program

Sixty girls participated in a special bat mitzva program after Shavuot, which for the first time included several mothers who are graduates of Migdal Oz. The program, which started at the Migdal Oz campus and then moved to the Yeshiva campus, included chavruta learning, shiurim, a musical workshop, a short tour of the area and meetings with the Roshei Yeshiva.
Marriages
Dov Karol ’95 and Esther Malka Stromer
Yechiel Robinson ’01 and Ariella Mitchneck
Elyasa Schwartz ’01 and Mi Ri Michaeli
Rabbi Daniel Fridman ’02 and Dr. Chaya Gopin
Mordokhay Farster ’04 and Leorah Khalili
Aryeh Goldberg ’06 and Hannah Lowinger
Meir Dardashti ’07 and Rikki Notis ’08MO

Births
Ami ’87 and Lea Aharon, Gavriela Tiferet
Mitch ’87 and Marni Benuck, Itzai Shai
Craig ’91 and Leah Berkowitz, Chaim Binyomin
Jonathan ’96 and Nechama Price, Leora Temima
Meir ’98 and Aliza Belsh, Aryeh Yehuda
Yonah ’98 and Rachel Stein Berman, Lev Benjamin
Yehuda ’98 and Elissa Chanales, Chaim Yitzchak
Yoel ’00 and Ilana Cohn, twin boys, Zev Itamar
Mazal tov to former madrich of overseas students Elkan Amitai ’03H and wife Efrat on the birth of son Yonatan
Mazal tov to Avi Ganz, Program Director of Yeshivat Darkaynu, and wife Chana Esther on the birth of son Yehuda

Bar/Bat Mitzva
Mazal tov to Avi ’86 and Debby Levitt upon the bar mitzva of their son Sammy

Aliya
Yehuda ’95 and Orit Seif & family, Efrat
Josh ’02 and Yudit Samad & family, Ra’anan
Dov Aharon ’03 and Anna Goldstein, Jerusalem
Jason Greenspan ’12, Har Etzion Hesder

Condolences
Nissan Ziskin ’72 on the loss of his mother, Ruth Ziskind z”l
Ezra Chwat ’77 on the loss of his father, Rabbi Meshulam Sheldon Chwat z”l
Rabbi Dr. Shalom Friedman ’77 and Ray Mordechai Friedman ’79 on the loss of their father, Rabbi Dr. Armin Friedman z”l
Rabbi Daniel Roselaar ’87, on the loss of his father, Leonard Roselaar z”l
Tani Wallach ’89 on the loss of his father, Paul Wallach z”l
Gabriel Tibber ’93 on the loss of his father, Alan Tibber z”l
Amir Ellituv ’96 on the loss of his mother, Rebbezetzen Esther Ellituv z”l
Mayer Winkler ’01 on the loss of his father, Ira Winkler z”l
Benyamin Ben-Zvi ’09 on the loss of his mother, Hadassa Ben-Zvi z”l
Yehuda Chinskey ’12 on the loss of his sister, Etta Chinskey z”l
Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Baruch Gigi ’8H, on the loss of his sister, Rachel Meimran z”l
Rav Uzi Friedlich ’68H, on the loss of his mother, Sara Friedlich z”l

The Yeshiva mourns the tragic deaths of Gil-ad Michael Sha’er z”l, son of alumnus Ofir ’89H and Bat Galim Sha’er, and of Naftali Fraenkel z”l and Eyal Yifrach z”l, all of whom were cruelly abducted and murdered by terrorists. The plight of the three young victims and their courageous, faith-infused families inspired the nation to prayer and brought about much sorely-needed achdut. May their memories be a blessing and may all of Am Yisrael be spared further sorrow.

The Yeshiva mourns the passing of longtime board member and supporter Mr. Herbert Smilowitz z”l, beloved husband of Marilyn Smilowitz, father of Rabbi Mark Smilowitz ’88, Gloria Mosenkis and Rachel Neiman, and grandfather of Yoni Mosenkis ’05H and Levi Teitz ’07. We extend our condolences to the entire family.

PC = Post-College  H = Hesder  MO = Migdal Oz  K = Kollel  TM = Tochnit Mitkademet • The year indicates the commencement of study
Got news? Update us online at www.haretzion.org or www.skamigdaloz.org
PUBLICATIONS

DAAT Volume 76: Eidut LeAharon (Hebrew), Bar-Ilan University Press
Edited by Moshe Halamish
The respected DAAT Journal of Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah has dedicated an entire volume in honor of Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein. The journal contains articles on HaRav Aharon’s thought and methodology, as well as original research into Jewish thought done in his honor.
Order from www.biupress.co.il

Mah Ahvati Toratecha (Hebrew & English), YHE Press
By Har Etzion staff and alumni
Edited by Yitzchak Recanati ’69H, Rav Shaul Bart ’01H and Rav Reuven Ziegler’86
This collection of articles celebrates 45 years since the Yeshiva’s founding by giving readers a taste of the many topics studied in Yeshiva – Gemara, Tanach, halacha and machshava – and delving into fundamental questions in each field. Includes articles in both English and Hebrew.
Order from office@etzion.org.il

Tanach Shebe’al Peh (Hebrew), Yediot Aharonot Books
By Rav Hanan Porat
Brings together the legendary lectures of Rav Hanan Porat delivered at Herzog College’s Tanakh Summer Study Days. Rav Hanan Porat’s approach was marked by a deep love of Eretz Yisrael and an insistence on the relevance of Torah to modern Israeli life.
Order from books@herzog.ac.il

Al Saf Ha’Aretz (Hebrew), Maggid Press
By Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot ‘81, translated by Atara Snowbell ’98MO
An original literary reading of Sefer Bamidbar reveals the spiritual messages hidden in the text. Based on articles that originally appeared on the VBM (the Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash). With introductions by Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein and Rav Yoel Bin Nun.
Order from www.korenpub.com

Livnot Eretz – The Life Story of Moshe Moskovic (Hebrew), Beit El Press
By Efrat Krauss
The biography of “Moshko”, the beloved founder of Yeshivat Har Etzion whose story personifies the history of modern Israel. Moshko, who came to Israel as a child during the British Mandate, was one of the original settlers of Gush Etzion, one of the few survivors of the Battle of 1948, and a dedicated visionary who spearheaded the renewal of Gush Etzion after the Six Day War.
Special price for YHE alumni (49 NIS instead of 69 NIS) at tel. +972-1-801-700-201.

Torah MiEtzion (Hebrew), YHE Press & Maggid Press
Har Etzion Staff
The five-volume set has been completed and is available for purchase! Original, insightful essays on the parshiot by leading Har Etzion scholars explicate the text and demonstrate the rigorous, creative interpretive method that has become a trademark of Yeshivat Har Etzion.
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