



Yeshivat Har Etzion  
Newsletter for בוגרים of MTA

## News N' Shmooze

**BRUCHIM HABAIM TO THE READERS OF 'GUSHPANKA'!**

**UNBELIEVABLY, SHAVUOT IS HERE ALREADY. PESACH JUST ENDED, SO HOW CAN WE HAVE PASSED 49 DAYS ALREADY? BUT THE BETTER QUESTION IS, WHAT CHANGED IN BETWEEN???**

**THERE ARE THREE MAIN CHAGIM IN JUDAISM, PESACH SHAVUOT AND SUKKOT; ALL THREE WITHIN JUST SIX MONTHS. PESACH AND SHAVUOT WITHIN JUST TWO. BUT WHY? WHY AREN'T THEY EVENLY SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR?**

**ANY YESHIVA TALMID, OR BOGER WORKING BACK AT HOME, CAN RELATE TO THE FEELING OF ROUTINE. ROUTINE CAN BE FOR THE GOOD OR FOR THE BAD. ONCE YOU GET INTO A GOOD ROUTINE, LIFE IS EASY, AND AVODAT HASHEM COMES NATURALLY. BUT THE FLIP SIDE, A BAD ROUTINE CAN BE VERY HARD TO BREAK.**



**THE CHAGIM ARE NOT EVENLY SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO GET INTO ROUTINE, AND ENJOY IT. SO THEN WHY HAVE THEM AT ALL? BECAUSE THEY ARE LIKE A SPIRITUAL PIT-STOP.**



**YOU START AT PESACH WITH FREEDOM, A NEW CYCLE BEGINS. 2 MONTHS LATER, A CHECKPOINT, SHAVUOT. 4 LATER, ROSH HASHANA AND YOM KIPPUR. AND IF YOU'RE STILL ON TRACK THEN, YOU'RE READY FOR THE LONG HAUL OF THE REST OF THE YEAR!  
SO ENJOY THIS SPIRITUAL PIT-STOP, RENEWAL OF THE TORAH; AND DON'T EAT TOO MUCH CHEESECAKE!**

**EDITORS OF GUSHPANKA.**

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### From the Festival of Freedom, to Matan Torah.

The first event in the Yeshiva since Pesach, was Yom Hashoa. A holocaust survivor was invited to speak of his personal experiences, followed by a powerful sicha by Rav Aharon Lichtenstein.

Yom Hazikaron was commemorated in the Yeshiva, starting with Rosh Kollel Rav Shlomo Levi telling of his experiences in Yom Kippur war, accompanied by songs befitting the mood of the day, slow and moving. During the day, many talmidim participated in the annual tekes in Kfar Etzion. Foreign students saw a short movie about Yoni Jesner HY"D and Daniel Mandel HY"D, fallen soldiers from our Yeshiva.

Yom Ha'atzmaut came, and the mood changed instantly. A festive davening, followed by dancing in Beis before the meal, and speeches from both Rav Aharon Lichtenstein Shlita"m and Rav Gigi Shlita"m speaking about the 'importance of a just society in Israel'.



However, undoubtedly, the highlight of the evening was the return of Rosh Yeshiva Rav Amital Shlita”h who hasn’t been able to visit the yeshiva since last Elul. The atmosphere was one of highly intense emotion and awe. The talmidim accompanied Rav Amital to his Makom singing “Hodu Lashem Chasdo”, where he said a few short words, wishing his talmidim good luck for rest of zman, and expressed his sadness over his inability to be here more often, but blessed them with prosperous zman with the hope that he’d return to the Beis Midrash soon.



In the daytime, the talmidim went on tiyulim in Shomron, and met up for a festive BBQ in the late afternoon.

(Editor’s note; you can search on “u-tube” for pictures and videos on

Rav Amital’s visit. A worthwhile watch!)

Lag Baomer was celebrated with the traditional bonfire in Yeshiva, with instruments and singing.

The Yeshiva is now looking forward to celebrating 40 years alongside the Yeshuv Alon Shvut this Shavuot, stressing the connection between the Yeshiva and Yeshuv. In the words of Rav Rav Yatz “Alon Shvut and Yeshivat Har Etzion is one of few instances that a Yeshuva and Yeshiva were built and grew because of each other.



## Mazal Tavs!!!

As usual, the Gushpanka is proud to wish a hearty ‘mazal tov’ to the following past talmidim on the occasion of their respective smachot.

### ALIYAH:

**DAVID BELKIN**

### ENGAGEMENTS:

**WARREN SHER AND MONIQUE PRICE**  
**ARIEL HIRSCH AND ILANA HERTZ**  
**ALON FREIDMAN AND DANI FLAX**  
**DANNI MIRVIS AND -**  
**ALPHEA DEVORAH ZELOF**



### MARRIAGES:

**DANIEL AND ANDY KAPLAN**  
**YOSSI AND TZIPPORA DINNEN**

### BIRTHS:

**JARRED AND MRS MYERS - GIRL**  
**ZAK AND ELYA GOMO- GIRL**  
**RAV HILLEL AND Yael MAIZELS - GIRL**  
**RAV AND KERRY PODLASHUK - BOY**  
**SAUL AND MICHAL KAPLAN- GIRL**  
**MARK AND DINA MYERSON-GIRL**  
**ROBBIE AND DEVORAH TOCKER-BOY**  
**CHAIM DAVID AND TZIPPORA LAZEAR-GIRL**

## Updates

### MTA

The end of Ben Hazmanim was marked by a three day tiyul to the North. The keen Mta’ers enjoyed hiking around the Dilabun waterfall, climbing the Gilboa ‘in the steps of Shaul Hamelech ZT”L’, refreshing in the



waters of Nachal Hakibbutzim, rafting on the Chizbani, and learning the history of the area in the Golan, climaxed by a tour of the kivrei tzaddikim in Tzfat.

Shabbat Hachshara, Mta again boarded the buses, destination Petach Tikva. There was a short tiyul on Friday near Bet Shemesh, to help form bonds between the other participants of the Shabbat. Over 300 youth from over 16 countries attended, making it one of the most successful Shabbat Hachsharot ever. The theme of the Shabbat was “Diversity and Unity amongst the Jewish people”. Shiurim and special

learning programs and activities were provided.

On Lag Baomer, Mta toasted 81 years of Benei Akiva, and each received their special BA chultza, handed to them personally by their dedicated madrich, Greg Bank.

On Yom Yerushalayim, there was a special BBQ lunch and shiurim plus a kumzitz of Israeli Jewish songs in the park in Yerushalayim. Afterwards, Mta joined the dancing and singing of the Rikkud Degalim.

We wish them much continued success in their year!



## ופרצת ימה וקדמה

### Kolel in South Africa

The Kolel in Johannesburg is continuing to grow strong, with the help of many Gush MTBogrim.

A visit by Rav Tabori is planned for this Shavuot, to help give Chizuk to the young Kolel.

The Kolel is currently offering גמרא shiurim be'iyun by ex-Gush talmidim Rav Ramon Widmont and Rav Doron Podlashuk, on mesechtot “Sukka” and “Brachot” respectively.

### Kolel in Sydney

The new Sydney Kolel headed by Rav Blackman and Rabbi Danny Eisenberg, is also growing.

Aron Potter and Joe Wolfson (both Alter Gushnikim), finished their three months of learning there, and returned to the Yeshiva with positive reports.

Sydney is also looking forward to its first set of Torah Mitzion “Hesder Boys” and have almost finalised accepting ‘shiur vav’ Israeli’s from the Gush!

**May both these Kollelim only continue to grow!**

### Inspirational Quote

Shavuot night, we are able to serve ה' with true “yirat ה', without the fear of the Prosecuting Angel, as ה' confounds him just as he does on Rosh Hashana. (see Tosfot Shabbat (89a))

(adapted from “Sefer Hayom Yom”)

## D'var Torah, by Rav Moshe Lichtenstein Shlit"a

Sicha From Rav Moshe Lichtenstein Shlit"a  
To all of our dear talmidim in the Southern Hemisphere,  
Greetings from Alon Shvut and Eretz Yisroel!

There is no better way to reconnect and experience afresh the bond between the Yeshiva and each of you than by sending a dvar torah that can serve both as an idea to ponder over the chag as well as an expression of the deep keshet between us. May we all have the zechut of experiencing the sublimity of Matan Torah and the gratitude of yom habikkurim as we approach the KBH on the upcoming chag.  
Chag Samech,

*Moshe Lichtenstein*

Shavout which we will soon celebrate in the beginning of Sivan, is unique amongst the chagim in that it doesn't have, halakhically speaking, a fixed date.

"Shavout, sometimes on the fifth [of Sivan], sometimes on the sixth, sometimes on the seventh" notes the Gemoroh in Rosh HaShasnah (6b). This detail, peculiar to Z'man Matan Torateinu, is not a mere idiosyncrasy or a point of interest to professional calendar makers only; rather, it reflects a basic difference between it and the other holidays. The essence of all the chagim is Man's approaching God and appearing before Him ("amidah lifnei Hashem"). Yom Tov cannot exist without this element which it both establishes and is established by it. The very act of approaching God, such as bringing a korban, creates a Yom Tov [Ta'anit 12a, Moed Koton 14b, tosfot Pesochim 50a, Or Zaruh II 432], whilst during the fixed Yamim Tovim, which are brought about by Man's being in such a spiritual state, additional korbanot are added to the regular schedule.

This, as stated above, is common to all the chagim. However, they differ as to their means of bringing about and expressing amidah lifnei Hashem, each individual day achieving it by means of the day's special essence. Pesach, which precedes Shavout, is based upon the historical element. God met us - Am Yisroel - during this period and therefore we commemorate and celebrate it. Actually, commemoration of the past, though part of the day's significance, is not the essence of the chag. A much more accurate definition would be reenactment and renewal. We reenact the events of the past and thereby renew and re-experience the relationship between Man and God and between Am Yisroel and Elokei Yisroel. Thus, while focused on the present, it is rooted in the events of the past. Therefore, the actual historical date of day and month is essential. History occurred at a fixed point in time, and exists, for purposes of re-experience and renewal of the covenant, only when the time repeats itself.

Shavout, as described and prescribed in the Torah, lacks any historical context or cause. It is Chag HaBikurim, a festival of human gratitude to God for the bounty which He has granted us. Its precipitating cause is not history, but agriculture and human need. A careful reading of the psukim in Vayikrah will reveal that the chag is the result of the Bikurim (the shte halechem) rather than their cause. Upon completing the process of Sefirah from the Omer, the Torah presents a long list of mitzvot to perform, all of whom are parts of the korban bikurim. All this is prior to, and independent of, the day's proclamation as a holiday. Only upon completion of the bikurim does the Torah tell us that the approach to God involved in this expression of gratitude creates a chag. The agricultural cycle, rather than the chronological date, is the determining factor as to Shavout. Shavout results from the Bikurim which follow the Omer [which in turn is dependent on the commencement of springtime]. The holiday thus serves to remind the farmer and his consumers that material success in the harvest season is a result of Divine grace.

Though all of the above is true of Shavout's basic character, Chazal expanded the holiday to include the celebration of Matan Torah as well. The process, whose halakhic expressions are our current choice of Kriat HaTorah and the description of the day in birchat kdushat hayom, gathered such momentum that Matan Torah has become the main motif of the chag for us. The chag now functions on the historical as well as the natural level. Who doesn't experience a feeling of awe and celebration as he walks to shul Shavout night in anticipation of le'il Matan Torah. The reading of the approach to Mt. Sinai, Ezekiel's vision of the Merkavah and the story of Ruth all merge into a symphony of revelation and acceptance, bringing about emotional involvement and religious intensity of the highest order.

However, there is also a certain danger inherent in the great emphasis placed upon Shavout's historical character. Matan Torah, due to its great dignity and sublimity, may obscure and obliterate the basic nature which the Torah prescribed for Chag HaBikurim. The problem is especially acute for modern man. When men, both great and small, were all close to the soil and their immediate sustenance depended on nature's seeming caprice, man's reliance upon his Creator and the debt of gratitude due Him could be constantly known and felt with relative ease. Insensitive was he who did not feel so. However, modern man, so far removed in place and spirit from the earth and the animals, who has actually succeeded in reducing his short term reliance upon the elements, may easily forget who the real provider of his sustenance is. The great accomplishments of modern science may blind a person to the basic situation of man's dependence on his Creator.

The materialistic philosophies prevalent nowadays also take their toll, both philosophically and psychologically, consciously and subconsciously, upon all modern men, believers as well as non-believers. No other age has been in such urgent need of the original intent of Shavout as our generation. However, we stand in danger of losing sight of this due to the chag's other elements. Our great challenge is to recapture the basic meaning and motto of Chag HaBikurim, and to be able to understand and experience the significance of all elements which comprise Yom HaBikurim and Zman Matan Torateinu.

We reenact the events of the past and thereby renew and re-experience the relationship between Man and God

# The Fun Page

## Joke of the Week:

A Bein'ish (Ben Yeshiva) was going out on a date with a girl, and decided to take her to the beach around Netanya. As sunset approached, and the sun started to make a beautiful display for them, the girl couldn't help remarking "Wow, what a beautiful sunset", to which the Beinish responded by looking at his watch and exclaiming, "No! Shkia isn't for at least another three minutes!"

## Jewish Riddle:

### HOW MANY MIZBECHOT DID THE AVOT BUILD???

Answer to last edition's riddle:

How many sons did Avraham have?

Yizchak, Yishmael, plus the sons of Keturah makes a total of 8 sons!!!

## Where in the World?

Can you guess where in the Gush Etzion region this picture was taken?



(Last edition's picture was taken in Neve Daniel)

## Did You Know???

- The Yeshiva's Kollel Gaviha in conjunction with RA"l have just released their new book "Ma'amar Hazevach".
- The talmidim sing Rav Aharon Mikarlin's nigun "Kah Echsof every Thursday evening '8 minutes before Ma'ariv' in honour of Shabbat.
- Corn Shnitzel tastes bad...

## Contact Us

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For halachic queries (to be passed on to a Ram of your choice), nostalgia and if you just simply want to be in touch:  
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Remember: this publication is about you as Bogrim as much as it is about the Yeshiva. Therefore we would love you to send in articles, stories, mazal tovs, or anything else of interest to be published in the next Gush-Panka.

The Ramim are always interested in hearing from you, what you are learning, or just “what’s up?” so please do e-mail them

Also, please keep in mind that your halachic questions can be presented to any of the Ramim in Yeshiva that your heart desires (or any number of Ramim), so please don’t hesitate to put forward your questions!

### Don't forget...

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For a daily Torah Podcast, from Yeshiva:  
[www.kimitzion.org](http://www.kimitzion.org)

For a short D'var Torah updated daily:  
[www.vbm-torah.org/salt.htm](http://www.vbm-torah.org/salt.htm)

This edition was edited by Rav Pini Cohen and Moshi Broner.

## Pictures

