

CHAVRUSA

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אין התורה נקיית אלא בחבורה (ברכות סג):

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תשע"ז Chag HaSemikhah



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Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

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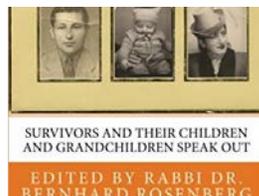
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Editorial Policies

- CHAVRUSA will consider articles and letters for publication.
- Books authored by musmakhim that are reviewed by musmakhim will be considered for publication as well.
- Obituaries about and authored by musmakhim will be considered for publication.
- CHAVRUSA aims to maintain the Hebrew pronunciation style of the author of the article. Transliterations follow the author's preference i.e. academic, Ashkenazic, modern Hebrew or the like. While we will remain consistent within articles, each author will be afforded to transliterate within his comfort level.
- CHAVRUSA reserves the right to edit articles received for publication, and will make every effort to show a draft form to the author prior to publication.
- Contributions may be sent to chavrusamagazine@yu.edu.
- In addition to CHAVRUSA magazine, articles and divrei Torah may also be submitted for publication in the weekly Rabbinic Alumni e-newsletter. Please e-mail them to rabbinicalumni@yu.edu.

Rabbis Alumni Yarchei Kallah

February 27-March 1, 2017 • Boca Raton Synagogue



Purim 5777

March 11, 2017



Siyum HaShas in Honor of Rav Hershel Schachter '67R

March 15, 2017



Yom Ha'atzmaut 5777 in Yeshiva

May 2, 2017



YU Announces Makor College Experience Program

Beginning this fall, a new partnership between Women’s League Community Residences (WLCR), a lifespan social services organization, and Yeshiva University, will make a Jewish collegiate experience accessible to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Called the Makor College Experience, the three-year, non-degree program enables young men with intellectual disabilities to become a part of the YU community on the University’s Wilf Campus as they gain skills, explore opportunities and transition to a life of independence. Students in the program will begin their day immersed in a special Judaic studies program in the Yeshiva’s batei midrash, then take self-contained courses in the afternoon that will range in focus from the liberal arts to living skills.

“The YU Wilf Campus in Washington Heights is the perfect place for such a program,” said Rabbi Menachem Penner ’95R, the Max and Marion Grill Dean of RIETS. “Here, they can have wonderful opportunities for social integration and enjoy Torah and secular learning. At the same time, they can take advantage

of the staples of Jewish life that are readily available on our campus, such as minyanim, kosher food and Jewish celebrations and activities.”

The program is tailor-made for young men with intellectual disabilities who wish to continue their education after high school; have a strong motivation to learn and gain skills; are excited to become involved in campus life; and have a long-term goal of finding gainful employment. As such, it will feature a heavy emphasis on vocational exploration and opportunities, preparing students to take on employment in administrative environments, retail and food services, and communal work. Students will work with academic advisors to choose a career field based on their interests, skills and abilities, as well as learn how to build a résumé and manage correspondence.

Equally important will be an array of social opportunities to experience life at Yeshiva, as students in the program engage in chavrusa study with their peers, attend events, connect with mentors and avail themselves of job placement options on and around campus.

While the program doesn’t grant a degree, students will graduate with a Certificate of Completion, a résumé and a reference letter for future employment. Residential opportunities will be addressed on an individual basis during the admissions process.

“This is a win-win experience for all involved,” said Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander ’86R, Vice President for University and Community Life at YU. “As a yeshiva and a university, it is fitting that we join the ranks of other colleges that offer this type of program. We look forward to the mutual learning and give-and-take our current students and those we will welcome to campus through the Makor College Experience will share.”

“For many families in our community, YU is more than just a university—it’s a dream,” said Dr. Stephen Glicksman, developmental psychologist at WLCR. “This gives a whole new meaning to the term ‘letter of acceptance’—for our students, this is next step in their growth as young Jewish men.” ■

YU and Young Israel of Fort Lee Spring Learning Series

Learning is a life-long endeavor. Yeshiva University’s Center for the Jewish Future in collaboration with Young Israel of Fort Lee (YIFL) aims to enrich members of the community with the opportunity to learn from renowned YU scholars on the other side of the George Washington Bridge.

YIFL had the privilege of hosting Dr. Daniel Rynhold, Associate Professor of Modern Jewish Philosophy, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. In the four-week course, “Maimonides and his Guide—Understanding the

Perplexed,” Dr. Rynhold examined the complexity of reading the Guide, analyzed Maimonides’ theories of prophecy, the purpose of life, and creation ex nihilo.

The learning series takes place in the fall, spring and summer semesters over four consecutive weekday mornings, and has currently launched three successful semesters. Community members noted that the program has exceeded expectations and they look forward to the continued relationship with Yeshiva.

Rabbi Zev Goldberg ’14R, rabbi

of YIFL, corroborated this point: “Our community is particularly pleased to offer this course in conjunction with Yeshiva University, an institution very dear to many of us in the congregation.”

In the effort strengthen relationships with the community, “CJF is proud to partner with the Young Israel of Fort Lee, and Rabbi Goldberg, in bringing the scholarship and inspiration of Yeshiva University to the Bergen County community,” said Rabbi Yaakov Glasser ’01R, David Mitzner Dean, CJF. ■

Straus Center and CJF Present “Pesach and the Future of Jewish Thought”

Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik '03R and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks led a discussion on “Pesach and the Future of Jewish Thought” on Sunday, March 26 2017 at Yeshiva University’s Lampport Auditorium.

In partnership with the Center for the Jewish Future, the Abraham Arbesfeld Kollel Yom Rishon and Millie Arbesfeld Midreshet Yom Rishon, the event celebrated the publication of *Books of the People: Revisiting Classic Works of Jewish Thought* by the University’s Zahava and Moshael Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought.

Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik, director of the Straus Center and assistant professor of Judaic studies, describes

Books of the People as “an extraordinary introduction to the full range of Jewish thought as well as a treasure trove of insights that have been an essential part of the intellectual heritage of the Jewish people.”

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who had been the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth for 22 years and was recently named the winner of the 2016 Templeton Prize, is the author, among many other books, of *A Guide for the Perplexed at the Seder Night: How Maimonides Can Help Us Understand the Exodus*. He recently served as Kressel and Ephrat Family University Professor of Jewish Thought at YU.

The Zahava and Moshael Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought.
Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future and the
Abraham Arbesfeld Kollel Yom Rishon and Millie Arbesfeld Midreshet Yom Rishon present

Pesach and the Future of Jewish Thought

Celebrating the publication of the Straus Center's new volume,
Books of the People: Revisiting Classic Works of Jewish Thought



Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik
Director, Straus Center
The First Work of Political Thought:
A New Approach to the Haggadah



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
A Guide for the Perplexed at the
Seder Night: How Maimonides Can
Help Us Understand the Exodus

Sunday, March 26, 2017 • 10 a.m.
Yeshiva University's Wilf Campus
500 West 185th Street • New York, NY 10033

Open to men and women—Parking available by RSVP only
Register online www.yu.edu/thought

For more information, please contact:
Rabbi Ayesh Czarka, Program Coordinator
Center for the Jewish Future
kollelyomrison@yu.edu • 212.960.5400, ext. 6826

“This program provides an opportunity to enrich the experience of the Pesach Seder with the insights and perspectives of two great scholars in Jewish thought,” said Rabbi Yaakov Glasser '01R, the David Mitzner Dean of CJF. ■

CJF Presents a Semester of Community Beit Midrash

In its fourth year, the Community Beit Midrash program has expanded its reach with over 375 participants from North and South Jersey, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Five Towns. This lecture series program is held at Stern College for Women’s Israel Henry Beren Campus each semester, where participants learn from prominent YU scholars over six consecutive weeks.

This semester in the first session, Rabbi Daniel Z. Feldman '98R '06YY, Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS and instructor at Sy Syms School of Business and Wurzelweil School of Social Work, presented a series of lectures titled “Halachic Observance in the Information Age,” exploring the relevant and complex interplay between

halachic and ethical concepts and contemporary society. Topics included 21st Century Shidduchim, Journalism, Marketing and the Truth, Intellectual Property in the Digital Age, Lashon Hara and Blogs, and Political Campaigns.

In the second session, “Prophecy in the Second Temple Era,” Rabbi Hayyim Angel '95R, instructor of Bible, examined themes in the biblical books of the Second Temple era, developing insights into the critical period of restoration and the simultaneous decline of prophecy. Topics include Ezra: A Miracle of History; Haggai: Imminent Potential for Redemption; Zechariah: G-d is Hidden but Ready to Reveal Himself; Esther: What They Didn’t Teach Us in Day

Yeshiva University proudly presents

Community Beit Midrash

at Stern College for Women's Israel Henry Beren Campus

Exciting Learning Opportunities with
Renowned Yeshiva University Faculty

<p>HALACHIC OBSERVANCE IN THE INFORMATION AGE</p>  <p>Rabbi Daniel Z. Feldman Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Lector, Director, Theological Seminary Director, Sy Syms School of Business and Wurzelweil School of Social Work, YU</p>	<p>PROPHECY IN THE SECOND TEMPLE ERA</p>  <p>Rabbi Hayyim Angel Senior Lecturer, Yeshiva University</p>
<p><small>This series will examine themes in the biblical books of the Second Temple Period. Insights into the critical period of restoration and the simultaneous decline of prophecy will be developed. Topics include: Ezra—A Miracle of History; Haggai—Imminent Potential for Redemption; Zechariah—G-d is Hidden, but Ready to Reveal Himself; Esther—What They Didn't Teach Us in the School Five and Nehemiah—Different Models of Leadership; Malachi—The End of Prophecy and Transition to the Rabbinic. Learn how strikingly relevant these books are to our modern age.</small></p>	<p><small>This series will examine themes in the biblical books of the Second Temple Period. Insights into the critical period of restoration and the simultaneous decline of prophecy will be developed. Topics include: Ezra—A Miracle of History; Haggai—Imminent Potential for Redemption; Zechariah—G-d is Hidden, but Ready to Reveal Himself; Esther—What They Didn't Teach Us in the School Five and Nehemiah—Different Models of Leadership; Malachi—The End of Prophecy and Transition to the Rabbinic. Learn how strikingly relevant these books are to our modern age.</small></p>

10:30 – 11:30 a.m. 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Course Dates: Wednesdays, February 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8, 15
Yeshiva University's Midtown Campus
215 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Open to men and women
Register online at www.yu.edu/sternlearn
Tuition: \$275

School; Ezra and Nehemiah: Different Models of Leadership; and Malachi: The End of Prophecy and Transition to the Rabbinic.

Plans for the upcoming fall semester are underway. For general questions about this program, contact sternlearn@yu.edu. ■

חג הסמיכה תשע"ז

Chag HaSemikhah 5777

The Yeshiva celebrated 133 Musmakhim from the past three years, who leave the כותלי בית מדרש to be leaders in the community, להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה.



The Musmakhim



Rabbi Moshe Abrams
Rabbi Joshua Abramson
Rabbi Arieh Ackerman
Rabbi Gershon Albert
Rabbi Jason Allen
Rabbi Avi Anderson
Rabbi Jared Anstandig
Rabbi Adam Ariel
Rabbi Yisroel Ashen*
Rabbi Mosheh Aziz
Rabbi Willie Balk
Rabbi Eliezer Barany
Rabbi Sammy Bergman
Rabbi Jacob Berman
Rabbi David Block
Rabbi Jonathan Bloom
Rabbi Abraham Borenstein
Rabbi Tuvia Brander
Rabbi Natan Brownstein
Rabbi Shamir Caplan
Rabbi Dov Carpe
Rabbi Bryan Chustckie
Rabbi Shlomo Clark
Rabbi Chaim Cohen
Rabbi Dan Cohen
Rabbi Meir Cohen
Rabbi Noah Cohen
Rabbi Yakov Danishefsky
Rabbi Yoni Danzger
Rabbi Daniel Elsant
Rabbi Joshua Elsant
Rabbi Yoel Epstein
Rabbi Matthew Faigen
Rabbi Natan Farber

Rabbi Ari Federgrun
Rabbi Roy Feldman
Rabbi Shaya First
Rabbi Caleb Fischer
Rabbi Aaron Fleksher
Rabbi Adam Friedman
Rabbi Noam Friedman
Rabbi Jonathan Fruchter
Rabbi Yechiel Fuchs
Rabbi Moshe Genack
Rabbi Yeshayahu Ginsburg
Rabbi Mark Glass
Rabbi Raphael Glickman
Rabbi Daniel Goldberg
Rabbi Noach Goldstein
Rabbi Shmuel Goldstein
Rabbi Yosef Gottesman
Rabbi Jason Grossman
Rabbi Scott Hoberman
Rabbi Dovi Hochbaum
Rabbi Michael Hoenig
Rabbi Yehuda Israel
Rabbi Andrew Israeli
Rabbi Yossi Jacobs
Rabbi Michael Kahn
Rabbi Raphael Karlin
Rabbi Shaya Katz
Rabbi Joshua Klein
Rabbi Nuriel Klinger
Rabbi Mordechai Kornbluth
Rabbi Yosef Kornbluth
Rabbi Yehuda Kravetz
Rabbi Shmuel Kresch
Rabbi Ben Kurzer

Rabbi Ari Lamm
Rabbi Michael Langer
Rabbi Yaakov Lasson
Rabbi Simcha Lauer
Rabbi Hart Levine
Rabbi Eliron Levinson
Rabbi Avi Libman
Rabbi Bradley Lipman
Rabbi Ari Lipsky
Rabbi Michael Macks
Rabbi Yoni Mandelstam
Rabbi Joshua Maslow
Rabbi Alon Meltzer
Rabbi Yair Menchel
Rabbi Yoni Miller
Rabbi Ari Mirzoeff
Rabbi Steven Nemetz
Rabbi Yechiel Neuburger
Rabbi Alex Ozar
Rabbi Elchanan Poupko*
Rabbi Mordy Prus
Rabbi Ari Pruzansky
Rabbi Yitzy Radner
Rabbi Moshe Rapps
Rabbi Alvin Reinstein
Rabbi Sam Reinstein
Rabbi Jared Rosenfeld
Rabbi Itamar Rosensweig
Rabbi Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig
Rabbi David Roth
Rabbi Willie Roth
Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein
Rabbi Moshe Rube
Rabbi Shmuli Sagal

Rabbi Emmanuel Sanders
Rabbi Gidon Schneider
Rabbi Uri Schneider
Rabbi Ashie Schreier
Rabbi Elliot Schrier
Rabbi David Schwartz
Rabbi Elie Schwartz
Rabbi Moshe Schwartz
Rabbi Shaul Seidler-Feller
Rabbi Ely Shestack
Rabbi Mordechai Shichtman
Rabbi Joseph Silverman
Rabbi Moshe Spira
Rabbi David Stein
Rabbi Dovid Strauss
Rabbi Jason Strauss
Rabbi Yaakov Taubes
Rabbi Sam Taylor
Rabbi Yosef Venoziou
Rabbi Eli Wagner
Rabbi Moshe Watson
Rabbi Gabi Weinberg
Rabbi Yosef Weinberger
Rabbi Mark Weingarten
Rabbi Michael Weingarten
Rabbi Mordecai Weisel
Rabbi Elliot Wiesenfeld
Rabbi Siman Tov Yanetz*
Rabbi Yosef Yanetz
Rabbi Yeshaya Zimmerman
Rabbi Daniel Zuckerman

*Yadin Yadin

Yeshiva Community Celebrates RIETS Chag HaSemikhah

More Than 130 Newly-Ordained Rabbis Celebrate at Triennial Convocation

The streets of Yeshiva University's Wilf Campus hummed with excitement as more than 130 new graduates of RIETS gathered to celebrate their ordination at the March 19 Chag HaSemikhah.

Together with their families, friends and Roshei Yeshiva, the musmakhim danced and sang together outside Zysman Hall as they marked the continuity of a beloved mesorah being passed down to a new generation of spiritual leaders.

In a day filled with festivities and brimming with pride, the graduates of the 2014-2017 classes joined more than 3,000 rabbinic alumni who have gone on to become distinguished Orthodox rabbis, scholars, educators and leaders around the world.

"In today's celebrants, Yeshiva embraces the continuity of our profound mission of advancing Torah values, so as to guide, teach and lead our people and the world to a better place," said President Richard M. Joel. "As musmakhim of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, you have been trained in leadership, you have been prepared to serve as our ambassadors of nobility, spreading the warmth of Torah by constantly fanning its flames. Your actions matter—your commitment to Torah inspires people and elevates the world."

President-elect Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman '95R, looking out over the musmakhim, said, "If you are to be rabbis, you must impart chochmah and exude anavah ... but you must live with ahavah—with love. If you do so, you will make God's Name more beloved in this world."

The Chag HaSemikhah ceremony took place in the Nathan Lampport Auditorium at Zysman Hall, with video



hookups in the Harry Fischel Beit Midrash and YU's Caroline and Joseph S. Gruss Institute in Jerusalem, and an online webcast. Approximately 1,800 people were on campus for the event, and close to 8,000 people viewed it online. The musmakhim currently living in Israel will hold a ceremony at the Gruss Institute on June 8, 2017.

This class of rabbis represents an internationally diverse group, hailing from five continents and more than 50 North American cities. While most of the musmakhim will remain engaged in either full-time post-semikhah Torah study or in religious work such as Jewish education, the pulpit, outreach or nonprofit management, many will pursue careers in other professions, including medicine and law.

Rabbi Elie Schwartz '17R, originally from Cleveland and now living in Chicago, spoke for many of the

musmakhim when he said that a primary impulse in pursuing rabbinic ordination was the "desire to professionalize my passion for Torah" by becoming a rabbi. This fall, he and his wife Miriam will become Orthodox Union-Jewish Life on Campus educators at the University of Maryland.

Rabbi Jason Grossman '17R, from Lawrence, New York—grandson of the late RIETS Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Zerubavel "Zelo" Schussheim '48R, zt"l—sought semikhah because he felt the need to "serve the community at large and help people develop their relationship with God and reach higher spiritual levels." He is currently working as a chaplain at St. John's Hospital in Far Rockaway.

As they go on to build their careers, the new musmakhim will benefit from the unique education they received at RIETS. In addition to intense religious study with renowned Torah scholars, the seminary

offers an enhanced Rabbinic Professional Education Program designed to meet the communal and spiritual needs of today's Jewish communities.

Students receive extensive training in topics critical for public leadership positions, such as pastoral psychology, public speaking and community building, all taught by renowned experts and rabbis. They're also exposed to contemporary halakhic issues in bioethics, technology and business to prepare them for real-world dilemmas they may face.

A new mental health emphasis also provides musmakhim with critical self-care tools as they manage the stresses and challenges of a life of public service. Rabbi Yossi Jacobs '17R pursued semikhah concurrently with a psychology degree because he wanted to be able "to integrate the two in order to help people by empowering their Torah understanding while also helping them face their challenges in life."

During the ceremony, RIETS honored Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel Rabbi Hershel Schachter '67R, Nathan and Vivian Fink Distinguished Professorial Chair in Talmud, with the HaRav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik zt"l Aluf Torah Award.

"You bring the rigor of Talmud, the

prodigious knowledge of Kol HaTorah Kula, the open warmth of a rebbe, the courage of a posek, and the understanding heart of a gentle man, to enrich our world," said President Joel to Rabbi Schachter. "As a talmid muvhak of the Rav, much of what you teach others is your understanding of the legacy of the Rav. How appropriate that your Yeshiva honors our Rav Muvhak with the conferral of the HaRav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik Aluf Torah Award. As we recognize you on the 50th anniversary of your serving as a Rosh Yeshiva, and celebrate you at this Chag HaSemikhah, we invite our young musmachim to savor and anticipate how they can impact on our world."

RIETS also commissioned the writing of a Sefer Torah in Rabbi Schachter's honor, with events in Los Angeles; New York City; Passaic and Teaneck, New Jersey; and the Five Towns to enable Rabbi Schachter's talmidim to participate in the process.

Chairman Emeritus Rabbi Julius Berman '59R was honored with the Eitz Chaim Award at the Chag HaSemikhah. "You have spent your life championing the causes of the Jewish people," President Joel told Rabbi Berman. "The Eitz Chaim Award, our Yeshiva's most prestigious honor given to a lay leader, affords us the opportunity to recognize

the greatest description that we can have of you—a lifelong Ben HaYeshiva."

In addition, special acknowledgement was given to RIETS alumni whose grandsons received semikhah at this year's ceremony, as well as to musmakhim celebrating their 50th anniversary. All the musmakhim heard divrei bracha from Rabbi Shlomo Amar, former Chief Rabbi of Israel and current Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem.

"The Chag HaSemikhah is a singular event celebrating Yeshiva, our community and our future," said Rabbi Menachem Penner '95R, the Max and Marion Grill Dean of RIETS and Undergraduate Torah Studies at YU. "Our opportunity to honor Rav Hershel Schachter and Rabbi Julius Berman takes this excitement to an even higher level."

Following the ordination ceremony, RIETS held a Gala Evening of Celebration honoring Rabbi Schachter and Rabbi Berman at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In addition, philanthropist Dr. David Arbesfeld was presented with the RIETS Service Award. The dinner raised more than \$1 million for RIETS. To learn more or to support RIETS, visit www.yu.edu/riets. ■





Chag HaSemikhah Remarks

Richard M. Joel

President, RIETS

Today marks the fourth and final opportunity I have to address a Chag HaSemikhah as Yeshiva's president. It has been a sacred privilege.

Today, we celebrate over 130 young men of extraordinary quality and character who I have seen grow in learning and in middos and in professionalism.

And today, I know that you join me in celebrating the extraordinary Roshei Yeshiva and Hanhala of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan whom I have had the pleasure to partner with.

In today's celebrants, Yeshiva embraces the continuity of our profound mission of advancing Torah values, so as to guide, teach and lead our people and the world to a better place. Almost 40 years ago, President Norman Lamm stood at this podium and shared the following message:

"Scholarship and piety are necessary, but they are not sufficient. A spiritual person is one whose ideals and practice transcend his self-interest, whose deportment and, indeed, very presence symbolizes the values of Torah."

Years before that, at an earlier Chag HaSemikhah, his predecessor, Dr. Samuel Belkin zt'l, shared the message that, "There is one thing we must remember always. Just as we have faith in God, and just as we have faith in the Torah of Moses, so let us have faith in the Jewish people, in the continuous miracle of its rebirth. Let us have faith in the miracle of spiritual unity between G-d, His Torah and His people, which is summed up in the sayings of our Sages, "Israel, the Torah and the Holy One Blessed Be He, are

one." ישראל ואורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא חד הוא.

And almost 85 years ago, our first president, Dr. Bernard Revel zt'l, stood at this podium and said the following, "Out of the portals of this sanctuary of the spirit shall come a Jewish leadership—lay and spiritual—conscious of its unique heritage, striving to develop in this land a Jewish life, culturally creative and spiritually satisfying, based upon the eternal foundations of the Torah, helping our communities to fuller self-expression, and richer contribution to the cultural and spiritual values of our society."

So I stand here today on the shoulders of those who came before me, and I contemplate, what can I possibly add to this discussion? To this continuing conversation?

To me, parashat Ki Tisa offers a precious perspective on how we, klei kodesh, and lay kodesh, are to lead our lives, a message that has been a defining insight for my life and I think for that of my wife and children.

Perek lamed gimmel details an amazing discussion between Moshe and the Ribbono Shel Olam, culminating with Moshe beseeching God to let Moshe see G-d's face, *Hareini na es kevodecha*. G-d responds

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תוּכַל לִרְאוֹת אֶת פָּנַי כִּי לֹא יִרְאֵנִי הָאָדָם וְחַי
And He said, "You will not be able to see My face, for man shall not see Me and live."

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הִנֵּה מְקוֹם אֲתִי וְנִצַּבְתָּ עַל הָעִוֵּר
And the Lord said: "Behold, there is a place next to me, and you shall stand on the rock."

Such a dramatic moment—Moshe wants to see G-d's face. As close as Moshe was to the Ribbono Shel Olam, he was hungry for more. He wanted to see G-d's

face, and G-d says no. But then G-d says "stand beside me."

Rav Sampson Raphael Hirsh explains: הִנֵּה מְקוֹם אֲתִי — there is a place next to Me. One and only one point of view exists as the highest goal to be attained by the highest human mind, even for Moses, only one legitimate point of view, and that is not to try and get a sight of God, but, elevated by God, and godliness, to look at men and the human condition from a height, next to God, near to God, from God's point of view, to understand and appreciate all men and all conditions of human life.

This master insight—the human being is not supposed to see G-d—it's not our realm. Our goal is to stand beside God. Our role is not to see G-d, but to see as G-d sees, and strive to do as G-d does.

Beloved musmakhim: Hear the message from four presidents of this Yeshiva, and consider that:

Be a caring role model;
 Believe in the Jewish People;
 Dare to make a difference in the world;
 And strive to see as G-d sees and do as G-d does—*vehalachta b'drachav*.

As musmakhim of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, you have been trained in leadership, you have been prepared to serve as our ambassadors of nobility, spreading the warmth of Torah by constantly fanning its flames. Your actions matter—your commitment to Torah inspires people and elevates the world.

Esther and I are entrusting our children and our grandchildren to you. Partner with them and with all our children to advance the Torah and advance the world.

V'cheyn yehi ratzon. ■



What Does it Take To Be a Transformative Rabbi?

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman'95R

President Elect, RIETS

Over the course of the last few months I have had the great pleasure to meet a number of Yeshiva University's fine rabbinical graduates. Allow me to share the story of one particular encounter.

A number of weeks ago, I was introduced to a young man and I asked him to tell me a little bit about his time in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. He replied by recounting to me a very difficult situation that arose in the course of his family life several years ago. Even with the distance of time it was clear that this situation was too emotionally charged for him to describe in great detail. But whatever the exact circumstances, the situation required expert halakhic guidance. So he approached his teacher, one of the senior *roshei yeshiva* in this institution, explained the situation, and asked him for his counsel.

"Do you know what his response was?" the young man asked me.

"My rebbe began to cry. It was one of the darkest moments in my life. There was not much that anyone could give me. But he gave me his tears. My family and I look back on that difficult time with much grief and regret. But completely intertwined with that experience is the memory of a rabbi who both answered my halakhic question and honored my pain. We will never forget that as long as we live."

This is the story of a person whose life was transformed by his encounter with a rabbinic leader and it raises a broader question. What does it mean to be a rabbi? What does it take for a rabbi to be a transformative force in this world?

The answer may lie in a crucial

Talmudic teaching. The Torah commands: "Love the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 6:5). While this verse appears straightforward, the Gemara (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 86a) cites a rabbinic interpretation that points to an additional layer of meaning.

It is taught: "Love the Lord your God," such that the name of God should become beloved through you.

How can a mere human being make God's Name even more beloved? The Gemara continues:

One should read Torah, and study Mishnah; serve Torah scholars; and be pleasant in all one's personal interactions.

Follow this tripartite formula, the Talmud advises, and the name of God will become more beloved in the world.

There is a debate among the Talmudic commentators over how to interpret this teaching. The simple reading of the Gemara, which appears to be accepted by all of the medieval authorities who simply cite it verbatim, is that it comprises part of the general

command to love God. As such it applies to each and every Jew. Rambam, however, prescribes this teaching as a requirement for "a person of great wisdom," and places it specifically in the context of the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem*, the sanctification of God's Name. The notion of a sliding scale of behavioral expectations, depending on how learned one may be, is part of a larger theme in Rambam's works. But for the moment I wish only to highlight that according to Rambam, the sage is not only required to adhere to a higher standard of conduct, he is also distinguished by a unique set of opportunities. In this case, the one who is recognized as a *chakham*, a sage, possesses an extraordinary opportunity to sanctify God's Name in this world. People judge religion by its adherents. Their experiences of Judaism, Torah and God are shaped and inspired by their interactions with His messengers. On some level this applies to all of us who are clearly identified as Jews, but it applies even more so to rabbis. As such,



the very idea of receiving semikhah, rabbinic ordination, carries with it great consequences. For each of you today who are being publicly recognized as *musmakhim*—ordained rabbis—are not only being rewarded for your years of Torah study, but are also being granted an enormous opportunity to fundamentally alter the world in which we live.

How can you best capitalize on this opportunity? How can you most effectively utilize your strengths to sanctify God's Name in this world? Using the Gemara as a homiletical guide, allow me to suggest a three-pronged strategy.

First, you must speak with *chokhmah*—with wisdom—and to do this you must learn deeply: “Read Torah and study Mishnah.”

Your greatest resource is the Torah; your greatest strength is that you represent a 3,000-year-old tradition. You must be sure to do so judiciously and authentically. And so you must be learned. You have already succeeded in completing a rigorous process of *semikhah* that required you to have displayed a mastery of Torah. But you must continue your studies. The vistas of Torah are vast, and you must explore them with great passion and vigor.

But more than just developing as *lamdanim*, as rabbis you also need to develop a deep understanding of the broader world and modern reality. You will need to speak directly to the hopes and concerns of this generation, in

the words of Matthew Arnold, “to the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds,” and directly relate to the specific challenges and opportunities of our times. Now this may sometimes require you to challenge some elements of contemporary culture. But to be an effective and respected countercultural voice as opposed to one who is written off as simply out of touch you will need to acquire a deep familiarity with the intellectual and cultural milieu of our day.

In this context, in order for one to speak with *chokhmah*, one needs to have deep insight into both Torah and reality.

The Gemara's second suggestion is to act with *anavah*—with humility: “Serve Torah scholars.”

Know what you know and know what you do not know. As the Mishnah says, the wise man is not the one who knows everything but the one who continuously learns from others. Be secure enough in yourself to seek advice and counsel.

This is of course true in respect to your rabbis, teachers and peers. You have a large support network here at Yeshiva University that will always be ready to assist you. I myself, all throughout my years in the rabbinate until today, have been deeply blessed with the ability to turn to my rabbis and teachers at Yeshiva University as resources and guides to help me think through challenges of great complexity and consequence. But it is also true of your lay leadership, parents, and students. Our community is filled

with thoughtful professionals, sensitive parents, and people of substance with a wealth of experience. They have much to offer and much from which you can learn. Take advantage of their insight. Learn from their life lessons. They are not just your parishioners, they are your partners.

You will need to lead and speak with wisdom, but also approach your new role with the humility to learn from all those around you. Impart *chokhmah*; exude *anavah*.

The Gemara's third and final suggestion is to behave with *ahavah*, with love: “Be pleasant in all one's personal interactions.”

I only began genuinely to understand the possibility of loving someone outside of one's family as oneself after working as a rabbi, for my community became my extended family. Working with them day and night building our synagogue, facing deficits and challenges, formulating ambitious plans for expansion and success; grieving with them over the loss of a loved one, adding a name to a sick child who suddenly fell perilously ill or celebrating the birth of a child to a couple who previously thought that they would never have children. I thought of them in my personal prayers, spent sleepless nights considering ways to ease their troubles, and felt true joy upon hearing of their triumphs. This, too, is what you have learned by example from your *rebbeim* and teachers at Yeshiva—that the responsibility of the rabbi, educator and





Personal engagement with Torah and mitzvot, living a life that accents service over entitlements, giving as opposed to receiving, and a life in which one participates in the incredible unfolding story of the Jewish people and seeks the betterment of the broader society—such a life is filled with great meaning, purpose and true joy.

spiritual guide is to love one's students and congregants, to be moved by them and inspired by them.

If you are to be rabbis, you must impart *chokhmah*, exude *anavah* ... but you must live with *ahavah*, with love.

And if you do so, you will make God's Name more beloved in this world.

You our dear students have an enormous gift and opportunity, and this is especially true today. There are those who think that in today's climate of nihilistic individualism, in which claims to authority or transformative leadership are mocked, the role of the rabbi, educator and spiritual guide is diminished. But in truth the opposite is the case. These roles are even more necessary today. People naturally seek meaning and purpose; they will always find their role models and sources of inspiration. The question is whether they will find it outside of our tradition or within our tradition. The rabbi is certainly needed, but what kind of rabbi? What does it take for a rabbi to be a transformative force in this world?

Today, perhaps more than ever before, it is to embrace this formula of *chokhmah*, *anavah* and *ahavah*. It is the rabbi who speaks with sophistication and humility; who views the Jewish world not through the prism of allies and

adversaries, but of partners and potential partners. It is the rabbi who when faced with a halakhic dilemma responds not only to the question but also to the person; who not only has the depth of knowledge to know the answers but also the humanity to cry. It is the rabbi who is not fueled by fury or self-righteousness but by love, care and concern.

It is this kind of rabbi who is deeply needed in our world.

This is your gift and this is your opportunity. You as rabbis, educators, and spiritual guides can show by word and deed that personal engagement with Torah and *mitzvot*, living a life that accents service over entitlements, giving as opposed to receiving, and a life in which one participates in the incredible unfolding story of the Jewish people and seeks the betterment of the broader society—that such a life is filled with great meaning, purpose and true joy.

You can bring God into this world, sanctify His name and sanctify the lives of those around you.

What a *berakhah*—what a blessing! *Ashrekha!* What an inspiring and meaningful manner in which to channel your energies and to which you may devote your unique talents and skills.

Allow me to close, then, with the

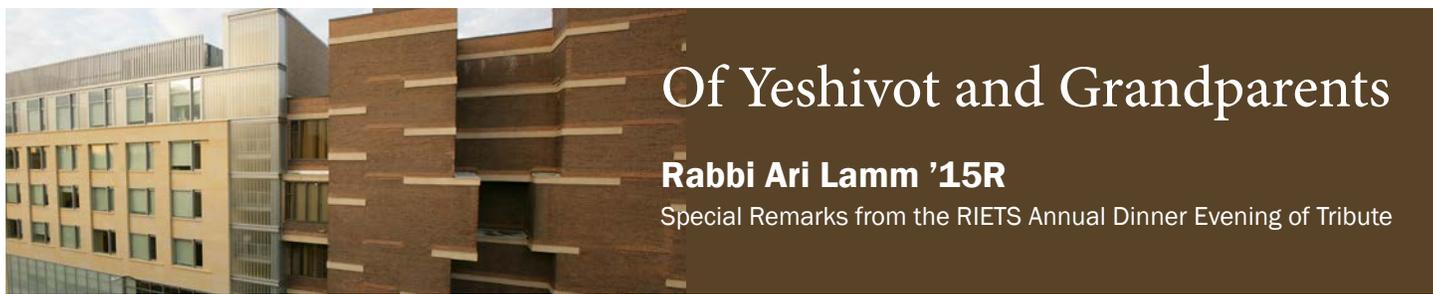
words of benediction that in the *girsah*, or textual version, of the medieval commentator, Rosh (R. Asher b. Yechiel), serve as the coda to our Gemara. The Gemara concludes this section with the assurance of what will happen if one behaves with *chokhmah*, *anavah* and *ahavah*.

What will humanity say of such a person? 'Fortunate is his father, his mother, and his teacher who taught him Torah ... see how pleasant are his ways, how proper his deeds. It is about such a one as this that the Lord says, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified (Isaiah 49:3)."

May the praises of the prophet be said about you as well, our dear *talmidim*. May you continue to be a source of great pride to our Yeshiva and to your families, May you be a blessing to all those with whom you come into contact. And through your actions May God's Name become even more beloved in this world.

We need you. The world needs you. *Alu ve-Hatzlikhu*—rise up, and find great success. ■

This speech was originally published in Tablet magazine, at tabletmag.com, and is reprinted with permission.



Of Yeshivot and Grandparents

Rabbi Ari Lamm '15R

Special Remarks from the RIETS Annual Dinner Evening of Tribute

I confess to some cognitive dissonance in paying simultaneous tribute to both my grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm '51R, and our Yeshiva. After all, for all that my grandfather is inextricably bound to this institution, in many ways he represents its opposite, or at least its stark counterpart.

For instance, our Yeshiva is the institutional personification of Lithuania, with all the cerebral, academic precision of that tradition. My grandfather, by contrast, represents the heritage of Galicia with all its witty, whimsical creativity. Our Yeshiva taught us the majesty of *tzvei dinim*, two concepts underpinning a rabbinic dispute, while my grandfather always marveled at the possibilities of *shivim panim*, of Torah's seventy faces. The foundation of our curriculum in Yeshiva consists of the Gemara and rishonim—the raw material out of which halakhah and halakhic values are shaped. But whenever I learned with my grandfather, we would study teshuvot—the literary culmination of the halakhic process.

Is there not then some unresolvable tension at the heart of this evening?

A resolution may emerge from the very first teshuvah my grandfather and I ever studied together, a teshuvah by his grandfather, R. Yehoshua Baumol zt"l, the *Emek Halakhah*. Therein, the *Emek Halakhah* wonders how the Gemara could relate that R. Yishmael—having transgressed on Shabbos—recorded in his ledger that upon the Temple's rebuilding he would bring a korban chatat, a sin offering. After all, doesn't

the Gemara in Menahot assert that simply reciting the Parshat HaChatat—the pesukim describing the chatat—is sufficient substitute for bringing the offering? Surely R. Yishmael recited korbanot every morning, so why would he feel the obligation to bring a fresh korban in the Messianic Era?

The *Emek Halakhah* ultimately answers by referring to the halakhic principle *kohanim okhelim be'alim mitkaperin*. According to this dictum, a chatat, even if formally valid, does not achieve atonement for its bearer unless the meat of the chatat is consumed by the kohanim, by the priests. Now, simply reciting the Parshat HaChatat, according to Rabbi Baumol, is equivalent solely to the act of sacrificing the chatat. But since such a recitation provides no sustenance to any actual kohanim, it does not result in genuine atonement. R. Yishmael therefore resolved that when the opportunity presented itself in the age of the Third Temple, he would bring a new, more effective korban from which he could provide meat for the kohanim, notwithstanding having already recited the Parshat HaChatat.

In other words, we may conceive of reciting the Parshat HaChatat in two ways. First, it is an abstract act with conceptual consequences. Has a theoretically valid substitute korban been offered or not? The answer is the same no matter who brings the korban, and whether or not a kohen has eaten from it. This sort of analysis treats all people equally.

But in addition, reciting the Parshat HaChatat is a particular action, with



Rabbi Ari Lamm

human consequences. Will a kohen who might in another era have served in the Temple have something to eat today, or will he go hungry? While you may formally discharge your obligation by reciting these pesukim, realize that this decision may dramatically impact the daily existence of a living, breathing human being. There are kohanim who may not eat on account of our having discharged our obligations merely through mouthing the Parshat HaChatat.

And herein, I believe, lies the coherence—even the necessity—of honoring both our Yeshiva and not just my grandfather, but all our grandfathers, and all of our families. That is, for Torah to thrive—for our religion to become not just a dull habit, but an acute fever—we require both a Yeshiva and our grandparents.

We require our Yeshiva for the purpose of treating us all equally. Our Yeshiva teaches us that no matter who we are, we all must learn the same Rambam, the same *Milchamot*, the same *Ketzot*.

By doing so, our Yeshiva transforms us from individuals into a united collective. Into Klal Yisrael writ large. Our Yeshiva represents the formal korban itself.

But our grandparents—and in my life, my grandfather especially—always remind us of the reverse. They are the kohanim

who must eat from the korban. They remind us of the human element of Torah. They remind us of the beautifully unique individuals whose contributions shaped our personal journeys through the peaks and valleys of halakhah. And they remind us of all the souls that are impacted by

our Torah. They remind us that Torah has not just metaphysical consequences, but world-historical consequences.

May it be God's will that as we go forth into careers of Avodat Hashem, we bring pride and nachat to both our Yeshiva and our grandparents. ■

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kol she-hu), explains that talmud Torah, *au fond*, is not a personal endeavor but a transgenerational enterprise: A *kinyan ha-Torah* is only achieved by securing three generations of talmidei chakhamim. A grandfather can fulfill *li-lmod*, becoming a talmid chakham himself, but this does not constitute a *kinyan ha-Torah*. A grandfather can further accomplish *li-lmod u-lelameid*, raising his children to become talmidei chakhamim, but this too does not constitute a *kinyan ha-Torah*. A *kinyan ha-Torah* is only achieved when a grandfather imparts his Torah to his children and those children pass it forward to their children: *li-lmod u-lelameid*, and that *le-lameid* kindles a further *le-lameid*.

This is why the berakhah of *la-asok be-divrei Torah* is complimented by *ve-ha'arev na*. The ma'aseh ha-mitzvah of talmud Torah would be incomplete if it didn't prospectively aim towards securing a *kinyan ha-Torah* over three generations. Without the perspective of *ve-ha'arev na*, talmud Torah would be a sterile enterprise that withers and decays with the passage of time.

It is this very idea that the Gemara in *Nedarim* 81a has in mind when it maintains:

ומפני מה אין מצויין תלמידי חכמים לצאת
תלמידי חכמים מבניהם וכו' שאין מברכין בתורה
תחילה.

The Gemara asks, why is it the case that talmidei chakhamim, by and large,

The ma'aseh ha-mitzvah of talmud Torah would be incomplete if it didn't prospectively aim towards securing a *kinyan ha-torah* over three generations. Without the perspective of *ve-ha'arev na*, talmud Torah would be a sterile enterprise that withers and decays with the passage of time.

fail to produce grandchildren who are also talmidei chakhamim? The Gemara answers, because the grandfathers didn't recite the berakhah of *ve-ha'arev na* (see Rashi s.v. *she-ein*). They didn't study with the perspective of securing a *kinyan ha-Torah* over three generations.

Tonight we are celebrating the realization of a *kinyan ha-Torah* that was initiated at a Chag HaSemikhah three generations ago, a *kinyan ha-Torah* that is realized tonight through the securing of three generations of talmidei chakhamim in one family.

My grandfather, Rabbi Bernard Rosensweig 'SOR, shlit"a, initiated his

kinyan ha-Torah some sixty-seven years ago when he received his semikhah here at RIETS, under the tutelage of his esteemed *rebbeim*, Rav Moshe Shatzkes, zt"l, and the Rav, zt"l. He was then *marbitz Torah*, first as a *mara de-asra* in Toronto and later in New York, and also as president of the Rabbinical Council of America, where he worked closely with the Rav in navigating American Orthodoxy through the high seas that threatened to overwhelm it.

My grandfather passed that mesorah to my father, Rabbi Michael Rosensweig '80R, shlit"a, and sent him to study with his rebbe, the Rav, under whom my father received his semikhah some thirty-seven years ago. My father then sent me and my brothers to study with his rebbe, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l, in Eretz Yisrael—And I've now spent the last nine years studying in my father's shiur here at RIETS. Such is the transgenerational enterprise of talmud Torah, rebbe to talmid, father to son.

Today's Chag HaSemikhah is the realization of that transgenerational *kinyan ha-Torah* our grandfathers began at their Chag HaSemikhah three generations ago. As for me and my chavirim, we look forward to the day when we can stand here and witness the realization of our *kinyan ha-Torah*—a *kinyan* we commenced at the Chag HaSemikhah today. ■



Rabbi Andrew Israeli '17R and Rabbi Michael Hoenig '14R Bring Passion for Torah to Local High Schools



The Yeshiva community celebrated the ordination of more than 130 musmakhim at its Chag HaSemikhah Convocation on March 19, 2017. While most will remain engaged in either full-time post-semikhah Torah study or religious work—Jewish education, the pulpit, outreach or non-profit work—many will pursue careers in other professions, including medicine and law.

It's no accident that Rabbi Andrew Israeli and Rabbi Michael Hoenig, two new rabbis who just celebrated their semikhah, find themselves back in the classroom; from a young age, both were driven to teach Torah and inspire others.

"I want to spread a love of Torah, a love of *ruchniut*, a love of Hashem and mitzvot and our beautiful tradition and heritage. I want to help my students in their everyday lives by empowering them to feel good about themselves as people, and by being a good role model for them," said Rabbi Hoenig, who is a rebbe and chessed coordinator at Torah Academy of Bergen County in Teaneck, New Jersey.

Rabbi Israeli, a rebbe at Yeshivat Frisch in Paramus, New Jersey, felt richly impacted by the Judaic studies teachers in his own life and wanted to pay it forward. "I have had exposure to many rebbeim over the course of my life and have really been influenced by them. I want nothing more than to have that same influence on my students," he said.

To accomplish that, Rabbi Israeli knew he had to immerse himself in intensive, full-time Torah study. RIETS was the perfect place to do it. "As an



Rabbi Andrew Israeli '17R

undergraduate in Yeshiva College, I had met many of the rebbeim, and continued those relationships into semicha and beyond," said Rabbi Israeli. "I also knew that I wanted to learn in Eretz Yisrael, and the Gruss Kollel on the YU Israel campus was a perfect place for me to continue my learning while spending time in Yerushalayim. The friends that I made in the *beit midrash* over the years were also unparalleled. To spend time with guys who were extremely motivated and motivating was such a crucial factor in my time at RIETS, which really pushed me to take advantage of everything it had to offer."

What RIETS offered was more than just high-level textual Judaic studies and close mentorship from Roshei Yeshiva—it was preparation for every aspect of Jewish communal leadership. "I chose to study at RIETS because it was the most well-rounded program, with incredible rebbeim and world-class talmidei



Rabbi Michael Hoenig '14R

chachamim who have tremendous love for Torah and an outlook on life that teaches you how to be a *kiddush Hashem* in the world," said Rabbi Hoenig. "YU semicha is the whole picture, not only in terms of the learning but also in terms of fully preparing you for all the responsibilities you face as an educator or rabbi. If you take advantage of this program, you're ready to go, energized, inspired."

For Rabbis Hoenig and Israeli, the close relationships they were able to build with rebbeim at RIETS have been especially important to their careers as mechanchim. "There are rebbeim I speak to all the time for my own family and students," said Rabbi Hoenig. "Rav Eliakim Koenigsberg '92R, Rav Baruch Simon '89R, Rav Zvi Sobolofsky 91'R—they're lifelines in every sense of the word. The advice they give me, I pass on to my students. They taught me how to live, give advice, be a thinking person, a

calculated person. Life is tough, and that's why I think the rebbeim at RIETS are an incredible compass on how to behave."

"As an undergrad I spent six semesters learning with Rav Koenigsberg," said Rabbi Israeli. "As I continued into semicha, I went to learn in the Gruss Kollel where I spent two full years learning with Rabbi Dovid Miller '71R and Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh '97R. I also had the zechut to develop very close relationships with Rav Hershel Schachter '67R, Rav Mayer Twersky '85R and Rav Zvi Sobolofsky throughout my six summers in the NCSY Kollel."

The two also benefited from the diversity of their fellow muskmakchim. "There's such a range of hashkofot and personalities in the program, and that's also a beautiful thing," said Rabbi Hoenig. "It's incredible how RIETS accommodates a wide range of philosophies and everyone walks out equipped to serve their own communities. I don't think you could find that anywhere else in the world."

In addition to their rabbinic training, Rabbi Hoenig and Rabbi Israeli sought out the most advanced teaching techniques and knowledge in Jewish education as they earned their master's degrees at YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish

Education and Administration. "Dr. Pelcovitz in particular was unbelievable—his advice, wisdom and the Jewish values he brought to his course were incredible, and the teaching modeled by Dr. Ilana Turetsky was very eye-opening and informative," said Rabbi Hoenig.

"When I look at my rebbeim and what they have been able to accomplish with their talmidim, I am immediately impacted and feel a responsibility to push myself to be the best rebbe I can be."

Armed with that holistic preparation, mentorship and deep familiarity with Torah studies, Rabbi Hoenig and Rabbi Israeli have both quickly become beloved at their schools—and the feeling is mutual.

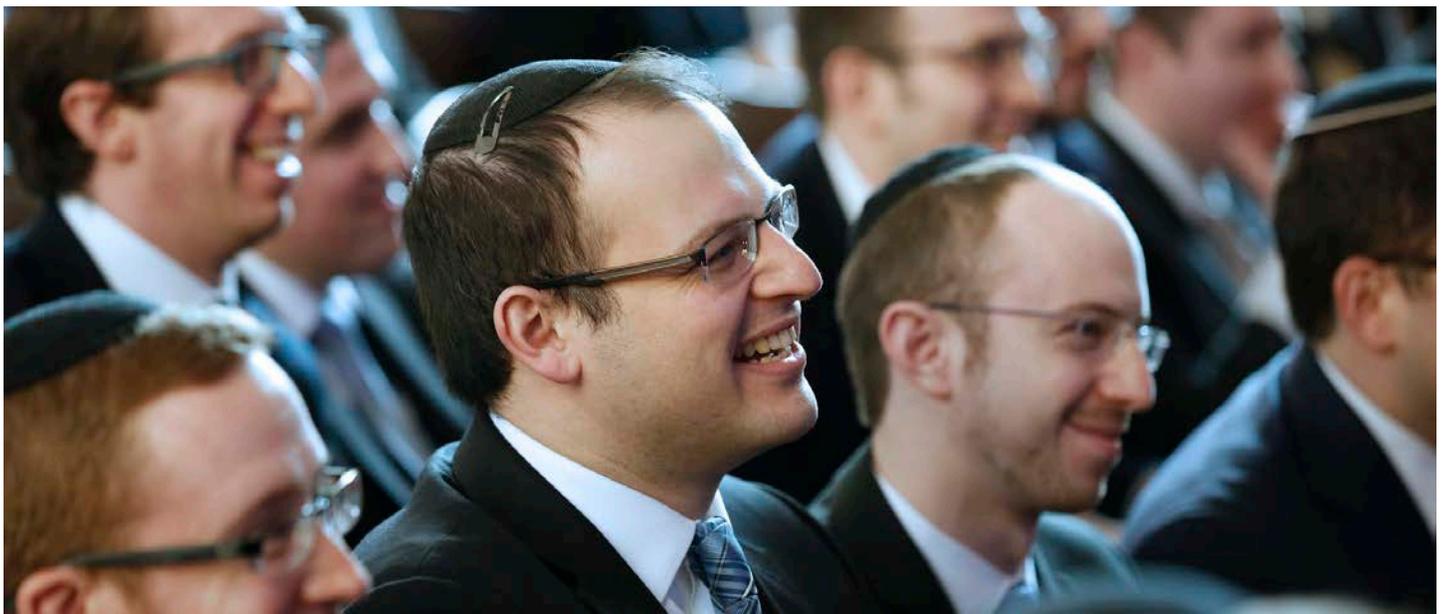
"Being in chinuch, I find my days to be overflowing with meaning," said Rabbi Israeli. "I have the ability to sit one-on-one with students and engage and analyze

texts that I remember sitting one-on-one with my rebbeim and learning. We have the ability to pass on the mesorah in an authentic and genuine way. When I look at my rebbeim and what they have been able to accomplish with their talmidim, I am immediately impacted and feel a responsibility to push myself to be the best rebbe I can be."

Rabbi Hoenig and Rabbi Israeli are joined by many other accomplished RIETS muskmakchim making an impact at yeshiva day schools and high schools around the world.

"The spiritual and professional journeys of RIETS rabbinic alumni do not end here," said Rabbi Yaakov Glasser '01R, David Mitzner Dean, Center for the Jewish Future. "It is strengthened as they participate in Rabbinic Yarchei Kallah programs and continuing education courses. These innovative and substantive programs provide our Rabbinic alumni with resources and skills that enable them to continue making a positive impact on their communities and schools. ■

This section is a continuation of the Muskmakchim profiles that appeared in the Adar 5777 Chavrusa. To request a copy please contact chavrusamagazine@yu.edu.



B'Atzeret al Peirot Ha'Ilan

Rabbi Meir Goldwicht
Joel and Maria Finkle Visiting
Israeli Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

The Gemara (*Megillah* 31b) teaches us in the name of R. Shimon ben Elazar that Ezra decreed that Bnei Yisrael read the klalot of Sefer Devarim before Rosh HaShanah, and those of Sefer Vayikra before Shavuot, in order to “finish the year and its curses.” As we turn a new page in Jewish history, it is understood that the curses be completed before Rosh HaShanah. However, reading the klalot before Shavuot in order to “finish the year and its curses” is puzzling. In what way is Shavuot compared to the beginning of a new year? To answer this query, the Gemara cites a Mishnah (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a), which explains that on Shavuot we are judged regarding the peirot ha'ilan. The Holiday of Shavuot, Chag HaKatzir, celebrates the harvesting of the first fruits of the season. In its own way, Shavuot brings about a new beginning, and is considered to be a Rosh HaShanah.

As each year comes to an end, we wish to leave behind all of the curses and start the coming year with blessings.

Even with this in mind, the Gemara's answer remains perplexing. After all, the same Mishnah that equates Shavuot to Rosh HaShanah (for peirot ha'ilan), also admits that Pesach is a Rosh Hashanah for grains. Why is it that we don't read the klalot before Pesach?

Perhaps we can find a distinction between Pesach and Shavuot when we explore a verse in Devarim:

כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה (דברים כ:יט)

The Torah compares Man to a tree: *for man is the tree of the field*. Man's mission in life is compared to a tree, as we say in Birchat HaTorah, וחיי עולם, נטע בתוכנו, *He planted eternal life within us*. Unlike a seed, which must rot in order to produce a new plant, a tree remains kayam, intact and alive, even as it produces fruit. So too, Man remains kayam as he produces peirot, both in bringing life to the next generation and being productive on behalf of Klal Yisrael. Furthermore, when the Torah says that Hashem created Man in the image of G-d, the Vilna Gaon points out that the gematria of צלם is עץ.

Similarly, every tree consists of three parts: roots, trunk, and fruit. There are also three parts to the service of G-d: *Tefillah, Torah, and Ma'asim Tovim*. These three elements of avodat Hashem parallel the three parts of the tree: *Tefillah* corresponds the *roots* of the tree because it is through tefillah that we attach ourselves to HaKadosh Baruch Hu; *Torah* corresponds to the *trunk*, because Torah is the pillar that holds up the world; *Ma'asim Tovim* corresponds to the *fruit* of the tree.



What does it mean that on Shavuot we are judged regarding the peirot ha'ilan? The judgement will determine how much siyata dishmaya Man will have in Torah from this Shavuot until the next Shavuot, and whether or not he will produce abundant peirot this year. For this reason, before Shavuot we read the klalot, in order to put them behind us as we start a new blessed year.

This analysis helps us understand a Rashi at the beginning of Bechukotai:

אם-בְּהַקְטִי תִלְכוּ; וְאֵת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעִשִּׂיתֶם אֹתָם (ויקרא כו:ג).

Rashi writes that following G-d's statutes means “... *that you must toil (עמלים) in the study of Torah.*” If Rashi's goal is to explain pshat in the pasuk, then how does the pshat here refer to ameilut in Torah?

Chukim only refer to statutes. חק comes from the word חקיקה, and therefore, it refers to an engraving. Becoming a person in whom the Torah is engraved, that he and the Torah are one, requires tremendous ameilut. This is the symbolism behind “אם-בְּחֻקְתֵי תִלְכוּ” which ultimately leads to

וְעַץ הַשָּׂדֶה [“e.g., “Man] יִתּוּ פְרִיָו (ויקרא כו:ד).

For this reason, we find trees associated with every new beginning in the history of Am Yisrael. Immediately after Yetziat Mitzrayim and the splitting of Yam Suf, the Torah says,

... וַיִּזְרְהוּ ה' עַץ ... וַיִּמְתְּקוּ הַמַּיִם... (שמות טו:כה).

Hashem showed him [Moshe] a tree ... and the waters became sweet.

When the Jewish people enter the Land of Israel the Torah commands them to plant trees.

וְכִי תִבְאוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ וְנִטְעַתֶּם כָּל עֵץ (ויקרא יט:כג).

When a child is born, the Gemara in Gittin says that there is a custom to plant one type of tree for boys and another type of tree for girls. When the children grow up, we use the branches of these trees to hold up the wedding canopy. The prominent role that trees play in every new beginning is meant to serve as a reminder that every time a person starts something new, in order for it to blossom, grow, and succeed, he must remember how his avodah relates to the three aspects of the tree; thus encouraging him to be serious about Tefillah, Torah, and Ma'asim Tovim.

Every Shabbat we say, שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית ה' (תהלים צב:יד). *Those planted in the house of Hashem will blossom in the courtyards of our L-rd.*

Beit Hashem is the Beit Midrash; Chatzrot Elokeinu is where one goes after he leaves the Beit Midrash. In order for everything to blossom and be successful in the Chatzrot Elokeinu, one first needs

to be Shetulum b'veit Hashem. As long as the shatil (plant) grew up in the house of Hashem, you can be sure that it will succeed on the outside as well.

On Shavuot we are judged based on the extent that we are rooted in the house of Hashem. For the favorable outcome of this judgement, we will merit to blossom in the Chatzrot Elokeinu. As the next verse continues, we further merit:

עוֹד יִגְבוּן בְּשִׁבְהַ דְּשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ (תהלים צב:טו)

They will continue to be fruitful in their old age, they will be full of sap and richness.

May we internalize these lessons and live by the pasuk:

וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שְׁתוּל עַל פְּלִי מַיִם (תהלים אג:ג)

And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water. ■

This article was compiled by Rav Goldwicht's students.

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Perspectives from the Courtroom

An Interview with Rabbi Shlomo Weissmann '01R '14YY
Menahel, Beth Din of America

Rabbi Shlomo Weissmann is Menahel of the Beth Din of America. He is a graduate of Columbia Law School, where he was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. Prior to his association with the Beth Din of America, Rabbi Weissmann worked as an attorney at several prominent law firms, including Debevoise & Plimpton LLP.

CHAVRUSA: What makes your role at Beth Din of America unique from all other forms of rabbanus that you have encountered?

In some ways my role is similar to that of a traditional rabbi. People who utilize our services are often very vulnerable. Some are entangled in emotionally trying disputes, some are getting divorced from their spouses, some are facing the horrible specter of igun. So we try to help them through. My job is also to explain halachic practices, such as the Get process, or sometimes even the concept of chalitzah. These notions may be challenging, unfamiliar and clash with modern sensibilities.

But my role is also unique, because the Beth Din of America is a very unique organization. In much of the work I do I'm wearing my lawyer hat more than my rabbi hat. This is especially true in our administration of dinei Torah, where secular legal questions relating to arbitration procedure arise all the time. Our process must comply with secular law in order for our piskei din to be enforced by the courts.

CHAVRUSA: How has the training at RIETS impacted your role at the Beth Din of America?

There was no semicha class that taught me how to administer a contemporary beit din, but the limud haTorah and psak halacha skills that I acquired from my mentors and Roshei Yeshiva at RIETS are invaluable in the work that I do. The values taught and practiced at RIETS heavily shaped my personal outlook on many issues.

CHAVRUSA: Tell us about the relationship between the Beth Din of America and Yeshiva.

The two organizations have deep ties. The rabbinic staff of the Beth Din consists entirely of musmachim of RIETS—Rabbi Gedalia Dov Schwartz '49R, Rabbi Michoel Zylberman '10R and myself—along with current Roshei Yeshiva of RIETS, Rabbi Mordechai Willig '71R and Rabbi Yona Reiss '02R. We have a joint program with the Yadin Yadin Kollel, which provides opportunities for shimush and observation by kollel



Rabbi Shlomo Weissmann

members of dinei Torah conducted by the Beth Din, and we have jointly published "The Journal of the Beth Din of America," which features articles on beit din jurisprudence and reproductions of piskei din issued by the Beth Din. We maintain a satellite din Torah room at the Glueck Center, which we use frequently for dinei

Torah. Each year, we hire interns at the Beth Din from RIETS.

CHAVRUSA: How does the Beth Din resolve today's complicated issues?

The Beth Din of America conducts its business by successfully integrating Torah laws and values with contemporary secular knowledge, something closely tied to the philosophy of RIETS and Yeshiva University. When we needed to resolve the 9/11 agunah cases, we utilized sophisticated investigative skills, including reliance on DNA evidence. When we resolve commercial disputes that derive from transactions in the secular marketplace, the dayanim include lawyers and businessmen so that we can properly analyze the facts and the commercial customs that often determine the outcomes of the cases. Mental health professionals sit on cases that involve child custody determinations and other sensitive psychological issues.

CHAVRUSA: In what ways can rabbis and mechanchim support the communal goals of the Beth Din?

One way is by educating people about the importance of utilizing batei din to resolve disputes, rather than resorting to secular courts. Halacha prohibits litigation in secular court in most instances, but resolving disputes through rabbinic mediation or arbitration is also less expensive and more efficient than court litigation, not to mention the confidentiality benefits.

CHAVRUSA: How has the Beth Din been effective in addressing the aguna issue?

The Beth Din is known internationally for its prenuptial agreement (available at www.theprenup.org). This document, which was introduced by Rabbi Mordechai Willig more than 20 years ago, has been enormously successful. We are

also the beit din of first resort for many people who, for whatever reasons, did not sign a prenup and now find themselves in the position of seeking to arrange a Get with a recalcitrant spouse. We send out hazmanot (invitations/summons) to appear before the Beth Din and, when necessary, we issue seruvim (documents of contempt) to signal that an individual has not complied with his or her halachic obligations in this realm.

CHAVRUSA: After working as a corporate lawyer, what motivated you begin a career in Jewish communal work?

I practiced in the area of commercial real estate transactions, and I enjoyed the challenge and stimulation of working on interesting deals. But I knew that avodas hakodesh would represent an opportunity to do something really meaningful on a daily basis. ■

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Mazal Tov

Rabbi Hanan '84R and Barbara Balk on the birth of a granddaughter, to Leora and Shmuel Leshner.

Rabbi Saul '62R and Shellee Berman on the marriage of their son, Akiva, to Carmela Leah.

Rabbi Michael '11R and Yael Bleicher on the birth of a son, Gavriel Ari.

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth '86R and Ruchie Brander on the birth of a grandson, Nadav Yitzchak Tzvi, to Yoni and Yehudit Brander, and to great-grandparents, **Rabbi Aaron '59R and Ellen Brander**.

Rabbi Jonathan '14R and Sefi Hefter on the birth of a son, and to grandparents, **Rabbi Yaakov '73R and Abby Lerner**.

Rabbi Josh '01R and Aviva Friedman on the birth of a son.

Rabbi Seth '04R and Leba Grauer on the birth of a son.

Rabbi Aaron '10R and Molly Katz on the birth of a son, Levi Yitzchak.

Rabbi Dovid '94R and Bonnie Kupchik on the marriage of their daughter, Tova, to Chaim Levitz.

Rabbi Yaakov '15R and Kayla Lasson on the birth of a son, and to grandparents, **Rabbi Dr. Marc '88R and Jackie Mandel**.

Rabbi Meyer '78R and Shulamith May on the birth of a granddaughter, Sima Chaya, to Rabbi Yehuda and Nechama May, and on the birth of a grandson, Yehuda Aryeh, to Rachaeli and Shuey Lobl.

Rabbi Shmuel '08R and Leah Segal on the birth of a son, Ahron Shalom, and to grandparents, **Rabbi Gershon (AA) and Tovah Segal**.

Rabbi Mordechai Schnaidman '52R on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Zeeva Feiga.

Rabbi Rami '07R and Debbie Strosberg on the birth of a son.

Rabbi Avi Narrow-Tilonsky '11R on his marriage to Atara Oren.

Rabbi Neal '83R and Laura Turk on the birth of a grandson, Yoni, born to Eitan and Nechama Turk.

Rabbi Netanel '05R and Sara Wiederblank on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Leah.

Rabbi Robert '81R and Marilyn Zeiger on the birth of a granddaughter, Tamar Zisel, to Eliezer Menachem and Nadine Zeiger.

Condolences

The Family of **Rabbi Dr. Nachum Norman Berlat '65R, z"l**.

Rabbi Abba Engelberg '68R on the passing of his brother, Pinchas Yosef Engelberg, z"l.

Rabbi Neil Fleischmann '92R on the passing of his father, Werner Fleischmann, z"l.

Rabbi Daniel Gutenmacher '80R on the passing of his father, Abraham Gutenmacher, z"l.

The family of **Rabbi Joshua Hoffman, z"l**.

Rabbi Avraham Kelman '83R and Mindy (and Rabbi Dr. Norman '51R) Lamm on the passing of their mother, Jean Kelman, z"l.

Rabbi Dr. Johnny Krug '78R on the passing of his father, Walter Joseph Krug, z"l.

The family of **Rabbi Mayer Offman '80R, z"l**.

Rabbi Kenneth Paretzky '75R and Rabbi Yisrael Meir Paretzky '79R on the passing of their mother, Yetta Paretzky, z"l.

Rabbi Chaim Pearl '75R and Sharon (and Rabbi Richard '71R) Auman on the passing of their mother, Mrs. Jean Pearl, z"l.

The family of **Rabbi Myron Rakowitz '57R, z"l**.

Sara (and Rabbi Dr. Edward '97R) Reichman on the passing of her father, Professor Louis Feldman, z"l.

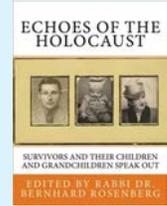
Rabbi Nahum Spirn '90R on the passing of his father, **Rabbi Charles Spirn '51R, z"l**.

Rabbi Eli Turkel '69R on the passing of his wife, Jerri Turkel, z"l.

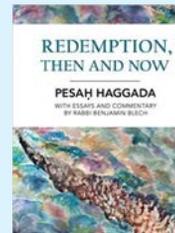
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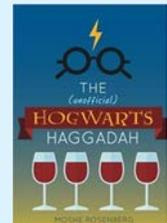
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Rabbi Hayyim Angel '95R
Maggid (January 2017)



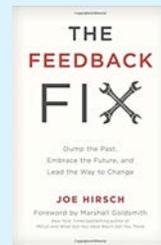
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Rabbi Moshe Rosenberg '84R
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Rabbi Hershel Schachter '67R
Edited by Rabbi Daniel Z. Feldman '98R '06YY
YU Press (2017)



Verapo Yerape, vol. 7
Rabbi Peter Kahn '13R and Rabbi Dr. David Shabtai '09R
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Hagada Shel Pesach Yismach Av
Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman

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