

# CONNECTIONS



**"אבל גדול ליהודים" מיד הצמיח להן הקב"ה ישועה ... "ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה".** (דברים רבה ואתחנן פרשה ב)  
**אמר רב יהודה: אורה - זו תורה, וכן הוא אומר (משלי ו) "כי נר מצוה ותורה אור."** (מגילה דף טז:)

**A** long winter has gone by and it seems like quite a while ago that many of us saw each other at the Yeshiva's annual Dinner. At that most powerful Dinner, in addition to the tribute paid to the honorees - including alumnus Reb Mordechai Golombeck and the Class of '97, we experienced many powerful moments of remembering our Rebbe - HaGaon HaRav Mosheh Twersky, הי"ד זצוק"ל.

In the months since then, Ner Michoel has quietly gone about its business, planning current and future events for our Alumni. Many of the events that you will read about in this issue happened over the past winter. Some of them happened during the period of Rabbi Twersky זצ"ל's *yahrtzeit*, during the time leading up to the Dinner.

The theme that emerges from these pages reconfirms the feelings and words expressed by Reb Zeev Berkovits in one of the articles "that the *Ribbono shel Olam* is pleased with the *talmidim's* response to their *rebbe's petirah*, the Siyum HaShas and all the learning..." You will read of the Siyum HaShas, commemorating Rabbi Twersky's *yahrtzeit* in Eretz Yisroel, and parallel events in America. You will read of the recently published Kovetz of Rabbi Twersky's Torah on Chanukah and the *sedorim* during which *talmidim* learned the *sugyos*, once again with their Rebbe, זת"ל. You will read of the new Vayigdal Moshe website, and really the "Vayigdal Moshe movement", spearheaded by alumnus Reb

Yehoshua Berman as an *aliyas neshama* for Rabbi Twersky, זת"ל, and a *kiyum* of דוכבות בקבר.

You will also read of other Ner Michoel gatherings that happened over the winter and of the recent Siyum HaShas by *talmid* Rav Avidon Soroka. Ner Michoel has deep feelings of *nachas* from his accomplishment.

The winter will soon be behind us. The darkness will dissipate and the spring sunshine will warm us with its rays. אורה זו תורה - even in the bleakest moments, the Torah shines forth and shows us the way out of the abyss.

May we soon see the אור של משיח צדקינו together.



*Daniel Sinowitz*  
 Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz



*Shmuli Weiner*  
 Rabbi Shmuli Weiner

## LIVING EACH YOM TOV AS HE TAUGHT

### Warm Response to Publication of Rav Twersky's Torah

**A**s his *talmidim* are well aware, Rav Mosheh Twersky, זת"ל, lived with a very powerful, vibrant connection to the Torah calendar; each Yom Tov and its season was a palpable, living reality. On Yom Tov itself, he was transformed into a different person; his entire being radiated the unique flavor and magnificence of that particular *chag*. He instilled in his *talmidim* the principle that for a *ben Torah*, a vital component of experiencing a Yom Tov is to delve into the *sugyos* underlying its

*halachos*. With the approach of each Yom Tov, Rav Twersky would allocate some of the time he spent with the *talmidim* to deliver special *shiurim* on these *sugyos*. He would infuse these *shiurim* with the rich essence of the Yom Tov and its deep meaning; they were a very central part of his influence on the *talmidim* and people around him.

In honor of the Siyum Kesivas Sefer Torah *l'ilui nishmas* Rav Twersky, which took place at the Yeshiva's Dinner, a Kovetz

Zikaron was published and distributed among the many *talmidim* and alumni who delight in his Divrei Torah. The first section is comprised of the special *shiurim* he gave on a yearly basis during the weeks leading up to Chanukah on the *sugyos* in Bameh Madlikin dealing with the related *halachos*. The second section of the Kovetz is a collection of various *chiddushei Torah* which Rav Twersky submitted over the years to Tiferes Tzvi, the Yeshiva's Torah periodical, on various *masechtos*. Rabbi

Continued from page 1

Avi Lowenstein and Rabbi Matis Feld had originally collected and distributed a limited edition of these *chiddushim* at the Siyum HaShas Melava Malka *l'zecher nishmas* Rav Twersky held in Yerushalayim last winter. As part of the Kovetz, this is now available for all the alumni.

While the second section originated from Rav Twersky's own submissions which he felt were fit for publication, the first section came from audio recordings of his *shiurim*, with some augmentation from the notes written by many of the *talmidim*. Rabbi Lowenstein and Rabbi Naftali Meiselman spent many hours listening to the recordings and transcribing them in a manner that would be as faithful as possible to the original, retaining the unique "feel and flavor" of the way Rav Twersky would explain a concept. They asked Rav Twersky's son, Rav Meshulam, to review the work for accuracy and authenticity; he, too, listened to the audio several times, adding and replacing words and phrases that he thought would better reflect his father's intent. While the original *shiurim* were presented in the flowing order of the *dapim* of the Gemara, it was decided to arrange them in the Kovetz in the form of *simanim* by topic, for greater clarity.

The newly printed Kovetz arrived in Yeshiva on Thursday evening, the 24th of Cheshvan, when *hespedim* for Rav Twersky's first

*yahrzeit* were said. *Talmidim* excitedly began learning from it; that Friday night there was a *sefer l'ilui nishmaso*, during which everyone went through several *simanim*. A number of *avreichim* gave *chaburos* based on the Kovetz. The following Sunday, when the *talmidim* traveled to visit the *kever*, Rabbi Matis Feld gave a *shiur* from the Kovetz on the bus.

A group of *talmidim* learned the entire Kovetz, at a pace of one *siman* per day from the *yahrzeit*, completing it in time for Chanukah. Rebbetzin Twersky, who was very pleased with the publication of the Kovetz and the *talmidim*'s warm response, hosted a special *mesibas* Chanukah for this group in her home. Rabbi Matis Feld, Rabbi Avi Lowenstein and Rabbi Sholom Tuvia Gordon spoke about how meaningful it is that the Rebbe's Torah was learned before Chanukah by his *talmidim* just like it was done in years past, during his lifetime. The singing and dancing - accompanied by Moshe Ziegler on the guitar - made it a memorable and inspiring event.

*Talmidim* throughout the world, who vividly recall and still feel the excitement Rav

Twersky exuded when a Yom Tov approached, have expressed their joy at the opportunity to be able to relive this experience and reconnect with their Rebbe's Torah through the Kovetz. Many have responded with their comments and insights, and are looking forward to the publication of his Torah on the other Yomim Tovim and the weekly *parsha*, currently in preparation.



# TALMIDIM COMMEMORATE FIRST YAHRZEIT OF RABBI MOSHEH TWERSKY

**O**n Motzei Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah, a crowd of close to 200 *talmidim*, family and friends of Rav Mosheh Twersky, *zt"l*, gathered at the Ahavas Torah Hall in Yerushalayim for a Melava Malka and Siyum HaShas in his memory. The fact that Rav Twersky's first *yahrzeit* fell on the preceding Shabbos - ruling out any *hespedim* taking place on the day itself - was understood by many *talmidim* as an indication that as sad and troubled as they were by their *rebbe's* tragic *petirah*, it was now time to focus on moving ahead and trying their best to emulate his ways.

Participants listened attentively as Rabbi Yehoshua Berman, Rabbi Eliezer Niehaus, and Rabbi Avrohom Twersky spoke about how

the closing of this difficult year brings with it a comforting sense of accomplishment. Recalling how Rav Mosheh, *zt"l*, constantly encouraged his *talmidim* to learn and review the entirety of *Shas*, they emphasized that tonight's *siyum* demonstrates that we have attained a degree of success in emulating him and putting his lessons into practice.

After Rabbi Zev Klein completed the last piece of Gemara and said the *hadran* along with some *divrei Torah*, Rav Meshulam Twersky recited the *kaddish*. Although the Rosh Yeshiva was already in America for the upcoming Dinner, the event was graced with the participation of the Mashgiach, Rabbi Abramowitz, Rabbi Samber,

Continued on back cover

# Alumni Happenings

## Staying Connected

Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz, who was in the United States for a family *simcha*, took the opportunity to visit Yeshiva Ohr HaChaim in Queens, NY, where a large contingent of Toras Moshe *talmidim* are currently learning. "Visiting these *talmidim*," says Rabbi Sinowitz, "was a very special experience for me. I had a strong connection with them while they were in Eretz Yisroel, and I was really happy to see them thriving so beautifully in their new *yeshiva*. Rabbi Doniel Lander, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ohr HaChaim, graciously invited me into the *bais medrash*, where I spent some time with the *bochurim*. He then allowed us to use one of the *shiur* rooms so I could say some *divrei chizuk* for them."

Rabbi Sinowitz shared an inspiring *vort* on the weekly *parsha* of Vayechi, pointing out the differences between life in America and Eretz Yisroel, and offering insights on how to make the necessary adjustments. We all go through different stages in life, he told the *bochurim*; the key is to live in the present, and try to be your best at whatever stage you're up to by making the right choices.

Special thanks to Uri Klein and Eli Bienstock for coordinating the visit.

**H**atznea leches – modesty and humility were a hallmark of Rav Mosheh Twersky's, *zt"l*, essence during his lifetime. The shocking tragedy of his *petirah al Kiddush Hashem* created a tremendous yearning among his *talmidim* and beyond, to keep his influence alive by studying his Torah, his *mussar*, and his *avodas Hashem*.

Rabbi Yehoshua Berman, a devoted *talmid* of Rav Twersky, conceived and created VayigdalMoshe.com, a website serving as a resource center for everything about his great *rebbe*, bringing his priceless lessons and influence to all who seek inspiration and long to hear his voice once again. The website is well designed and user-friendly, with separate sections for *divrei Torah*, a categorized audio library (linking to NerMichael.org), pictures and videos, memories, and information about many other projects, such as a comprehensive biography scheduled to be published in the near future. The video section features the touching memorial video that was shown at the recent *yahrtzeit* Siyum Hashas in Yerushalayim.

New, exciting sections are being constantly added, such as "Window to Brisk", and "Bursts of Profound Insight". "We are trying to categorize the *Rebbi's* Torah in a way that it will appeal and be accessible even to those who weren't *zocheh* to know him during his lifetime," Rabbi Berman says. "The response so far has been very positive, and we hope to continue to bring merit both to ourselves, as well as to the lofty *neschama* of Rav Twersky, *zt"l*."

A recent Siyum Hashas by Rabbi Avidon Soroka, a Toras Moshe alumnus who is now a Rosh Chabura in Lakewood, brought inspiration and incentive to many people who participated in the celebration or heard about this worthy achievement.

This Siyum was a culmination of what began over eighteen years ago, when Rabbi Soroka was a first-year *talmid* in Toras Moshe. "My inspiration was certainly drawn from the *rebbeim* I had there," he says. "The Rosh Yeshiva is fond of saying, 'Shas is long, and Shas is hard', and I realized early on that you really have to be in it for the long haul, with a strong goal and a firm commitment. I was also *zocheh* to be in the '*daled amos*' of Rav Mosheh Twersky, *zt"l*; he constantly pushed us to learn as much as possible, and to want to know *kol hatorah kula*. He had it on his fingertips; he was fluent in every area in *Shas*, and he urged us to aspire for the same degree of familiarity.

"The Yeshiva was learning Bava Metzia back then, and I set a goal to learn the *perakim* we weren't learning during the *sedorim*, so that I would know the entire *masechta*. For the next few years, I tried to finish the *masechta* we were learning in *yeshiva*, while doing small *Mo'ed masechtos* on the side. I realized that if I kept this pace – learning about 100 blatt a year, I could hope to finish *Shas* before I turned 40. When I completed the '*yeshiva cycle*', I started on the other *masechtos*; I joined the *Kodshim chaburah* here in Lakewood. As time went on, I started doing it with more and more of the *Tosafos*, and filling in the '*gaps*' I had left out. During some years I covered a bit more, others years a bit less, but I stayed focused on my goal, which ultimately allowed me to achieve it – to learn through *Shas* with a satisfying degree of *shleimus*. I still have a lot to learn, and *iy"h* during my next time around, I hope to take it to the next level!"

The Rosh HaYeshiva Giving a Shiur in Lakewood



The Rosh HaYeshiva Giving a Shiur in Baltimore



Continued from page 2

Rabbi Avrohom Meiselman, and Rabbi Naftali Meiselman. Rabbi Yonason Sanders, founder and dean of Bais Tova girls' school in Lakewood and a friend of the Twersky *mishpacha*, addressed the event. Also in attendance were Rav Twersky's mother, and his *rebbetzin*, who was very involved in the planning and preparation.

A moving, emotional video portrayed some memories and sparks of greatness personified by Rav Twersky, highlighting the message that while he is no longer physically present among his *talmidim*, the flame of his legacy continues to burn brightly.

During the inspiring event, momentum quickly gathered for participating in the next Siyum HaShas, to be held *iy"h* in time for the second *yahrzeit*. People began signing up, and most of the *masechtos* were committed on that very night. A *talmid*, Rabbi Yisroel Wohlgelemer, was called upon to begin *Shas* once again, with the first *Mishna* in *Masechta Brachos*.

On that same Motzei Shabbos, alumni in Lakewood gathered for a *Melave Malka* at the home of Dr. Yosef Polinsky, who completed *Masechta Nazir* with his *chavrusa*, Rabbi Yosef Katzenstein, *l'ilui nishmas* their *rebbei*, Rav Twersky. After making the *siyum*, Dr. Polinsky spoke briefly about his *rebbei's hashkafa* and offered some examples of how he personified these lessons. Rabbi Zeev Berkovits expressed his feelings that the *Ribbono shel Olam* is pleased with the *talmidim's*



response to their *rebbei's petirah*, the Siyum HaShas and all the learning. After additional remarks by Rabbi Katzenstein, Rabbi Yehudah Eisenstein shared a *dvar Torah* on the current *parsha* that he personally heard from Rav Twersky many years ago, on Erev Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah following the *petirah* of Rav Shach, *zt"l*. Mr. Shelly Lang of Neginah spoke about his impressions of Rav Twersky, with whom he became acquainted through his son Rabbi Yechezkel Lang, a *chavrusa* of Rav

Twersky for many years. Rabbi Nesanel Twersky, a nephew of Rav Mosheh, *zt"l*, was also present at the *Melave Malka*.

Alumni in Baltimore marked the *yahrzeit* when the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Meiselman, visited Yeshiva Ner Yisroel. The Rosh Yeshiva began with an approach to the *parshiyos* in *Sefer Bereishis*, which describe the triumph of our forefathers over other individuals who may have attained great heights in understanding, but failed to put their proficiency into practice. Rav Twersky's greatness, the Rosh Yeshiva emphasized, came from the fact that his vast Torah knowledge influenced his every move; this is what he succeeded in transmitting to his *talmidim* as well.

Wherever they find themselves, Rav Twersky's *talmidim* continue to bring *nachas* to his exalted *neshama* by continuing to build on the strong foundations he established.

