



CONNECTIONS

בבקר זרע את זרעך ולערב אל תנח ידך (קהלת י"א ו')

אם למדת תורה בילדותך למד תורה בזקנותך אם היו לך תלמידים בילדותך יהיו לך תלמידים בזקנותך (רש"י שם)

Shlomo Hamelech teaches us that even if one has merited to learn and teach Torah in his youth, he must never rest on his laurels. He must continue to learn and to teach into his old age, for one never knows which Torah and which *talmidim* will bear the most fruit.

Shlomo Hamelech's message brings to mind the stage that Ner Michoel currently finds itself in. Ner Michoel is currently welcoming many new alumni into its ranks, all of whom spent their years in Yeshiva at a time when our Alumni Organization already existed. For them, leaving Yeshiva – while still a major shift – is more of a transition than a departure. And *boruch Hashem*, we have already enjoyed staying in touch with them, from across the ocean.

In this issue of Connections, you will read of the recent event in Far Rockaway, commemorating Harav Michoel Weiner's 5th *yahrtzeit* and the beginning of Ner Michoel's 5th year of operation. It was an event that reunited so many of the "younger alumni." You will read of Ner Michoel's new Mishnayos Project which aims to plant seeds over the telephone, by Podcast, and of course on the website, and to keep alumni of all ages connected through the worldwide Mishna Yomis.

You will also read of our more established (who wants to be called older!) alumni, as well. We wish Rabbi Emmanuel Efraim a big *mazal tov* on his recent Siyum Hashas. And of course, we feature the Class of '98, slated to be honored with the Ner Michoel tribute at this year's upcoming Dinner.

We at Ner Michoel feel privileged to have been able to sow so many seeds of *achdus*, *ahavas Torah*, and *harbotzas Torah* over the past four years. We look forward to continuing that mission. And we hope to see all of you (okay... at least as many of you as possible) at the Dinner!



Daniel Sinowitz
Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz



Shmuel Weiner
Rabbi Shmuel Weiner

Far Rockaway Gathering: Ner Michoel Enters Its 5th Year

This past Elul, a contingent of Toras Moshe alumni gathered in Far Rockaway for a special event marking the fifth *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Michoel Weiner, *zt"l*. The Ner Michoel Alumni Association – named and dedicated in Rabbi Weiner's memory – began its fifth year in conjunction with the *yahrtzeit*.

The gathering took place on a Sunday evening at the home of Reuven Knobel, an alumnus who recently became a *chas-*

san. Reuven's family graciously hosted the event, and a delicious *fleishig* menu was enjoyed by all. Over thirty-five people from Lakewood, Queens, Brooklyn – even a few from Baltimore – were in attendance. As most of the participants had left Yeshiva during the past five years, there was a very special *ruach* and camaraderie permeating the atmosphere, like a "reunion" of sorts.

Rabbi Shmuli Weiner, who was on a special visit to the US for his father's *yahrtzeit*,





made a *siyum* on Mishnayos Seder Zera'im and offered *divrei zikaron* in his memory. Then Nechemiah Hoch, a member of Ner Michoel's Central Committee who lives in Queens, addressed the gathering to acquaint the more recent alumni with the benefits offered by Ner Michoel. He explained that while a *talmid* is still learning in Yeshiva, he's focused on what he needs to do in order to maximize his achievement during that very special time. The Yeshiva's impact, however, goes beyond the time a *talmid* spends between its walls, guiding and influencing him for the rest his life. Whether he is now an alumnus in a different *yeshiva*, in college, working, or whatever he may be up to, he can still be fully connected to Yeshivas Toras Moshe. Ner Michoel helps the alumni stay connected by coordinating and organizing events like

these, arranging Yarchei Kallah, posting recent *shiurim* on the website, and the like. "Don't wait until five years from now, when you may already feel quite 'disconnected'," Nechemiah advised the crowd of mostly newer alumni. "Be smart enough to stay connected from day one, by utilizing what Ner Michoel provides."

The event also included the launch of the Telephone Mishnayos Project for alumni. A daily, five-minute *shiur* which Rabbi Sinowitz has been giving in Yeshiva for the past few months (see page 6) was made available to all alumni who sign up to receive a phone call each afternoon. Dedicated *l'ilui nishmas* Rabbi Sinowitz's niece, Miriam Sinowitz, *a"h*, (Miriam Shaindel bas Reb Ephraim Shimon), the *shiur* follows the schedule of the popular Mishna Yomis

program, which completes the entire six *sedorim* of Mishnayos in six years at the rate of 2 Mishnayos per day. Participants finished Mesechta Terumos shortly after Succos and began Mesechta Maaseros.

"It was really nice to see Rabbi Sinowitz, Rabbi Weiner, and all the guys who were still in Yeshiva not so long ago," says Chaim Wachspress, who left Toras Moshe at the end of last winter *z'man*. "At the event, I felt like I was once again in that great ToMo atmosphere. I signed up for the Mishnayos call, and I know that from my *yeshiva* alone – Yeshiva Gedolah of the Five Towns – 4 or 5 guys are in as well. It's really a nice thing, to have alumni from all over connected and learning the same thing."

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NER MICHOEL ALUMNI TRIBUTE: THE CLASS OF '98

The Yeshiva takes tremendous pride in presenting the Class of '98 with the Ner Michoel Alumni Tribute. Almost twenty years after their arrival in Toras Moshe, a brief glance at their diverse lives and accomplishments bespeaks a shared value system and meaningful sense of purpose.

"From the start, our class had a remarkable *chevra*," recalls Shimmy Yarmak, who settled in Baltimore after several years in Ner Yisroel. "There were guys from YTT, Shaarei Torah in Monsey, Yesodei Yeshurun – many of whom became exceptional *bonei Torah*. Everyone, however, became a better person; no other group that I had been with over the years was so special. Even after all these years, we still feel a *kesher* to one another, despite living in many different communities."

"For us American boys, coming out of 12th grade in America to learn in Eretz Yisroel was quite overwhelming," Shimmy reminisces. "But as soon as we walked through the door, we were greeted by older *bochurim* with a genuine interest in helping us and easing our transition. In my first *dirah*, we had four senior *bo-*

churim who were among the Yeshiva's 'superstars': Naftali Katz, Shmuli Zilber, Shlomo Soroka, Dovi Kreismann. We realized these were 'normal' guys who came from YTT, where they followed sports and had similar interests as we did in high school. If they could soar to such high levels in *middos*, *hasmada*, and *avodas Hashem*, we could do it too. The Yeshiva still follows this successful recipe of having the older guys interact and be *mashpia* on the younger ones, without compromising their own growth."

Rabbi Menachem Wiederman is currently a *rebbe* at the Clifton Cheder, coordinator of TAG's Passaic branch, assistant head counselor at Camp Toras Chaim, and a Sunday School teacher in Livingston, NJ. "I came to Yeshiva with seven golf clubs and a hockey stick," he laughs. "The culture shock was massive; none of us had ever sat and learned the entire day before. After two weeks, I called my mother and said, 'Get me out of here!' I actually booked a ticket back home. I owe my life to some older *bochurim* – Ari Hoch, Avi Kula, Dovi Gopin – they schmoozed with me a lot and convinced me to stay. My mother, *a"h*, – who really wanted me to continue my secular education in America – said, 'You owe it to yourself to give this more of chance'; it was very special of her. I stayed for four

years, and then went to the Mir, and from there to a *kollel* in Bais Yisroel, but Toras Moshe gave me my life; it made me into what I am today."

"The powerful *kesher* between the *rebbeim* and *talmidim* had a tremendous impact on both our learning and *hashkafa*," says Rabbi Tzvi Zombek, another member of the class. "The Rosh Yeshiva's keen *eitzah* has continued to guide me ever since.

After my time in Toras Moshe, I went to BMG and got married, then returned to Eretz Yisroel, where I joined the Mir's *kollel*. The Rosh Yeshiva once visited our apartment in Yerushalayim because I called with a *shaila* about our oven, and he felt he should see it before he *paskened*. When I consulted with him about *parnasah* concerns, he told me that a *ben Torah* should deal with his worldly needs in a way that dovetails comfortably with his spiritual *she'ifos*. 'Tzvi, he said, you can have a life of full-time learning ahead of



you. The solution for someone like yourself is not to leave the *beis medrash* and train for a career that will allow little time for learning.' The Rosh Yeshiva encouraged me to develop my salesmanship abilities, and to seek out a livelihood that would enable me to continue learning full-time while fulfilling my obligation to support my family. Boruch Hashem, I currently live in Lakewood, learn 3 *sedorim* a day, and am in the process of writing a *sefer*. I earn my living by running my business for few hours in the morning, and during *bein hasedorim* and off hours."

Rabbi Zev Flaumenhaft, a member of Kollel Zichron Meshulam in Monsey, shared some post-Yeshiva experiences that were typical of many in the class. "When I was leaving Yeshiva for BMG, the Rosh Yeshiva sensed my apprehension about navigating the *shidduchim parsha*. He looked at me and said, 'Flaumenhaft, I'm not

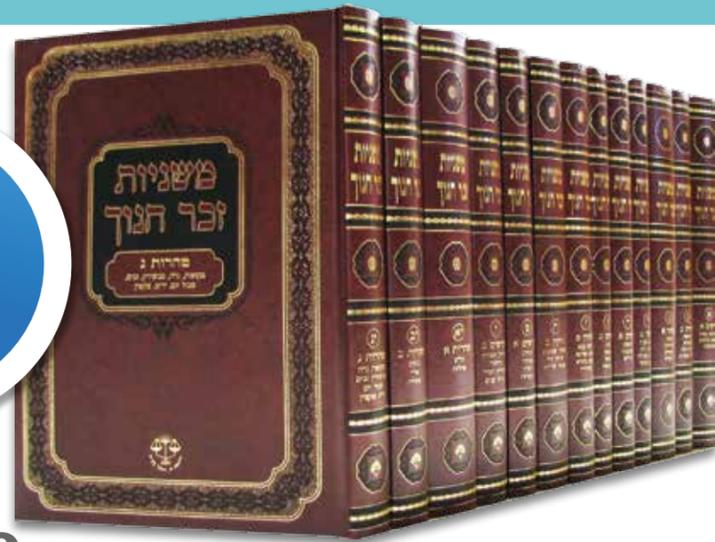
finished with you until I walk you down the aisle.' The skills I developed in Toras Moshe served me well in Lakewood, and later as a young *avreich* in Brisk. In addition, I had an ongoing *kesher* with *rebbeim* who knew me well and were always available to discuss anything I desired. They take a very personal interest in their *talmidim*, asking to be updated on where we're up to and what is going on in our lives. This facilitates another advantage: Whenever a *talmid* is faced with an issue or a question, he is able to discuss it with them in a detailed, productive fashion and receive clear and specific advice. Friends of mine, fellow *yungeleit* who graduated other respected Yeshivos, envied me. They hadn't kept up with their *rebbeim* in a detailed, consistent manner. They too, wanted to discuss going back to America after five years in a *kollel* in Eretz Yisroel, but were uncomfortable about calling someone who had no idea what transpired since they left his Yeshiva, how many kids they had, and other significant factors."

Shimmy Yarmak, who is an investment director, offers the perspective of those in the class who have entered the working world. "The dedication to *limud haTorah* I have today comes from the outstanding *hasmada* I experienced in Toras Moshe. I

make sure to find time, even in my normally hectic schedule, to learn with my children my *chavrusos* and attend *shiurim*. I spend most of my Sundays in Ner Yisroel's *beis medrash*. My *parnasah* sometimes calls for getting up at 4 AM to catch an early flight and landing back home at 8:30-8:45 in the evening. Half an hour later, I'm right back out the door on my way to night *seder* – it's simply not negotiable. I really believe that Toras Moshe helped solidify my *chashivus* for and lifelong commitment to learning. But even in the workplace, the Yeshiva's impact is discernible. I was looking to hire an associate for myself, and my supervisors suggested that I try to employ 'someone from the same religious school you attended.' The Rosh Yeshiva always reminds us that we have to be *mekadesh shem shomayim* wherever we find ourselves."

Rabbi Zombek concludes, "We were a friendly and outgoing bunch who all clicked together right away. The lessons we learned in Yeshiva and the whole atmosphere we imbibed continue to impact our lives to this very day."

Mishnayos Telephone Project: Connecting Talmidim Worldwide



With the launch of Ner Michoel's Telephone Mishnayos Project, a daily *shiur* is being offered to the entire community of Toras Moshe alumni for the very first time. The idea behind this revolutionary new program is quite simple: to connect all the alumni – wherever they may be – via a brief, five-minute daily *shiur* on the phone.

"Ner Michoel had been looking for something new that would benefit our alumni," explains Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz. "When the well-known Mishna Yomis cycle – which completes the entire six *sedorim* of Mishna (about 4,200 Mishnayos) in six years at the rate of 2 Mishnayos per day – started anew several days after Purim, I began a daily *shiur* with a small group of about 6-8 *talmidim*. Our intention was to begin 'on the ground' within the Yeshiva's walls, and to eventually expand over the phone lines, connecting the alumni back to a *seder limud* that's actually taking place in Toras Moshe itself.

"This was very much on our minds when we set the time for this *shiur* at five minutes before night *seder* in Yeshiva, when it's lunchtime for many of our US alumni and supertime for alumni in Eretz Yisroel who wish to participate. In Yeshiva, the *talmidim* in the group leave supper a few minutes early, and go straight from the Mishnayos *shiur* to night *seder*. So far, we've been getting a few members with each *mesechta* we've completed; it's become a culture of sorts in Yeshiva."

"I was somewhat skeptical when I first joined the Mishnayos *chaburah*," one of the participants recalls. "Before long, though, I realized the tremendous benefit that comes with it. You have a daily responsibility to yourself – to the group – without any breaks or letups; you must keep up and learn the two Mishnayos each day. It's a lesson in *achrayus* that many of us have been not accustomed to. You recognize that the whole *chaburah* has undertaken this; people all over the world are doing this. In a short few minutes each day, you begin to accumulate a tremendous amount of *yedios* that apply to Gemara and to Poskim, all over. These are *yedios* you wouldn't necessarily gain through the regular learning that's done in Yeshiva. Then there's another thing: the *chevra* of guys that are doing this are really special, they really want to grow together. The *maggid shiur*, Rabbi Sinowitz, explains everything in his clear, easy-to-understand fashion. On Shabbos, when he's not in Yeshiva, each of us rotate and say the *shiur* for the others. We're learning Chullin in Yeshiva now; from time to time we see Mishnayos from Zera'im coming up in the Gemara."

"The fact that there's a clear, meaningful goal in sight makes it very special," adds another participant. "You're constantly moving forward, getting closer toward that goal. There's a sense of excitement each day because you know you'll be learning something new that will help with other areas of your learning. Zera'im comes up all over Shas; you now have a familiarity with topics cited by the Gemara."

"Every single day," says a third member of the group, "you know you're going to be meeting and learning with this *chevra*, 'day in day out.' If we see each other during the rest of the day, we'll say to each other something like, 'I'll see you at Mishnayos later'. On Shabbos, or during *bein hazemanim* when the rest of our day has a bit less structure, we still know that we need to 'stay with the program', perhaps by learning it together with one or more of the guys that we see around. This collective sort of *hasmada* by a special group is a very special thing in itself, not to mention the alumni tuned in all over the world, whom we don't see. Then there's the advantage of the actual learning; little by little, the amount we covered increases; the consistency and perseverance make it very powerful. We're making *siyumim* on many *mesechtos*, eventually on complete *sedorim*. Last year we were learning Kiddushin; very often, the Gemara, or even the Rishonim, discuss concepts rooted in Zera'im. My chavrusa was often amazed; 'How do you know about this?' he would ask me."

Alumni around the world are invited to join Ner Michoel in this exciting initiative by subscribing to the Mishnayos Telephone Shiur. Submit your phone number via the Ner Mechoel website (www.nermechoel.org), and you will receive a daily phone call at 1:15 pm EST. The daily *shiur* will soon be available via podcast as well, details to follow.

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Siyum Hashas by Alumnus Rabbi Emanuel Efraim

A memorable and inspiring Siyum Hashas was recently celebrated by Rabbi Emanuel Efraim, a Toras Moshe alumnus who is currently a member of Rav Michel Feinstein's *kollel* in Bnei Brak and a *mechaber seforim*. The event was graced by the presence of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Shurkin, and a broad diversity of *rabbanim* from many different circles. A large crowd of friends from Toras Moshe and elsewhere joined in the *simcha* of this noteworthy achievement.

A native of Kew Gardens, NY, Reb Emanuel was already one quarter of his way through Shas when he arrived in Toras Moshe. "At the time," he recalls "I was used to learning at a rather accelerated pace, making a *siyum* every few months. Toras Moshe intensified the spark of *hasmadah* that had ignited during my high school years and gave it direction and focus. During my first year and a half, I heard *shiur* from Rabbi Shurkin (some of my previous *rebbeim* were *talmidim* of his). Rabbi Shurkin demonstrated that learning means seeing what lies beneath each word – understanding and becoming thoroughly familiar with the entire *sugya*. During the next year in the Rosh Yeshiva's *shiur*, I was taught that 'learning the Rashba' means much more than simply going through the Rashba's comments on the Gemara at hand. It means checking every place in Shas where the Chiddushei Rashba – as well as the Teshuvos HaRashba – discuss the *sugya*. I remember how I looked up to the example set by the older, 'fifth year' *bochurim*; I watched how every spare second of their time was utilized for *limud haTorah*. I would dare myself to be in the *bais medrash*



as long as they were there, no easy feat for someone who just came from a New York high school. Outside of Seder hours, I was still covering *mesechtos*, albeit at a slower, more deliberate pace. The Yeshiva also taught me how to develop and present a *chaburah*; I compiled all of my *chaburos* into a *kuntres*, which I distributed at my *chasunah*.

"During his remarks at the Siyum, the Rosh Yeshiva emphasized an important point when he said, 'Emanuel, there's no such thing as finishing Shas. You never "completely" learn Shas. Shas is *aruka mei'erez middah* – more than a lifetime of work. The more times you "finish" it, the more you realize how much of it there is still to learn. Tonight, then, we're only celebrating a new *has'chalah*.' While Rabbi Shurkin did not speak, he told me privately to please invite him to my fifth *siyum hashas*; the actual learning, he explained, only begins after you've gone through it four times!"



About a year ago, Rabbi Efraim published a *sefer* on various topics in Shas, entitled *Pri Yosef, l'ilui nishmas* his grandfather. Since the *siyum*, he's been working on another volume, mostly on *Kodashim*, with some of it dedicated to the other *sedorim*.

"I feel very indebted to the Yeshiva," Reb Emanuel concludes. "The level of learning it instills in the *talmidim* is highly regarded, even in a Bnei Brak/Brisk type of *kollel* such as the one I am privileged to attend. *Yecholim le'histader sham* – you can go there and still be OK! At the same time, it is this same Toras Moshe training and foundation that enables my friends in the working world to lead their lives as bona fide *bnai Torah* in a role that is best suited for them. This is what makes the Yeshiva truly unique."