

CONNECTIONS



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDIUM

Dear Alumni,

Boruch Hashem, a lot has happened since you last heard from us at the beginning of the New Year, before the *yomim tovim*.

Shortly after Succos the Ner Michoel Alumni Association was launched in the city of Toronto and the Toronto Committee was formed. The Rosh Yeshiva spent a very busy and very productive weekend in the city of Baltimore. The fourth CD in the Ner Michoel series on the Yomim Tovim (dedicated *I'ilui nishmas Chaya Miriam Shaindel* ז"ל *bas Ephraim Shimon* ה"ר) came out for Chanuka.

The Ner Michoel tribute to the Class of '95 at the Yeshiva's 31st Anniversary Tribute Dinner, was the first of, what we hope will be many

reunions between old *chaveirim*, rekindling and strengthening connections of old. The palpable feelings of *achvah* and *achdus* that the Class of '95 radiated at the Dinner, Rabbi Shlomo Soroka's presentation and Rabbi Baruch Levine's performance, were all part of an inspiring and memorable evening.

Just before the Dinner, the Rosh Yeshiva's monumental work on the topic of Torah and Science entitled "Torah, Chazal, and Science," which was sponsored by Ner Michoel, appeared in bookstores around the world. Copies have been "flying-off-the shelves" and the second printing is already underway.

Our esteemed colleague and friend, Rabbi Dovid Kornreich, *shlita*, who returned to Yeshiva this *zman* to lead a *chaburah* learning

Maseches Yevamos, has been giving a series of *shiurim* in Yeshiva based upon the book. We wish Rav Dovid success in all his endeavors.

We wish all of our alumni a wonderful and "warm" winter and hope that you'll enjoy reading about Ner Michoel's most recent developments.

Please stay in touch.

With best regards,



Daniel Sinowitz
Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz



Shmuli Weiner
Rabbi Shmuli Weiner

COUNTERING DISTORTION & MISINFORMATION

A seasoned master sets the record straight

Rabbi Dovid Kornreich is a respected Marbitz Torah and *kiruv* professional in Yerushalayim. A long-time *talmid* of the Rosh Hayeshiva, Rav Moshe Meiselman *shlita*, Reb Dovid first became intrigued by the the so-called "conflict" between Torah and science, by way of his relationship with Rav Aryeh Carmell *zatzal*, post-high school. In further exploration of the topic, he attended the *shiurim* and studied the *seforim* of Rav Moshe Shapiro *shlita*. In more recent years R' Dovid has been personally mentored by the Rosh Hayeshiva in formulating and concretizing his approach to "Torah and Science." Rabbi Kornreich has gained notoriety for effectively debating and discussing these matters, based upon a solid, Torah-true outlook. His blog, "The Slifkin Challenge" is a forum of articles and ongoing discussions about the *hashkafa* errors and serious distortions found in popular literature of the last 20 years.

"Whether in print or in the blogosphere," Reb Dovid explains, "these people have clearly overstepped their bounds by blindly and overwhelmingly accepting every scientific pronouncement as the absolute truth", Rabbi Kornreich says. "The 'conflict' between Torah and science becomes much less troubling when we learn to distinguish between scientific

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theory and scientific fact. Difficulties based on scientific theory, or assertions that we can't observe in the lab – that can't be tested or proven with any degree of certainty, do not even merit any of our attention. So right at the start, we are left with much fewer '*kashyos*' that

we have to deal with.

"I started my blog," explains Rabbi Kornreich, "when I really got fed up with the misinformation and confusion that these bloggers keep generating with every new post. Besides the incompetence inherent in their approach, making the Torah and Chazal seem primitive and trapped within their surrounding primitive culture, their proofs are arguably incomplete and full of lies and contradictions. For example, one of the main points that the Rosh Hayeshiva, Rav Meiselman *shlita*, articulates in his long-awaited (seven years in the making) book, 'Torah, Chazal, and Science', is that a closer look at what our *seforim* say should give us the self confidence to say, 'We know better than what the others claim'. We need to recognize that our *mesorah* goes way back all the way to Har Sinai, to the *nevi'im*, originating from Hakadosh

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Boruch Hu Himself. It is thus far more reliable than what the ‘theories’ of contemporary science say about how the universe and the world we see today came into being. We have no reason to feel insecure in our beliefs in areas where science has no authority to talk and make statements.

“At the end, though, there will be statements of Chazal that do appear to be in conflict with scientific fact. As an example, the basis for believing spontaneous generation doesn’t occur, is indeed very clear, based on Rav Saadia Gaon’s principle that we are permitted to trust the information about the world gained by our own senses, and extrapolate backwards – regarding natural phenomena only. Our senses directly perceive that the species discussed by Chazal come into being via eggs or live birth. In these cases, the Rosh Yeshiva will find a new approach to understanding a Gemara that he feels is properly understood when it is viewed in a perspective that does not conflict with observable fact, even if this will not be exactly the way Rishonim understood the Gemara. In the intellectual world in which the Rishonim lived, spontaneous generation was an accepted principle. They had no reason, therefore, not to explain the Gemara as it appears on the surface. The Rishonim make no claim, however, that their understanding of Chazal is complete and perfect. Whenever the observable facts seem to leave us with a choice of a) Chazal were mistaken, *chalila*, or b) the accepted

understanding of their words is incorrect – the Rashba clearly tells us which conclusion we must draw. Chazal made no mistake; rather, it is some aspect of the accepted understanding that is in need of modification.

“The devotees of science have devoted a great deal of time and effort to refute the position of the ‘right-wingers’ who allegedly claim that no member of Chazal was mistaken regarding anything, including science. Rav Meiselman, however, takes the view that just like in areas of Halacha, Chazal left many discussions as “Teiku” (unresolved) or “Tiyuvta” (indefensible) based on the arguments leveled against it, the same may be the case where they deliberated the workings of the physical world. A crucial caveat here, though, is that we don’t have the right to point out – regarding Chazal’s words – where this is the case. Only fellow members of Chazal were able to do this. In the absolute sense, therefore, we may indeed find statements by Chazal that do not stand up against what is accepted as fact.

“The Rosh Hayeshiva clearly excludes the definitive, absolute statements of Chazal that must ultimately be accepted as fact. If any of these seem to be in conflict with what appears to be the reality, they must be studied and viewed from different perspectives in an attempt to reconcile it with the truth and defended from any scientific challenge.

The blog is a place of lively, heated dialogue, with Rabbi Kornreich refuting critics and referring visitors to precisely the chapter or page in the book to find the topic under discussion. The book’s size (11 topics, 60-plus chapters) is a result of the excruciating detail in which it clarifies, one topic at a time, what needs to be dealt with and defended and what doesn’t. For each subject, there is an overall, comprehensive view, a list of solutions, but perhaps more significantly, the reader is left with comprehensive approach, a set of tools and a perspective that can be applied to a variety of issues. The next time the reader encounters a difficult Gemara, he’ll say, okay, let’s see what category this Gemara falls into.

Reb Dovid clearly identifies which ideas that the others would have you accept are considered *kefirah* and why; which authority, *gadol*, or *sefer* said this is the case. In a world where we generally find people who are either completely brainwashed by everything modern science claims to know, or those who feel that we must be *mekabel* Chazal’s words without any explanation or understanding, we now have a breath of fresh air, well researched, with everything presented built with a solid foundation, backed by sources from Chazal through Rishonim and Acharonim.

THE ROSH YESHIVA SPENDS SHABBOS IN BALTIMORE

The Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Moshe Meiselman, spent Shabbos Parshas Noach, Rosh Chodesh MarCheshvan in the city of Baltimore, home to a sizable contingent of Toras Moshe alumni and parents.

On Friday evening, the Rosh Yeshiva *davened* at Kol Torah, Rabbi Yosef Berger’s Shul. Between Kabbolas Shabbos and Maariv, he presented a *shiur* to a packed audience, contrasting the extreme materialism of the Dor Hamabul with the “enlightened” Dor Haflaga, who viewed man as a mere utility valued on how much he can contribute to economy. Rav Meiselman then applied the lessons of the Parsha by elaborating on how they shed light on the prevailing ideologies in our time.

On Shabbos morning, Rav Meiselman *davened* at Mercaz Torah U’Tefillah, under the leadership of his nephew, Rav Yissocher Dov Eichenstein, who hosted the Rosh Yeshiva during his stay. Before Shacharis, at 8:15 AM, he gave the weekly *chumash shiur* that regularly takes place in Shul at that time.

The Rosh Yeshiva’s main *drasha* was delivered during *shalosh seudos* at Mercaz Torah U’Tefillah. He discussed the ongoing tensions in Eretz Yisroel between the governing powers and the *chareidim*. Characteristically, his words put everything into tremendous perspective, as he presented this as the continuation of the age-old, historic struggle for the character of the *yishuv*.

While the other *shiurim* were open to the general public, a Melave Malka for parents and alumni was held at the offices of DC Dental, hosted by Dovid Charnowitz and Daniel Ely. Over fifty people attended the exciting event. Rav Meiselman addressed the crowd, a delectable menu was served, and the attendees had the opportunity to greet the Rosh Yeshiva and discuss matters with him.

On Sunday morning following Shacharis at Mercaz Torah U’Tefillah, Rav Meiselman gave a *shiur* entitled: “Choshen Mishpat, Civil Law; Beis Din, Courts – Halachos of Litigation Relevant to Everyday Life”. The

Rosh Hayeshiva left everyone strengthened, with Torah blessings and reinforced bonds of closeness and connection between the Baltimore community and the Yeshiva in the *Ir HaKodesh*.

The weekend was coordinated and planned by Rabbi Moshe Schuchman and R’ Daniel Ely. Their efforts greatly contributed to the success of the Rosh Yeshiva’s visit.





INAUGURATION OF NER MICHOEL'S TORONTO CHAPTER A MILESTONE IN ALUMNI'S SUCCESS

Shortly after Succos, Rabbi Shmuli Weiner and Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz, made a special trip from Eretz Yisroel to spend a few days in Toronto, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Toronto chapter of Toras Moshe's alumni association.

The two *rebbeim* spent several days in the area, meeting privately with alumni and their families in their homes. There was ample time and scheduling to allow productive sessions with anyone who was interested; all were highly appreciative of the opportunity to benefit from the *rebbeim's* warm presence and wise counsel.

The high point of the visit was a very warm and enjoyable alumni gathering, held at the home of Ari Messinger, a Toras Moshe alumnus with a close connection to the Rosh Yeshiva and the Mashgiach. Noticeably present were quite a few older alumni, who had left the Yeshiva at least ten years ago and still feel very much a part of Toras Moshe. Among these were Rabbi Shmuli Zilber, who serves as a *rebbei* in a local mesivta, and Rabbi Avrumi Rudner, currently a member of Rav Shlomo Miller's Kollel.

"It was really very nice", said one of the alumni attendees, "seeing my old friends from *yeshiva* and even people who I'm used to seeing all the time, there's that special sense of camaraderie when you get together as a group who share the common ToMo thread. Just recalling the good times we had, sharing warm memories of how we grew and *shteiged*, the years of learning and growth. Sitting once again with Reb Shmuli and Reb Daniel, with whom we had a very strong *kesher* with during our *yeshiva* years is something very special. After

all, we used to sit and talk so many things through with them, whether *inyanei hashkafa*, the Chumash *va'adim*, the Chazarah *shiurim*, they were so approachable all the time. Although right now, we may be older and have moved on to different tracks in life, we still share a common bond. Sharing what we've accomplished since then reignites and reinforces this connection."

Both *rebbeim* touched on the same theme during the *shmuess* they gave at the event. Pointing to the Dor Haflaga, the Rishonim took notice that the Torah does not call their actions an *aveira* or any form of sin. Hashem simply disrupted what they were trying to do because it was against His plan for civilization. While their desire to remain close and stick together was understandable, sometimes you have to spread apart, to go off and spread the word of Hashem. Centralization may be good for one's formative years, but then the time comes to spread out and go share what you have learned. Rabbi Sinowitz described how he used get a bit sad and down at *mesibos preidah*, those "good bye parties" held in *yeshiva* when *talmidim* left. "I can't believe another one of the guys is leaving," he used to think to himself, "but then I realized that this is part of maturing and growing up. Baruch Hashem, Ner Michoel has branched out to so many different locations, touching such a wide circle of people, and this only highlights the inherent *brocha* of spreading and branching out. Look how many *talmidim* ended up in different cities and are being *mekadesh shem shomayim* there, each in his own way being *mashpia*, impacting and influencing the people that are around them, a wonderful ripple effect. This is the true will of Hashem, not to remain in your

original spot but to grow and perform. I look around the room," Reb Daniel continued, "and I see *rebbeim*, *kollel yungeleit*, and *baalei battim* who set aside hours in their day for learning, this is a beautiful reflection of Toras Moshe's ideals successfully implanted and bearing fruit."

At the event, Reb Shmuli marked the recent *yahrzeit* of his father, Rav Michoel Weiner *zatzal*, for whom Ner Michoel is named, by making a *siyum l'ilui nishmaso*. After the event ended, people just hung around and schmoozed for several hours, savoring the warmth and good feelings. Everyone went away with renewed *chizuk* and strength, and a greater appreciation of their role and mission as Toras Moshe alumni.





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SHIURIM BY MAIL

Pre-Yom Tov Shiurim CDs Unite Toras Moshe Alumni

As many alumni already know, the pre-Yom Tov CD production is the latest project of the Ner Michoel Alumni Association, and has already had a tremendous impact on so many Toras Moshe *talmidim*, both in the professional world as well as those who are serving as *klei kodesh*.

The alumni response thus far has been truly astonishing. When *talmidim* hear the voices of their beloved *rebbeim* giving a *shiur* once more, they feel transported back in time, as if they were sitting in *yeshiva* once again. "It was actually amazing", said one alumnus with a huge smile, after listening to a pre-Yom Tov *shiur* from Rav Michel Shurkin. "It was like I was sitting there, right back in *shiur* the way it used to be." Timing is also a factor, as each Yom Tov season is a time when people are generally most receptive to a spiritual shot in the arm, and are looking for deeper insight and meaning to make the most of what this particular *chag* has to offer.

But the alumni reaction and feedback tells even a greater story. The sense of satisfaction and the sparkle in their eyes indicate that it's not just that they've picked up a tidbit or two to say repeat at the Yom Tov table, which in itself would be a significant accomplishment. More than just evoking nostalgia for their *yeshiva* days, the *shiurim* have a way of taking the messages and the *limudim* they have learnt back then and making it all applicable to their day-to-day lives at their current stage in life, to who they are and what they've become today.

The CDs feature the full spectrum of Toras Moshe's *rebbeim*, reflecting their varying nuances and distinct approaches, thereby providing an opportunity for each *talmid* to connect with the unique *derech* he has come to appreciate and best relate to. The *shiurim* are geared to convey a powerful, timely message with "something for everyone" both alumni who are still learning in Kollel full-time, *rabbanim*, *mechanchim*, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen, each in their own way are finding a very positive benefit from the sessions.

At the end of each CD, there is a brief *halachic* overview by Rabbi Shmuli Weiner, summarizing the seasonal *halachos* pertaining to the approaching Yom Tov. The son of Rav Michoel Weiner *atzal*, for whom Ner Michoel is named, Reb Shmuli is well-known to many alumni as warm and approachable member of the *kollel* during the their *yeshiva* days. He currently serves as a *posek* to whom many American *yungerleit* turn with their *halacha* questions.

For the Yeshiva, whose recent Dinner celebrated the one thousand alumni milestone, this project has special significance as it truly connects scores of diverse alumni from different periods in its history, who share the same *mehalach hachayim* they received from their *rebbeim*, united in study of the same pre-Yom Tov material approaching the upcoming *chag* in the Toras Moshe tradition.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Sponsoring the publication and dissemination of the *shiurim* is a great *z'chus* for a *refuah sh'leima*, *yahrzeit*, or to simply honor a special occasion. Join those who've already taken this opportunity to partner with us in this special project. These CD's are mailed out to over **1,000 Toras Moshe alumni and friends, 5 times a year**. To sponsor a publication call Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz 054-465-4988 or Rabbi Naftali Katz at 732-600-9336 or email nermichael@torasmoshe.org.