YEAR 10, ISSUE 2

MORESHET MAGAZINE

A Publication of Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim



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Mission Statement

Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim is a Sephardic post-high school yeshivah located in Jerusalem, dedicated to preparing young men for college, business and life with a strong foundation in Torah and misvot. Rooted in the rich traditions of Aram Soba and guided by the timeless Sephardic values of our ancestors, we strive to cultivate future leaders- Bnei Torah- who will carry their experience of living and learning in Eres Yisrael into every aspect of their lives.

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Kislev 5786

Month of learning is generously sponsored

By

Joey Shamah and Family

Lessons of Hanukkah
by Rabbi Harold Sutton

A central theme of the holiday of Hanukkah is the miracle of the lights. A small amount of undefiled olive oil – an amount that could only last one day – lasted for eight days, enough time for the Kohanim to produce more oil. Many of our later commentaries question the need for this miracle, claiming that since there was no pure oil available, it would have been permissible for them to use impure oil. Why the need for a miracle to facilitate a stringency?

In addition, one may ask if it was necessary for the Jews to risk their lives fighting the mighty Syrian-Greek empire. Antiochus' decrees forbade the observance of Shabbat, Milah and Rosh Hodesh. None of these mandate risking one's life to observe these rules. The answer to this question can be found in Rambam *Hilkhot Yesodei HaTorah*, Perek 5. Rambam maintains that when the Jews are in a state of *sha'at hashmad*, one must sacrifice one's life for any law. A similar rule applies even in a non- *sha'at hashmad* situation where the non-Jew's intention is not for personal gain but to force one to abandon his faith and is demanding a public desecration.

Since the survival of the Torah is at stake, one must sacrifice himself rather than violate any commandment. This was the predicament faced during the period of the Hashmonaim. They put their lives at risk for the continuity of Jewish law. It may be said as well that the "stringency" of requiring pure oil was due to those specific conditions faced by the Jews of that period. Not only was there an external threat of Greek persecution, but there was an internal threat of Hellenized "modern" Jews who sought to modernize existing ritual as well. In order to combat that threat, scrupulous adherence to those rituals – even beyond the letter of the law – is required.

During Hanukkah, even in our times we commemorate that sacrifice to preserve our Jewish religion. In an extremely unique demonstration of our scrupulous dedication to Rabbinic law, we accept the most stringent approach to lighting the candles, described by our Rabbis as *Mehadrin min haMehadrin*. This practice is performed by all Jews who perform the *misvah*.

In our own day, we face similar threats of Hellenization as did the Jews over two thousand years ago. As then, the secular forces of Hellenization claim that our faith is outdated and ancient. Core foundations of our belief are not only questioned but repudiated in favor of a more open and liberal approach. One need not go far to find simple truths that, until a decade ago, were taken for granted now being challenged. The answer of the Jewish nation must be – as it always was – a strengthening of our commitment to our Torah and its values. The most vulnerable to our society's challenges are our youth. High school and college students are constantly bombarded with messages that challenge their identity. The values of heritage and community are questioned. Deepening their learning and commitment to the Jewish people and the Land of Israel is a solution that Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim provides.

We grow through the experience of spending a post-high school year studying in Israel under the guidance of great scholars who mentor our students for a lifetime. We spend the year connecting with the Land of Israel and the people of Israel, and celebrating the miracle of the modern State of Israel as it demonstrates the continuity of our nationhood. We watch in awe as our Israeli youth follow in the footsteps of the Maccabees by risking their lives to secure our state, people and religion, reminding us that we will outlive all our challenges.



Rabbi Harold Sutton, born and raised in Brooklyn, received Semikha from Hakham Ovadia Yosef, Hakham Meir Mazuz and Hakham Shimon Alouf. He earned a degree in Psychology from YU and studied towards a Master's degree in Judaic studies at NYU. He served as the Rabbi of Bnei Yitzhak, Rosh Yeshivah of Sephardic Rabbinical College and Rosh Yeshivah of Magen David Yeshivah before making Aliyah and founding Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim where he currently serves as Rosh Yeshivah.

Staff Spotlights



RABBI SHIMON HAI ALOUF

HALAKHA SEDER RABBI

Born in Jerusalem, Israel, Rabbi Shimon Alouf was a close student and hazzan of Hakham Ovadia Yosef. He served for decades as the head rabbi of Ahaba VeAhva in Brooklyn, NY leading the Egyptian community as well as the Rosh Yeshivah of both Magen David Yeshivah and the Sephardic Rabbinical College, where he gave semikha to dozens of community rabbis. He is a highly respected halakhic authority of Sephardic Jewish communities around the world and upon moving back to Israel in 2022 has been teaching at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.



All of Rabbi Alouf's Shiurim this year have been graciously sponsored by

Joey Levy



SOL KURTZ

NIGHT SEDER

Mr. Sol Kurtz grew up in Brooklyn and attended Magen David Yeshivah High School. Afterwards, he spent a year learning at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim before continuing his studies in Yeshiva University's Mazer Yeshiva Program for two years, followed by a year in the Sephardic Rabbinical College (SRC) under Rabbi Avi Harari. He also has been a participant of SRC's summer program since 2023. Additionally, he earned his bachelor's degree in Accounting from Yeshiva University and after getting married, moved with his wife Vivian to Israel in September of 2025 to continue learning and teaching at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.





RABBI JOSEPH SALEM

MORNING SEDER RABBI

Rabbi Joseph Salem grew up in Brooklyn, New York, where he attended Shaare Torah Elementary and Magen David Yeshivah High School. Afterward, he studied in Mitzpeh Yericho, Israel, under the guidance of Rabbi Shabtai Sabato. He continued his learning in the Sephardic Rabbinical College from Rabbi Shimon Alouf and Rabbi Harold Sutton. He works in his family business, in the textiles and home fashion industry, teaches his daf yomi shiur on zoom and is a Morning Seder Rabbi at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim. He, his wife Loraine and their six children currently live in Alon Shvut.



All of Rabbi Salem's Shiurim this year have been graciously sponsored by

The Salem Family



RABBI YAAKOV TESSLER

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE & ACTIVITIES

Our Director of Student Life & Activities, Rabbi Yaakov Tessler's family made aliyah from Flatbush. His father was one of the first students of Rabbi Shimon Alouf. Rabbi Tessler studied for 17 years in Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav, where he was a very close student of the Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Yaakov Shapira. Rabbi Tessler also holds a Bachelor's degree in education from Orot Yisrael College for Education.

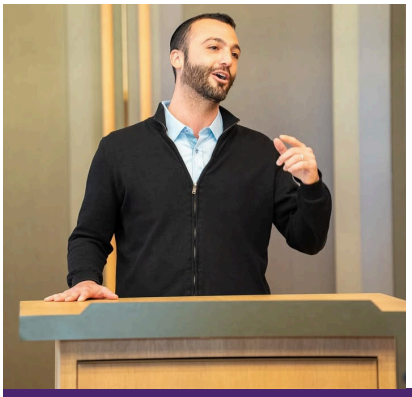


All of Rabbi Tessler's Shiurim this year have been graciously sponsored by

Ikey Chera and Family

Recent Highlights

Recruiting Has Begun!





Rabbi Edward Benjamin recently visited several high schools to begin recruiting for next year.
To apply, visit moreshetyerushalayim.com/application

Hebron Shabbaton

Graciously sponsored by The Franco Family



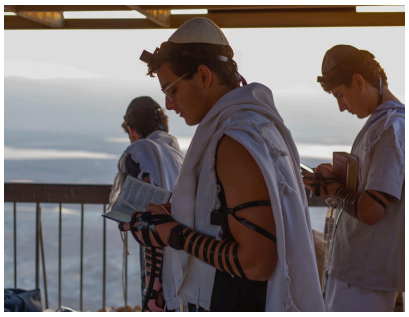
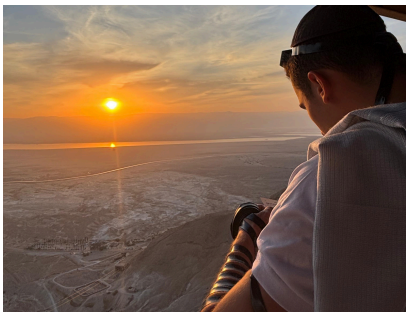


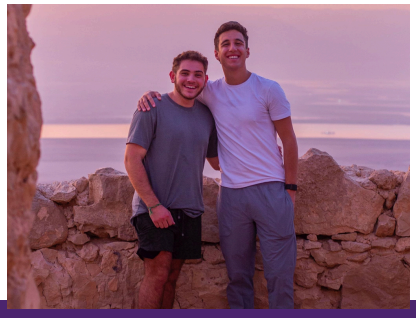

On Shabbat Toledot, we had a truly meaningful Shabbaton in Hebron. We prayed Minha, Kabbalat Shabbat, and Arbit in Mearat HaMakhpela, followed by a delicious Friday night dinner and a guided tour of the city.

The next morning, we prayed in the Abraham Abinu Synagogue, enjoyed a shiur from Rabbi Harold Sutton, and then enjoyed another great meal. After Habdalah, we learned how tefillin are made, played a fun quiz game (shoutout to winners Joseph Catton, Aron Ani and Eli Levy!), heard the story of how the Abraham family purchased Bet HaShalom and ended the night with music and rooftop pizza overlooking the city.

Recent Highlights

Tiyul to Masada & The Dead Sea




4:45am Climbing Masada for Vatikin minyan, followed by a tour of the area and some fun in the Dead Sea

YOFHS Seniors Vist






We recently hosted senior boys from Yeshivah of Flatbush Joel Braverman High School who were on their "Torat Eretz Yisrael" trip. Our students learned with them, connected with them and spoke to them about what it's like attending Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.

Recent Highlights

Day of Hesed











We recently had a special Day of Hesed in which we built beds for needy families in the morning and we made and delivered pizzas for families of miluim in the afternoon!

Day of Hesed coordinated & sponsored by Sally & Eddie Cohen

Mabrook!

Mabrook to Sally & Jacques Salama (Class of '22) on the birth of a baby girl!
Mabrook to Sarah Saideh & Jacob S. Mosseri (Class of '22) on their engagement!
Mabrook to Or Asulin & Aharon Elmaleh (Class of '21) on their engagement!
Mabrook to Esther Manopla & Joe Sultan (Class of '22) on their engagement!
Mabrook to Cherie Chehebar & Joey Falack (Class of '23) on their marriage!

Football Season is Underway
by Aron Hasbani

Three games into the flag football season, this team has already shown explosive potential, strong leadership, and stretches of high-level play. Even though the record isn't where we want it yet, the flashes on both sides of the ball point to a group with the talent to make the rest of the year very exciting.

Our Explosive Offense
Quarterback Joe Dweck is the offensive captain. With eight touchdowns, Joe D has shown excellent field vision, strong decision-making, and the ability to spread the ball to a deep crew of speedy, dynamic receivers.

Joseph Catton, a true speedster with three touchdowns, constantly threatens defenses with deep routes and quick bursts in space.

Hymie Gindi, another explosive weapon, has two touchdowns and regularly creates separation on short and medium routes.

Ronny Gindi adds versatility with reliable hands and a standout two-touchdown game, while Jacob Escava brings an X-factor spark, already finding the end zone once and forcing defenses to account for him on every snap.

At tight end, Steven Benun provides physicality and steady play, while veteran TE Ezra Dweck brings leadership, toughness, and valuable experience in both blocking and route running.

Up front, Aron Hasbani has anchored the offensive line with strong protection and clean snaps, giving Joe D the space and time needed to run the offense effectively.

Defense Creating Pressure and Turnovers
Defensively, the team has shown the ability to change games with pressure and smart reads. Jack Mugrabi has been an X-factor on the rush, who has three sacks and getting consistent pressure that forces quick throws and mistakes.

Alongside him, Steven Benun has been a force on the defensive line, using his strength and speed to disrupt plays and collapse space.

In the secondary, Joseph Dusi has been a lockdown force grabbing one interception, while safety Jesse Leventer has had an amazing start with four sacks and one interception, showcasing how effective he is as both a blitzer and coverage defender.

Cornerback Daniel Bailey has emerged as a true shutdown player. Opposing quarterbacks really try and avoid throwing to his side. Any receiver he guards gets shut down.

A Record That Doesn't Tell the Whole Story
The team began with a tough loss to Yeshivat Torat Shraga, responded with a dominant 33–0 shutout over YBH, and then battled hard against Pizzeria Efrat in another close loss.

This team is playing much better than a 1–2 start. Between the speed on offense, the pressure on defense, and the moments where everything clicks, the potential is clear.



A Promising and Exciting Season Ahead
With a quarterback in command, multiple speed threats, strong veteran leadership, and a defense that can blitz and cover at a high level, this football team has all the tools to make a real push as the season continues.

If they turn these flashes into consistent drives and stops, this year has the chance to be something special, the talent and upside are absolutely there.



Aron Hasbani graduated from Hillel Yeshiva High School in 2025 and is currently a student at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.

Alumni Visits









ALUMNI VISITS

WE'RE ALWAYS HAPPY TO HAVE OUR ALUMNI STAY-AND LEARN-WITH US. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN THE YESHIVAH, LET US KNOW IN ADVANCE BY SCANNING THE QR CODE. WE'LL REVIEW AVAILABILITY AND GET BACK TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

The Shadowed Message at the Heart of Hanukkah
by Jonas Saida

The profound meaning behind Hanukkah lies in its connection to the Jewish experience of exile and the earliest moments of creation. Only by viewing Hanukkah in this broader context can one fully grasp its enduring significance. The second pasuk in the Torah reads:

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹקִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם׃

This is translated as:

> "Now the earth was void and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep…"

On this, the Midrash in Bereshit Rabbah 2:4 teaches:

- תֹהוּ - זה מלכות בבל: Void refers to the exile in Babylon.
- וָבֹהוּ – זה מלכות מדי: And Empty refers to the exile in Media.
- וְחֹשֶׁךְ – זה מלכות יון: And Darkness refers to the exile related to the Greeks.
- עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם - זה אדום: On the face of the deep refers to the exile related to Edom (this refers to the current exile caused by the Romans who destroyed our Second Bet Hamikdash).

Summing up the Jewish exile with six words written in the Torah to describe pre-creation raises many questions. To delve deeper, let's focus on two:

1. How does darkness connect to the Greek exile?
2. How does this connection enrich our understanding of Hanukkah?

Addressing these questions requires examining the nature of the Greek decrees and their deeper implications.

The Midrash elaborates on Greek rule by writing "שהחשיכו עיניהם של ישראל בגזרותיהם", "they darkened the eyes of Israel with their decrees." The Midrash in Ma'aseh Hanukkah lists these decrees:

גזרו מלכי יוון גזרות קשות על ישראל: לבטל שבת ומועדים, ולמנוע מהם מילה, ולא יקדשו את החודש, ושיכתבו על קרן השור: אין לנו חלק בא-לוהי ישראל

The Greeks restricted our observance of Shabbat, Brit Milah, sanctifying the new moon, and forced us to write on the horns of our oxen that "we have no portion in the G-D of Israel."

The Maharal writes in *Ner Misva*:

לכתוב על קרן השור… כי בזה הם שוללים כחם של ישראל

"to write upon the horn was to deny the spiritual power of Am Yisrael."

This prompts a further question: Why doesn't the Maharal say that banning us from Shabbat or Brit Milah observance denies our spiritual power? How is this decree more harmful than the others?

The Ben Ish Hai in *Derashot, Mikes*, writes that the Greeks …גזרו על קרן השור, לרמוז על חטא העגל כדי לשבר לבם, decreed (that the Jews) write on the horns of the oxen to allude to the sin of the golden calf and to break their hearts." Rashi writes in Shemot 32:4 that the language of עגל בן שור (*Egel* or Calf) refers explicitly to the son of an ox. Thus, the Greeks sought to instill in the minds of the Jewish people the falsehood that because of our sins in the past with regard to the *Egel Hazahab*, we lost our portion in G-D.

Acceptance of such a notion is to completely debase the institution of *Teshuba* and deny G-D's continued relationship with the Jewish people. But the cunning in the Greeks' messaging wasn't in its tone or content but, as Rabbi Farhi points out, in its consistency. Faced with such a demoralizing message once, one can reasonably muster the strength to move forward with his Abodat Hashem. But to see this message in front of one's eyes every single day, every time you go to work and plow with your oxen or move loads -- nothing can be more harmful! Presenting this negative message to our eyes and to thus rewire our brains.

Perhaps this is what the Hida was referring to when he wrote in *Homot Anakh* regarding this specific decree being מן הגזרות האכזריות ביותר כי פגעה בעצם האמונה "amongst the most cruel of decrees because it struck at the foundation of emunah."

While banning us from fulfilling a misva like Shabbat or Brit Milah can restrict an avenue of our connection to Hashem, it doesn't fundamentally erode our belief in the existence of such a connection. By contrast, the decree to write on the horns of the oxen and allude to the idea that because we sinned, G-D is no longer interested in us, sought to accomplish such an evil.

In performing the miracles of Hanukkah, Hashem showed the nation at a critical time that he not only still cared for us but desired us and would even bend the laws of nature to receive our service.

Further in *Homot Anakh*, the Hida writes that אין לך דבר שמחבב את האדם לפני המקום כתשובה המקום "Nothing endears a person to G-D like *Teshuba*."

From this perspective, one can also understand how important it is for the Hanukkah miracles to be publicized in order to combat the malicious narrative the Greeks put forth before our eyes. In this way, Hanukkah is about making known the enduring and vital truth of G-D's continued immense caring for us, as shown in his desire for our sincere *Teshuba* and *Abodah*.



Jonas Saida graduated from Katz Yeshiva High School of South Florida in 2025 and is currently a student at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.

The True Miracle
by Jack Benjamin

In the story of Hanukkah, the Jews defeated the Syrian-Greeks who tried to force their Hellenistic faith upon us. The Jewish people then lit the מנרה with the only pure oil they had left, which miraculously lasted for 8 days, and that's why we celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah.

The Gemara says, "when the Syrian-Greeks entered the sanctuary, they made all the oils that were in the sanctuary impure. And when the חשמונאים overcame them and were victorious, they searched and found only one פך of שמן that was placed with the seal of the כהן גדל, and there was only enough oil to light the מנרה for one day. A miracle happened and it lit for 8 days. The next year, the rabbis instituted those days as holidays with הלל and הודאה (Shabbat 21b)."

What's interesting is that the Gemara only talks about the lighting of the מנורה and only vaguely mentions the much greater miracle, which was the war. You would think the focus would be on the impossible military victory: a tiny group of Jews that defeated one of the strongest empires in the world. But instead, the Gemara chooses to highlight what seems like a smaller and quieter miracle. Why does it focus so much on this?

The reason is because the real war was never just a physical one, it was a spiritual one. The Syrian-Greeks didn't try to wipe us out the way other nations did. They didn't care if Jews lived, they cared if Judaism lived. They tried to force their Hellenistic faith and culture upon us, convincing the Jews to drop mitzvot, to abandon holiness and to trade Torah for Greek influence. They even placed idols inside the בית המקדש itself, trying to shift the center of Jewish life away from God and toward their own ideas.

By the Jews taking such care to light the מנרה, Judaism continued to live and grow. Even though the war was huge and miraculous, the victory over the Syrian-Greeks wasn't truly complete until the מנרה was lit again. They tried to destroy us spiritually, but our connection to Hashem remained untouched.

That's why the story of Hanukkah can't really be compared to any other story of Jewish persecution. Unlike the other nations who tried to destroy us physically, the Syrian-Greeks tried to destroy us spiritually. And the miracle of the oil wasn't just about light lasting longer than it should, it was about us wanting to follow the mitzvot, and HaShem helping us continue to do that even when we aren't able to.



Jack Benjamin graduated from Yeshivah of Flatbush Joel Braverman High School in 2025 and is currently a student at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.

Mishmar @ Moreshet

Mishmar Series 5786 is graciously sponsored by
The Mosseri Family

On Oct 30th Rabbi Dovid Fink, a senior attorney in Maryland, spoke to us about his experiences as a Torah observant attorney and how he makes sure it doesn't take time away from learning Torah and spending time with his family.

Mishmar was graciously sponsored by The Benzaken Family In memory of Freda Nonda Benzaken







On Nov 6th, we heard from our very own Rabbi Edward Benjamin about setting goals and putting a plan in place to achieve them.

Mishmar was graciously sponsored by Steven Rabih (Class of '22 & '23)

On Nov 13th Rabbi Yaakov Tessler, our Director of Student Life & Activities, spoke to us about the significance of choices.

Mishmar was graciously sponsored by Eddie & Freda Levy and Family לעילוי נשמת אליהו בן סנבול







On Nov 20th, we had a special Rosh Hodesh Mishmar! It began by hearing from Mr. Eddie Cohen who spoke to us about how important it is to stay true to our values. We were then treated to a deluxe "Just Meat" dinner- followed by a talk with Irwin Azar (Class of '23) about seizing opportunities. We ended off the night with some Rosh Hodesh dancing.

Mishmar was graciously sponsored by Sheffy & Irwin Azar (Class of '23)

Mishmar @ Moreshet

Mishmar Series 5786 is graciously sponsored by
The Mosseri Family

On Nov 27th we heard from TWO amazing speakers. First we heard from Rabbi Avi Churba, who spoke to us about gratitude and then we heard from Jack Oved, who spoke to us about the importance of setting goals. To end off the night DJ Elliot Chalmè (Class of '25) set up his lights and speakers for dancing!













On Dec 4th, we heard from Isaac Dweck (Class of '18) about how to maximize the year and then we held our annual Sisit tying workshop! Rabbi Tessler and Moshe Alouf taught our students all about the Misva of Sisit and the different opinions of how to tie them. When they finished, every student got to tie their very own Sisit and keep it!

Sisit Workshop was graciously sponsored by
Joe Shamosh (Class of '21), Jacob Kassin (Class of '22), Hershel Chomali (Class of '21), Joshua Catton (Class of '23), David Cattan (Class of '22) and Morris Ades (Class of '25)

Families

As Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim marks its tenth year, "Families" shines a light on parents who have chosen the yeshivah for more than one son. Their experiences capture the consistency, care and confidence that have defined Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim since its founding.

The Natkin Family

Moreshet Magazine (MM): You sent 3 of your children to Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim over the years. What are their names and when did they attend the school?

Natkin Family (NF): Yes, so 2021 was Sonny's year. He's my oldest and he was the 1st one to go. His year was during COVID, which was very different. They almost weren't going to go- down to the wire. The next one that went was Larry; that was 2023. Larry's year was probably the best of the three. He had the greatest experience. He got the most out of it. He also had a great group of kids there with him. And then my third son, David, just came back last year, 2025. Also, it was a solid year, each was a little different.

MM: How did you first hear about the school?

NF: I mean, my kids were in Yeshivah of Flatbush and through their meetings we got to know more and more about the school. I guess it was just the only real option, to be honest. I've always heard stories of other schools that were not for our family- some of them are more of a loose environment and more of a free-for-all, so that always scared me. The truth is, I was not down to send any of my children to Israel. I'm very overprotective. I get nervous, I get scared. My wife was the one pushing. So we heard great things about the school. It's like one big family there. It's a small tight-knit group. You know who all the kids are. They're all from mainstream schools, so we sent them to Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.

MM: Tell me about Sonny's experience at the school.

NF: So, like I was saying before, Sonny's experience was different. It's sad because I don't think he got the full experience, which of course wasn't the school's fault. You know, they did the best they could given the health restrictions. But towards the second half of the year, as things opened up more and more, he really enjoyed himself. Overall, the learning was great from the beginning. It was just a weird year, you had to wear masks everywhere and things like that.



That was the best place for him to be because we had similar restrictions here in Brooklyn as well. So, at least there, he had like a large extended family with him, you know? They had 30 kids, or whatever it was at the time. I mean, he has friends that he's still close with from there that he got closer with while he was there. They're still very tight till today. He definitely loved it.

MM: What about Larry's year? Why did you say he was the best of all three years?

NF: First of all, it was a lot more kids than Sonny's year. They also got to basically do everything. Like the full program [without having to worry about COVID]. Friends traveled together during off time, the school was able to take them on different trips. Also, when he got home, I felt that he got more religious. He was wearing a kippah everywhere, going to Minyan every morning, attending classes. Also something very special is that during his year, he got to learn one-on-one with Rabbi Harold Sutton every morning. Larry never missed a morning. He literally had the greatest time, till today he talks about it. Such a great group of kids that year!



MM: Tell me about David's experience last year- especially with the war intensifying towards towards the end of the year.

NF: David's year was great. He had a good time. It's very close knit. I can tell you this- I always felt safe. I'm at home getting all these alerts. I'm in 50 chats and could barely follow what was going on in the news. But when they were there, they never felt anything. They never felt unsafe. They always felt that they were safe wherever they were. Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim definitely did a good job of letting us know, keeping us in the loop, keeping us informed and giving us a heads up ahead of time. We always knew that they were in good hands and that they were safe.



MM: What could you tell me about the growth you've seen in the school from year five, when Sonny attended, through year nine, when David attended?

NF: You could see that it got much more organized. They're adding staff every year. There's more people involved. Now they have people on staff that specifically deal with parents, you have other people that are there for the kids. Depending on what it is, you know that there are people to contact.

MM: How about their new marketing director, as well? How's he been doing?

NF (laughing): Yes, oh, for sure. By the way, I was going to say that. Way more pictures, way more videos, way more everything. I'm not even just saying that because it's you that's asking, it's the truth.

In the beginning, it was like just a dump of random pictures here and there but over the years, it got way better. I see a difference. In terms of the school growing- 100%. Adding the staff, being more organized, more on top of it, the magazine is amazing. And it's fun to see where it's going to go down the road. You know, it's only getting better and better. My next boy is nine years old so we have some time before he attends the school.

MM: Was there a specific Rabbi that your family got close to over the years?

NF: I feel like it's Rabbi Edward Benjamin. He's the most relatable and the kids were always close with him. Rabbi Yehoshua Shani is also great. We had a legal issue when David was there during his year, because he had a late birthday and wasn't going to turn 18 by the end of December. The country was threatening to send him home or something crazy like that because of the visa laws and him being underage, but Rabbi Shani stepped in and cleared it all up. He really went above and beyond for us and we are so appreciative for that.

MM: As a parent, what do you love most about the school?

NF: Just knowing that they were safe. They treat the kids like their own. It was real, it was genuine. It was like, as if me and my wife were there with them. We knew that there were people looking after them, the same way we would. Sometimes it gets hard when you're a million miles away and you're getting video after video of the war that's going on. But the truth is that it definitely calmed us down knowing where they were and who they were with. So it definitely made a difference.

MM: What message do you have to The Yeshivah on celebrating the tenth year?

NF: Just keep doing what you're doing, don't stop. It's been amazing to watch the growth. I love it. I can't wait to see 10 years from now. Like I said, I have another 9 year old and I have a 6 year old. So Gd willing, I'll be doing this with you down the road again. Celebrating the 20th year!

Rising Star: Yosef Betesh
by Victor Cohen

If you ask three people to define the qualities that lead to success, you'll probably get five or six different answers. Some might say that the key to success is being kind and good to others, others might point to a highly analytical mindset or the ability to innovate, or execute, or even just a high level of intelligence. Some exhort the value of strong people skills or charisma. Many would also say that the only way to be successful in this world is to have the right values, namely a strong connection to Hashem. All would agree, though, that having all of the above qualities is extremely rare and hard to find in individuals.

That is what makes Yosef Betesh, this issue's Alumni Spotlight, stand out. Yosef, a recent graduate of the class of 2025, has a unique combination of qualities that you do not normally see in individuals. He is intelligent, has a good mind for business and real estate, is a hard worker, and can look at a problem in several different ways. Yet he is also kind, personable, and knows how to make friends. Besides those qualities, he is an intensive learner ever since his days in Hillel Yeshiva High School, where he used to wake up extra early to learn with Rabbi Joseph Dana in West Deal Shul before going to school.

Yosef is a great example of the right values that any Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim alum could look up to. Below, we will go through his decision to attend Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim, what he did while he was there, some of the highlights of his year, and how what he learned at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim has shaped his growth since then.

Why Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim?

When Yosef Betesh was deciding which yeshiva to attend in Israel, he wanted to find a school which aligned with his values. Quickly, he found Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim to be what he was looking for. "I liked the values of the school." He pointed to their emphasis on doing Hesed as a big factor, as well as the importance they gave to learning Torah and the unique appeal of going to a school which had a shared Syrian heritage.

Another factor in his decision was the chance to meet with the Rabbis of the yeshivah when they came to visit the United States. As he put it, "when I met the Rabbis, we instantly clicked, and I knew that Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim was the best place for me."

There were other reasons he chose to attend Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim specifically. Like in real estate, location matters, and "Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim's location was also good." Located in the Nahlaot neighborhood of Yerushalayim, the yeshivah was right across the street from Gan Sacher, one of the most beautiful parks in the area. It was a ten minute walk to Makhne Yehuda, and around twenty-thirty minutes to the kotel.



Alumni Spotlight

What He Learned in Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim:

Yosef Betesh learned with Rabbi Mirsky for his Elective, Rabbi Gold for Morning Seder, Rabbi Sutton for Afternoon Seder, and Rabbi Tessler for Night Seder.

On Rabbi Mirsky: “his class was great,” Yosef said, “every single word he said was like a gem.” Rabbi Gold taught Masekhet Ketubot, and Yosef remarked that he was probably the “smartest rabbi. He knew every hiddush off the top of his head.” With Rabbi Sutton, Yosef had the chance to learn Tur Bet Yosef, and called the experience of learning with one of the community’s top Rabbis “amazing.” Finally, he developed a special connection to his favorite Rabbi, Rabbi Tessler. “We had a connection like no other,” Yosef said.



On top of the intensive learning schedule, Yosef celebrated two personal siyumim in his year. He finished Seder Nezikin, a collection of some of the most difficult mishnayot in Shas. He also completed a Masekhet of Gemara– Masekhet Taanit.

Highlights and Experiences:

Yosef had two very different highlights of his year. The first was all their trips, especially the Eilat one, where they went on many hikes and got the chance to really explore the land of Israel. Throughout their year they traveled all around Israel and got the chance to see just about everything. On some of those trips they had to wake up at sunrise to get there.

The second was when the entire yeshiva spent the night learning, and then praying netz at the Kotel, all Lilui Nishmat Baby Shimon Hai Alouf A”H, who tragically passed away during their year. “It was really meaningful seeing everyone come together in honor of it.”

Where He Is Today:

In lieu of attending traditional college, Yosef chose to get in on the ground floor at Rabbi Ricky Cohen’s Advance School of Business, deciding, like he did when he attended Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim, that it was important to attend institutions which have similar values to you. He also saw the importance of hard work, and decided to work at Arya Realty Group while he was at Advance School of Business.

Yosef also continues to grow in learning, even after leaving Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim, taking what the Yeshivah had given him to the next level. He now learns in West Deal Shul with a Habruta, fellow Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim alum, Rabbi Michael Ancona (Class of ’19). On top of all of that, he is a Hatzalah service member, maintaining the ambulances and equipment to ensure that they continue to do life-saving work. He is also training to become and emt.

Yosef is the true definition of a rising star. Not only does he have the correct values, but he also has all the qualities that make for a successful individual. He is a shining example of what every alum of Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim should strive for, and has a bright future ahead of him.



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