**Yeshivat Birkat Moshe – Ma’aleh Adumim** Kislev, 5779 Vol. 2

Dear Alumni and Friends,

In the coming year, the yeshiva plans to flesh out and greatly enhance the bonds of mutual love between the yeshiva and its alumni outside of Israel. The love of Torah and its study – as well as the education towards love of the people and the land and towards proper character – that you received in our beit midrash is surely with you at all times. To reinforce this, the yeshiva will be developing unique ways of consistent Torah and social connection between the beit midrash in Ma’aleh Adumim and our alumni around the world. Hence we would appreciate if you can update all of your current information in the file that we will be sending you by email.

As you know, the heavy burden of maintaining the yeshiva obligates us to request assistance form alumni and friends around the world. This year, we successfully launched a fundraising project via monthly bank payments from alumni and supporters in Israel and we would like to expand this to our alumni outside of Israel as well. This will allow us to continue functioning with renewed strength in the development and growth of our beit midrash, *lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah* – to aggrandize the Torah and glorify it.

With Torah blessings,

Rabbi Haim Sabato

Rabbi Yitzchak Sheilat

For donation information:

Website – ybm.org.il / Email – office@bym.org.il / Phone – 02 5353655 / Address – American Friends

Yeshivat Birkat Moshe was named in memory of Mr. Moshe and Brachah (Breindel) Gershbaum *z”l*, lovers of Torah and Eretz Yisrael, manifested by their work for the Mizrachi movement in North America. Our thanks and appreciation to them will never cease.

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**Yeshivat Birkat Moshe – Ma’aleh Adumim**

Mitzpeh Nevo 21, Ma’aleh Adumim 98410

Phone: 02 5353655, 02 5354222 / Fax: 02 5353947

Email: office@bym.org.il

Website: ybm.org.il

Birkat Moshe – Ma’aleh Adumim

**Greetings from the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Haim Sabato**

The gloomy face of winter has set in. The days are short and the darkness is great. The rain prevents people from walking the streets and shuts them up in their homes. The joy of Sukkot is already forgotten, and the Torah did not designate a holiday to sweeten the days of this season. This is why the candles of Chanukah are so beloved to Israel. And an even greater love was made known about them, in that they bring the hearts of one’s household closer together. As from the day that the Sages said that the obligation of the candles is upon a man and his household, this special quality was endowed in them. Even though their light is small, they warm the heart. And even though the Sages did not allow us to use their light, the warmth of the heart that they bring is permitted. Moreover, they remind us of “the deliverances and the consolations,” and testify that in the future “the evil will be given into the hands of the righteous, the many into the hands of the few and the plotters into the hands of those involved with Torah.”

**Friends of the yeshiva, and alumni everywhere, may God’s blessing be upon you.**

This year, our yeshiva has experienced both spiritual and academic renewal: Two important kollels were established – for the study of matters connected to the state and for dayanut. Two great talmidei chachamim were added to the staff, Rabbi Aryeh Katz and Rabbi Oz Bluman; and an alumnus of the yeshiva, Rabbi Yishai Engleman was appointed to be the Ram for Shiur Dalet. We have instituted two special classes in Tanakh from Rabbi Elchanan Samet that have been drawing large audiences. And there is more. Warm blessings are sent from our house of God to the alumni, friends and supporters whose help strengthens our efforts in this great project to sanctify God’s name.

May it be His will that the work of God in our hands succeeds *lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah* – to aggrandize the Torah and glorify it – and may you all be blessed in all that you do.

Yours,

Haim Sabato

**Greetings from the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchak Sheilat**

The upcoming days of Chanukah are a reminder about the historical importance of the Hesder yeshiva project. Just as in the those great days of the Hasmoneans, today as well, a great portion of the fighting force of the IDF are “those involved in Your Torah” – yeshiva students whose nourishment and life force is from the beit midrash. However out of moral integrity, the holy task of “teaching the bow to the Judeans, behold it is written in the Book of Integrity,” takes them out of the beit midrash to serve and defend the people of Israel, before they can return to it.

We are obligated to ensure that this historical project continues to flourish and grow and increase its influence upon the future of our state, its spiritual character and its moral fiber.

Happy Chanukah to all of you,

Yitzchak Sheilat

Deeply felt thanks to the yeshiva’s dear friend, Mr. Mark Frankel – may God keep him – who after three decades of dedicated, loving and highly successful work, has requested to end his tenure as voluntary Director of the American Friends organization.

The many merits of the Torah study and love of Eretz Yisrael in our beit midrash will always accompany him and his beloved family.

We would like to thank Mr. Steven Adelsberg – may God keep him – from the bottom of our hearts for graciously and happily answering our request to fill this important position.

**Renewal and Growth**

With great excitement and thanks to God for all of the good that He has bestowed upon us, we are delighted to announce that we merited starting this past Elul with several new projects:

First, almost sixty new students in Shiur Aleph have brought a freshness that has helped to bring renewal to all of us.

And secondly, with the following new programs:

1. **Dayanut Kollel** – At the initiative of Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Haim Sabato, and for the first time since the establishment of the yeshiva over forty years ago, the yeshiva has opened a kollel for dayanut. The Rosh Kollel is Rabbi Aryeh Katz, an important posek at Machon Puah and a writer for the Encyclopedia Talumudit; and its members are from the ranks of our top students. The length of the program is approximately eight years. The course of study has opened with the laws of judges and testimony. Most of the topics covered in this unit are studied in great depth, while the students also cover Tractates *Sanhedrin* and *Makkot* in *bekiut* style. We wish and pray that in the merit of this program, we will see the emergence from our yeshiva of great Torah scholars who will go on to make their mark on the entire Torah world.

**Torat Hamedinah Kollel** – One of the greatest tasks of the yeshiva is the formation of talmidei chachamim who will become integrated in all aspects of life in the state of Israel; such that they will steer its paths by the light of the Torah. In order to strengthen this area of focus and at the initiative of Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchak Sheilat, we have established this new three-year program of advanced studies called Torat Hamedina for alumni of Hesder yeshivot. This program will be dealing with the laws of governance, the land and the people, the legal system and economics, Israel and the nations, the public square, personal status and more. The heads of the program are Rabbi Sheilat and Rabbi Oz Bluman, who comes to this project with expertise in Jewish thought and chasidut, as well as being the author of two books, *Shevatim* (Tribes), and *Shemati Memorai* (I Heard from my Teachers).

1. **Classes of Rabbi Samet** – With the return of Rabbi Elchanan Samet to the yeshiva, we have merited reestablishing our days as of old. He is one of the greatest teachers of Tanakh today in Israel and will again be giving his unique Tanakh classes at the yeshiva. Rabbi Samet will be giving two series of classes – the first on the book of *Shmuel* and the second made up of broad studies of the weekly parsha.

The classes take place every Thursday between 5:00 and 7:30 PM. Dozens of alumni and local residents assemble every week to listen to the classes, and it is also possible to see the classes via the yeshiva website.

The Tanakh classes are dedicated to the memory of our alumnus, Rabbi Ezra Ashkenazi, *z”l*.

To see the classes, go to ybm.org.il

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**The Past Year**

We are pleased to share with you, dear alumni, what has been happening at the yeshiva this past year:

1. **Yemei Iyun for Alumni**

With the goal of allowing those not currently learning at the yeshiva to taste from its fruits, we organized a number of yemei iyun, as well as learning projects for children and teenagers.

Four yemei iyun for the yeshiva’s alumni took place this year – two of them at the yeshiva, and two of them in communities in which our alumni reside.

***Ori VeYishi*** – On 26 Elul 5778 (Sept. 6, 2018), the yearly yom iyun dedicated to the high holidays took place at the yeshiva with the theme, *Ori VeYishi* (My Light and my Salvation). Rabbi Sheilat and Rabbi Aviner opened the morning session with topics related to Torat Hamedina in honor of the opening of the new advanced learning program dedicated to this focus in the yeshiva. At the end of this unit, we merited to hear the fascinating lecture of Rabbi Dr. Israel Katz (14th graduating class) about the dilemmas involved around the issue of forced medical treatment. During the afternoon session, those in attendance heard classes preparing them for the high holidays, culminating with the stories of *teshuva* (return) from two of our beloved alumni, Yehudah (Udi) Vilner (25th graduating class) and Yishai Fleishman (17th graduating class). The Yom Iyun concluded with drashot about *teshuva* form the Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbi Haim Sabato, *shlit”a* and Rabbi Yitzchak Sheilat *shlit”a*.

**Pesach** – This year, for the first time, a unique evening of study was organized at the yeshiva: “*Ve’higadata Lebincha* – the Rabbis of the Yeshiva tell about the Exodus from Egypt.” The main goals of the evening were preparation (in the midst of busy lives…) for Seder night and the Pesach holiday; and the giving over of tools for presenting the Seder to families as well as to communities all over Israel. During the course of the evening, the yeshiva’s rabbis presented divrei Torah about the Hagadah, interspersed with music and singing. At the end, a special gift was distributed to all the participants – a Hagadah with the *Lev Avot* commentary of Rabbi Elisha Aviner. Many alumni of the yeshiva participated in this special evening and came away inspired and ready for the Pesach holiday.

**Hold the Date**

The yom iyun for Pesach will occur again this year and is scheduled for 26 Adar II 5779 (April 4, 2019).

1. **Event Marking the 90th birthday of the Rosh Yeshiva, *shlit”a***

Hundreds of alumni arrived to honor the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Nachum Eliezer Rabinovitch, *shlit’a*, on the occasion of his reaching the age of 90 and the release of the Hebrew translation of his book, *Probability and Statistical Inference in Ancient and Mediaeval Jewish Literature*. The book was written many years ago by the rabbi in English, but was just now translated into Hebrew by his grandson and yeshiva alumnus, Rabbi Dr. Avraham Klein. Among the speakers at this moving evening – in which Rabbi Rabinovitch’s unique approach in the Torah world was duly noted – were Professor Alex Lubotzky (winner of the Israel Prize for Mathematics, father of our alumnus, Ashael Lubotzky and father-in-law of Maro Gata); and Rabbi Gabi Goldman, the rabbi of Kefar Adumim and staff rabbi at Machon Puah.

Rabbi Goldman spoke about the devoted tutelage that he received from Rabbi Rabinovitch when the former began his tenure as rabbi of the settlement and was faced with challenging questions. He told the following characteristic story:

After several tragedies hit the settlement in a short period of time, I brought my concern to Rabbi Rabinovitch that maybe an evil eye or something like it had been cast upon us. The rabbi’s answer was, “I am prepared to be your rabbi, but I am not prepared to be your Hassidic rebbe!”

1. **Learning Programs for Youth**

Most people have always thought that children only want to run around and play after school. Rabbi Sabato, however, thought – and proved – otherwise: At his initiative, this is the 17th year that we have organized an afternoon **Talmud Torah** for children. Children from all parts of Ma’aleh Adumim come to yeshiva campus classrooms to study Mishnah, and Chumash and Rashi with their instructors (married students of the yeshiva). During their recess, however – they obviously play soccer… The most diligent among them have had the merit to complete the entire Mishna and all of the Chumash with Rashi before their bar mitzvah and – even more importantly – held up the world with this merit of the breath of their mouths (reciting words of Torah).

Five of those who finished the Mishnah this year are sons of alumni: Shalo Haim Atun (R. Yoel), David Cohen (R. Moti), Yitzchak Yair Cohen (R. Tal), Yehuda Filheimer (R. Itamar) and Mordechai Karman (R. Eren).

Moreover, this is the third summer that the yeshiva has held **Study Days for Teenagers**. In this framework, high-school age youth from all over Israel came at the height of the heat to the holy desert and absorb the warmth of the Torah with study partners from among the students of the yeshiva, and with rabbis from the yeshiva for their classes. We, the yeshiva students, also benefit from this and get renewed energy when we see the youngest of the tribe wanting to grow in Torah like this.

**These Study Days are dedicated *l’iluy nishmat* our beloved alumnus, Danny Gonen, may God avenge his blood.**

This year, Rabbi Lifschitz initiated an additional challenge for the summer break – nightly study of Gemara with a yeshiva student. To the ones diligent in this, he promised a drone worth NIS 300. The experiment proved to be a success and – thank God – about twenty teenagers were able to fly their drones in the skies throughout the land.

1. **General Yimei Iyun**

Within the context of the Yemei Iyun for Topics in Halcaha and Modernity in memory of the yeshiva’s friend and donor, Mr. Sheldon Robinson, *z”l*, that have been held a number of times each year at the yeshiva, we had the opportunity to meet some special talmidei chachamim. The topic of the yom iyun in the winter was **Forcing a Get from Recalcitrant Husband**, whereas the topic at the end of the summer semester was **Murder and Manslaughter in Halacha and in Modern Jurisprudence.**

1. **New Books**

As a result of the toil in our beit midrash, several new books were released:

*Marriage – Halacha and the Torah’s Intentions* by Rabbi Sheilat; the last volume of the *Ralbag on the Torah* series, edited by Rabbi Baurch Brenner and Rabbi Carmiel Cohen; and *Mish-neot on Tractates Pesachim and Yoma* from Rabbi Gadi Machta and Rabbi Moshe Gross, enhanced by the beautiful illustration work of Chananel Turgeman; and others…

***Marriage – Halacha and the Torah’s Intentions*** // Rabbi Yitzchak Sheilat

We all grew up on Rabbi Shilat’s edition of the writings of Rambam. We also learned from his books about Gemara, Jewish thought and the development of halachic literature. Now we are becoming acquainted with a new direction in his creative work – involvement in practical halacha. As is Rabbi Sheilat’s style, his involvement his courageous and daring, both in his choice to deal with the most sensitive topics, and in the approach he uses to come to his halachic conclusions.

This type of reasoning Rabbi Sheilat calls, “the Torah’s intentions,” and it is based on the approach of Rabbi Gedalia Nadel, *zatz”l*, who sought out “the concept of the mitzvah.” “The concept is a definition of the content of the mitzvah that we are being commanded to concretize” (p. 11, *Medicine*). “The concept of the mitzvah often determines its halachic parameters” (ibid., p. 12). “It is probable” – writes Rabbi Sheilat – that the content of the mitzvah “is not found in the details of the laws that Chazal gave over to us, but rather it is up to us to discover the concept of the mitzvah by examination of the Torah’s language and the context in which a mitzvah appears in the Torah. And in this way we can know the halacha” (ibid., p. 13).

A few years ago, the first volume came out and dealt with seven topics concerning medicine and halacha, such as defining death and organ transplants, artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization and genetic engineering. These topics are dealt with breadth and depth according to the approach of “the Torah’s intentions.”

This past year, the second volume came out – this time dealing in the same way with nine topics revolving around marriage and halacha. Some of the topics are division of property between a husband and wife, common law marriage and forcing a husband to give a get and solutions for agunot.

Similar to Rabbi Sheilat’s previous books, the writing flows beautifully. The reader is brought into the heart of the halachic discussions about contemporary problems dealt with by the great poskim of recent generations and, as well as being introduced to creative new solutions.

***Probability and Statistical Inference in Ancient and Mediaeval Jewish Literature***// Rabbi Nachum Eliezer Rabinovitch

This book reveals the foundations of the Jewish Sages’ thinking about probability and analyzes them in light of the theories of modern philosophers about the laws of probability. The reader will find halachic discussions alongside mathematical equations; and names like Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yose, Rambam, Ralbag and Rabbi Yitzchak Arama next to names like Aristotle, Aquinas, Bernoulli, Bertrand and Leibniz. Between the lines, the book raises the historical issue of the influence of the Jewish Sages upon the development of the laws of statistics in Western mathematics.

This book is the Hebrew version of the work that was published in 1973 by the University of Toronto Press based on the rabbi’s doctoral thesis. It was translated by his grandson and yeshiva alumnus, Rabbi Dr. Avraham Klein.

***Ralbag’s Commentary on the Torah – Devarim***

The commentary of Rabbi Levi Ben Gershom (Ralbag), who was one of the great Rishonim, is a unique composition that shows how multi-faceted he was. One of the main goals that the author set for himself was to root the laws of the oral law in the written Torah.

This is a precise critical edition based on original manuscripts and includes different versions of the text, footnotes of sources and comprehensive explanations. It includes the text of the Torah itself with Rashi’s commentary and was edited by Rabbi Baurch Brenner and Rabbi Carmiel Cohen. This edition is now complete and consists of seven volumes (*Bereishit*, *Shemot 1*, *Shemot 2*, *Vayikra 1*, *Vayikra 2*, *Bamidbar* and the new volume on *Devarim*).

In honor of the completion of the volume on *Devarim*, a moving evening of study, featuring speeches by the roshei yeshiva and others, was held this past winter. The evening was culminated by brilliant lectures from the two editors, Rabbi Baurch Brenner and Rabbi Carmiel Cohen.

***Mish-neot*** *//* Commentary byRabbi Gadi Machta and Rabbi Moshe Gross, illustration by Chananel Turgeman

*Mish-neot* – *Mishnah Naeh Behanaa* (A pleasing Mishnah with Enjoyment): This series brings many things to the learner – an exact text, a new concise commentary and illustrations that help with understanding and enhance the learning experience. Before every mishnah, there is a short introduction to explain the mishnah’s topic and its placement in the entire chapter. The commentary explains the words of the mishnah, its main laws and the reasons for these laws. It is based on the words of the Talmud – both Bavli and Yerushalmi – the Tosefta, and classical commentaries of the Mishnah and the Talmud.

Understanding and experiencing the Mishnah was what the authors had in mind at every part of the production process, from the foundations to the rafters. The *Mish-neot* series has received highly favorable reviews from teachers, parents and children.

At this point, the series has five volumes *on* Tractates *Sukka, Megila, Rosh Hashana, Pesachim and Yoma*.

**Internal Yeshiva Activities**

**Yeshiva Students in the Army**

The whole week they are running, training, defending the lines and putting themselves out to protect us, but occasionally they also get “our greetings” from the yeshiva. Besides the visits to the army organized by the rabbis and students of the yeshiva during the week, we also spent three Shabbats with the soldiers at their bases this year. Rabbi Sheilat traveled to the Nahal training base in Arad and lifted the spirits of about twenty-five of our students, along with many other soldiers serving in Nahal. Rabbi Yishai Engelman likewise traveled with his family to our soldiers serving on the Golan Heights, and Elad Moriah (Shiur Zayin) traveled on an additional Shabbat to soldiers serving in Nahal.

**The Yeshiva Overseas Students Program**

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***Shabbat Shiur* (Class Shabbats)**

Within the framework of *Shabbat Shiur*, students from the various classes spend one Shabbat a year in other yeshivot and bask in the unique Torah light from another beit midrash. These Shabbats are very enriching spiritually and provide an important experiential component of their education. The boys usually return with interesting observations and the feeling that it is good to give to and receive from their peers.

This year the first-year students were hosted by Yeshivat Beit El, the fourth-year students by Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shevut and the fifth-year students by Yeshivat Ramat Gan.

Itamar Zamir shares his impressions of his Shabbat in Ramat Gan:

On Shabbat Shelach Lecha we were hosted together with Rabbi Elisha Aviner by Yeshivat Ramat Gan for a *Shabbat Shiur*. Alongside the class togetherness, the meals and the songs, we got to know Yeshivat Ramat Gan and the approach to Avodat Hashem that they seek to inculcate into the world of the yeshivot. We were also exposed to the special character of their prayer services and the friendly atmosphere in the yeshiva. On Friday night after the meal, we took a walk to neighboring Bnei Brak, where we participated in a Chassidic tisch, both atVizhnitz Hagadol and at Nadvorna. These visits left a strong impression on me and I will remember that Shabbat as a special and fascinating encounter with a broader part of my culture to which I am generally not exposed.

**Air Conditioning in Dormitory Dalet**

As is well known to all of us, the weather in the summer in Ma’aleh Adumim gets hot and even scorching. In good time, we have completed the project of installing air conditioning in the dormitories. This was made possible thanks to the generous donations of friends of the yeshiva. This is the place to thank them for cooling off our rooms and warming our hearts. Thank You!

**Alumni News**

The entire yeshiva wishes to congratulate our dear alumni:

**Rabbi Dov Stern** (20th graduating class), a graduate of the rabbinic kollel of the yeshiva, on his appointment as rabbi of Mitzpe Ilan (a *yishuv kehilati* between Harish and Katzir).

**Professor Ilan Ben Eliyahu** (9th graduating class), senior lecturer and researcher in the faculty of Jewish history at the University of Haifa, on his appointment as full professor.

**Dr. Avi Gorman** (12th graduating class), lecturer and researcher in law at Ono Academic College, on his appointment as judge of the central district court.

**Dr. Eliel Ben David** (16th graduating class), specialist in diagnostic radiology, on his appointment as director of the department of diagnostic neuro-radiology at Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem.

**Rabbi Mevorach Tuito** (26th graduating class), a rosh kollel in Jerusalem on his qualification to serve as a dayan.

**Mordi Kirshner** (8th graduating class), director, producer and CEO of Arutz Meir, on his winning the Minister of Education’s Prize for Jewish Culture in the field of cinema.