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

Dear Alumni and Friends,

In the coming year, the yeshiva plans to solidify and strengthen our loving relationship with alumni outside of Israel. The values you acquired in our beit midrash – love of Torah and of learning, love of the people and the land of Israel, and inculcation of good character – surely remain with you at all times. To further reinforce this, the yeshiva will be developing unique ways of maintaining a consistent connection, socially and religiously, between the beit midrash in Ma’aleh Adumim and our alumni around the world. We would thus appreciate if you could 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 from alumni and friends around the world. This year, we implemented a successful fundraising campaign for automated monthly donations from alumni and supporters in Israel, and we would like to expand this to include alumni outside of Israel as well. This will help us to strengthen our operations, develop our beit midrash and enable it to grow – and, God willing, to aggrandize Torah and glorify it – *lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah*.

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, which they so powerfully embodied by their work for the Mizrachi movement in North America. We will forever owe them our thanks and appreciation.

Graphic design: Tamar Ephrati

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

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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 darkness abounds. The rain prevents people from walking the streets and shuts them up in their homes. The joy of Sukkot is already forgotten. Nor did the Torah designate a holiday to sweeten the days of this season. This is why the candles of Chanukah are so beloved to the Jewish people. And “an even greater love was made known about them,” in that they also bring the hearts of our families closer together. As this special quality was endowed in them from the day that the Sages said that the obligation of the candles is upon a man and his family. Even though the light they give off is faint, they warm the heart. And even though the Sages did not allow us to use their light, we are permitted to let them warm our hearts. Moreover, they remind us of “the deliverances and the consolations”; and they 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 bless 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 and well-attended Tanakh classes with Rabbi Elchanan Samet. And there is more. We send our heartfelt blessings from our house of God to our alumni, friends, and supporters, whose help strengthens us in our efforts with this great project to sanctify God’s name.

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

Yours,

Haim Sabato

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

Dear Alumni and Friends,

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 a large portion of the IDF’s fighting forces are from “those involved in Your Torah” – yeshiva students whose nourishment and life force are from the beit midrash. Yet due to their 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

We wish to convey our 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, requested to end his tenure as voluntary Director of the American Friends organization.

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

We would also like to thank Mr. Steven Adelsberg – may God keep him – from the bottom of our hearts for graciously and happily answering our call 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 were granted the merit to start 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.

Secondly, we inaugurated 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 first unit was the study of the laws of judges and testimony. Most of the topics covered in this unit are being studied in great depth, while the students also cover Tractates *Sanhedrin* and *Makkot* in *bekiut* style. We hope and pray that this program will allow our yeshiva to produce great Torah scholars who will go on to make their mark on the entire Torah world.

**Torat Hamedinah Kollel** – One of the greatest goals of the yeshiva is the preparation of talmidei chachamim who will be integrated in all aspects of life in the state of Israel. This will then help them 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 a new three-year program of advanced studies for alumni of Hesder yeshivot called Torat Hamedina. This program will be examining 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. Rabbi Bluman is an expert in Jewish thought and chassidut, as well as being the author of two books, *Shevatim* (Tribes), and *Shemati Memorai* (I Heard from my Teachers).

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

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

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**

Dear alumni, we are pleased to share some of the highlights of 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 yeshiva alumni took place this past 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), we held the yearly high holiday yom iyun at the yeshiva. This year’s theme was *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 area of study in the yeshiva. The session ended with a fascinating lecture from Rabbi Dr. Israel Katz (14th graduating class) about the dilemmas involved with the issue of forced medical treatment. The afternoon session consisted of classes preparing attendees for the high holidays and culminating with 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* from the Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbi Haim Sabato, *shlit”a* and Rabbi Yitzchak Sheilat *shlit”a*.

**Pesach** – This year, a unique and new type of evening seminar 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 giving over tools for presenting the Seder to families and communities all over Israel. Over the course of the evening, the yeshiva’s rabbis presented divrei Torah about the Hagadah, interspersed with music and singing. Finally, 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, coming away inspired and ready for the Pesach holiday.

**Save the Date**

The Pesach yom iyun will take place 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 Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Nachum Eliezer Rabinovitch, *shlit’a*, on the occasion of his turning 90 and the release of the Hebrew translation of his book, *Probability and Statistical Inference in Ancient and Mediaeval Jewish Literature*. The rabbi wrote this book many years ago in English, but it was only now translated into Hebrew by his grandson, yeshiva alumnus Rabbi Dr. Avraham Klein. Among the speakers at this moving evening – in which speakers duly noted Rabbi Rabinovitch’s unique approach in the Torah world– 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 Kfar 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 told Rabbi Rabinovitch that I was concerned 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: Due to 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 been able 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 come to the holy desert at the height of the summer heat to 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 and get renewed energy when we see the youngest of the tribe wanting to grow in Torah like this.

**These Study Days are dedicated to the memory of 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 those who would be diligent, 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 winter yom iyun was **Forcing a Get from a Recalcitrant Husband**, whereas the topic at the end of the summer semester was **Murder and Manslaughter in Halacha and Modern Jurisprudence.**

1. **New Books**

Coming out of the serious work 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 Baruch Brenner and Rabbi Carmiel Cohen; and *Mishnaot 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 Sheilat’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 – the analysis of practical halacha. As is Rabbi Sheilat’s style, this initiative is 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.

Rabbi Sheilat calls this approach “the Torah’s intentions”; and it is based on the work of Rabbi Gedalia Nadel, *zatz”l*, who sought to discover “the concept of the mitzvah.” “The concept is a definition of the mitzvah’s 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 when we 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 medical halacha. These included defining death and the permissibility of organ transplants, artificial insemination, and in vitro fertilization and genetic engineering. These topics are analyzed broadly and in depth according to the approach of “the Torah’s intentions.”

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

As is the case with all of 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, 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 statistics in Western mathematics.

This book is the Hebrew version of the work 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 one of the great Rishonim, Rabbi Levi ben Gershom (Ralbag), is a unique composition that reveals his multi-faceted personality. 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 series edited by Rabbi Baruch Brenner and Rabbi Carmiel Cohen offers us a precise critical edition based on original manuscripts. It includes different versions of the text, footnotes with sources and comprehensive explanations, as well as the actual text of the Torah with Rashi’s commentary.. 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 last volume on *Devarim*, a moving evening seminar was held this past winter. The seminar, featured speeches by the roshei yeshiva and others, and was culminated by brilliant lectures from the series’ two editors, Rabbi Baruch Brenner and Rabbi Carmiel Cohen.

***Mishnaot*** *//* Commentary byRabbi Gadi Machta and Rabbi Moshe Gross, illustration by Chananel Turgeman

*Mishnaot* – *Mishnah Na’ah 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 subject and its placement in the 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 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 *Mishnaot* 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. Nevertheless, they occasionally 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 Shabbatot 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 in the Golan Heights, and Elad Moriah (Shiur Zayin) also traveled to spend an additional Shabbat with soldiers serving in Nahal.

**The Yeshiva Overseas Students Program**

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***Shabbat Shiur* (Class Shabbatot)**

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 of another beit midrash. These Shabbatot are spiritually very enriching and provide an important experiential component of our students’ education. The boys usually come back 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 Shvut 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 are trying 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. After the meal Friday night, 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.