

# Personal service with a heart and a smile

London will be hosting a gala dinner on Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheni in support of Yeshivas Lomdei Torah, a unique institution recently established in Bayit Vegan that provides excellent tailor-made learning for its bochurim

SEATED comfortably on El Al Flight 316 at the end of a long winter zman, Moshe discovers to his delight that the *bochur* sitting next to him is his old schoolmate Yehuda. Both are returning from Yerushalayim to London for Pesach, and they begin to discuss their experiences of the last six months of learning in their respective yeshivos.

Moshe definitely sounds tired. He tells Yehuda that he is glad to be seeing his family but is not quite sure what to tell them about the past term. He certainly made every attempt to work hard, but sitting in a *beis medrash* with 400 other *talmidim* – some of whom do not speak English – was both daunting and greatly unproductive. He went to the *shiur* every day, but only rarely did he understand the words of the great Rosh Yeshiva heading the academy. Because there were so many other boys constantly crowding the *rov*, it was almost impossible for Moshe to get a question in edgewise. Sighing, Moshe confesses to Yehuda that he thinks he may be wasting his time.

Yehuda is tired too, but he is somehow simultaneously full of energy and optimism. He sympathizes with his friend's plight, knowing how precious one's time can be. Surreptitiously running his fingers over his well-worn *Gemoro*, he beams with happiness over the *siyum* that he made only two days ago. He begins to tell Moshe about the term that he spent in Yeshivas Lomdei Torah in Bayit VeGan, home to a much smaller and closer-knit student body than the one just described by his old schoolmate. Yehuda cannot help but smile when he mentions the rabbis who quickly became his mentors and personal examples: warm *mechanchim* who spoke his language both literally and figuratively. He remembers staying up late learning *Tosefos* with his *chevrusa*: when they didn't properly understand, they could find someone to help them. Rather than ending a week in the despair that he had not gotten much from *shiur*, he found the Rosh Yeshiva quite approachable and ready to explain the matter as they sat together in the *beis medrash*. Yehuda also mentions his older afternoon-seder *chevrusa*: a recently-married English *avreich* possessing both wit and patience, and with whom he succeeded in mastering half a *masechta*

with two hours of solid learning every day. Moshe listens carefully, thinking about what he could have achieved and what he might yet accomplish given the right opportunity and setting.

Yeshivas Lomdei Torah was founded three and a half years ago in Yerushalayim by Rabbi Dovid Behar under the recommendation of *gedolei yisroel*. Located in the charming residential neighbourhood of Bayit VeGan, Rabbi Behar established the yeshiva in order to give an opportunity to English *bochurim* to enhance their *Gemoro* skills and to develop a deeper understanding of the *loshon* of the *rishonim* and *achronim*, enabling them ultimately to attain a level of independence in Torah study.



The Yeshiva staff with all the bochurim

Rabbi Behar, a *talmid* of Rav Ezriel Auerbach, taught extensively before opening Lomdei Torah. He also headed the Ohr Menachem Yehuda *halocho kollel* in Bayit Vegan. The yeshiva staff of talented *rabbonim* also includes Rabbi Avigdor Brazil, the well-known *mashgiach* and lecturer; Rabbi Aaron Elias and Rabbi Jeremy Posen, both coming from London with years of experience in *chinuch*; and fifteen dedicated English-speaking *avreichim*. Together, they provide a warm and open environment and close personal attention to each *bochur*, and close *rebbe-talmid* relationships have emerged through the learning. The yeshiva has met with tremendous success and the *bochurim* have made great strides in both their curricular

accomplishments as well as in the development of their personal *middos* and impetus to learn.

This year the yeshiva celebrates the fact that it is now located in one central building, containing dormitories and a dining room as well as classrooms and a spacious and beautiful new *beis medrash*.

Many of the *Gedolei Roshei Yeshivain* England are patrons of the yeshiva, understanding the necessity for smaller and more personalized yeshivos. Rav Avraham Gurvitz, the Gateshead Rosh Yeshiva, has provided Rabbi Behar with enthusiastic support from the beginning and bestows his *brocho* to Yeshivas Lomdei Torah and its outstanding *rabbonim*. Four years ago, he advised Rav Behar with the following: "Even if you have only four *bochurim* – open the yeshiva!" The rest has been a success of exponential proportions.

It is told that the *Chasam Sofer* was once asked how many of his 500 students would go on to become *rabbonim* or *roshei yeshiva*. He responded: "Only two – however, the other 498 will become fine *b'nei Torah* capable of appreciating a *rov*!"

Yeshivas Lomdei Torah makes a special effort to cater, with an equal standard of excellence, for every young man who wishes to learn. Many of the *bochurim* will hopefully continue in full-time learning. Others, however, might balance their *Talmud Torah* with professional studies and careers. Whatever the case may be, their solid grounding in a yeshiva that focuses on the development of every individual *bochur* will surely start them off in the most positive of directions.

As the airplane approaches the Heathrow runway, Moshe feels heartened by Yehuda's account. They exchange phone numbers, and Yehuda promises to call Rabbi Behar to tell him about the new *talmid* who is enthusiastically looking forward to continuing his studies and enroll in Yeshivas Lomdei Torah for the upcoming summer *zman*.

The yeshiva will be holding its second annual gala dinner on Sunday, March 6 (Rosh Chodesh Adar II), at A.J.C. Hall, 127-129 Clapton Common, in Stamford Hill, London. Tickets are limited in availability and may be obtained by contacting Mrs. Cohen at (0208) 880-1649. Guest speakers will be Rabbi Todros Miller and Rabbi Joseph Pearlman.



Rosh Yeshiva-Rabbi Dovid Behar



Some of the bochurim learning with avreichim in the main beis medrash