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MORESHET MAGAZINE

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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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Standing Before God: The Paradox of Abraham's Hospitality by Rabbi Tanchum Gold

Imagine for a moment: You have finally secured a meeting with President Trump- perhaps the most important meeting of your life, one you've been waiting months to arrange. You're sitting across from the President of the United States, discussing matters of critical importance. Suddenly, your phone rings. It's a friend calling to ask if you can help him move some furniture this afternoon. Would it make any sense at all to answer that call? Would anyone consider interrupting such a crucial meeting to take care of a friend's request?

Of course not. The very suggestion seems absurd. And yet, this is precisely the difficulty we encounter with Abraham- though on an infinitely greater scale.

The story opens with one of the most striking scenes in the Torah: "And the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day" (Bereshit 18:1). Abraham is in the midst of a divine revelation, standing before God Himself in prophecy- not just meeting with a president, but with the Creator of Heaven and Earth! Yet immediately afterward, we read: "And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three men were standing beside him" (Bereshit 18:2). Without hesitation, Abraham runs to greet these travelers, preparing an elaborate feast and attending to their every need.

This presents us with a profound difficulty that has troubled commentators throughout the generations. The Shulhan Arukh (Orach Haim 104:1) rules explicitly regarding the laws of prayer: If a person is standing in prayer before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and even a friend or a king greets him, or even if a snake is coiled around his heel, he may not interrupt. How then could Abraham Abinu interrupt a direct prophetic communication with God- an encounter infinitely more significant than any presidential meeting- to attend to what appeared to be a group of Ishmaelite travelers?

Rabbi Chaim Sabato, shlitá, offers a beautiful resolution to this question. He explains that in truth, a person is forbidden to interrupt standing before God in order to speak with other people. But Abraham Abinu, in his act of hospitality, did not interrupt his standing before God at all. Rather, he continued it in a different form.

The Gemara in Sotah (14a) expounds on the pasuk "and to cleave to Him" (Debarim 11:22)

asking: "But is it not written, 'For the Lord your God is a consuming fire' (Debarim 4:24)? How can one cleave to Him?" The Gemara answers: "Rather, cleave to His attributes. Just as He is merciful, so should you be merciful. Just as He performs acts of kindness, so should you perform acts of kindness."

Remarkably, the Gemara continues and brings as its first example precisely our story: "Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, visited the sick- as it says, 'And the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre' (Bereshit 18:1)" - referring to God's visit to Abraham after his circumcision - "so too should you visit the sick." The divine revelation at the beginning of our parasha was itself an act of bikur holim, God visiting Abraham during his recovery!

This adds a profound dimension to our understanding. Abraham our father did not merely perform an act of kindness that happened to align with God's ways. Rather, he understood the very message of God's visit to him. God was teaching Abraham through example: This is what it means to be Godly- to care for those in need, to show compassion, to perform acts of lovingkindness. When Abraham rushed to greet the travelers, he was not interrupting his audience with God; he was demonstrating that he had understood the lesson of that very audience. He was putting into immediate practice what God Himself was modeling for him at that very moment.

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For Abraham Abinu, therefore, the act of hospitality- of performing acts of kindness- was not a departure from standing before God. It was, in fact, a direct continuation of that very standing, and perhaps even a greater closeness to the Divine. By emulating God's ways of compassion and kindness, Abraham was not interrupting his communion with God; he was deepening it and proving that he had truly grasped its essence.

This teaches us a fundamental principle: True service of God does not require withdrawal from the world. The sacred and the mundane need not be separated. Rather, we are called to bring holiness into the world, to see every act of kindness and every human interaction as an opportunity to cleave to God's ways.

This year, we have the great privilege of celebrating a decade of Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim. Over these ten years, the yeshiva has already succeeded in producing talmide hakhamim and in shaping the next generation of community leaders. Every Saturday night, we dedicate ourselves anew to the path of Abraham Abinu- understanding that a person need not interrupt his connection with God in order to be engaged with God's creatures. We need not disconnect between the life of holiness and the life of the world; rather, we must bring the sacred into the world.

As we mark this milestone, may we merit to continue in Abraham's footsteps, building a community where Torah and kindness are inseparable, where standing before God and serving His children are one and the same. May the yeshiva continue to flourish, producing students who understand that the greatest cleaving to God comes through emulating His ways of compassion and lovingkindness- students who recognize that the lesson of God's presence is found not only in the study hall, but in every act of hesed we perform in His name.

Mabrook to Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim!



Born in Chicago, Rabbi Gold moved to Israel at a young age. He studied and taught at Yeshivat Birkat Moshe in Ma'ale Adumim for 15 years and served as an infantry soldier in the IDF. Rabbi Gold holds a Bachelor of Education degree in Talmud and Tanach, as well as a law degree, and received his Semikha (Yore Yoreh/Yadin Yadin) from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. He has served as Rabbi of the American program in Yeshivat Birkat Moshe since 2010, teaches in the Yeshiva's Kollel, and he actively sits as a Dayan in the local Beit Din. He is also the rabbi of a congregation in Chashmonaim and has been teaching in Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim since 2017.

Summer of Growth

An Evening of Hizzuk
Graciously sponsored by Sarah & Jack Cayre
In honor of their son Jacob and all the Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim boys



Breakfast & Class with Rabbi Gold
Graciously sponsored by Tammi & Solomon Mosseri
In memory of Tzirel Yehudit Bat Sarah Beila, Mrs. Shirley Kezra A"H



Summer of Growth

Annual Alumni Event *A night of unity in memory of Baby Shimon Hai Alouf A”H, Son of Moshe & Mariyah Alouf*



Summer of Growth

Summer Learning Program
*In partnership with The Midrash, Ohel Yitshak of Allenhurst
and Sephardic Community Alliance*



Mabrook!

Mabrook to Cherie Chehebar & **Joey Falack** (Class of '23) on their engagement!
Mabrook to Jennifer Zirdok & **Albert Chehebar** (Class of '22) on their engagement!

Mabrook to Esther Kroub & **Isaac Siama** (Class of '23) on their marriage!
Mabrook to Rachel Fallas & **Larry Natkin** (Class of '23) on their marriage!
Mabrook to Margo Chabot & **Ikey Betesh** (Class of '19) on their marriage!
Mabrook to Chloe Jemal & **Ness Hadeb** (Class of '23) on their marriage!

Mabrook to Joyce & **Sonny Cayre** (Class of '19) on the birth of a baby girl!
Mabrook to Marcelle & **Victor Terzi** (Class of '21) on the birth of a baby boy!
Mabrook to Loraine & **Rabbi Joseph Salem** (Morning Seder Rabbi) on the birth of a baby girl!
Mabrook to Sari & **Ralph Chattah** (Class of '18) on the birth of a baby boy!

Mabrook to **Michael Flaster** (Class of '23) on his siyum of Masekhet Ta'anit!
Mabrook to **Morris Chaaya** (Class of '23) on his siyum of Masekhet Megiah!
Mabrook to **Bobby Falack** (Class of '25) on his siyum of Masakhet Berakhot!
Mabrook to **Joe Shamosh** (Class of '21) **Alan Chabbott**, (Class of '24) and **Moshe Gohar** (Class of '24)
on their siyum of Masekhet Sukkah!

Mabrook to **Rabbi Edward Benjamin** and his students **Morris Sutton**, **Elliot Chalmè**, **Steven Benun**,
Joe Dweck and **Elliot Koren** (Class of '25)- who continued their learning from last year into our summer
morning and night learning program- on completing Masekhet Bessa!



Growing Through Struggle by Eli Levy

In פרשת וירא, we read some of the most defining moments in אברהם אבינו's life — the test of עקידת יצחק, the destruction of סדום, and the birth of יצחק himself. Again and again אברהם faces challenge after challenge. Yet through each one, he doesn't just pass a test, he becomes someone new. He transforms.

That's the story of growth, and that's exactly what our year in Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim is about.

We push ourselves to grow, not just spiritually, but mentally. We sit in the בית מדרש with a גמרא open, staring at words we are not familiar with. It seems impossible to understand, but we push through the confusion, through the late nights and early mornings, until slowly, the patterns emerge — the flow of the סוגיא begins to make sense.

This lesson, that growth happens through struggle, is also seen in וירא. When אברהם faced the עקידה, he didn't understand everything; it defied logic. But he trusted the process and believed that clarity would come through commitment. That's the same mindset we bring into גמרא; learning גמרא trains us to think deeply, to question, to connect ideas that seem unrelated, and to see how every piece of logic fits into a greater picture. It's a model for life.

Because life, like גמרא, doesn't always give you simple answers. It demands patience, perseverance, and analytical thinking. The same skills we build while breaking down a תוספות or resolving a contradiction are the ones that help us navigate challenges, relationships, and decisions beyond the walls of the בית מדרש.



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

In מסכת קידושין, for example, we analyze the smallest details — an extra word, a phrase, an assumption — and see why it's there. Through those discussions, we don't just learn laws of marriage and acquisition; we learn how to think critically, how to see both sides, and how to appreciate the depth behind every word of תורה.

Here in ארץ ישראל, that learning takes on an entirely new dimension. We're not just studying תורה, we're living it in the land where it all began. Every step on the streets of ירושלים, every time we visit the כותל, connects us to thousands of years of history and purpose. It reminds us that the תורה we learn is not abstract- it's real, it's alive, and it's ours.



Growth isn't always easy. It's not meant to be. But every page of גמרא we master, every idea we wrestle with, every connection we make — they all shape us. They make us more disciplined, more thoughtful, and more connected to תורה, to our people, and to ourselves.

This year, as we learn, as we challenge ourselves, and as we walk the same land our אבות walked, let's remember אברהם in וירא — a man who faced challenges at every corner, and who grew stronger with every test. That's our mission too: to embrace the grind, to love the process, and to trust that every struggle brings us closer to who we're meant to be.

Like a Lion by Kemmy Cohen

In Hilkhot Birkot HaShahar, the Tur and Bet Yosef write that a person should “להתגבר כְּאֵרִי לְעֵמֵד בְּבִקְרָה לְעִבּוּדַת בּוֹרוֹ” The Tur explains that this doesn’t just mean to get out of bed quickly, it means to begin your day with strength, energy, and excitement to do the Abodat Hashem. The Bet Yosef adds that the way a person starts his morning affects the entire rhythm of his day.

If he begins with the right head and state of mind, the rest of the day follows that same tone. That lesson goes beyond just the morning routine.

It teaches that in Abodat Hashem, the first step, the way we start the day, defines everything that comes after. Whether it’s how we pray, how we learn, or how we interact with others, the attitude we bring from the very beginning sets the tone for all that follows.

This connects to the beginning of Masekhet Megillah, which I’m learning this year. The Gemara starts by teaching that the Megillah can be read on different days, depending on whether the city is walled like Shushan or an open town. At first, it sounds like just a regular Halakha, but there’s a deeper meaning to it. Each city has its own time to read, yet all are part of the same mitzvah, and all are connected to the same Nissim and the same story of Am Yisrael. From here we see that every person has his own part in Abodat Hashem.

Not everyone’s Abodah looks the same, but what matters is that each person “להתגבר כְּאֵרִי לְעֵמֵד בְּבִקְרָה” that he rises with energy like a lion and does his part when his time comes.



Just like each city in Masekhet Megillah reads at its proper time, each of us has times when we need to act and take responsibility. The focus isn’t on when it happens, but that we do it with strength and consistency, the way the Tur says to “wake up like a lion.”

Being in yeshiva here in Eres Yisrael at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim brings this idea to life.

Every day there are moments to “get up like a lion,” to learn with energy, and to take advantage of the place I’m in and the opportunity Hashem gives us. Each person has his own path, but the goal is the same which is to be ready, focused, and strong in our Abodat Hashem, and to make the most of every opportunity we’re given.



Kemmy Cohen graduated from Magen David Yeshivah Joe & Celia Esses High School in 2025 and is currently a student at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim.

Recent Highlights

Landed!



The first flight of this years' students upon landing...Excited for another great year!

Learning in Action



September 8th- Day of Learning graciously sponsored in loving memory of Irwin Leventer A"H, Yitzhak Ben Nazira By The Leventer Family

Tiyulim



For the first tiyul of the year we went to the Wadi Kelt springs by Nahal Perat where we went on a hike followed by some fun in the waterfalls!



Touring the Old City



We recently went on a water hike, followed by aqua-kef water sports!

Recent Highlights

Beyond the Classroom



On Hoshana Rabba, we stayed up through the night in learning and tefillah. Following Arbit, we were privileged to hear a special presentation by Asher Guedalia, who spoke about his brother, Yosef Guedalia H"YD- an elite IDF soldier and one of the first responders on October 7th, 2023. Yosef heroically gave his life in Kefar Azza while rescuing civilians. We then had an inspiring shiur by Rabbi Yoel Kenigsberg, followed by the traditional Hoshana Rabba Keri'ah. After a short ice cream break, we recited Tehillim & special Selihot, concluding with sunrise Shahrit.

**Asher Guedalia presentation was graciously sponsored by Steven and Randi Matsas
In memory of Meir Ben Lina a"h who passed away on the first day of Sukkot**

**Rabbi Yoel Kenigsberg shiur was graciously sponsored by David and Gitta Neufeld
In memory of Alice Neufeld, Adele bat Sara v'Natan, whose yahrzeit is Hoshana Rabba &
In memory of all the giborei Yisrael who fell defending our people and our land**

Tehillim & special Selihot were graciously sponsored anonymously in honor of Rabbi Sutton



Vatikin Minyan at the Kotel followed by a delicious breakfast.



Midnight Selihot at the Kotel on Ereb Yom Kippur.



Tiyul to Ammunition Hill memorial where we learned about The Six Day War.



In the new settlement established in memory of Ori Shani HY"D, Rabbi Shani's son, who was killed in battle on October 7th, our students helped pave roads and farm the surrounding areas-protecting the land of Israel!



To celebrate Rosh Hodesh MarHeshvan we had a special breakfast with Dibre Torah from Rabbi Tessler, redukim at night and then another special breakfast the next morning, where we heard Dibre Torah from Rabbi Mirsky.
Graciously sponsored by Abe Jemal (Class of '18)

Mishmar @ Moreshet

*Mishmar Series 5786 is graciously sponsored by
The Mosseri Family*



For our very first Mishmar of the year Rabbi Max Sutton shared a monetary bet din case that engaged the students and taught them how to solve the case according to Talmudic and halakhic sources.

**Mishmar was graciously sponsored by
Jamie & Rabbi Ricky Cohen
In honor of their grandson
Elliot Chalmè (Class of '25)**

On Sept 11th, Josh Abody shared his life story. He was brought up in Cleveland, Ohio and went from public school to yeshivah in Israel, and from there to Ner Yeshivah in Baltimore, before becoming an attorney. He shared life lessons through his journey that the boys could relate to.

**Mishmar was graciously sponsored by
Albert Shalom, Morris Shamah,
Felix Hadeh and Solly Gadeh
In honor of Morris Sutton**



On Oct 16th, Rabbi Ricky Cohen spoke about the right mindset that a person learning Torah should have- particularly in the times invested learning in yeshivah.

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

On Oct 23rd, we had the opportunity to hear from Rabbi David Bibi about staying true to our values- especially during challenging times.



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 Cytryn Family

Over the last decade, three of our sons have had the privilege of spending their gap year at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim, and each of them came home with something unique and life-changing. Our oldest, **Zacky**, went during the height of COVID. Israel was in lockdown, with restrictions everywhere, yet he came back more confident and independent than ever. He learned how to adapt when things didn't go as planned, and he grew into someone who could handle challenges with strength and grace. Even after all the closures and difficulties, he says he wouldn't trade that year for anything.



Our second son, **Eric**, had an entirely different experience. For him, Moreshet was where he built a relationship with a group of friends that will last a lifetime. Those boys became like brothers, and years later they are still close, still sharing the values and lessons they built together in Israel.



By the time our third son, **Michael**, went, the program had matured even more. His year was marked by a deepening love and connection to the Land of Israel itself. He also experienced something we as parents will never forget: he was there during the war in Gaza and during the missile attacks from Iran. Of course, we were worried, but we always knew he was safe.



The Rabbis and the administration treated the boys as if they were their own children, making sure they were protected, supported, and cared for. That care gave us peace of mind and allowed Michael to thrive. He came home with an unshakable love for Eres Yisrael.

Looking back, it's clear to us how much the school itself has grown. From Zacky's time in the middle of COVID to Michael's time just a few years later, Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim has only become stronger and more polished- while never losing its heart. Each of our boys came back with different strengths- confidence, friendships, love of Israel- but they all came back more spiritual, more mature, and more connected to their Judaism than they could have ever become had they stayed home.

As parents, what we love most about the school is that it sees each student as an individual. There is no "one-size-fits-all." Each of our sons came back better in his own way, yet all of them carry the same gratitude for their year in the school and the lasting relationships they built- with their Rabbis and with their peers. That's why we are so excited for our youngest son, **Steven**, to have his turn. We cannot wait for him to join the Moreshet family and to see what his own journey will bring.

On this special 10-year anniversary, we want to thank the Rabbis and administration for a decade of dedication, guidance, and love. You have taught not only Torah, but also a love for Am Yisrael and Eres Yisrael. You have treated every boy as your own, and our family has seen the lifelong impact of your devotion. May you continue to inspire and shape generations of young men who will carry the light of Torah and the love of Israel wherever they go.

Victor Cohen: Keep Moving Forward!

Introduction

In sports– something everybody always says is to “keep your eye on the ball.” In baseball, that’s nearly impossible, or in football, many positions don’t require you to keep your eye on the ball. Yet it’s always said to everybody. So what does it mean?

To keep your eye on the ball is to keep your focus on the things that matter. To keep your eye on the ball is, really, to be in the right place and do the right things to succeed. To keep your eye on the ball is to stay in the game of life and to ultimately see victory.

Victor Cohen, this issue’s Alumni Spotlight, has kept his eye on the ball since he was in high school. He moved with nearly unparalleled speed and alacrity to accomplish his goals. Victor graduated Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim in 2022, graduated from Baruch College in 2024, and will graduate from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in 2027. Throughout this journey, the lessons he learned at Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim always stayed with him, and the ties he forged within the school never left him. Below, we will go through what Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim gave Victor Cohen– why he decided to attend, what were some of the highlights, the main takeaways from his year, and how he lives his life today, choosing to walk in the footsteps of his parents and grandparents.

Why Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim?

“Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim was the right choice for me,” Victor Cohen said, “because it gave me a bit of home to take with me abroad.” He already knew Rabbi Edward Benjamin, because Rabbi Benjamin spent his summers at Congregation Magen David of West Deal– where Victor prays. Many of the friends he grew up with in Deal and even some from Brooklyn would be attending as well. “It was a once in a lifetime chance to get to know my friends better and even meet some new ones along the way.”

At the same time, he was thinking about his future. He wanted to be a lawyer, which was going to be three years of school on top of the regular four years of college. Did it really make sense to take a gap year? Yeshiva University, luckily, had a three year program for those coming back from Israel. After much deliberation, he enrolled in YU and decided to give Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim a go.

Victor Cohen’s time in Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim

“Yeshivat Moreshet Yerushalayim taught me how to think on my feet.” Victor attributed much of that to Rabbi Tanchum Gold’s Gemara Morning Seder, which he said challenged him and sharpened his analytical and critical thinking skills. “It helped a lot down the line,” he added.

“Rabbi Gold,” he said, “you could throw any question in the world at him. He’ll have an answer with the exact page, it doesn’t matter what the topic is. Gemara, Halakha, anything! He really is a genius and I am really grateful for the time I spent learning with him.”

Victor was known for waking up early every morning to read the Korbanot before Shahrit, and he would also Hazzen often. He also spent much of his time learning Shaar Habitahon with a Habruta, Joshua Cohen. “Someone came to speak at a Mishmar and convinced the two of us to try and pick it up. I forgot who the guy was, but it was a great idea. Josh was a great Habruta.”



Alumni Spotlight

Victor and a crew of about seven boys from Deal joined that year. He roomed with his friends Jack Massry, Jacob Zimmerman, and made a new friend in Ronnie Terzi. “Ron’s great!” The Deal guys all went away for Sukkot to Netanya in “the best Airbnb ever.”

Outside of learning, he was trying to figure out his future. A turning point came when, mid-year, he decided to swap out of Yeshiva University’s three year program. It turned out to be a three year minimum, which he did not want, thinking he could find a way out faster. He switched into Baruch College upon learning that he could completely customize his schedule and potentially finish his undergraduate degree in less than three years. “It ended up saving me a year, and much more, as I was able to work throughout college as well.”

Victor and the big shoes of family:

Victor did two Siyums– one on Haggigah in the middle of the year, and one on Taanit, at the end of the year. “The last one was really special to me because I started it Leilui Nishmat my grandfather, Charlie Saka A”H, who passed away on Shebii Shel Pesah of that year. The idea was to have it ready by the 30 day Arayat, and it ended up being– I think– the last siyum of our year.”

His grandfather Charlie Saka A”H was a big inspiration to him. “I still keep a picture of him by my bed.” As the patriarch of the Saka family, and one of the most influential builders of our community, Charlie Saka A”H lives on through the work of his children and grandchildren, most of whom are involved with community institutions in some way, shape or form. “It’s something where– I’m sure if you ask anyone else in the family– where we all want to continue doing what he did and make him proud.”

Even three years later, thoughts of his grandfather are never far from Victor’s mind. “He’s still smiling at us.” He stays close with both his grandma Brenda Saka, and his grandparents on his father’s side, his namesake Grandpa Victor Cohen and Grandma Freda Cohen. “They’ve all done so much with their lives,” he said, “it helps us recognize that there is always so much more we could do with ours.” His Grandpa Victor, for instance, is a mainstay in Beth Torah and is helping to build the new synagogue in Surfside, Florida.

“We, as they’ve all told me hundreds of times, stand on the shoulders of giants. And it’s our job to keep building and keep moving forward.”

On the Horizon

To sponsor any of the available items below in honor or in memory of a loved one contact office@moreshetyerushalayim.com

Hebron Shabbaton	Available: \$15,000
Rosh Hodesh Breakfast	Available: \$1,800
Hanukkah Seudah	3 Available: \$1,200 each
Hanukkah Celebration by Rabbi Sutton	Available: \$1,800
Shabbat Kiddush & Class	Available: \$501
All Shabbat Seudot for an in Shabbat	Available: \$2,001
Issue of Moreshet Magazine	Available: \$1,800
Thursday Night Mishmar	Available: \$500 \$1,000 for Deluxe



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