

**Marc Zweier (Moshe Hersch ben Mendel Zweier) tells how Passover-Australia, and his encounters with the Yeshivah Gedolah students, changed the course of his life.**

I am originally from Brooklyn. The Rebbe probably lived about one mile from where I was born. However, my first Jewish memories are of Los Angeles. Chabad had not yet established its presence in our neighbourhood. Three times a week, I attended Hebrew School after public school, and I remember thinking that I would have rather played basketball. I used to wear Tzitzis to public school, in order that I would have them on for Hebrew school. However, we didn't attend Shule on Shabbos, and we did not light candles. In all honesty, I didn't even realise when Shabbos had arrived. My mom would go "bonkers" around Pesach and the High Holidays, and she made us aware of our Jewishness – at least on the holidays. My mom had kept kosher until she was nineteen or twenty, but then she assimilated a bit; the way her Yiddish-speaking mother (my grandmother Molly) spoke English was not too cool back then! Funny, because my grandmother would be a celebrity with the people I'm hanging around these days!

We recently visited my parents, and my mom lit Shabbos candles for the first time since she was twenty, and she is currently going on seventy-six! She lights candles like someone who's been doing it her whole life. But getting back to my story...

My wife, Lea, was born in Melbourne, made Aliyah at age three with her Israeli mother, then grew up in London, and finally returned to Melbourne. Now, after moving from Fremantle to Perth, Lea gives new meaning to the term "wandering Jew".

Lea was visiting in the USA on a special award, and we met at a conference in Austin, Texas. From the moment Lea arrived at my table, I knew she was the one. She thought I looked too Jewish, even though I was not wearing anything especially Jewish – not even a Magen-David. It was just written all over my face, or, more precisely, all over my nose. Of course, this meant that I was too real, too serious; something she wasn't sure she was ready for.

But time has its way, and we were married a short nine months later, in a very formal Jewish wedding in Melbourne. That might not have happened were it not for Lea's grandmother. When Grandma Irene heard that we were planning a sort of hippie multi-faith wedding in Perth, with a barefoot saxophone playing celebrant, she somehow convinced us to have a proper Jewish wedding in Melbourne. Looking back, we are so grateful to her for this.

Our daughter Zoë was born several years later in idyllic Denmark, Western Australia. In Denmark, we enjoyed our Shabbos gatherings with the local community. We were actually the only Jewish people, along with our very willing host Baruch, but that didn't stop us. A Jew loves a good party with Jewish people, even if most weren't really Jewish! Oy! That was how it was like back then; we didn't know where we were headed.

In terms of real Yiddishkeit, we were essentially High Holiday Jews – with a little Pesach and Chanukah thrown in for good measure. We lit Shabbos candles too; Lea would say the blessings, and we would think of our ancestors and family. Zoë was soon growing fast, and our Jewish souls soon started searching for something more.



By 2006, Lea and I had already moved to Fremantle. We founded a local Jewish "culture connection" in Fremantle called Simchafreo. It all started at a "foodie expo" in Fremantle, where another woman from our eventual group heard me describe the bagel scene in Los Angeles. African-Americans and Mexican-Americans standing behind the counter at Noah's Bagels, hollering: "Como estas big boy; what kind-a bagel you want?!" The connection began, and with Lea screening the many "strangers" over the phone, we soon had up to one-hundred Jewish families attending our Shabbos and holiday gatherings, discussion sessions and social events. It was exciting to reconnect Jewish souls with an awareness of their heritage. It was extremely heart-warming to publicly celebrate our Jewish connection with each other; a first for Fremantle in over one-hundred years. Since I was the only one in the group who could do slightly better than just barely read Hebrew, I became the resident 'Rabbi' at our more religious gatherings. You know, where we said a few blessings before eating, which is what we did best.

Fast-forward a bit. In 2007, Berel Majesky (YG Shliach 2007-2009) and some other boys from Melbourne found me in Fremantle, at my favourite coffee hangout. They were in town to arrange the Fremantle Community Seder. In no time, they had me wrapping Tefillin on the patio of this cafe in front of my wife and daughter, and in front of all of the other coffee drinking patrons. And, it just felt... right.

The following year, Levi Piha (YG Shliach 2008-2010) gave me a set of Tefillin, which I kiss and wear at least several days a week. After a Fremantle Shabbaton, he asked me: "Moshe, does Lea know how to light candles?" He called me back several more times that evening, enlightening me more and more.

In 2008, we visited Israel. This was my first visit, and our first as a family. Lea hadn't been in over ten years. Israel hit me by surprise; that should tell you how lost I was. All the same, with Lea's two Israeli sisters and all of Zoë's cousins, it was an amazing homecoming of sorts. Israel captured my imagination in a way that I cannot describe. I was walking in a Jewish dream.

The inspiration I experienced in Israel, along with my lacklustre career as "Rabbi" of Fremantle, prompted me to look further. The YG Shluchim directed me to Rabbi Shalom & Odeya White, the Shluchim in Perth. We met at a beach Chanukah party, and after discussing Simchafreo for a couple minutes, we invited the

Rabbi to lead a discussion session for us in Fremantle.

Rabbi & Rebbetzin White are the most amazing Shluchim that I know. Rabbi White is both the sweetest and the smartest man in the neighbourhood. He speaks fluent Hebrew, Yiddish, Australian English, sounds like a New Yorker, is a wonderful teacher of Torah to all ages, is a gifted orator, he shechts chickens and lamb and whatever else is needed – and he is only about thirty! And, most importantly, Rabbi White is there when we need him. He is a skilled listener and friend to many people.

Rebbetzin White has invited us for more Shabbos lunches than we could count. She has a way of making us feel welcome, and she teaches us something at the same time. And that's really something being that she's only half our age! With the White family, we talk and laugh, we learn and pray, we hold their babies and play with their five children.

Three months ago, we moved across from Fremantle to Perth, in order to be near Chabad, and in order that Zoë can attend the Jewish community school. Zoë adores the White children, and looks forward to interacting with them at Shule every Shabbos.

We also visited Israel again; our travels took us to Chabad in Sydney, Melbourne, Bangkok, Shoham (Israel), Jerusalem, and to an amazing little Chabad Shule at a Moshav near Afula. We also visited Chabad in Los Angeles and San Diego, and prayed at the Rebbe's gravesite. When in Israel, I wore my Yarmulke every single minute. I have certainly worn my Yarmulke before, even in Fremantle, where a Jewish friend of mine thought I had gone nuts and told me, "Wha...da ya wanna be the Jew of Fremantle or something?! Please, take that thing off!" However, in Israel, I made sure to wear that Yarmulke every single minute. You see, I read one of the Rebbe's letters, in which he writes that one ought to be especially aware of G-d's extra special presence in the Holy Land.

It is now 2011, and I watch with pride as a mobile Shtetl descends on Fremantle before Pesach! To see a couple of black-hatted boys from a Melbourne Yeshiva walking through Fremantle is worth a million bucks.

How did I get into this position, with all these smiling young guys with black hats teaching me, laughing with me, challenging me, and appealing to that part of me that wants to help them? I am not a typical Chassid with all the regalia and commitment, but there is something undeniably attractive about the Chabad way.

Does it have to do with my grandparents who lived not far from the town of Lubavitch before immigrating to the USA? Am I a Chassid at heart?

Chabad has reconnected me with my Jewish soul. It certainly took a long time to happen! Deeper than being born in the USA, deeper than becoming Australian, I am Jewish... and proud of it!

**For the full Passover Australia 5771 Report, please visit the "Passover Australia" page in the "Outreach" section of our website.**



# The YG Connection

The Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ Newsletter

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## Our Website

The Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ Website is being constantly updated.

Recently added features include an expanded and updated "Heoros" page. "Heoros Hatmimim" is a periodical published by the Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ, containing the students' thoughts and insights in their studies. The most recent issues are available at the "Heoros" page, under the "Students" section of the website.

Another recently added feature is the "Archives" section, which contains pictures of Yeshivah Gedolah's early years. Readers are invited to view these pictures online, and to suggest suitable captions and/or provide further background information.

All this and more at:  
[RabbinicalCollege.edu.au](http://RabbinicalCollege.edu.au)

## Kinus Torah Shavuos - 5771

**The Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand (Yeshivah Gedolah – Melbourne) hosted a communal Kinus Torah on Sunday the tenth of Sivan (June 12, 2011). The Kinus was convened in conjunction with Shavuos, as per the Rebbe's directive that a Kinus be held on, or immediately after, each Yom Tov.**



The Kinus was coordinated and chaired by Shliach Shimon Yisroel Dubinsky, and began with a Sicha delivered by Shliach Menachem Mendel Begun. Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Binyomin Gavriel Cohen delivered a Piipul explaining why a father fulfils the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah through the Torah that his son learns. Rabbi Zvi Telsner (Yeshivah Centre) explained and defined the prohibition of eating immediately prior to Pesach. Rabbi Motte Krasnjanski (Ohr Chadash – Caulfield Shul) discussed the definitions of the Melachos of Borer (selecting) and Zoreh (winnowing).

Eliyahu Rubin (Smicha student at Heichal Menachem – Machon Chaim) described how Chassidus contrasts the Mitzvos as observed before the giving of the Torah, and as observed



afterwards. Rabbi Yale New (Kollel Menachem) spoke about the concept of Tosfos Shabbos. Chaim Pinczower (student at Yeshivah Gedolah) discussed the laws of Bi'ur Shvi'is (the removal of out-of-season produce of Shmittah) which is currently being studied at Yeshivah Gedolah. Finally, Osher Kluwngant (student at Mesivtah) explained the famous dispute between Rashi and Tosfos at the beginning of Masechta Pesachim.

Several students (Shliach Menachem Mendel Polter, Chaim Hillel Markovits, Shmuel Chaikin, and Menachem Aron of Mesivta) transcribed each of the Piipulim as they were being delivered, in order to publish them IY"H in the near future.

The event featured a large and diverse crowd, who thoroughly enjoyed the wide variety of subjects addressed at this year's Kinus.



## Tikun Leil Shavuos at YG

This past Shavuos, the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand conducted its own "Tikun Leil Shavuos" program. Beginning after midnight, Shliach Yehudah Zaltzman addressed the students regarding the integrity of the borders of Eretz Yisroel. At 1:00am, Rabbi Shmuel Lesches detailed the backgrounds of Rus and Naamah, and explained why the dynasty of Dovid Hamelech and Moshiah is rooted in the nations of Amon and Moav. Shliach Menachem Mendel Begun then delivered a Shiur on the topic of Moshiah, and he was followed by Shliach Yisroel Halon, who presented a Shiur in Masechta Shabbos, on the Sugya of Mattan Torah. Afterwards, the Zal was filled with the sound of Torah, as the students finished their recitation of "Tikun Leil Shavuos".

The program and refreshments were arranged by Shliach Shmuel Lipskier. Delicious cheesecake was prepared by Levi and Mendy Rosenbaum.



### Noticing Others



**Rabbi Dovid Eliezrie is Executive Director of North County Chabad Centre (California), President of the Rabbinical Council of Orange County and Long Beach, and a board member of the Jewish Federation of Orange County. At a recent Farbrengen at the Rabbinical College, Rabbi Eliezrie shared the following:**

Back in 5725 (1965), a group of teenage boys made the journey from Montreal to Crown Heights in an old school bus that kept breaking down along the way. The trip had been arranged by the high school in Montreal, in order that the boys spend Yud Shevat and attend a special Yechidus (private audience) with the Rebbe.

One of the high school students, a fourteen year old, stood out with a funny little hat that he wore just above his "Tchup" (fringe). He was not familiar with 770, and when he arrived on Sunday (or Monday) night for Maariv, he found the Zal already packed with people. He tried all the different entrances, but there was simply no room for him to enter. The boy wasn't aware of the protocol, and when the Rebbe emerged from his office to enter the Zal for Maariv, the young boy decided to walk in right behind the Rebbe.

Rabbi Hodakov held the Zal door open for the Rebbe, and he signalled the boy to stay behind, being that it was inappropriate for the boy to walk in right behind the Rebbe. When the Chassidim in the Zal caught sight of the boy behind the Rebbe, they also began signalling him to stop. The Rebbe noticed the commotion, and turned around to see its cause. Just at that moment, Rabbi Hodakov began closing the door in an effort to keep the boy out.

The Rebbe motioned Rabbi Hodakov to leave the door alone, and he beckoned towards the boy. That Mariv, the boy stood right behind the Rebbe. That boy was me, and the attention that the Rebbe afforded me when I was just a confused kid is a memory that always remains with me.

**The lesson:** *Even when one is busy with important things, one should nevertheless take the time and effort to shower attention on others – especially when they need it most.*

### Alumni meet in New York



In spirit of the month of Sivan, when the Jewish Nation camped at Mount Sinai with complete unity, Shluchim and Alumni of Yeshivah Gedolah currently located in New York arranged a special Achdus (unity) Torah learning session. This event took place at 9:30 p.m on Sunday the third of Sivan (5 June 2011), at Kollel Avreichim of Crown Heights. The attendees enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to bond and reunite with old classmates and friends, and help each other prepare for Kabbalas Hatorah B'simcha Ub'nimius (receiving the Torah with joy and internalising it).



### Shabbos Achdus 5771



In the year 5746, the Rebbe put forth a "Bakasha-Nafshis" (loosely translated as: "heartfelt request") asking all Jews to participate in unity gatherings on Shabbos-Bamidbar, in preparation for receiving the Torah on Shavuos. Ever since then, Shabbos-Bamidbar has become synonymous with Shabbos-Achdus (Shabbos of Unity).

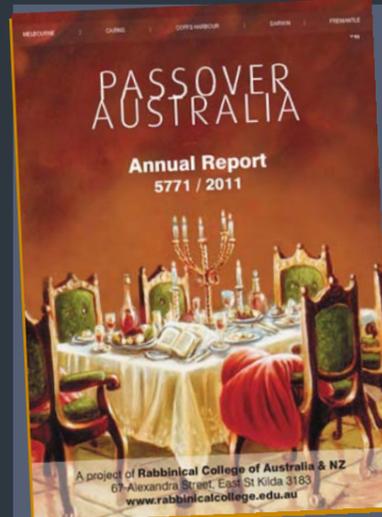
This year, the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand hosted a Shabbos-Achdus Friday night event, with the participation of the students at three other educational institutes: Heichal Menachem – Machon Chaim, Mesivta, and Yeshivah College High School.

The Shabbos-Achdus event began with Mincha at 5:00pm, and Seder Nigunim was followed by a Maamar (Chassidic discourse) delivered by Yossi Gopin (Mesivta). This was followed by Seder Sichos, in which each student was paired with another student from a different institute. After a resounding and inspiring Maariv, the students sat down to a grand Seudas Shabbos meal. During the course of the meal, several students spoke on behalf of their respective institutes; Shmuel Rosenbaum (Yeshivah College), Menashe Wolf (Mesivta) and Dovid Riesenberga (Yeshivah Gedolah).

Rabbi Raphael Aron delivered the keynote address, in which he recounted some of his experiences counselling people who became involved with cults.

The Seudas Shabbos meal was followed by a stirring Farbrengen led by the energetic Rabbi Dudu Lider of the Chabad House for Israeli Tourists. The event was organized by Shliach Levi Liberow.

### Passover Australia Annual Report



Pesach 5771 saw groups of students travelling to many parts of Australia to arrange Seders for their Jewish communities. Cities visited included Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour, Cairns, Darwin and Fremantle. Their visits enabled over five hundred people to attend Seders across Australia. Aside from conducting communal Seders (Sedarim), the Shluchim utilized their visits to offer guidance and encouragement, and to provide religious items such as Mezuzot, Tefillin, Jewish Books and Kosher food, wherever needed.

The Passover Australia 5771 annual report is available for download on the "Passover Australia" page in the "Outreach" section of our website.

- Number of Sedarim Attendees: 271**
- Number of Tefillin: 72**
- Number of Home visits: 82**
- Number of Mezuzos sold: 7**
- Number of books sold: 9**

### Thank You

We thank our outgoing secretary, Mrs. Miriam Paltiel, for her tireless efforts and dedication on behalf of the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand.

Mrs. Paltiel served for eleven years at the College, making her our longest serving secretary. We wish her much success in all her future endeavours.

### Lag B'omer 5771

Lag B'omer 5771 (22 May 2011): Thousands of people from all sectors of the Melbourne Jewish community lined the streets for an impressive Lag B'omer Parade, organized by Chabad Youth. The students of the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand were involved in many facets of the event.

The parade featured over fifty floats, including a "Mitzvah Amusement Park" theme float constructed by the students of the College, as well as a musical float featuring the Yeshivah Gedolah Band. Shliach Shmuel Lipskier

invested many hours into training a small group of Yeshivah College students to perform as a marching band. The many energetic and exciting clowns were none other than our very own students.

Upon the parade's completion, the festivities continued with a fair at Princes Park. Many students spent this time reaching out to their fellow Jews, and inviting men to don Tefillin.

Pictured below are several scenes of the students constructing their float, and their participation in the parade.

