



Dovid Staples is an alumnus of the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand, 5771 (2011). He is currently studying for Semicha (Rabbinical ordination) at Chovevei Torah, in Brooklyn, NY. In this letter, Dovid shares with us his current experiences, and the indelible impression that Yeshivah Gedolah had on him.



Hello Rabbi! I must say it was really nice to receive a message from you. Sorry for not writing back until now. I have been meaning to, but I didn't get around to it until now.

Boruch Hashem the learning is great, and I certainly have Yeshivah Gedolah to thank for that! Ah, how I miss it. You surely know that us former Bochorim get together and reminisce about the good ol' Yeshivah Gedolah days and how other yeshivahs just aren't the same. They aren't! Where's the enthusiasm, the noise, the awesome Shluchim, the great Hanholo, the occasional Mivtzah, the Friday night meals, the Melava Malkahs, the Fabrengens, the communal satisfaction, and the joy of learning that one naturally breathes in the Melbourne air? Aye, if there's one thing I still carry with me from Yeshivah Gedolah, it is, "keep on truckin'; don't drop till you stop," courtesy of Yakov Backman.

Perhaps I am beginning to rant, but I don't think I ever properly expressed my appreciation for everything that the Shluchim and Hanholo of Yeshivah Gedolah did for me. In fact, I didn't fully appreciate it until after I found myself outside of Yeshivah Gedolah's environs, and I realized how much I progressed there. I could hardly open a Gemoro when I first arrived, and I certainly could not decipher even one paragraph of a Ma'amar. By the time I returned home, I started giving evening Shiurim on the Gemoro that I learned in Yeshivah Gedolah, accompanied of course with

some of Rabbi Cohen's signature intonations. I also wound up being a little ahead of my current Semicha program, thanks to Shliach Moshe Wolvovsky who took the time to learn the fundamentals with me every day. I also find myself learning Ma'amar after Ma'amar in the mornings. Being able to do all of this really makes me glad, and my success accurately reflects what I tell everyone; that going to Yeshivah Gedolah was the best decision I ever made in my life. Believe me when I say that I use every opportunity to boast about Yeshivah Gedolah! (And I sure miss the absolutely superior food, which is much better than what I have had at all my other Yeshivahs. Would you believe it? I have not had lamb chops even once since I left Melbourne.)

I am doing well in all other respects as well, thank G-d. I recently took up a job at HASC, which provides educational and clinical services for children with special needs. G-d willing, I am starting to work with a special-needs boy this week. I also took up a position as a fundraiser for a special-education program in Crown Heights. It's nice to be able to make a positive influence.

Send my best to all the other members of the Hanholo, and to all the Bochorim. I wish you a super successful year!

All the best,
Dovid Staples



The YG Connection

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Our Website

The Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ Website is constantly updated, and may be viewed at:
RabbinicalCollege.edu.au

Lamplighter Weekly

Lamplighter is a popular weekly newsletter published by the Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand.

You may view current and past issues at:
RabbinicalCollege.edu.au/Lamplighter

Corrections

We recently published a record of a Farbrengen with Rabbi Moshe Feller (Issue 4), and another Farbrengen with Rabbi Yossi Gordon (Issue 7). We thank them for recently reviewing these articles for us, and making minor emendations. We have updated our archives, which are hosted at:
RabbinicalCollege.edu.au/YGConnection



The Shluchim prepare the first shipment of supplies.



Passover-Australia is a project of the Rabbinical College of Australia & N.Z, and is organized and conducted by its Shluchim. Inspired by the call of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to ensure that every Jew has a place at the Pesach Seder, the Shluchim reach out to Jews in remote locations across the country, providing them the means to experience and celebrate Passover. Last year alone, over 370 Jews attended the Passover Seders, close to 90 house visits were conducted, and countless men laid Tefilin. For some, the activities of Passover Australia are their only connection to Yiddishkeit throughout the year.

This year, Passover-Australia will be servicing Cairns, Coffs Harbour, Darwin, and Fremantle. In addition to the Passover Seders, the Shluchim will be travelling through the Great Australian Outback, offering vital Jewish services such as Tefilin and Mezuzot to all those in need.

If you would like to pass on our details to someone you know living in the "Australian Outback", or you would like to donate, or request further information, please visit the Passover-Australia website at:
www.PassoverAustralia.com.au



Siyum Harambam



Earlier this month, hundreds of men and women attended a grand Siyum HaRambam celebration in Melbourne Australia, at Yeshivah Centre's Werdiger Hall. The event marked the completion of the 30th study-cycle of three daily chapters of Rambam, and the 10th study-cycle of one daily chapter of Rambam. Prominent community rabbis addressed the crowd about the significance of the occasion.

The event was organized by the Shluchim of the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand in conjunction with Yeshivah Centre.

More details and photos are available in the News section of the Rabbinical College website.

In honour of the Siyum HaRambam, two sets of Hebrew-English Mishneh Torah were donated to the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand, by Marlene Gail Wolsh (of Vestal, NY), in memory of her mother, Krindyl bat Aaron Mordechai (Claire Feldman-Palnik).



The eleventh day of Nissan marks the birthday of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Chassidim typically ready themselves for the occasion by preparing the type of gift appreciated by the Rebbe: Increased learning, added concentration during Davening, charitable acts and good deeds. To assist the students in their preparations, the Shluchim recently launched a Mivtza Hachana (preparation campaign). Look out for the full roundup in the next issue of "The YG Connection".

The Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ recently purchased three sets of Shas (Oz V'hodor), which will be well utilized by our students. We thank Rabbi Shmaya Glick for his generous grant, as well as the other donors who made this possible.



This is who we are!



Rabbi Binyomin Cohen is Rosh Yeshivah (dean) at the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand. At a recent Farbrengen at the Rabbinical

College, in honour of his birthday, Rabbi Cohen shared the following words of inspiration:

I recently heard a story about the well-known *Mashpia* (Chassidic mentor), Reb Mendel Futerfas. I cannot vouch for the details of the story, as I did not hear it firsthand, but there is certainly a lesson to be had:

The hour was already late, but the Chassidim showed no signs of fatigue as they gathered around Reb Mendel Futerfas, who was reminiscing about a treacherous journey that he once took on his way to assist an underground Yeshivah in the city of Kharkov.

"I gripped the bars attached to the exterior of the railway car, struggling with all my strength against the wind, as the train made its way down the steep slope. Most of the travellers were safely and comfortably ensconced in the warm train compartments, but I travelled outdoors, on a small bridge connecting two of the train coaches. The bitter cold bit into me as the wind fiercely whistled its way past me. But I had little choice. Anti-Semitic drunks were a common feature of the Russian railway scene, and throwing Jews off fast-moving trains was a favourite pastime of theirs. With my conspicuous beard and *Peyos* (sideburns), I would have made an easy target for them. My only option was to try and keep a low profile, huddling between the railway cars, as the train steadily journeyed towards the city of Kharkov."

"Suddenly, as the train rounded a curve, I noticed another traveller up ahead. He was an obviously religious Jew, and he was travelling between the railway cars, like me. There were just three or four coaches separating us, and I was glad to

rid myself of my loneliness and spend the rest of the journey with him. I started making my way forward, and soon enough found myself face to face with one of the foremost *Roshei-Yeshivah* of the time. As we began conversing, it emerged that he was travelling on a similar mission; he was also looking to establish an underground Yeshivah in Kharkov".

At this point of the narrative, Reb Mendel interjected, "'You see, *Kinderlach* (children), the *Mesiras-Nefesh* (self-sacrifice) of the Rosh Yeshivah!"

Reb Mendel paused, his eyes spanning the crowd. He waited expectantly, as if anticipating a question. It wasn't long in coming. "But," exclaimed one of the audience, "If the Rosh Yeshivah exhibited *Mesiras Nefesh* by making this journey, then surely, so did you."

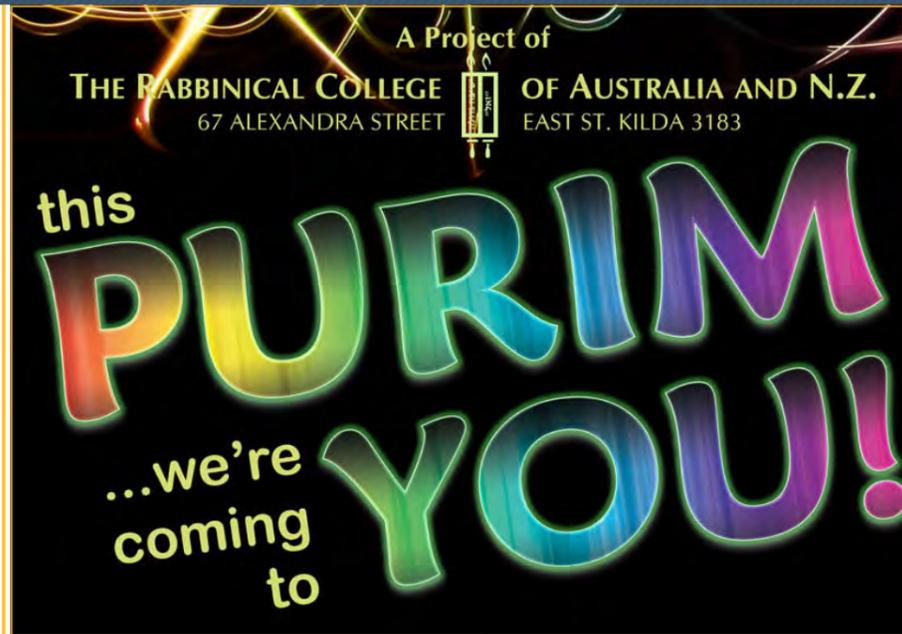
"No!" responded Reb Mendel with twinkling eyes, "My journey was not an act of self-sacrifice. For, as you know, I am a Chossid. And a Chossid's *raison d'être* is to advance the cause of *Yiddishkeit!* The self of a Chossid exists solely for Torah and Mitzvos. For me, travelling in dangerous conditions to establish a Yeshivah was no self-sacrifice; it was the very purpose for which I exist! *Dos bin Ich!* (This is who I am!)"



Fast forward several decades. By now, Reb Mendel had finally escaped Soviet Russia, after having served some seventeen years in Siberian prison camps, for the "crime" of spreading Jewish observance. Reb Mendel lived in London for some time, where I came to know him.

We were once learning together, when in walked a *Bochur* who excitedly launched into the details of his most recent *Peulah* (activity), which required him to walk from North London to the East End of London. The walk was about an hour each way, and the *Bochur* was very proud of the personal effort he expended for the sake of Jewish outreach.

Reb Mendel, not wishing to discourage the *Bochur*, listened in respectful silence. However, after the *Bochur* left the room, he turned to me and quietly said, "When we were in Russia, we spent three hours every Shabbos morning walking to the Mikvah, and another three hours returning. We reviewed Chassidic discourses the entire way, and spent the next couple of hours *Davening*. And we didn't think much of our efforts. After all, this is who we are; it is for this purpose that we exist!"



Purim 5772



Purim 5772 (2012) was celebrated on Wednesday evening, March 7, and Thursday, March 8. Students of the Rabbinical College of Australia & New Zealand brought the joy of Purim to a wide variety of businesses, eateries, residencies, hospitals, old age homes, markets, schools, childcare centres and prisons. They also assisted and participated in various events conducted by local synagogues, Chabad Houses and community organizations. Aside from hearing *Megillah*, the commandments of Purim include *Mishloach Manos* (gifts of food), *Matanos L'evyonim* (giving charity), and participating in a joyous feast.

Mishloach Manos packages: 1,100 +
Megillah readings: 85+
Megillah reading attendance: 1,000+
Matanos L'evyonim: 50+
Tefilin: 200+
Purim parties: 40+

Mishloach Manos packages



In the weeks prior to Purim 5772, students of the Rabbinical College devoted much of their free time to preparing thousands of Mishloach Manos packages for distribution within the community. These Mishloach Manos packages help facilitate observance of the Purim commandments.

More photos are available in the News section of the Rabbinical College website.

Purim Mivtzoyim

The Purim outreach activities of our students were not limited to Melbourne, and several Shluchim travelled to Brisbane and Cairns. Even when things seemed to be going wrong, they were really working out for the best, as seen in the following incident:

Shliach Moshe Backman travelled to Brisbane in order to help the local Shluchim spread the joy of Purim. After spending an action-packed Purim day in Brisbane, he set out for the airport bright and early the next morning, with enough time to catch his return flight to Melbourne. On his way to the airport, he tried to call his fellow Shluchim back in Melbourne to confirm that they would be picking him up from Melbourne airport. However, he was not able to get through to them.

After Moshe landed at Tullamarine Airport, he

again tried to contact his fellow Shluchim, but was still unsuccessful. Without much of a choice, he made his way to the taxi rank. Suddenly, he heard a holler above the din of Melbourne airport, "Rabbi, where are you going?" Moshe turned around to face an elderly Russian Jew, who was only too happy to offer him a ride.

During the ride, Moshe learned a little about his new-found friend, who was returning from a business trip to Singapore. Moshe used some of the time to discuss Judaism, and Tefilin specifically. The Russian businessman was initially not that interested in laying Tefilin, but slowly warmed to the idea. By the time the car arrived at Rabbinical College, our Russian friend eagerly put on Tefilin. Now Moshe understood why he been unable to arrange a ride!



Roving Rabbis Update: The connection continues...

In issue 4 of "The YG Connection", we described the experiences of Hirschel Gourarie and Shmuel Lipskier, who spent their mid-winter break reaching out to Jews in Campbelltown and Parramatta, New South Wales. In particular, the Shluchim spent several meaningful hours visiting a young family on the outskirts of Campbelltown. Over six months later, the connection still continues, with the following email recently received:

Hi Hirschel,

Just letting you know that we spent last night watching the DVD of Purim that you sent us. The whole family munched on the Purim treats from you and your friends, and watched the movie. It was such a great DVD for all ages. We couldn't stop laughing at the humour of the jokes at Haman and his family. Even his wife looked evil. Some two hours later we all went to bed.

Then I gave the boys a quiz ... what does the name Ester mean? What does the word Purim mean? And so on and so forth. It was so much fun, we even play acted some of the roles. I was the beautiful Queen Ester. Jakie, well he always plays the evil fellows... It was so much fun!

Thank you again.