



The YG Connection

The Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ Newsletter



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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

Heoros

"Heoros Hatmimim" is a periodical published by the Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ, containing Torah thoughts and insights. The most recent edition was published in honour of Yud Shevat, and may be viewed at:
RabbinicalCollege.edu.au/Heoros

Contributions for the next edition may be submitted by email to:
heoros@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au



Talmud

This semester, Talmud studies at the Rabbinical College focus on the laws of slavery, the methods of acquiring and emancipating slaves, and their ethical treatment.

In our times, the Torah's laws of slavery are mostly theoretical. According to the Torah itself, the laws of slavery are practiced only during the times of the *Yovel* (Jubilee), the observance of which ended thousands of years ago.



Nevertheless, the laws of slavery have many practical ramifications in Jewish law today, primarily with regards to the various modes and aspects of *Kinyanim* (legal processes of acquisition) in general, as well as the rights and obligations inherent in the employer-employee relationship.

Many aspects of the master-slave relationship are far from ideal. Even whilst permitting it, the Torah frowns upon selling oneself into slavery. Yet, a central tenet of our faith is that all of Torah is relevant and eternal. What significance does the concept of slavery have in our times?

Beneath the legalistic application of Torah law lie many layers of meaning and spiritual instruction. While it is true that we would rather not be enslaved to other mortals, the Torah teaches that one must strive to be a servant of G-d.

Chassidic thought teaches that our relationship with G-d operates on three levels; it mirrors a father-son relationship, a husband-wife relationship, and a master-slave relationship. We connect with G-d because we feel inseparable from Him, because we love Him, and because we feel a sense of duty towards Him.

A slave accepts the will of his master even if he does not understand it. His labours are not driven by his own feelings of self-worth and personal fulfilment. His personal emotions do not play any role in attaining the will of his master.

A servant of G-d makes G-d's will his own. And, during the process, he breaks free from the bonds of enslavement to his own emotional and physical drives. Therein lies the value of the master-slave relationship.

Chassidus

"I have come to My garden, My sister, O bride."

These words, appearing in *Shir Hashirim* (Song of Songs 5:1), are the opening phrase of the *Maamar* (Chassidic discourse) that was distributed on the very day that the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe passed away. In the years and decades that followed, the present Lubavitcher Rebbe marked the *yahrtzeit* by delivering a *Maamar* entitled *Basi L'gani*, always based on a different chapter of the original discourse penned by his predecessor.

In honour of the auspicious day of *Yud Shevat*, the *Chassidus* curriculum at the Rabbinical College incorporated two of these *Maamarim*.

One major recurring theme of these discourses is that G-d views our world as His garden. Of all the countless spiritual emanations and realms, there is only one place which He refers to as "My garden." It is precisely within our physical world that G-d wishes to reside, and manifest His very essence.

G-d envisioned a world containing spiritual darkness,



in which possessors of free choice, capable of embracing the darkness or rejecting it, would repress the darkness

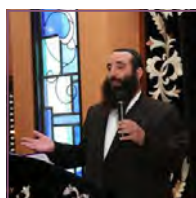
and transform it into light. Through the difficult work of banishing and transforming the darkness, the beautiful garden is revealed. And G-d exclaims, "I have come to My garden."

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A True Example



Rabbi Yossi Gordon is the founder and director of Chabad of Tasmania, a teacher in Yeshivah College, and an active community member. At a recent Farbrengen at

the Rabbinical College, Rabbi Gordon shared the following:

In 5734 (1974), shortly after Pesach, I had a Yechidus (private audience) with the Rebbe. The Rebbe told me that success in Shlichus and outreach stems from being a true living example. The biggest impact one has is not through what he preaches, but through the way he acts. In the words of the psalmist (71:7): "I was an example for the multitude."

On another occasion, at a Farbrengen during Tishrei 5739 (1978), the Rebbe expressed the idea this way: "Not only is the time of learning and Davening part of the Shlichus, but even the time during which one eats and sleeps, as well as family time."

My father, Rabbi Sholom B. Gordon, of blessed memory, exemplified this. I would like to share with you a number of stories about him:

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My father was originally a Rov in Newark (New Jersey), but the Shule eventually moved to nearby Maplewood. Initially, there was no men's Mikvah in Maplewood. [This ultimately changed when my father built a men's Mikvah in his own basement.] On certain Shabbos and Yom-Tov mornings, my father would make the long six-kilometre trek to the closest men's Mikvah, which was situated in Newark. He would leave at 5:00 in the morning, in order to be back in time for the Shabbos morning Shiur, at 8:00.

On the last day of his first Pesach in Maplewood, shortly after the Yom-Tov meal, my father announced that he was making another round-trip journey to Newark, despite already having done so in the morning. My father explained that there was a bakery under the Kashrus supervision of the local Vaad Harabonim (council of rabbis) which he was a member of, and

he felt a personal responsibility to ensure that the bakery was closed for the entire duration of Pesach, as required. In previous years, when my father still lived in Newark, the baker would not have dared to start baking Chometz on Pesach. But now, with my father living many kilometres away, there was the concern that the baker might take the chance.

Obviously, it would have been a lot more convenient for my father to assume that the baker was not up to any trouble. In fact, my father's position with the Vaad Harabonim did not require him to be personally involved with matters of Kashrus. However, Kashrus was of paramount importance to him, and he was ready to greatly inconvenience himself in order to ensure that all was as it should be.

My father set out for the bakery. Unfortunately, his worst suspicions were confirmed. The baker had not been able to withstand the temptation, and was hard at work in the bakery. Surprised at being caught red-handed, he tried to rationalize with my father that Pesach really ends right after Yizkor. Obviously, my father stood firm. He removed the Vaad Harabonim's approval until the bakery agreed to hire a permanent on-site supervisor.

• • •

My father began displaying signs of illness about a year before he ultimately passed away. The extent of his illness could not be fully determined without surgery, which was scheduled to take place in the Newark Beth Israel Hospital, where he had served as the Jewish Chaplain for some forty years.

On the day before his operation, my father arrived at the hospital quite early, and made his usual hospital rounds, as if he didn't have a care in the world. He went from room to room, bringing cheer and comfort to many people. He put on Tefilin with a number of patients, visitors and doctors. Finally, towards the end of the day, he presented himself to the admissions nurse. Well known and deeply beloved and respected by the staff at Beth Israel, he was treated like a VIP every step of the way.

Prior to the operation, the family met the surgeon, Dr. Donald Brief, Chief Surgeon of Newark Beth Israel. He and my father had been very good friends and professional colleagues for many years. Dr. Brief advised us to hope for a long drawn out surgery. "The longer the procedure, the greater the indication that things are going well," he told us. A quick operation would suggest that the disease was inoperable.

Unfortunately, the procedure was very short, and it wasn't long before Dr. Brief emerged from the operating theatre. He shook his head as his eyes welled up with tears. "I am sorry. I am just so, so sorry."

The tumor was inoperable. Chemotherapy and radiation would be tried, but there was little hope for success.

The entire medical team joined my family in the recovery room. Dr. Brief turned to my father and said very softly: "Sholom, I am so very sorry. If there is anything I can do – anything at all – to help you through these trying days, please ask it of me. I am here for you."

My father looked up, and in a very calm and measured tone of voice, said to Dr. Brief, "If you really want to do something to help me, I have been asking you for about twenty-five years to put on Tefilin. You have consistently declined. If you are serious and truly wish to help me, I will ask my son to put on the Tefilin with you in my merit."

With tears streaming down his cheeks, Dr. Brief said, "Of course I will put on Tefilin, my dear friend, Sholom." With the tears continuing to flow, he performed the mitzvah.

• • •

Even after hearing about the terrible prognosis, and the slow but steady decline in his health, my father faithfully continued serving as the hospital chaplain for two area hospitals, Newark Beth Israel Hospital and S. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston. He visited these hospitals almost every day, making the most of his opportunity to assist and comfort the patients, and to help them connect with Torah and Mitzvos.

Due to his illness, there were times that my father was a hospital patient as well. One time, my father asked my brother to bring something to the hospital for him. It was already late at night, and when my brother arrived, the security guard refused entry, citing hospital policy. My brother directs Chabad of the Valley (California), and this position brings him into contact with famous political leaders. So, my brother began producing pictures of himself with the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of California, but the guard remained unimpressed.

Eventually, my brother named the patient he was trying to gain access to: Rabbi Sholom Gordon. All of a sudden, the guard's demeanour changed completely. The guard said, "Rabbi Gordon? You came to deliver something for Rabbi Gordon? Of course, you can come in – you can come in 24 hours a day! You see, when Rabbi Gordon comes to the hospital every day to make his rounds, he always notices me. He always greets me with a 'Good morning' when he arrives, and a 'Good evening' when he leaves".

My father's simple and sincere gesture went a long way in touching this security guard.

Upcoming Farbrengens:

Tuesday evening, 22 Shevat 5772, 14th February 2012, at 10:00pm.

Thursday evening, Rosh Chodesh Adar 5772, 23rd February 2012, at 10:00pm.

Sunday evening, 2 Nissan 5772, 25th March 2012, at 10:00pm.

CGI MELBOURNE 5772.



CGI Melbourne is a fortnight-long summer camp organized by Chabad Youth. The comprehensive camp program is designed to imbue the campers with a

deep sense of pride in their Jewish heritage, through exciting activities, stories, songs, discussions, games and contests.

CGI Melbourne is staffed by the Shluchim and students of the Rabbinical College, who serve as counsellors and learning teachers, or function in other camp roles. Our Shluchim and students are great role models as they warmly care for each individual child, ensuring a rich and wholesome experience replete with fun, friendship and meaningful educational experiences.



Yud Shevat at Yeshivah Gedolah



The 10th of Shevat is the *Yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn (1880-1950), the sixth Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, who settled in New York after enduring Stalinist imprisonment in 1927, as well as the horrors of war-torn Europe. On the same day exactly one year later, at a gathering of Chassidim marking the first *Yahrtzeit* of the previous Rebbe, the Rebbe delivered a Chassidic discourse entitled *Basi L'Gani* ("I Came into My Garden"), effectively signifying his formal acceptance of the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch.



In order to mark this special day, the Shluchim at the Rabbinical College launched a *Mivtzah* (campaign) designed to encourage the students in their preparations for this special day. The *Mivtzah* was coordinated by Shliach Shmuel Slonim and Shliach Mendy Lieberman.



For an entire month, the Yeshivah was gripped with an inspiring and electric atmosphere, as the students strove to further enhance all areas of their daily conduct. The students participated in a variety of ways, such as attending optional Shiurim, filling out a daily *Duch* (report), and making and keeping a personal *Hachlata* (resolution). Additionally, many of the students learned and memorized *Basi L'Gani*, and the entire student body gathered together to hear, learn and review the Rebbe's talks of Yud Shevat 5735 (1975).



The month-long campaign concluded with an exhilarating *Farbrengen* (Chassidic gathering), the theme of which was *Hiskashrus* – maintaining our bond with the Rebbe. The evening concluded with a number of raffles. The grand-prize winner was Levi Gutnick, who was selected to travel and represent the Yeshivah on Yud Shevat, at Lubavitch World Headquarters in Crown Heights (New York, USA).

Update: Rambam 7:40

This year's "Rambam 7:40" builds on the remarkable success of previous years. "Rambam 7:40" offers first rate incentives including daily refreshments, a fortnightly sushi lunch, a monthly raffle, and weekly and monthly raffles with prizes pegged to the amount of attendees. Attendees also receive a free copy of the weekly "Chayenu" publication (a weekly Torah magazine for the English speaker). This past week, close to 20 students successfully completed one month of Rambam, and celebrated their achievement with a special Shiur and barbecue held at the Joseph residence.

“Rambam 7:40” is partly sponsored by Dovi Lesches (Brooklyn, NY) in memory of his grandparents, Moshe ben Yeshayahu and Chana Leah bas Yeshavahu.

For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Shliach Shmuel Slonim (0452-388-770) or the Rabbinical College office.



Several years ago, the “Rambam 7:40” club was founded by Shluchim of the Yeshivah Gedolah of Melbourne, in order to encourage Yeshivah students to learn the daily quota of Mishneh Torah (Maimonides' Code of Jewish law), as per the Rebbe's instructions. A daily Shiur is delivered by one of the Shluchim during the daily dinner break, at 7:40pm.

Postcard from Kinshasa, Congo



Moshe Rudd (far left in the picture to the right) is an alumnus of the Rabbinical College of Australia & NZ, 5771 (2011). He is currently learning at the Yeshivah of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In this letter, Moshe shares his current experiences with us, and the indelible impression that YG has had on him.



Study partners at the Yeshivah of DRC.



Farbrengen at the Yeshivah of DRC.

Attention Alumni

Do you have a YG experience or photos that you would like to share with our readers? Please contact us!



Dear rabbis and fellow alumni,

I am part of a group of nine Shluchim in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Together, we form the nucleus of the local Yeshivah recently established by Chabad of Central Africa, under the leadership of Rabbi Shlomo Bentolila.

The Yeshivah plays a pivotal role in Jewish life here in Kinshasa (capital of DRC). The Jewish community is mainly comprised of Jewish expatriates based temporarily in Kinshasa. Most of them are attracted to the area for business reasons, and a few of them are stationed with the various embassies.

Until recently, none of these Jews came to Shule during the week, because the prospect of a Minyan was not guaranteed. This has changed with the establishment of our Yeshivah, and there is now a Minyan three times a day. Between Mincha and Maariv, some of the attendees avail themselves of the opportunity to learn with us.

Some of these businessmen have a Yeshivah background, and are more than happy to delve into advanced subjects, such as our Shiur in Minchas Chinuch. Others learn with us such basics as Aleph-Beis, how to read Hebrew, and how to daven. Imagine, a group of adult men who have left their families and homes solely to make money in a foreign land, and in their free time they stop by to learn Aleph Beis with us!

Having a group of these people join us for Shabbos davening and a "Farbrengen" is really special! We even made a Seudah for Yud-Tes Kislev at the yeshiva, and about fifteen people came because they heard that there was a local Yeshivah, and they were curious to see what it was all about.

Our Shlichus in Africa even affects the non-Jewish locals, just by walking in the streets. Throughout the week, a local drives us around from place to place. Of course, on Shabbos we walk to shul, and the whole street literally stops to stare at the group of "Rabbis" decked out in hats and jackets. However, the staring is not negative; the locals have great respect for Jewish people. Often, they wave, the police salute, and you hear them saying "Juif!" – the French word for Jew. They are happy to see us in their part of the world, and this gives us the great opportunity to be a Dugmah Chaya (living example) and making a real Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of Hashem's name).

For Chanukah, we split up into pairs, in order to travel around Central Africa for Mivtzoyim (Jewish outreach). My study partner and I went to Nairobi,

Kenya. Sadly, we were told that about 95% of the community were away due to the "December holidays". We spent most of our time at the various shopping centres looking for anyone that could have been Jewish. After some effort, we found six Israelis sitting together for lunch, and we gave them Menorahs. At one point, someone directed us to an Israeli cafe manager far away at the other end of town. It took us over an hour to get there. When he realized that we came just to visit him, he was very touched. He took a Menorah and was very thankful.

With Chanuka behind us, and several more weeks until Purim, it is really an opportune time to focus on learning. Our group resolved to learn two hundred Maamarim (Chassidic discourses) in honour of the 7th of Adar. On a personal level, I committed to learning eight Mishnayos a day, as well as learning "Ayin Beis" with my brother over the internet.

My experiences last year at Melbourne's Yeshivah Gedolah continue to guide me in my current studies. One of the most important things I picked up at YG was that successful learning requires disciplined restraint. Just as one can't eat a full plate of food all at once, but must eat it in measured bites, so too, one can't digest all there is to learn at once. Learning will not be successful if it is crammed and not properly thought out. Also, one can't have a good day of learning after waking up late, or davening and eating too quickly. Everything must have its set time, and every goal needs to be worked at a steady and measured pace.

This is actually a lesson for anything in life: Whatever needs to be accomplished, in whatever area of life – make a plan, use the time wisely, make sure there is time and attention for every detail, and don't try to swallow the whole plate at once!

There are other ways in which my experiences last year continue to affect me. I am currently learning Masechta Chagiga, which I was inspired to do by the fond memories I have of Levi Brown and Moshe Winner learning this Masechta last year. I've even dreamt of the Shluchim demanding further improvement! Clearly, YG has had a lasting impact upon me.

Being that my birthday is on 14 Teves, I wish to conclude this letter by wishing you all success in all of your aspirations, and all in good health.

Best regards,

Moshe Rudd

The electronic version of this newsletter (including more information and pictures) is available at:
www.RabbinicalCollege.edu.au/YGconnection

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