

Alumni Reflections

Impact of Limud HaTorah

Torah Education: Classic and Contemporary

By: Rabbi Eliezer Lefkowitz

Then



Now



Fifteen years ago, the Twin Cities underwent a monumental change; a change that went completely unnoticed by all but the Jewish community of St. Louis Park. Led by their Rav, the people decided that they wanted to bring a kollel to their town, so that this select group of individuals would ensure that Torah would have a permanent home in their midst. As the community took on this huge task with its host of challenges, I'm sure there were a number of people who began to ask: Is it really worth it? Do we really need to expend so much effort for this?

Today, I'm sure they are asking a different question: How could we have ever had a community without a kollel?

The impact that Torah has on everyone it touches is immeasurable. At one of the first Kollel dinners, Rabbi Yissachar Frand was invited to speak. He knew that for many in the audience, this would be the first exposure to Torah Judaism. He spoke of the gemara in Berachos which describes the changes in Bavel (Babylonia) after Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya replaced Rabbi Gamliel at the helm of the central Yeshiva. During the latter's tenure, only those students with impeccable character traits were admitted, but Rabbi Elazar allowed all to enter. When Rabbi Gamliel saw how many new students enrolled, he felt bad. The question is that Rabbi Gamliel was certainly aware that his policy kept the Yeshiva small, yet he believed that this was the proper approach. What saddened him now?

Rabbi Frand answered that it is true that Rabbi Gamliel only wanted the best. But what he now witnessed was that even average students were transformed after they began to study Torah! He now understood that had he given them the chance to learn, their lives would have been changed dramatically.

In this generation alone, we have witnessed fundamental changes in society, not the least of which is how technology has changed the way we behave. Already, many schools (even elementary schools) have done away with old fashioned textbooks; students must have a tablet of sorts on which all their material is available. Homework is recorded on video, assignments are emailed, and lessons are skyped.

Indeed, contemporary education bears little resemblance to the learning institutions of yore. In today's day and age, would any medical student dream of dusting off an old tome to learn about the nervous system?

But there is one subject that has withstood the winds of change. Your son or daughter attending Torah Academy this year can walk over to the shelf and take down a Chumash, the very same one their parents used decades (depending on your age) before. The Gemara might have been republished with a clearer print and fancier cover, but the words never change. The reason? Simple. The Torah is from Hashem, and He does not age.

Yes, the Torah is eternal, and its lessons never age. We are learning the very same traditions and teachings that Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya imbued his students with, and we can reap the same benefits.

But I believe that in order to be transformed by the Torah's holy words, there is one caveat. We must realize that it cannot be approached like any other subject; it is of another world entirely.

Then, and only then, can the Torah enter our minds and souls, just as it has since the beginning of time.

Have a good Shabbos!





**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Chaim Simcha Gibber,**
Rosh Kollel

**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Menachem Frank,**
Rosh Kollel, 2005-2011

**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Eliyahu Stern,**
Rosh Kollel, 2011-2015

Rabbi & Mrs. Shmaryahu Abramczyk
Rabbi & Mrs. Avrohom Berzansky
Rabbi & Mrs. Nussie Bitterman
Rabbi & Mrs. Levi Botnick
Rabbi & Mrs. Aryeh Cohen
Rabbi & Mrs. Adam Crystal
Rabbi & Mrs. Yisroel Meir Ebstein
Rabbi & Mrs. Hillel Engelson
Rabbi & Mrs. Pinchos Friedlander
Rabbi & Mrs. Chaim Tzvi Friedler
Rabbi & Mrs. Aryeh Geretz
Rabbi & Mrs. Avigdor Goldberger
Rabbi & Mrs. Yechezkel Greenberg
Rabbi & Mrs. Yaakov Yosef Hutman
Rabbi & Mrs. Ari Kahan
Rabbi & Mrs. Mordechai Kalatsky
Rabbi & Mrs. Moshe Koval

**Rabbi & Mrs.
Eliezer Lefkowitz**

Rabbi & Mrs. Tzvi Lichtman
Rabbi and Mrs. Yaakov Eliyahu Mandelbaum
Rabbi & Mrs. Avromi Mayer
Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem Mendel Pam
Rabbi & Mrs. Shloime Rothstein
Rabbi & Mrs. Zecharya Rubin
Rabbi & Mrs. Yochanan Schnall
Rabbi & Mrs. Avner Sela
Rabbi & Mrs. Dovid Silverberg
Rabbi and Mrs. Yakov Ephraim Skolnick
Rabbi & Mrs. Moshe Weinreb

**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Moshe Twia Lieff,**
Miyased HaKollel



MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY
KOLLEL

Alumni Profile

Rabbi and Mrs. Eliezer Lefkowitz
Members of the Kollel: 2000-2005



L to R: Dovid, Chezky and Menachem Manis

Personal Reflection

Although we left Minneapolis over a decade ago, the five years we spent there taught us the value of community and friendship. We met Jews from the greater Twin Cities area who showed us that the pintelevid is waiting to be reignited. We know that although we may not see the impact of our actions - perseverance, warmth, and acceptance can ultimately alter the course of one's life. We always (well, usually) say Good Shabbos to strangers on the street, even if we get funny looks. And if the Weinbergs invite us back for a fishing trip (not ice fishing, please), we would be delighted to come.

Highlights

- The Lefkowitz's have eight children ka'h, ranging from 5 years of age to 18.
- Rabbi Lefkowitz is a rebbe at Yeshiva Gedola of South Monsey, and teaches at Bais Yaakov of Passaic. He also is a writer for the Kleinman Holocaust Education Center.
- Mrs. Lefkowitz works as payroll administrator for the Town of Ramapo.

Keep in touch with the Lefkowitz Family!

Home

H- 845.352.2288
136 Rock Hill Rd
Spring Valley, NY 10977

Rabbi

C- 845.300.1941
elefko@outlook.com

Mrs.

C- 845.825.7178