

Some Words from the Rosh Yeshiva

The Rabbinic enactment of Chanukah – according to the Talmudic account (Shabbos 21b) – did not take place immediately after the victory over the Hellenist Greeks and the miracle of the Menorah’s flames burning for eight days. Instead, the Talmud relates, it was only after one year had passed that Chanukah’s observance was decreed.

By contrast, it is clear that the celebration of Purim involved no such delay; the verses in the Megillah (Esther 9:16-18) explicitly declare that the day following the Jews’ decisive triumph over their tormentors was celebrated with feasting and joy.

The difference is not hard to understand. In ancient Shushan, the Jews were threatened with annihilation; the downfall of Haman and the defeat of his empowered militias on the following thirteenth of Adar were critical to the very survival of the Jewish people. That these events would be worthy of celebration was – as we would say today – a “no-brainer”. In fact, several Rishonim (Ran, Megillah 1a, citing Ramban) infer from the wording of the Megillah verses that those initial celebrations were spontaneous; Rabbinic legislation was only needed to establish future years’ celebrations.

On the other hand, what problem did the Chanukah miracle solve? Because the oil of the Bais HaMikdash was defiled, there was a possibility that the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah would be suspended. Miraculously, the one small flask, which only contained enough oil for one night, lasted for eight nights. In other words, this miracle facilitated the performance of a Mitzvah. Now, to a religious Jew, every Mitzvah is precious. Yet, we could certainly appreciate some taking the position that ordaining an everlasting holiday for its celebration would be an over-reaction. (See Maharal, *Ner Mitzvah*, London edition, P. 22, where this issue is discussed.) It was only one year later, after much analysis and consideration, that Chanukah was deemed worthy of becoming a fixture of the Jewish calendar.

Why? What insight was achieved over the twelve months to justify and rationalize this decision? The Sfas Emes (Chanukah 5644) offers an intriguing insight:



The assumption that the miracle of the Menorah is the rationale for the Chanukah celebration may be an example of “putting the cart before the horse”. Chanukah, suggests the Sfas Emes, was not ordained to celebrate the Menorah miracle. Chanukah was ordained because the Sages determined that we needed to have the holiday of Chanukah. The Menorah miracle merely provided the opportunity and pretext for the ordinance. As we needed to have the holiday, even a seemingly inadequate justification would suffice.

But why did we need another holiday on the calendar?

Weren't the Biblically mandated holidays (Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot/Shemini Atzeret) sufficient?

To address this question, we must first ask another question: Why do we have holidays at all? Undoubtedly we are meant to serve the Ribono Shel Olam every day of the year. So why do we have exceptional days from time to time? The Sfas Emes explains that just like a person's body is supported by his legs, so the entire year is supported by the "pillars" of the Yomim Tovim. (The Sfas Emes utilizes a play on words here: Regalim (holidays)=Raglayim (legs)!) That is, the inspiration and enlightenment that we receive on each of the Yomim Tovim gives us the ability to sustain ourselves as Jews until the next Yom Tov; then we receive another "booster shot".

In earlier times, the Biblically mandated holidays were sufficient. But, as the times changed, our spiritual nutritional needs also changed. As greater darkness descended on the world, additional light was needed to dispel that darkness. That additional light could be provided by the holiday of Chanukah and its special Mitzvah of kindling the Menorah.

(Perhaps the following illustration will be helpful: If a person eats a balanced diet, he should be able to extract all the vitamins and minerals he needs from the food he eats. But, if he has an unusual need for extra nutrients or if his body is unusual in that its ability to absorb nutrients from food is compromised, he may need to take a vitamin/mineral supplement.)

But how could Hashem hint to the Jews of that time that such a Mitzvah would be advantageous? Very simply! Hashem orchestrated a Hellenist threat, a Maccabee victory, and a Temple miracle that would be best commemorated by instituting an eight-day Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah.

Did the Jews get the hint? **No.** You see, Hashem always "creates the cure before the illness" (Megillah 13b), and here as well Hashem brought about the pretext for Chanukah before the Jews could understand how desperately they would need that holiday. But it did not take long. By the time one year had passed, the Sages understood in hindsight what Hashem had done earlier. In that span of time the darkness of the world had become so opaque and dismal, it had become obvious that we needed that extra festival and accordingly it was ordained.



An Interview with Mr. Martin Romaris

When did you begin your teaching career? When was your first-year teaching at Darchei Torah?

Teacher career began in 2006, which was also my first year at Darchei Torah.

What inspired you to become an English teacher, and what did you enjoy most about your career?

I had an English teacher in high school who was amazing and she inspired me to consider making this a living. I also love reading and writing, so that helped shape my decision.

How did you engage your students, and what teaching methods did you find to be most effective?

I engage students by getting to know them as people and as learners. I challenge them with difficult ideas and (hopefully) get them to feel good about learning and accomplishments in the course and in developing their skills.

In what ways did teaching in Darchei differ from teaching in the public school system?

In sooooo many ways! First of all, teaching all boys means ALL ENERGY, ALL THE TIME.

I've had to navigate through that. Also, the culture is totally different and I have learned a lot about it and how the students at Darchei are more verbal learners and benefit from seeing things and speaking about them.

Tell us a story or two from your time at Darchei

I have always enjoyed learning Hebrew terms popular at Darchei and also love the Yiddish. I enjoy surprising the grade 9s I have every year by saying some of these terms, especially with the proper pronunciation.

Saying "Baruch Hashem" to kids at the right time and seeing their faces is always amusing.

If you had to sum-up your time at Darchei in one line, what would it be?

Good Shabbos!

What do you consider to be your greatest achievements during your career, and why are they important to you?

Getting students who hate English and some of these general studies courses to appreciate literature and the value in disciplined reading and writing. Also, getting students to respect recycling, and not just looking at me like some weirdo garbage picker (even though I am probably still referred to as the 'weirdo garbage picker.'

What do you think are the most pressing challenges facing high school education today, and how can they be addressed?

Attention spans are a real issue and concern. I think the limitations on smartphones and personal devices implemented by Yeshiva Darchei are really important and will have great consequences in the long term.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in education today, and how can they prepare for a successful career as an English teacher?

Have an open mind and be patient. Learn about your students, and learn from them.

Give me the top 3 Jewish Slang terms you have learned from Darchei.

Top 3 only?!

- Good SHABBOS (said Darchei style)
- Baruch Hashem
- Bal Taschis (DO NOT WASTE FOOD)
- I also really love randomly saying SHMURA MATZOS

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I love potato latkes. Also, if so many Jewish boys have such stomach issues with the dairy, why do they continue to pound milk and cheese?!

Thank you so much for your time and more importantly for all you have done for Darchei during your time here!

THANK YOU TZVI!

Alumni Spotlight: Eli Lipson (2013)

What years were you in Darchei?

2009-2013

Which Yeshiva's / Universities did you attend, How did your time in Darchei compare/prepare you for them?

I went to Toras Moshe for 1 year. When I first arrived in Yeshiva, I felt like boys from other yeshivas and other cities had skills that were better developed than mine. However, what I felt I really gained from Darchei was my Ahavas Torah and passion for Torah. So when I was given the opportunity to acquire those new skills, I was able to learn quickly and push myself to reach my potential.

After my time in Yeshiva I attended York University, where I got a Bachelor's degree in Psychology.

At the beginning, I had a hard time because I didn't have the best study skills. Similar to my experience in Yeshiva, I found that Darchei gave me a framework of how to problem solve, adjust, and find the positive even when going through a difficult time.

As well, during my time in university, I was fortunate to learn with Rabbi Breitowitz b'chavrusa almost daily. The Rosh Yeshiva had a tremendous impact on me during that time, where I often asked him hashkafic shailos, questions about dating, and he took an interest in my studies. After I graduated, I was accepted to Guelph University's Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology program, where I received a Master's in Clinical Psychology.

What are you doing now?

Currently, I work as a psychologist for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), teach a few English courses at Mesivta, and run a sourdough bakery. I am lucky to still be in touch with the Rosh Yeshiva, attending his weekly motzei Shabbos Mesilas Yesharim shiur, and I learn nightly with my grade 9 rebbe, Rabbi Stern.

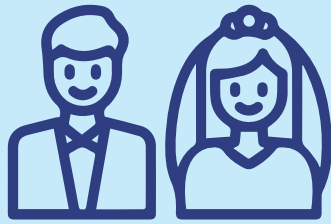
Any recommendations/advice for Alumni just beginning the post-yeshiva part of their lives, especially guys taking a similar path?

I found when I came back from Yeshiva, that it was very challenging to navigate this whole new system. For the first time, I wasn't in a school or program that formed a structure for my entire day. I also wasn't sure what each next step would be to continue along my career path. The best advice I can give is for you to reach out and speak to people. It seems like it's really hard or can be awkward to contact someone who you don't really know, but generally speaking, people are more than happy to help and will be more generous with their time than you can imagine.



All you have to do is ask.

Mazel Tov!



To the Newlyweds

Benjamin (2007) & Tamar Shahin

Noam Sonenberg (2018) & Mimi Skosowski

Rabbi & Rebbetzin Shmuel Katz on the recent marriage of their son Yitzchok to Faige Perlstein



To the Baby Girls

Mr. & Mrs. Reuven (2004) Menzelefsky

Aryeh (2017) & Hadar Hytman

Aryeh (2011) & Rebecca Spiegel

Eli (2017) & Miriam Bohbot



To the Baby Boys

Yehuda (2006) & Shoshana Zians



To the Bar & Batei Mitzvah

Rabbi & Mrs. Yitchok Czermak (Grade 9 Rebbe) on their son Eli's Bar Mitzvah

Elisha (2004) & Tamar Grunwald on their son Eyal's Bar Mitzvah

Shoutout to the graduating class of 2013 who raised almost **\$75,000** during last year's Day of Giving and won the dinner to Meron!



This year's campaign will be on **March 6th**, however, all donations made beginning today will be allocated to your class page.

Once again, the winning class will be rewarded with a dinner at Meron!

Donations can be made at www.darchei.ca or by calling Jeff at 416 782-7974 x 227

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