

The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel 25

# BNEI DAVID ELI

Pesach 5776 Bulletin Nisan 2016



“MAY WE SOON PLANT YOUR VINEYARD  
AND RETURN TO ZION WITH JOYFUL SINGING” (From the Pesach Haggada)  
BNEI DAVID INSTITUTIONS WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES A HAPPY AND KOSHER PESACH



## Fundraising continues for the mechina building

**T**he number of students at Bnei David's mechina continues to grow, and this year there are some 250 students in the first - and second-year programs.

Their Beit Midrash studies are currently being held in the dining hall, which is also becoming too small

for all the students. We are nearing the completion of the architectural planning for the new mechina building, and will soon be issuing a tender for a building contractor. The mechina building will have a central study hall, Beit Midrash and memorial room, classrooms of various sizes and

various auxiliary rooms. We have launched a fundraising campaign for this building and are grateful to all the parents and alumni who are helping us to advance this project. There are many dedication options for this building and we welcome your assistance. For details contact liors@bneidavid.org. ■

## Congratulations to Rabbi Sadan,

the dean of Bnei David Institutions, on being awarded the Israel Prize. Earlier this month Rabbi Sadan received a phone call from Israeli Minister of Education Naftali Bennett, who called to notify Rabbi Sadan that he had been chosen to receive this year's Israel Prize for Life's Work and Special Contribution to the State of Israel and Israeli Society.

Bennett said that Rabbi Sadan was a Zionist revolutionary who had spearheaded one of the greatest revolutions in Israeli society. Thanks to Rabbi Sadan, thousands of Israeli youth have had the privilege of meaningful IDF service.

“Rabbi Sadan has forged a bridge and a bond between religious and secular, the Torah and the army, the state institutions, Zionism and the settlement enterprise,” said Bennett. “Rabbi Sadan's life's work – the establishment of the religious and non-religious pre-army mechina programs – has borne a generation of soldiers who are as deeply dedicated to defending their country as they are to their Jewish heritage, and as such he deserves the Israel Prize not only this year, but every year.” ■

**Rabbi Sadan concluded the special night in the synagogue at Masada**

Page 2



**BNEI DAVID ELI**  
The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel

## ***“2000 years ago Jews stood here wrapped in tallis and tefillin and prayed exactly the way we are praying here today”***

With these words Rabbi Sadan concluded the special night hike that began on the second night of Chanukah in the city of Arad and finished the following morning in the synagogue at Masada.

At midnight all the mechina students gathered in Arad for a riveting lecture on the Great Revolt (66-73 C.E.) by the renowned story-teller Gershon Bar Kochba. This year Bnei David alumni were invited

to join the hike and many even brought their families to participate in this special event. On the hike to Masada Rabbi Sadan walked right alongside the students, who also included a few of his grandsons. At the foot of Masada they were all met by Gershon Bar Kochba, for another fascinating lecture about Jerusalem during the siege that preceded the destruction of the Second Temple. As dawn broke, the

students climbed Masada and entered the ancient synagogue for the morning service, with the special Hallel and additional prayers for Chanukah. Following the service, Rabbi Sadan spoke about the zealots who had defended Masada and the miracle of our return to this place in recent generations. All the ancient peoples have disappeared into the history books and the Jewish People is alive and thriving. ■

## **Preparing for the 5777 academic year**

Each week dozens of 12th-grade students visit Eli for several days to experience learning in Bnei David's Beit Midrash, have interviews with the educational staff and decide whether they want to enroll in the mechina program. Over 100 students have registered so far for the mechina and a few dozen students have registered for the Advanced Yeshiva. Over the next few months bonding

Shabbat programs will be held for the incoming students. The anticipated increased enrollment is beyond the capacity of the current dorm building and we are currently building an additional wing that will have 72 beds. We hope to complete the construction of this wing by the beginning of the next academic year, which will commence on 1 Elul, 5776 (4 September, 2016). We thank all our friends and loyal supporters in Israel and abroad who are helping make this dorm building a reality. ■



## ***Lifesaving equipment in the batei midrash***

Following the recent security incidents we decided to bolster our medical equipment for routine and emergency situations. Thanks



to our friends in Canada, we bought a portable defibrillator and the teaching and office staff received professional training on its use. Thanks to our friends in Panama, there is a fully equipped emergency medical kit in each of the batei midrash, locked in a special cabinet that will be accessible to medical personnel if necessary, but in the hope that it won't be needed. ■



## **Rabbi Sadan visits the community of Boca Raton, Florida**

On the Shabbat after Chanukah Rabbi Sadan was the guest of the congregation of Rabbi Efreim Goldberg in Boca Raton. Over the course of Shabbat Rabbi Sadan spoke with the community's educators, gave shiurim and held study sessions with the Sephardi and Ashkenazi minyans on the topic of Joseph and his brothers.

Before the mincha service Rabbi Sadan gave a shiur on Israel's wars – miracles or military might – and at Seuda Shlishit he answered questions on religion and state in Israel. On Saturday evening Rabbi Sadan participated in a special memorial evening



marking 30 days since the murder of Ezra Schwartz HY"D. The speakers at this event included a friend of Ezra's, who is a member of the Boca Raton community and was sitting beside him when the terrorist attacked. The Israeli consul in Florida also spoke, as did Rabbi Sadan, who explained about Kiddush Hashem – sacrificing one's life for the sanctification of God's name – in our generation. ■





## ***Bnei David from a different angle***

As part of our planning and fundraising for the new mechina building, we launched a camera-equipped drone into the air over the Bnei David campus, to take pictures of the campus-under-construction. The drone circled a few times and took some amazing pictures at many different angles. We invite you to view the photos on our website. ■



## ***A great miracle happened in Eli Roi Harel chases terrorists out of his home***

**Early one morning in February two terrorists infiltrated the HaYovel neighborhood of Eli and waited for Roi Harel, a Bnei David alumnus from the class of 1999. He was about to leave for reserve duty as a company commander.**

As he opened the door of his house, the terrorists pushed him back inside and began stabbing and beating him, while shoving him toward the bedrooms where his wife and

five children were sleeping. Roi fought off the terrorists and managed to oust them from his house and lock the door. The first response team and IDF forces chased after the terrorists and killed them. Roi was taken to the hospital with injuries to his face and head, but was released that same day and held a thanksgiving meal in his home to celebrate the great miracle with his friends, family, neighbors and Rabbi Sadan. ■

## ***Serving in the IDF from & with a Torah perspective - the Advanced Yeshiva***

A "sending off" party was held in March at the Advanced Yeshiva for the students who joined the army at the end of the month. The students spoke about their personal growth through their pre-army yeshiva studies and the rabbis gave the students their blessings

for success. Rabbi Sadan also attended the party and gave the students his blessing. After the festive meal there was joyous singing and dancing. We wish all the new recruits safe and meaningful IDF service and look forward to welcoming them back to the Beit Midrash. ■



## ***Who are you, religious Zionism? Answers from right and left***

In light of the current challenges and the many topics in the public discourse, Rabbi Sadan wrote the booklet, "Who are You, Religious Zionism?" In this booklet Rabbi Sadan addresses a wide variety of issues, such as unwarranted love, religion in the IDF, the intervention of rabbis in IDF orders, and the army as an educator or a provider of culture. The booklet was distributed in tens of thousands of copies and was translated into English for our friends overseas. It can be downloaded from the Bnei David website. ■

### **Who are you religious Zionism? Answers from right and left**



Rabbi Eli Sadan



## The Jordan Valley branch of Bnei David



The new Beit Midrash has been completed, as well as the landscaping and garden- ing throughout the small campus. Shortly after Chanukah the new Beit Midrash was dedicated in a special ceremony attended by local and Bnei David rabbis. The rabbi of Ma'ale Ephraim, Rabbi Menachem Glitzenstein, said he looked forward to the day when the new building would be too small for the growing number of students. In the meantime it is a spacious and comfortable place for the students to learn in the special serene atmosphere of the surrounding community.

Welcoming next year's students – Throughout the winter months, dozens of 12th-grade students came to visit the Jordan Valley branch and so far nearly 20 students have enrolled for next year's mechina program there, and many more students are visiting to gain an impression and consider enrolling.

Midreshet Danielli preparing for next year – The first group of young women has been learning enthusiastically in this new program, and has

also visited many places in search of the one best suited for their national civilian service next year. Most of the young women have already decided where they are going to serve.

Over the winter months the students studied a variety of subjects and met with the local women for special evening events. There have also been interesting field trips, volunteer activities and activities in memory of Danielli Sonnenfeld z"l. After Pesach the girls will add university entrance exam studies to their curriculum, and will take the exam in the summer.

Construction at the Midreshet Danielli campus has also been continuing. Pergolas have been built and the landscaping has been completed. The second-year class of students is beginning to take shape and nearly 40 young women have already enrolled. ■



## Purim at Bnei David

The students of all the various batei midrash at Bnei David celebrated Purim with singing and dancing. On the Sunday before Purim, two classes of mechina students went to Meir Hospital in Kfar Sava to bring some joy to the patients and give out Purim gift packages of goodies. ■

## Visitors at Bnei David



■ In February, Minister of Housing – **Maj. Gen. (res.) Yoav Galant** – and his bureau staff met with Rabbi Sadan and Rabbi Levinstein and afterward addressed the students. "After 2,000 years of living in exile and suffering persecutions and attempts to destroy us, culminating with the Holocaust, we are now able to defend ourselves," he said. "Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, said that the State of Israel's future depends on its might and its justification for being here – the ability to understand our right and the essence of our existence in this land." Galant explained to the students that it is their obligation to do their very best, for the army and for Israel.



■ Ministry of Education representatives visit Bnei David's Advanced Yeshiva – After years of providing financial support for Bnei David's Advanced Yeshiva programs, the branch of the Education Ministry that is in charge of budgeting for yeshiva students sent a delegation headed by **Mr. Amos Tziada**, who came to see the batei midrash in Eli and at Midreshet Danielli in Tapuach. We were very pleased to have the opportunity to show the delegation the success and growth of Bnei David in recent years, and to thank the representatives in person for their dedicated work in transferring the approved funds to Bnei David each month.



■ Game Theory at Bnei David – Nobel Prize Laureate **Prof. Yisrael (Robert) Aumann** visited Eli shortly before Purim and spoke with the students about game theory and the joy in our day-to-day lives as a Jewish state.



■ **Mr. Gideon Saar** presents his worldview – Immediately after Purim the former minister of education came to Eli and spoke to Bnei David's students, explaining his ideas on diplomacy, the economy and Israeli society. The hundreds of students who attended his lecture heard his proposals for solving the housing crisis and the rising cost of living and gained much from his explanations on how the elected officials are trying to overcome the many challenges facing this country.



■ **Mr. Chen Bar Yosef**, Bnei David alumnus – class of 1991, Managing Director of the Oil and Gas Authority at the Ministry of National Infrastructures, gave the students some insights into Israel's fossil fuel sources and the ongoing debate over the future of off-shore gas production in Israel.



■ Jewish youth from Chile visit Bnei David for Shabbat – **Rabbi Avi Horowitz** and 11th-grade students from his school in Santiago, the capital of Chile, shared an amazing Shabbat with the mechina students and met with the rabbis and teachers here in the special Shabbat atmosphere.



# The Freedom to Ask Questions

By Rabbi Eliezer Kashtiel

## You Shall Tell Your Child

One of the most central *mitzvot* of the *Seder* night is the commandment “You shall tell your child on that day” (*Shmot* 13:8). The phrasing of the *Haggada* and the customs surrounding the *Seder* night are all arranged around the children. “It will be when your child will ask you tomorrow: What is this?” (*Shmot* 13:14). From the customs to the story of the Exodus from Egypt, the *Seder* revolves around questioning. The focus of the evening is the children: We dip the *karpas* (the celery) and the *maror* (bitter herb), we pour the cups of wine, and we hand out sweets and nuts, all in order to prompt the children to ask questions. “Why is this night different from all other nights?” And if after all we’ve done to encourage their curiosity they don’t ask – then “You open [the subject] for them.” The duty to ask questions is even if there are no children; the husband asks the wife and the wife asks the husband, and even someone who is all alone at the *Seder* table – asks himself the questions.

The first and simplest advantage to be gained by gearing the *Seder* night to the children is the necessity for the parents to study themselves beforehand, in order to know the answers! Rav Tzadok HaCohen of Lublin, in his book, *Pri Tzaddik*, says that in order to fulfill the duty “to tell the story in your children’s ears and in your children’s children’s ears,” one must first learn in-depth and absorb the knowledge, before being able to teach others. Standing in front of the children places us in front of our lives: only if the story of the Exodus from Egypt is relevant to our lives, only if it excites and enlivens us – can we then succeed in passing that excitement and interest on to our children, “Teach it diligently to the children” – and through the obligation to do so the parents fulfill their own duty “to speak them (words of Torah).” However, beyond the importance of passing on this knowledge and these messages to the next generation – what is the importance of questions in this Festival of Freedom? It’s interesting to note that the first

step that *Am Yisrael* takes on its way to the Exodus also starts with a question. When G-d reveals Himself to Moshe at the burning bush, Moshe asks: “Why is the bush not consumed by the fire?” That is how it goes throughout the story of the Exodus from Egypt, Moshe raises pointed and probing questions: “Who am I to go to Pharaoh?”; “And I will tell them [*Am Yisrael*] the g-d of our fathers has sent me to you, they will ask me: what is his name? – What shall I tell them?”; “Why have you dealt unkindly with this people?”

## The Freedom to Ask

The world of questions represents the world of freedom. Someone who is depressed or frightened is not psychologically able to think up serious, profound questions. Freedom of thought is imprisoned by fear or depression. Absence of questions attests to the capitulation of a human being and the blocking of his sense of perception. A free human being utilizes his ability to think and with it the ability to ask questions. In Hebrew the word for human – אדם “adam” – is the numerical equivalent (45) מה “what.”

Inquisitiveness is an expression of the Divine Image in man, and the more inquisitive we become – the better. The study halls of Torah are full of questioning, curiosity, difficult questions from the Talmud and the early and later commentaries; there are questions of logic, emotional and societal queries – an entire, wondrous world of freedom. “Don’t read *’charut’* (engraved) but rather *’cheyrut’* (freedom), for there is no one as free as one who studies Torah” (*Bamidbar Raba*, *Naso*, 10).

## Nevoov – Vooven

The Gemara in *Tractate Shabbat* quotes Rav Chisda relating the miracles of the two tablets with the Ten Commandments: “*Mem* and *Samech* in the tablets were held in place miraculously”; “The writing on the tablets could be read from either side, in either direction: *nevoov-vooven*, *raheb-behar*, *saru-uras*”. Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook zt”l writes about the pair

of words: “*nevoov-vooven*” that “*nevoov*” means empty, hollow. At first glance hollowness and emptiness are negative things, but at further glance we can see that the empty, hollow space affords the possibility of filling it in with a new creation.

At times, the old generation must make room for the new generation to be able to grow and develop, with its own unique character and spirit. There is a parental instinct to wish to see the next generation as an exact copy and extension of the old. However, in order to facilitate the free expression of the new generation, for it to become what it was meant to be, it is necessary to make room for it, so that it can develop independently. “*Vooven* = *vo ven* (= *bo ben*)”, an emptiness that allows the son to appear.

G-d is true existence and fills the world. There is no real existence other than G-d. But if so – how is there a creation? How are we here? Here, too, the story is that G-d – so to speak – makes room for us, to be, to live, and even to have free will. It is as if G-d created an abstract emptiness that is filled with His creation. There is a place where the Divine Will creates a void that is then filled with our free will and free choice.

## The Question – Mutual Trust

Giving space to the other, to the children, to ask questions, is an expression of deep trust in the questioner. When the absolute moves aside it becomes susceptible to criticism, but also affords the opportunity to think things through anew while giving room to relate to new problems and challenges. We don’t always have the courage to give a time and place for questioning – but G-d has trust in us and gives us the Torah together with the ability to question.

When a parent gives a child the right to question, a special affinity is created. The first time we find a conversation between father and son is between Avraham and Yitzchak on the way to the *akeidah* (the binding of Yitzchak on Mt. Moriah). Yitzchak has questions for his

father: “He said – my father?” – are you indeed my father? Is there a relationship of intimacy and trust? “He said: I am here, my son. He (Yitzchak) said: Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a sacrifice?” And this series of questions and answers only deepens the ties between them: “The two went together” (*Breishit*, 22).

On the *Seder* night, the understanding that comes to us through G-d “making room” for us makes it possible for the son – “my first-born son *Yisrael*” to appear. *Binah*, understanding, means the ability to inquire and analyze, and in the end to realize new conclusions. *Binah* is from the word *ben* (son), and just as every son has a father, so too every new understanding has a preceding father source, a root from which it grew and developed. “Go children, listen to me, I will teach you reverence of G-d” (*Tehillim* 34:12). In order to really grow spiritually, the children must listen and learn from the parents, to grasp and understand the spiritual wisdom coming from the world of the parents and the preceding generations. Only by determinedly following the parents can the deeper, inner sense of spiritual listening fully develop and then real hearing comes, hearing the moral teachings of the parents, of preceding generations, of the true and loyal shepherds.

Close to the end of the *Seder* we appeal to Eliyahu the Prophet, to answer all the questions that have yet to find a solution. “*Tishbi* [Eliyahu] will explain questions and queries” (a popular rendition of the Aramaic word *teiku* that sometimes appears at the end of a Talmudic discussion without resolution). Eliyahu the Prophet is the source of hope for all those throughout the generations who have unanswered questions. He is the one who calls to us not to give up hope, not to despair of asking, because there’s a place for every question. Eliyahu אליהו in Hebrew is numerically equivalent to son בן (52). He allows room for the children to dare to ask, and he is the one that will come and “Return the hearts of the fathers to their sons and the sons to their fathers” (*Malachi* 3:24).





## The story of a vineyard

Manny Gertler, a Bnei David alumnus from the class of 1990, decided to dedicate a unique memorial to his two classmates, Lt. Ezra Asher z"l and Lt. Col. Emanuel Moreno z"l, who fell in Israel's wars. A few years ago Manny cleared a stony field near his home and planted a vineyard that has been worked over the years by volunteers from his class and other Bnei David classes, as well as students from other

yeshivas, relatives and friends. A memorial boulder was set up, with an inscription dedicating the vineyard to Manny's classmates, and a pergola was built for visitors. The vines grew and matured and last year the grapes were made into a delicious wine that is used at Bnei David on very special occasions. We wish Manny much success with the future of the vineyard and in all his endeavors. ■



## Bnei David alumni - forever connected to Bnei David



On the last day of Chanukah we held a full-day Bat Mitzva event for the daughters of all our alumni who were or will be celebrating their bat mitzva this year. We were very excited to see some 30 alumni with their daughters. The day was packed with activities, starting with father-daughter learning at Bnei David, followed by a visit to Midreshet Danielli in the community of Tapuach for a lecture-discussion with

Rabbanit Geula Nissim, lunch and a flower-arranging workshop, where the girls and their fathers made special bouquets for the mothers. The day ended with a tour for the wondrous stalactite cave near Tapuach and a shiur from Rabbi Yigal Levinstein. Similar bar and bat mitzva days will be held in the coming year, after Shavuot for the boys and on the last day of Chanukah for the girls. ■



### USA

**Bnei David-Eli C/O  
One Israel Fund,**  
445 Central Ave. Ste. 210  
Cedarhurst, NY 11556  
United States

### Canada

**The Mizrahi  
Organization of Canada  
Israel Resident Committee**  
**Remittance**  
296 Wilson Ave.  
North York, ONT. M3H 1S8

### England

**Friends of Bnei David**  
75 Maygrove Road  
West Hampstead  
London  
NW6 2EG

### Panama

**Friend of Bnei David**  
Ezra Cohen  
PH Mirage # 2  
Punta Paitilla  
Panama  
Rep of Panama

### Israel

**Bnei David- Eli,  
The Military Yeshiva  
Academy of Israel**  
Eli D.N. Ephraim 4482800, Israel  
info@bneidavid.org  
[www.bneidavid.org](http://www.bneidavid.org)

