

The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel

# BNEI DAVID ELI

BULLETIN Pesach 5770 - 2010



## Alon Prize awarded to the Mechina

The Palmach Generation Association awarded this year's Yigal Alon Prize for Outstanding Trailblazing Achievement to Israel's pre-army Mechina institutes. The awards ceremony was held at Palmach House in Tel Aviv on 17 Adar, 5770, (March 3, 2010) and commemorated 30 years since the death of Palmach commander Yigal Alon. Rabbi Eli Sadan, head and founder of the Bnei David Institutions accepted the prize jointly with Zeev Nativ, who founded the first non-religious Mechina in coordination with Rabbi Sadan. The emotionally charged ceremony was attended by Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Palmach veterans, the heads of the Mechinot and representatives of the students. The prize committee, which includes former IDF Col. Dani Matt and industrialist Steff Wertheimer, decided to grant this year's prize to the Mechinot for their achievements in instilling high school

graduates with a sense of mission and commitment to making a difference for the better during their army service. Defense Minister Ehud Barak praised the important role of the Mechinot in building the next generation of leadership for the IDF and the State of Israel.

"The Mechina students are following in the footsteps of the Hagana and IDF fighters who endangered their lives for the establishment of the State of Israel," said Barak.

The Alon Prize was also awarded to Gen. (res.) Amram Mitzna who is currently the mayor of Yerucham. Amram Mitzna as Head of Central Command in the late 1980s, was involved in the founding of Bnei David. In a chat with Mitzna at this event, Rabbi Sadan mentioned that four of the employees at Yerucham city hall are Bnei David alumni, who continue to contribute to Israeli society through key positions in the civil service. ■

« They were redeemed  
in Nisan and will be redeemed  
in Nisan in the future »

The future redemption of the Jewish People, whose first stages we are witnessing in our lifetime, depends on our faith and spirit. Our true freedom is gaining strength and clarity - from national independence devoid of spiritual content, to a freedom that is lighting the world with the richness of our spirit, the heritage of our forefathers that lives on in us.

We have much work ahead, but it is a labor of love, this striving for freedom by a people for whom freedom is the air that we breathe.

We wish all our friends  
and their families

## A HAPPY FESTIVAL OF FREEDOM

**Rabbi Eli Sadan,**  
the staff and students  
of Bnei David Institutions





## Shabbat in Bnei Brak

**The entire Mechina, students and rabbis, spent an extraordinary Shabbat a few weeks ago in Bnei Brak.**

The wonderful experience began on Friday afternoon when the students gathered at the home of the Gaon Rabbi Shmuel Vozner shlit" a, one of the great halachic deciders of our generation and author of the responsa Shevet HaLevi. The students had the honor of hearing the Rabbi's thoughts on current affairs and afterwards he blessed the students one by one.

They continued to the home of the oldest living Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman shlit" a, 98, who agreed to give an hour of his precious Friday afternoon to the students. He spoke to them about the value of Torah study and the importance of taking the best advantage of the opportunities in our lives. The group split into two because the room could not accommodate them all together. The Rabbi's appearance and his most modest apartment left an unforgettable impression. The Friday night prayers were held at the Vishnitzer



Beit Midrash together with hundreds of Hassidim. From there the students went to the Ruzhin yeshiva where they ate the Shabbat meals and slept in the dorms.

After the evening meal they went to hear a talk given by the Gaon Rabbi Kowalsky shlit" a, head of "Meorot Hadaf Hayomi". The Rabbi spoke on a scholarly halachic topic. In spite of the late hour the students all sat attentive, fascinated by the Rabbi's teaching. "He makes the gemara come alive!" said one student, excitedly.

Next, the students went to two customary

Friday evening "tish" gatherings of Hassidim with their Rebbe, for singing and more words of Torah. The first "tish" was with the Nadvorna Rebbe followed by a "tish" back at the Vishnitzer Beit Midrash.

From there, the students went to visit to the well-known Ponevezh Yeshiva. Although it was already past midnight, the yeshiva was full of boys learning and the mechina group had the opportunity to speak with them.

After the morning service and Shabbat meal, the group walked to the beit midrash of the Gaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlit" a, for a close encounter with the world of total devotion and commitment to Torah study.

During Seuda Shlishit they heard Rabbi Israel Dov Meir Shushan, a talented and moving storyteller. As soon as havdala was over a

big surprise awaited the students – a sumptuous Melava Malka sponsored by Israeli businessman Motti Zisser, who was the driving force behind the organization of this uplifting Shabbat, together with his son and loyal friends.

The Modzhitzer Rebbe arrived during the course of the meal, and after hearing his sweet words the group broke out in boisterous singing and dancing.

Even after all this, the Shabbat experience was not yet over... After receiving a special invitation from the Nadvorna Rebbe, the students returned to the hall underneath his home, where he spoke to them from his heart and they drank up his words like desert dew.

Tired and full of impressions, the students returned to Eli with much to think about, internalize and add to their spiritual growth. ■

## The gift of life

**The Blood Bank always knows that when there is a shortage of blood, Bnei David is here to help!**

Every three months the Blood Bank staff comes to Bnei David to hold a blood drive. The medical team sets up equipment in two classrooms, with folding beds and a registration table, and the work begins. Scores of students line up, wait patiently to fill out forms, lie down on the bed and donate a unit of blood. More than one hundred units of life-saving blood were donated at the last blood drive. This is another of the many contributions Bnei David students make to Israeli society. ■



## Sefer Torah in memory of Ariel



Three years after the death of our student Ariel Strigler, z"l, his family donated a Sefer Torah to the Beit Midrash in a joyous and uplifting ceremony. The procession was held in the pouring rain, which could not dampen our spirits. Afterward hundreds of guests participated in a festive meal and heard reminiscences of Ariel. May his memory be for a blessing. ■



## Bnei David Teacher Training students visit Retorno Drug Rehab Center

One of Bnei David's post-army yeshiva programs is a teacher training college, which currently has 50 students. As part of one of the courses, in recognizing irregular behavior in the heterogeneous classroom, the students visit various types of educational settings and hear a series of special lectures.

Two field trips earlier this year included visits to yeshiva high schools for teens with various learning disabilities: Ahavat Chaim in Kochav Hashachar, and Bnei Chayil in Jerusalem. Our students met with the yeshivas' principals, students and teaching staff, and observed classes.

Recently, the students visited Retorno, the International Jewish Center for Prevention and Treatment of Addictions. The students met with patients undergoing rehabilitation and with "graduates" of Retorno's programs. The patients talked about the therapies they receive and the faith that the staff has in their ability to build a better future for themselves. Bnei David's students also met with Retorno's director, Mr. Shmaryahu Chen, who led them in a "foundation workshop," which addresses a person's exposure to emotional pain and his search for simple solutions, such as addictions. The workshop then focuses on the fundamentals of managing feelings and speaking about pain as a way to solve problems and prevent the build-up of anger and frustration that lead to addiction.

This visit tour was an important stage in the emotional and character development of our graduates who are embarking on careers in education.



## Rabbi Sadan publishes commentary on the Pesach Haggadah

For many years, Rabbi Sadan has given special lectures prior to the Pesach vacation, preparing Bnei David's students for Seder night. This year, Rabbi Sadan edited these lectures for publication in a new and attractive edition of the Haggadah.

This new Haggadah features an introduction to Seder night, explaining the essence of the holiday and its mitzvot, a foreword by Rabbi Charlap and the Seder service, with Rabbi Sadan's commentary. In honor of the Haggadah's publication, Rabbi Sadan gave two 5-hour classes on preparing for the Seder and the Seder itself.

In his introduction to the Haggadah he writes: "Seder night is far more than a religious-cultural family get-together. Seder night is specially designed to pass on the Jewish faith from fathers to sons, and the main mitzvah of this evening, the telling of Haggadah, is a fulfillment of the Torah command, "you shall tell your son," – to pass on the tradition of emunah from fathers to sons.

This is why the prophet Elijah comes on this night, to bring parents and children closer together.

During the time of the Beit haMikdash,

every family would gather together for the Pesach sacrifice, and every household – every extended family – would come together as one whole group, because "the Pesach (sacrifice) is only eaten as a group." Thus began the custom of the holy nation of Israel is to celebrate Seder night together, with the family members.

In addition, this family ingathering is an expression of the deep, inner understanding of the essence of the Jewish family, which is:

### **Passing on the light of Israel's faith from generation to generation**

**The main focus of the family gathering is the Divine revelation on this night. On Seder night we express our complete faith in our redemption, and in Hashem's declaration that we are sons of kings, Hashem's children, who continue to fulfill our purpose in this world – to call on His name.**

*The Haggadah can be purchased at Bnei David, Tel. 02-9407888 & by email: [sale@bneidavid.org](mailto:sale@bneidavid.org) and Jewish bookstores.*





**F**ive days after the earthquake, Bnei David alumni Lieutenant Colonel Golan Vach and Magen David Adom paramedic Ilan Klein joined a delegation of 150 IDF rescue personnel and MDA medics from Israel who flew to Haiti's capital, Port au Prince. Using sophisticated rescue equipment and specially trained dogs, Golan helped rescue Haitians trapped under buildings, while Ilan worked tirelessly in the field hospital. The medical team treated thousands of injured and carried out hundreds of life-saving operations. During the first three days, it seemed as if there was no end to the chaos and disorganization.

"It was a terrible sight," says Ilan. "There were so many injured, it was impossible to keep up." Shabbat that week was different than any other, "between tumbled-down buildings and the injured all around, you stop all the tumult for a brief moment, light candles and welcome Shabbat. We thought of our homes and Shabbat services in Eli, and about our lives – the lives we have built, and which prepared us to take part in this humanitarian aid of historic proportions. The enormity of it all is inconceivable, especially when you are in the middle of a situation, treating patients and saving lives. The short break for Shabbat evening makes you try to understand this bewildering reality. That Shabbat evening in Haiti I stopped to think, to ponder what is truly important. A few



minutes later a woman in labor arrived in the reception area. All my thoughts stopped and I went back to work. Within minutes a healthy baby boy was born." Shortly after the Israeli delegation came home, Golan spoke to Bnei David's students about his efforts in Haiti to save lives. He described the amazing work of the IDF and the MDA teams, who set up the field hospital and

began operating within eight hours of landing in Haiti – a fully equipped modern hospital with all the departments and the best equipment in the world. While delegations from other countries were still getting themselves organized, the Israeli hospital was already treating dozens of patients.

"The most meaningful incident for me," said Golan, "happened on the last day of the rescue efforts. One of the directors of the makeshift encampments told me, 'I read the Bible a lot, and I admire you Jews.' I asked him why. 'You have managed to make a Garden of Eden in this world,' he

replied, 'and we need you. Without you we just can't.' "This illustrated for me how much the Jewish People and Israel, which is so small, can bring tremendous blessing to the entire world. During my prayers that day, I realized why we ask for normalization in Israel, for health, social justice and rain. I realized how much the whole world can benefit from the gifts of the Jewish People, when we are living normal lives in our land. Israel is like the heart among all the organs of the body." ■

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**USA**  
Bnei David-Eli C/O  
One Israel Fund,  
1175 West Broadway  
Suite 10, Hewlett  
NY 11557

**Canada**  
The Mizrachi  
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  
c/o Ezra Cohen,  
Torre Credicorp Bank  
Calle 50 Oficina 1702,  
Panama, Rep of Panama  
Tel. 392-5555

**Israel**  
Bnei David- Eli,  
The Military Yeshiva  
Academy of Israel  
Eli D.N. Ephraim 44828, Israel,  
info@bneidavid.org  
[www.bneidavid.org](http://www.bneidavid.org)

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## Graduates and freshmen

Our second-year students have completed their studies at Bnei David and most are preparing for their induction to the IDF before Pesach. Rabbi Eli Sadan and Rabbi Yigal Levinstein gave the students their blessings at a moving graduation ceremony. We wish them much success in their army service.

Over the winter months hundreds of high school seniors from all over Israel arrived at Bnei David to check out the Mechina and yeshiva programs. The students attended classes at the Mechina and yeshiva and were interviewed by the rabbis. Immediately after Purim the 150 students who were accepted for the coming academic year returned to Bnei David for three days to get to know one another and to meet and learn with the teaching staff at Mechina. They also went on a field trip to Lod, the Galilee and visited an army base.

We hope this long-weekend program created a strong foundation for next year's class. ■



## Building toward the dedication ceremony

We are happy to announce that the post-army yeshiva building is nearing completion. The dedication ceremony will be held on Lag Ba'Omer, 18 Iyar, 5770, May 2, 2010.

Guests at the ceremony will include public officials, rabbis, IDF officers, our honored donors from Israel and abroad, students and graduates. We still have not obtained the entire sum for the completion of the building but hope that by the time of the dedication we will have raised the remaining amount.

The foundation of the dormitory building's southern wing is now under construction. We are continuing to accept donations in honor of loved ones and hope to complete the building by Rosh Chodesh Elul, the beginning of the new academic year, to ensure that each student will have a comfortable bed by the beginning of the new year. ■