

# MHA/FYOS

Alumni and Friends



**Issue 28**

**Highlighting the  
graduating classes  
of 1991-1995**

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This issue is dedicated in loving memory of the school's 1991-1995 graduates who are no longer with us:

**Rabbi Yosi Eisen** (MHA '94, FYOS '97)

**Heather Samuels** (MHA '90, FYOS '94)

We also mourn with profound sadness the recent passing of alumnus

**Erwin Ostrow** (MHA '61)

Our sincerest condolences to his wife, Rose; brother, Max; and children, Jenny Herman, Erin Ostrow and Craig Ostrow.

May the memory of our departed alumni forever be a blessing.

MISSED AN ISSUE?

**ARCHIVES**

All previous issues of our alumni publication are now conveniently available at [mhafyos.org/alumni](http://mhafyos.org/alumni).

## COVER PHOTO



This photo of **Yoni Kutner** (MHA '88) rescuing a Torah scroll from the electrical fire that broke out in the Yeshiva wing on Jan. 23, 1991, ran in Memphis's daily newspaper, The Commercial Appeal.

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair

**Amara Levine-Reich** (MHA '94, FYOS '97), editor

Shoshana (Yaffe) Cenko, copy editor

Noam Davidovics, technology support

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## MESSAGE TO ALUMNI

Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

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Dear MHA/FYOS alumni and friends,



We are living in troubled times. The events of the past few weeks have blown a cloud over our heads. Israel is engaged in a battle for its life with Hamas. Many hostages remain in captivity. Anti-Semitism is on the rise all over the world. When, we wonder, will the

sun break through again? How will we emerge from this darkness?

I was very excited about this issue because it highlights the years that my sons **Michael** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) and **Josh** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) were in school. My research on the early 1990s in preparing this issue reminded me that those were also turbulent times filled with fear and anxiety for our people.

In 1991, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The U.S. sent troops to fight Iraq and liberate Kuwait from its hold. This war should not have involved Israel, yet it did. Since several of the Arab nations were allied with the U.S. in the fight, Iraq tried to pull Israel into the war, knowing that the U.S. would align with Israel and the Arab alliance would disintegrate.

Iraq began a campaign, shooting at least 42 Scud missiles into Israeli territory. At that time, there was no Iron Dome. Israelis retreated to their bomb shelters. The U.S. implored Israel not to retaliate, for fear of losing support of the other Arab countries. Israel was pressured to go against its principles. Israel sat in waiting while missiles were fired into the country every day and as Iraq hoped to provoke Israel to enter the war.

I remember watching on TV how the Scud missiles lit up the skies over our beloved homeland. While the missiles did significant damage to Israel's infrastructure, only two civilians were killed. It was a miracle from Hashem that thousands more were not killed by these missiles. But even one casualty is too many.

In January 1991 — the same month when Iraq started launching missiles into Israel — a fire destroyed much of the Yeshiva wing of our school (see cover photo and Flashbacks, page 53). Everyone's first reaction was to assume it was an act of anti-Semitism. I remember the fear and anxiety as we came to pick up our children, who were safely evacuated to the St. Louis Catholic School a couple of blocks down White Station Road. The fire department later informed us it was an electrical fire, but I will never forget the feelings of fear that our school had been attacked. For the rest of that school year, our high school boys attended classes in the elementary wing, often resembling a group of Gullivers in the land of the Lilliputians.

Also around this time, our brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union were forbidden to practice their Judaism. These trapped souls, known as Refuseniks, could not obtain visas to leave the USSR. The entire Jewish world, including our school, worked to create awareness of the plight of Soviet Jews. We held rallies and fundraisers and wrote letters to our elected officials. "Free Soviet Jewry" was the common battle cry. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Soviet Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev instituted a policy of "glasnost" (openness). For the first time, Jews were permitted to leave the USSR. Some went to Israel, others to Australia and Canada, and many came to America. Here

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## MESSAGE TO ALUMNI

Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

in Memphis, we welcomed two waves of “new Americans” to our community, in 1990 and 1991.

I remember going to the airport to greet our first wave of arrivals. They were exhausted and anxious, but we sang and danced and gave them a welcome that only Memphians could. Then the work began. These Jews had lived under communist rule for so long that the challenges of acculturating to the U.S. seemed nearly insurmountable. Our community came together and worked tirelessly to help our new members establish new lives here and learn about the meaning, privileges and responsibilities of freedom. It was a difficult time, but Memphis met the challenge — as it always does.

**Isaac Geller** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) arrived in Memphis shortly before his 13th birthday. Our community rallied to give him a bar mitzvah that I will never forget (see Flashbacks, pg. 52). Many women spent hours in the MHA kitchen preparing the *seudah* (festive meal), and the entire school was invited. Isaac barely spoke English, but he learned the *bracha* (blessing) in Hebrew to be called up to the Torah as a bar mitzvah and he executed it flawlessly. With musical accompaniment from our high school band, the whole community danced around Isaac and lifted him on a chair. There was not a dry eye in the house.

In 1994, when we thought things were calming down, our peaceful neighborhood was shattered by an anti-Semitic attack on three of our students — **Chaim Lubin** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), **Jon Wogan** (MHA '94) and Alex Katz. They were walking home on a Friday night when they were physically assaulted by two young men spouting anti-Semitic tropes. (Both perpetrators were apprehended and

brought to justice.) Jon and Alex sustained injuries that required hospitalization. This tragic event again shook our community to the core.

This historical perspective offers more than just a walk down memory lane. It's important to remember that our school, our community and the Jewish people have been through turbulent times before. This is not the first time we're experiencing such challenges, and sadly, this won't be the last. What distinguishes us as a people is how we accept and face adversity and how our faith gives us the strength to keep going. When I reflect on the period of 1991-1995, it gives me renewed strength that this too shall pass, that we as a people will do what needs to be done, and that our faith will carry us through these and all future turbulent times.

Our school and the Memphis community have certainly stepped up to show our support for our brothers and sisters in Israel. We have heightened our commitment to Torah learning and *davening* (prayers) in the merit of the hostages and the brave members of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). *Tehillim* (Psalms) are being recited daily. As highlighted in this issue (see Alumni Reunite, page 45), 70 FYOS students and faculty and 180 other Memphians traveled to Washington to be part of the landmark March for Israel on Nov. 14. Memphis Jewish Federation has [raised nearly \\$4 million locally](#) as part of a \$500 million emergency relief campaign from communities across North America.

Our alumni all over the world are working diligently to provide Israel with whatever help is needed. A number of MHA/FYOS alumni and former faculty are [serving in the IDF](#), and our thoughts and prayers are always with them. FYOS faculty member Rabbi **Dovid Safier** (MHA '00, FYOS '04) recently

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Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

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traveled to Israel for a two-day visit to give *chizuk* (strength) to our alumni studying and living there (see [Facebook](#) and Alumni Reunite, page 39). **Jon Wogan** visited Israel and [delivered thank you notes](#) made by MHA students to members of the IDF.



*An IDF soldier admiring the thank you cards made by students at the MHA.*



*Jon Wogan (center) in Israel with (from left) Yaakov Moshe Cowher (who was a Torah MiTzion bachur in Memphis in 1999 and happened to be the Wogans' cab driver on the way to delivering the thank you notes), former MHA/ FYOS faculty member Rabbi Yisroel Wende (in uniform), **Benjamin Siegel** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), control manager of the IDF air force base they visited, **Dovid Reuven Wogan** (MHA '19, FYOS '23) and **Rena Wogan** (MHA '18, FYOS '22).*

In our previous issue, we announced our intention to publish the inaugural “Road Less Traveled” feature in this issue to highlight alumni in the IDF. In light of the current circumstances, we have, of course, decided to delay that and will revisit the introduction of the feature in a later issue.

To our alumni and friends living in Israel and serving in the IDF, you may not get to read this right away, but we hope you'll always know that...



In the meantime, we are raising our voices, performing acts of kindness, doing *mitzvos* (good deeds) for the merit of Israel, and imploring Hashem to bring a lasting and just peace. May our voices rise in unison to Hashem, and may the lights of Chanukah illuminate the darkness of the past few weeks.

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair  
[joannekahane111@gmail.com](mailto:joannekahane111@gmail.com)



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Deena Davidovics

Dear MHA/FYOS alumni and friends:



The news of the situation in Israel — the horrific terrorist attacks of Oct. 7 and the ensuing war — and the barrage of headlines with concerns for rising anti-Semitism across the world are leading many of us to question: When will this end? When can we stop

worrying? When can we just be? What does it take to live at peace?

When these thoughts enter my mind, I think of our forefather Yaakov and the concept of “*bikeish Yaakov leshev b’shalva*” (Yaakov sought to settle down and live in peace). This follows multiple personal struggles for Yaakov and precedes the troubling story of Yosef.

In *Bereshit* (Genesis 37:1), the Torah says:

וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן.

*Now Jacob was settled in the land where his father had sojourned, the land of Canaan.*

The medieval commentator Rashi quotes a *midrash* in *Bereshit Raba* to explain the verse:

בראשית רבה פ"ד:ג אָמַר רַב אַחָא: בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהִצְדִּיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים בְּשִׁלְוָה וּמְבַקְשִׁים לֵישֵׁב בְּשִׁלְוָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הַשֵּׁטָן בָּא וּמְקַטְרֵג. אָמַר, לֹא דִיּוּן שֶׁהוּא מִתְקַן לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֲלֵא שֶׁהֵם מְבַקְשִׁים לֵישֵׁב בְּשִׁלְוָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, תִּדְעֵ לָךְ שֶׁהוּא כּוֹן, יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ עַל יְדֵי שֶׁבִקֵּשׁ לֵישֵׁב בְּשִׁלְוָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה נִדְדוּג לֹ שֶׁטְנוּ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף.

*Rav Acha said: When the righteous sit in tranquility and desire to sit in tranquility in this world, the*

*Satan comes and accuses, saying: “Is that which is set for (the righteous) in the World to Come not enough that they seek tranquility in this world?” Know that this is certainly the case. Our forefather Jacob sought to dwell in tranquility in this world, and Satan gave him the difficulty of Yosef.*

The *midrash* goes on to connect this to a verse in *Eyov* (Job 3:26) that references *shalva*:

לֹא שְׁלוֹתַי וְלֹא שְׁקֵטוֹתַי וְלֹא-נְחִיתִי וַיָּבֵא רָגֶז.

*I had no repose, no quiet, no rest, and trouble came.*

לֹא שְׁלוֹתַי מֵעֵשָׂו, וְלֹא שְׁקֵטוֹתַי מִלָּבָן, וְלֹא נְחִיתִי מִדִּינָהּ, וַיָּבֵא רָגֶז, בָּא עָלַי רָגֶזוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף.

*יְשִׁיב* refers to Yaakov having no repose from Esav; *שְׁקֵטוֹתַי* refers to having no quiet from Lavan; *נְחִיתִי* refers to no rest in the case of his daughter, Dina; and *וַיָּבֵא רָגֶז* refers to the trouble of Yosef.

What is so wrong with *tzadikim* (righteous people) wanting to live in peace in both this world and the next? Must the Jewish people always be unsettled and expect trouble at every turn?

Curious as well is the term *shalva*, which is used only a handful of times in *Tanach* (a few of which we’ve just seen). One of the most famous appearances is found in *Tehillim* (Psalms) 122:

יְהִי-שְׁלוֹם בְּחִילְךָ שְׁלוֹהַּ בְּאַרְמוֹתֶיךָ.

*May there be peace in your midst, tranquility in your fortresses.*

This verse is a prayer for peace in which we express a hope for both *shalom* and *shalva*. It’s a plea to

experience peace and tranquility in this world, not just in the next. It distinguishes between *shalom* (peace) and *shalva* (tranquility), and the distinction seems to be tied to location. So, where and when can we have *shalva*, and what does it entail?

We find another reference to *shalva* in *Yechezkel* (Ezekiel 16:49), in the context of Sodom:

הַנְּהִיָּה הָיָה עִן סֹדֵם אַחֲרָיִךְ גָּלוֹן  
שִׁבְעַת לֶחֶם וְשִׁלֹּת הַשֶּׁקֶט הָיָה לָהּ וְלִבְנוֹתֶיהָ יַד־עֵנִי וְאֲבִיוֹן  
לֹא הִחְזִיקָהּ.

*This was the sin of your sister, Sodom: arrogance. She and her daughters had plenty of bread and untroubled tranquility, yet she did not support the poor and the needy.*

*Shalva* is defined as tranquility, the property of being free from bother. In Sodom, they had peace, quiet and an abundance of resources, yet they could not be bothered to care about others.

This is the distinction in the pursuit of *shalva*, or tranquility. We may wish to be free from bothersome outside forces, but we can never allow ourselves to be so at peace that we forget about the needs of those less fortunate among us.

In this way, we can understand how, in the *Tehillim* reference above, we pray for *shalom* within our community and *shalva* in our fortresses. We hope to be free from invading outside forces and for this we pray for *shalva*, but within our midst, we want the kind of peace that comes only from caring for one another.

Yaakov sought to live in tranquility, but infighting among *b'nei Yisrael*, culminating in the sale of

Yosef, broke the peace. We only have *shalom* when brothers take care of each other.

The difference between the words *shalom* and *shalva* is only one letter. *Shalva* has a *hay* — a broken, divided Hebrew letter — while *shalom* has a *mem*, which completes the circle and forms the word *shalem*, whole. We can be free of worry looking out from the fortress walls on others, but within our community, we can only have *shalom* if we are *shalem*. This comes from caring for each other.

The book of Daniel (4:24) features another of Tanach's few references to *shalva*:

לְהִן מַלְכָּא מַלְכִּי יִשְׁפֹּר עֲלֶיךָ וְחִטָּאֲךָ בְּצַדִּיקָהּ פְּדִיק וְעֵוִיתֶךָ  
בְּמַחְנוּ עֲבִיוֹ הֵן תִּהְיֶה אַרְכָּה לְשִׁלְוֹתֶךָ.

*Therefore, O king, may my advice be acceptable to you: Redeem your sins by charity and your iniquities by generosity to the poor. Then, your tranquility may be extended.*

The keys to *shalva* in this world are *tzedakah* (charity), generosity and caring for the needs of our community.

My son **Rafi Davidovics** (MHA '22), a sophomore at the CYHSB, recently relayed an allegory at our Shabbos table that beautifully connects to this concept. There are many versions of this allegory, but the primary source is Reb Chaim Elchanan Tzadikov of Romshishok, Lithuania. He traveled from town to town in the 1800s, sharing words of Torah and inspiration, and often began his talks with this story:

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Deena Davidovics

"I was once privileged to get a glimpse of the world to come. First, I went to see purgatory (*gehenom*). The sight was horrifying: Row after row of tables were laden with platters of sumptuous food, yet the people seated around the tables were pale and emaciated, moaning in hunger. As I came closer, I understood their predicament.

Every person held a full spoon, but both arms were splinted with wooden slats so they could not bend either elbow to bring the food to their mouth. It broke my heart to hear the tortured groans of these poor people as they held their food so near but could not consume it.

Next, I went to visit heaven. I was surprised to see the same setting I had witnessed in *gehenom*: row after row of long tables laden with food. But in contrast, the people in Heaven were sitting contentedly talking with each other, obviously full from their sumptuous meal.

I was amazed to discover that here, too, each person had their arms splinted on wooden slats that prevented them from bending their elbows. How, then, did they manage to eat?

I watched a man pick up his spoon and dig into the dish before him. Then he stretched across the table and fed the person across from him! The recipient of this kindness thanked him and returned the favor by leaning across the table to feed his benefactor.

I suddenly understood. Punishment or reward in the World to Come offer the same circumstances and conditions. The critical difference is how people treat each other.

I ran back to *gehenom* to share this solution with the poor souls trapped there. I whispered in the ear of one starving man, 'You do not have to go hungry. Use your spoon to feed your neighbor, and he will surely return the favor and feed you.'

'You expect me to feed the detestable man sitting across the table?' said the man angrily. 'I would rather starve than give him the pleasure of eating!'

I then understood Hashem's wisdom in choosing who is worthy to go to heaven and who deserves eternal punishment."

This message is so poignant and timely when our fate seems to hang in the balance. Our favorable judgment and ultimate reward are directly proportionate to the kindness and generosity we extend to others. Caring for our fellow humans is part of the fabric of our being as individuals and as a people. *Tzedakah* is central to our lives as Torah Jews, on both an individual and communal basis.

If we return to Tehillim 122 (cited above) and read further beyond "May there be peace in your midst, tranquility in your fortresses," we find:

לְמַעַן אֶתִּי וְרַעֲי אֲדוֹבְרָה-נָא שְׁלוֹם בְּךָ.

*For the sake of my brothers and friends, I pray for your well-being.*

We pray for peace in our community and the tranquility that stems from being free of worry about outside forces disrupting our communal peace. This can only be achieved when we remember we are אֶתִּי וְרַעֲי — one family committed to caring for one another. The chapter ends:



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Deena Davidovics

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למען ביתה אלהינו אבקשה טוב לך.

*For the sake of the house of Hashem our G-d, I seek good for you.*

For the sake of our communal future and the continuity of our religious institutions, we pray for good — not just for ourselves but for each other. In sustaining each other as a community, we lay the groundwork for us all to experience peace and tranquility in this world.

In our prayer liturgy, we often connect the above Tehillim with the concluding line of another chapter of Tehillim (29:11):

ה' עד לעמו יתן ה' יברך את עמו בשלום.

*May Hashem grant strength to His people. May Hashem bless His people with peace.*

I am so thankful to be part of a community where caring for each other is a given. I am grateful that my children are receiving this education at the Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South. And I am hopeful we will soon have peace in Israel and for the Jewish people everywhere.

Deena Davidovics

*President, MHA/FYOS board of trustees*

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND ALUMNI CHAIR

Community Responses

We welcome your feedback on the alumni newsletter at [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org). Here are some of the responses we received to [Issue No. 27](#).

Thank you so much for the newsletter. It always brings back so many good memories from when I attended the MHA. I'm amazed at how the one year I spent there (1965-66) as an eighth grader affects me to this day in such a positive way.

-**Jan Starr** (MHA '66)

Well done! I was glad to see my trivia questions and memories made the final cut.

-**Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75)

Another outstanding edition! I, unfortunately, did not submit anything for this one, but it was great to see updates from members of my class. Thank you for your efforts.

-**Freddie Rabhan** (YOS '75)

Thank you so much for the wonderful and very special alumni newsletters. They serve as an incredible reminder of how confident, loved and educated I feel — by and because of the Memphis community, and particularly, the MHA/FYOS.

-**Dana (Chafetz) Berlin** (MHA '92, FYOS '96)

I enjoy these so much. Thanks again for this amazing newsletter! Remembering kindergarten teacher Mrs. Eva Loskove was so joyous.

-**Sarah (Katz) Tarkieltaub** (MHA '91, FYOS '95)

*Note from the editor and alumni chair:*

*As we were compiling this issue, we learned of the passing of Mrs. Loskove's husband, Marvin. We send our sincerest condolences to her and to their*

*children, **Rachelle (Loskove) Bernstein** (MHA '73), **Michael Loskove** (MHA '78, YOS '82) and **Debra (Loskove) Silverstein** (MHA '79, YOS '83). A recording of the funeral can be viewed online [here](#).*

Thank you so much for the Ricki's Cookies from the trivia contest and for such a wonderful newsletter.

-**Reuven Stein** (MHA '98, FYOS '02)

We are pleased to share that our daughter **Devorah (Sharon Wolff) Herbst** (YOS '80) has had her second book published! "Stormy Waters," a novel for teens, is now available for purchase on the [Menucha Publishers' website](#).

-Marcia and Bob Wolff

*Response from the editor and alumni chair:*

*Thank you for sharing this exciting news! We get such nachas from the achievements of our alumni. We hope our readers with teenage daughters will check out this wonderful new book.*



As I shared on Facebook, my family and I have decided to create a butterfly garden at the MHA/FYOS in memory of my sister **Heather Samuels** (MHA '90, FYOS '94), z'l, to celebrate her life. Heather was someone who fluttered into people's

life and spread happiness to all who knew her, especially children of all ages. She was a proud alumna of our school and loved by so many people in this community. Although bittersweet, this project warms my heart and feels appropriate for so many reasons. It's a wonderful way to honor Heather's memory, as she truly brought smiles to the faces of everyone lucky enough to have met her.

Contributions can be submitted via the school's website at [mhafyos.org/donate](http://mhafyos.org/donate), with a note in the comments to earmark the donation for Heather's butterfly garden. On behalf of my parents, Rabbi Yochanan and **Carol (Smith) Samuels** (MHA '60 and former faculty member); my sister, **Tova (Samuels) Marizan** (MHA '88, YOS '92); and our entire family, we greatly appreciate your support of this meaningful endeavor.

**-Ruth (Samuels) Wurzburg**  
(MHA '86, YOS '90 and MHA general studies principal)



*Response from the editor and alumni chair: We have such fond memories of Heather, z'l (pictured above), and agree a butterfly garden is a beautiful way to carry on her legacy. We encourage our readers to support this wonderful project and look forward to publishing photos of the butterfly garden in a future issue of the newsletter.*

**CORRECTION:**

*In the "Where Are They Now?" feature of issue 27, we inadvertently omitted **Rabbi Yitzchok Mitnick** (YOS '73). He returned his questionnaire well before the deadline, but his submission somehow got lost in our sea of emails and didn't make it into the issue. We are including his responses here and have added them to the version saved in the [website archives](#) so they are available for future reference. We sincerely apologize to Rabbi Mitnick for the omission and appreciate his understanding.*

**Rabbi Yitzchok Mitnick** (YOS '73), who came to Memphis as a dorm student from Brooklyn, New York, now lives in Lakewood, New Jersey. He is engaged in the writing, editing, and printing of *seforim* (Torah books) through the [Avodah Berurah Institute](#), which has a team of 26 colleagues and has published 41 volumes to date.

Rabbi Mitnick recently became a great-grandfather when his granddaughter gave birth to a baby girl in Israel. He sincerely hopes he can visit his great-grandchild very soon.

He implores FYOS students to spend a year or two after high school studying in Israel. "Don't make the same mistake I did," Rabbi Mitnick said. "You'll never regret going; you'll only regret not going."

He would love to hear from his classmates and friends at [rabbimitnick@gmail.com](mailto:rabbimitnick@gmail.com).

# TRIVIA ANSWERS

# 1971-1975

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Thanks to everyone who sent in responses to the trivia questions featured in our [27th issue](#).

The winner of our trivia contest from that issue is **Louis Chapman** (MHA '70, YOS '74), who correctly answered eight out of 11 questions.

The Chapmans' Chanukah celebration will be enhanced by a tin of goodies from [Ricki's Cookie Corner](#), owned and operated by **Ricki (Thomas) Krupp** (MHA '66, YOS '70).

*Below are the answers to the trivia questions from issue 27. How many did you know?*

1. The GMSG had students from the western, central and eastern regions of Tennessee in 1972. Besides our Memphis belles, who were the female high school students from Nashville and Chattanooga that year?  
ANSWER: **Tova (Therese Hochdorf) Yarmush** (YOS '73) from Chattanooga and **Rena Rozenberg** (MHA '70, YOS '74) from Nashville.
2. Who was the high school boys' dorm counselor in 1971-1972?  
ANSWER: Due to lack of consensus among two of our alumni, we accepted either Rabbi Ephraim Weingot or Perry Miller as correct.
3. What three-word mantra best typified the Torah learning motivation in the high school during this era?  
ANSWER: "Learn or burn."
4. French teacher Mr. André Suffren threatened to send students with poor conduct who disrupted class to which nearby town, which housed a mental institution?  
ANSWER: Boliver, Tennessee.
5. What kind of car did math and science teacher Mr. David Cotton drive to school?  
ANSWER: MG.
6. Which student from this era was famous for their inability to keep a secret?  
ANSWER: **Lorry Rubenstein** (YOS '72).

7. How many times did the boys' dorm catch fire between 1971 and 1974?

ANSWER: Twice.

8. In 1974, the school held a special celebration weekend to dedicate a new wing of the building. (It's since been used for special-purpose classrooms and instruction space for junior high and, later, elementary school.) For which beloved community member was this wing named?

ANSWER: Shifra Kutner, z'.

9. Who worked at the school's front desk during this era?

ANSWER: Mrs. Kathleen Wilson.

10. Which local caterer planned the school lunch menus, supervised the kitchen, and cooked for special events during this era?

ANSWER: Mrs. Shirley Bluestein, z'.

11. What happened to the tadpole aquarium in the back of the lab in Mr. Evan Purdue's biology class that caused a disturbance and made the rallying cry "Save the tadpoles" popular at our school?

ANSWER: Someone put detergent in the aquarium water. When it began bubbling over, students feared the water had to be changed at once in order to save the tadpoles.

## THANK YOU

We express our deepest appreciation to all those who gave of their time to help us publish this issue. First, thank you to the staff at the MHA/FYOS, most especially **Francie Schneider** (MHA '68, YOS '72), **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99), Amanda Davidson and Erica Stoltz. Second, thank you to the alumni and friends who assisted us by supplying photographs, identifying individuals in those pictures, and providing historical background, trivia questions and more, including **Judy (Yormark Mernick) Fruchthandler** (MHA '75, YOS '79), **Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz** (MHA '76, YOS '80), **Peninah (Fink) Salid** (MHA '82, YOS '85), **Anna (Fink) Kaminetzky** (MHA '84, YOS '88), **Sarah (Fink) Wachtel** (MHA '88, YOS '92), **Yedida Lubin** (MHA '91, FYOS '95), **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), **Chaim Lubin** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), **Yoni Frieden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00), **Isaac Graber** (MHA '10, FYOS '14), **Avi Katz** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Aidan Kahane** (MHA '19), Tova Graber, Devorah (Belsky) Pinkus, Adina (Belsky) Maryles, Miryam (Belsky) Biala, Tamar (Belsky) Sokol, Hanielle Sauer and Talya Tsuna.

# TRIVIA QUESTIONS

# 1991-1995

Regardless of when you graduated, have some fun with these trivia questions!

Send your answers to [joannekahane111@gmail.com](mailto:joannekahane111@gmail.com). The person who gets the most answers correct (or in the case of a tie, the earliest respondent) will win a tin of Ricki's Cookies, made by **Ricki (Thomas) Krupp** (MHA '66, YOS '70). Good luck!



1. Which alumna was in charge of the school's Moreh/Morah teacher resource center in this era?
2. During these years, our school had a gym teacher whose name sounded very similar to that of a popular beverage. What was her name?
3. Who served as the school's crossing guard during these years?
4. Which school rabbi during this era was an Eagle Scout, which came in very handy on camping trips?
5. Which alumnus from this period got a jump-start on his career by cooking breakfast each day for the CYHSB?
6. During this era, our school participated in the annual Math-a-thon benefiting which charity?
7. What did the letters TASCPT stand for in Mrs. Abby Johnson's English class assignments?
8. In 1993, the junior high put on a production of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (a) Who played the role of mischievous sprite Puck? (b) What unusual part of his costume was a source of great amusement for his fellow students? (c) Where did he obtain this piece of the costume?
9. (a) What play did the junior high perform in 1991? (b) Who played the character Time?

My daughter keeps a daily countdown to Chanukah. She announces every night at dinner and sometimes multiple times during the day, “There are X days until Chanukah.” That’s why I know that, as I write this, Chanukah begins in 39 days.

You may be thinking to yourself, “Wait, that’s the wrong holiday. We count toward Shavuot, not Chanukah. And don’t we count up, not down?” You are absolutely correct! But, I’d like to suggest that there may be a connection between Shavuot and Chanukah after all: On Shavuot, we celebrate the giving of the written Torah, while Chanukah is the festival celebrating the *Torah She’b’al Peh* — the Oral Tradition that has sustained us for so many years.

The Written Law is the Five Books of Moses, but what is the Oral Law? Presumably, it is everything else; anything not written explicitly in the *Chumash* is part of the Oral Law. Under this definition, Purim would also be a good candidate for celebrating the Oral Law, as it is a rabbinically declared holiday. However, when we imagine the Oral Law, we tend to think of the Talmud.

The Talmud comprises the Mishnah and the Gemara. Both began life as oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. They were only written down (the Mishnah circa 200 CE and the Babylonian Gemara approximately 300 years later) when circumstances prevented the proper transmission of these discussions. Under this definition, Purim, which is recorded in the Book of Esther, is more closely related to the Written Law than the Oral. Purim also has a dedicated tractate in the Mishnah. This is similarly true of rabbinically mandated fast

days. The only place within the traditional works of Oral Law where Chanukah is expounded upon is in the Babylonian Talmud. It is snuck into a few pages in the second chapter of Tractate Shabbat (pages 21a-24b).

The Kozhnutzer Maggid, in his book *Avodas Yisroel*, explains that there is no tractate of Mishnah dedicated to Chanukah because it wouldn’t be fitting. Kabbalistically, the Mishnah is the part of the Torah that is internal to the Jewish people. On Chanukah, the main *mitzvah* (commandment) is *pirsumei nisa* — publicizing the miracle of the oil by spreading the light. We set up lights outside to share this miracle with everyone, Jew and non-Jew alike. The discussion of Chanukah in the Talmud is based on *braitot*, which are external teachings. Chanukah is an external holiday and thus not included in the Mishnah, which is internal.

Even though it doesn’t have a dedicated tractate like Purim, Chanukah is mentioned from time to time in the Mishnah. To be exact, there are seven places when Chanukah appears in the Mishnah. Six of these references present Chanukah as a date of note in our calendar and a somewhat important holiday. We learn that it is forbidden to mourn on this day and that the holiday has a special Torah reading. Heralds are sent out to announce the new month of Kislev so the holiday can be observed properly, and the date marks the end of the season of the first fruits. We aren’t told about any *mitzvot* associated with the holiday, and we aren’t even told how long the holiday lasts. The final location where Chanukah is mentioned is in Baba Kama (6:6). It teaches that if an animal’s burden catches fire due to an encounter with a Chanukah lamp, the lamp owner is not liable

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## D'VAR TORAH

Yedida Lubin (MHA '91, FYOS '95)

to pay damages. From this we can deduce that Chanukah has a *mitzvah* of fire, which overrides regular rules of liability.

This way of learning about Chanukah, in fits and starts and through hints and by-the-way mentions, is a microcosm of the Oral Law itself. When Rav Yehuda HaNasi recorded the discussions of the Mishnah in writing, he was acutely aware that he was writing for posterity something that was meant to remain oral. In several places in the Talmud, we are told that the Torah has these two components — written and oral — and that they are meant to remain that way (Gittin 60b, Temurah 14b). This shaped the written version of the Oral Law that we have today. What is written in the Oral Law is often cryptic, and we learn the *halacha* (law) through hints and the instruction of a teacher.

An excellent teacher is crucial to the transmission of Torah. It's so fitting that this issue of the alumni newsletter highlights Rabbi Jay Salid. While I didn't have the opportunity to study Gemara with him, I will always remember the *Navi* (Prophets) that I learned from him. He truly made the text come alive. That is the mark of a gifted teacher — especially one entrusted with the transmission of Torah. Making Torah come alive so it is relevant to our current reality is an absolute necessity. Only when we see Torah as a living tradition do we devote all our efforts to understanding it and applying it to our lives.

In his book *Pachad Yitzchak* (*ma'amar 1, siman 5*), Rav Yitzchak Hutner explains that Chanukah is the holiday marking the triumph of *Torah She'b'al Peh*. He writes that the war with the Greeks was a

war against writing down that which was meant to remain oral. This is the true problem with translating the Torah into Greek. There is no translation without interpretation, and that interpretation was meant to be oral — or at least in the hands of trusted teachers of tradition.

The *Chashmonaim* (Hasmoneans) who fought the Greeks were a family of *kohanim* (priests). As such, their role was that of spiritual leaders and teachers. But they set aside their primary function and went to battle the Greeks, who were threatening the spiritual life of the Jews. As I write this from Jerusalem, we are currently in a war with Hamas. This war is not for our spiritual survival, but rather for our physical existence. I write this only days after a beloved local history teacher and *talmid chacham* (Torah scholar) was killed in his tank on Israel's northern border.

Each day, occurrences like these change my thoughts about the war. At first, there was shock, horror and disbelief that a tragedy of this magnitude could happen in the Jewish state. I moved on to looking for ways I could help in the war effort, even though neither I nor any of my loved ones are on the front lines. Now, after nearly a month of war, I have entered a state known in Israel as *shigrat cheirum* — routine of emergency. We are attempting to return to a routine despite the war. In this way, we support the home front by keeping up morale and displaying Israeli resilience.

My daughter may be counting down the days until Chanukah, but once Chanukah begins, we count up. This is the opinion of *Beit Hillel*; each night of Chanukah, we add another light. Because we



practice the maximal performance of the *mitzvah*, each person in each household lights Chanukah lamps according to the day of the holiday. In this way, we bring light to the darkness. I hope and pray that our Chanukah lamps can light our way through these dark times.

*Addendum: In the few short weeks since I wrote this piece, the war has hit much closer to home. My cousin, [Rose Lubin](#), was killed in a terror attack while working as a Border Police officer outside the Old City of Jerusalem. Then, only four days later, the principal of my son's high school, [Yossi Hershkovitz](#), was killed fighting in Gaza. May our learning of this Torah be in the merit of Rus Elisheva bat Chaim Dovid and Yosef Chaim Hershkovitz.*

**Yedida Lubin** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) lives in Jerusalem with her husband, Avi Rosenschein, and their two children. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree from the Hebrew University. She volunteers at the Jerusalem English Language Library for Youth, teaches a *Daf Yomi* (a page of Talmud a day) class at the Matan Women's Institute for Torah Studies, and is working on the creation of a family archive.





## ENGAGEMENTS/ WEDDINGS:

Mazel tov to:

Stacy and **Scott Vogel** (MHA '77) of Memphis on the Nov. 11 marriage of their daughter, Ashley, to Sam Teper in Memphis. The newlyweds live in Chicago.

**Raquel Kampf** (MHA '05, FYOS '09) on her engagement to Noam Yitzchaki. The wedding date remains uncertain, as the groom is currently serving in the Israel Defense Forces. Mazel tov also to the bride's parents, faculty members Cantor Ricky and Mrs. Anat Kampf.

**Yehudit Fleischhacker** (MHA '13, FYOS '17) on her engagement to Coby Lyons. The couple plans to get married March 12, 2024, in Netanya, Israel, and to continue living in the Holy Land. Mazel tov to the bride's parents, David and former MHA faculty member Chany Fleischhacker, now of Beit Shemesh, Israel.

**Rena Osdoba** (MHA '13, FYOS '17) on her engagement to Ben Katz. They plan to marry Aug. 29, 2024, in Westchester, New York, and will live in New York City. Mazel tov also to the mother of the bride, **Sandra (Loterstein)**

**Osdoba** (MHA '76, YOS '80) of Memphis.

## BIRTHS:

Mazel tov to:

Nancy and **Mordechai (Marty) Wolff** (MHA '80) of Brooklyn, New York, who recently welcomed two new grandchildren. On Oct. 18, baby girl Esther was born to Yaakov and Sorala Wolff of Lakewood, New Jersey. Mazel tov also to big sisters Ahuva and Shoshana. On Nov. 6, Shmully and Estee Fleisher, also of Lakewood, celebrated the birth of son Elisha Aryeh. Mazel tov to siblings Noam, Ezra and Nava.

Former faculty members Rabbi Jay and **Peninah (Fink) Solid** (MHA '82, YOS '85) of Hollywood, Florida, on the Nov. 5 arrival of granddaughter Yocheved Sarah, the first child of Devorah and Nate Boaz of Cleveland, Ohio. Mazel tov also to great-grandmother **Gerry (Margolin) Fink-Platsky** (MHA '59) of Jerusalem.

Elisheva and **Rabbi Simcha Mirvis** (MHA '85) of Moshav Sdeh Ilan, Israel, on the Sept. 19 birth of grandson Natan El Chai, making Sichi a big sister. Mazel tov to parents Leah and Nveh Tal of Tzfat,

Israel, and great-grandparents David and **Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis** (MHA '62) of Memphis.

Lindsey and **Mark Kaplan** (MHA '00) of St. Louis, Missouri, on the Sept. 8 birth of their son Ari.

Ashley and **Dovid Thomas** (MHA '00) of Miami, Florida, who became parents with the Oct. 16 arrival of son Aiden Lee. Mazel tov also to grandparents **Stuart** (MHA '75, YOS '79) and **Pam (Blotner) Thomas** (YOS '79) of Livingston, New Jersey.

Nina and **Rabbi Binyamin Ehrenkranz** (MHA '00, FYOS '04) of Orlando, Florida, on the Oct. 6 birth of daughter Ahuva Miriam, making Yehuda Simcha a big brother. Mazel tov also to grandparents **Bart** (YOS '77) and **Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz** (MHA '76, YOS '80) of Memphis.

Rashki and **Zac Kaplan** (MHA '01) of Memphis on the Nov. 14 birth of daughter Sophia. Mazel tov to siblings Sammy and Ellie and grandparents Jonathan and **Abbe (Seiger) Kaplan** (MHA '71), also of Memphis.

David and **Tamara (Freiden) Goodman** (MHA '03, FYOS '07) of Silver Spring, Maryland, on the

Oct. 31 birth of son Yisrael Roey. Mazel tov to big brothers Yaakov and Eitan and to grandparents Debbie Freiden and **Hugh (Freiden) Gordon** (MHA '72, YOS '76) of Memphis.

Mussie and Rabbi **Menachem Klein** (MHA '06) of Memphis on the Nov. 15 birth of son Avraham Mendel, making Benny a big brother.

Elana and **Yosef Gersten** (MHA '07, FYOS '11) of Dallas, Texas, on the Sept. 7 birth of son Binyamin Nota Tzvi, making Aryeh a big brother. His second name is a tribute to Rav Nota Greenblatt, z'l, who played a pivotal role in founding the MHA. Mazel tov also to grandparents and faculty members Rabbi Yonasan and Mrs. Sandy Gersten.

Diana and **Avi Thomas** (FYOS '11) of Miami, Florida, on the Nov. 10 birth of their first child, son Roie Oz. Mazel tov also to grandparents Navah and **Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81) of Beit Shemesh, Israel.

Ellin Mitchell Cooper and **Jeremy Cooper** (MHA '08, FYOS '12) of New York City, who on Nov. 17 welcomed daughter Lielle Merav, making Ariel a big brother. Mazel tov also to grandparents Aileen and **Pace Cooper** (MHA '77, YOS '81) of Memphis.

Phoebe and **Eli Osdoba** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) of Miami, Florida, on the Sept. 15 arrival of son James Bradley, making Mason a big brother. Mazel tov also to grandmother **Sandra (Loterstein) Osdoba** (MHA '76, YOS '80).

Sara and **Tani Finkelstein** (MHA '13) of Washington Heights in New York City, who became parents with the Oct. 11 birth of son Yosef Baruch. Mazel tov also to first-time grandparents Rabbi Joel Finkelstein and former FYOS faculty member Mrs. Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein.

### BNEI/BNOT MITZVAH:

Mazel tov to:

**Rabbi Michael** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) and **Miriam (Amy Goldstein) Kahane** (MHA '89, YOS '93) of Jerusalem on the Nov. 25 bar mitzvah of their son, Tzvi. Mazel tov also to grandparents **Sidney Goldstein** (MHA '64) and Joel and Joanne Kahane (alumni committee chair), all of Memphis.

## MAZEL TOV!

Send us your alumni news for the next issue at [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org).



# THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 1991-1995

## Where are they now?



Kramer Family

**Rivka (Goldfein) Kramer** (MHA '88, YOS '92) and her family live in Lakewood, New Jersey.

She has very warm memories of attending the MHA/FYOS and welcomes the opportunity to reconnect with her classmates at [rivkakramer@gmail.com](mailto:rivkakramer@gmail.com).

'88

'92

'89

'93

**Miriam (Amy Goldstein) Kahane** (MHA '89, YOS '93) is married to **Rabbi Michael Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95). They live in the Maalot Dafna neighborhood of Jerusalem, Israel, and have five children. She teaches Torah at the Chedvas Beis Yaakov seminary (where he serves as *menahel*, or principal) and has a psychotherapy practice, specializing in treatment for trauma. In addition to his work leading Chedvas Bais Yaakov, he teaches in other schools throughout Jerusalem, lectures for [Torah Anytime](#), and is working on a book that will be published soon.

Among her favorite memories from the MHA/FYOS are the high school camping trips and shabbatons led by Mrs. Shelley Kutliroff, Mrs. **Chana (Anet Yaffe) Silver** (MHA '76, YOS '80) and Rabbi Yonasan Gersten. In addition to these three outstanding teachers, she also has fond memories of learning with Rabbi Jay Salid and Rabbi Manny Nissel.

'91

'95

"The massacre that occurred on Simchas Torah/Oct. 7 has brought so much pain and darkness, and at the same time has reignited the soul of every single Jew in *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel)," she said. "The unity, love for all fellow Jews, *chesed* (loving kindness), *emunah* (faith in Hashem), strengthening of Torah learning and commitment to Shabbos are so inspiring. Many IDF soldiers are requesting *tefillin* and *tzitzis*."

Her message to the entire MHA/FYOS community: "Don't underestimate the power each person has to make an impact for the better. The situation in Israel needs every prayer, every act of kindness, every moment of holding back from speaking *loshon hora* (ill of others), every bit of *tzedakah* (charity), every smile you can give to another person. Our children, each in their own way, are volunteering in the war effort. All these

## THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 1991-1995

Where are they now?

# 21

seemingly small acts have ripple effects and give so much merit and protection to the soldiers and citizens of Israel. Don't minimize what you can do, no matter where you are. Sometimes the smallest *chesed* can have the greatest impact."

She would love to hear from her classmates at [miriamkahane@gmail.com](mailto:miriamkahane@gmail.com).



The Kahane family at the Kotel (Western Wall) days after the Oct. 7 massacre, to commemorate their son Tzvi putting on tefillin for the first time.

*Note from alumni chair (and proud grandmother): How sad is it to see the Kotel so devoid of humanity?*

**Yedida Lubin** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) lives in Jerusalem with her husband, Avi Rosenschein, and their two children. She is part of a team that teaches a *daf yomi* (one page of Talmud a day) class at the Matan Women's Institute for Torah Studies. She teaches on Thursday mornings each week, and all the classes are available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com).



Additionally, she is building an [online archive](#) for her family using materials from the home of her late parents, Leonard and Deanna Lubin, z'.

"I loved all the exciting school trips we went on," Lubin said. "Whether it was a middle school trip to St. Louis with Rabbi Jay and Mrs. **Peninah (Fink) Salid** (MHA '82, YOS '85) or a shabbaton with the entire girls' high school, we always had a great time and quite an adventure (though we won't talk about the van breaking down)." Her favorite MHA/FYOS teacher was Mrs. Ann Ivins, of blessed memory.



Lubin-Rosenschein family

She encourages her classmates to be in touch and hopes they will reach out when visiting Jerusalem. "If any of you have children studying in Israel, I'm happy to be a person they can contact for Shabbat hospitality or anything else they might need," she kindly offered. She can be reached at [yblubin@gmail.com](mailto:yblubin@gmail.com) or on WhatsApp at +972 54-7484704.

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## THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 1991-1995

Where are they now?

'91  
'95

**Sarah (Katz) Tarkieltaub** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) lives with her husband and children in Queens, New York. She works as a physician assistant.

"Now that I am raising my children in a large Jewish community in New York City, I realize that there is no place like Memphis," she said. "I am so grateful for the small classes and genuine friendships I was able to have over the years."

Her favorite memory from the MHA/FYOS is the MSG shabbaton in Petit Jean State Park in Arkansas.

**Evan Saltzman** (FYOS '95), who originally hails from Omaha, Nebraska, now lives in Haifa, with his wife, Rebekah, and their three children. "For the past nine years, *aliyah* to Israel has been a godsend for us — pun intended," he quipped. He works in business continuity management for Amdocs, and she is a professional organization and decluttering expert who recently published a book, "[Organized Jewish Life: The Essential Guide for Planning Jewish Holidays, Events and Every Day.](#)" Her website is [balaganbegone.com](http://balaganbegone.com).

'95



Chaifetz-Saltzman family (clockwise from bottom-left): Melissa Chaifetz, Elke Saltzman, Rebekah Chaifetz Saltzman, Carl Chaifetz, Evan Saltzman, Dahlia Chaifetz, Alex Saltzman, Richard Chaifetz (father to Rebekah and Carl), Sophie Chaifetz, Gordon Chaifetz and Nathan Saltzman.

Saltzman gained a new connection to Memphis when his wife's brother, Carl Chaifetz, moved to town a few years ago with his wife, Melissa (who works in the MHA early childhood department), and children Gordon, Sophie and Dahlia.

"I'm super excited that there will be more MHA/FYOS alumni in my extended family," Saltzman said. "I am grateful to the Memphis community for making Carl, Melissa and the kids feel so welcomed when they moved to town during COVID."

"I was privileged to visit Memphis for Sophie's bat mitzvah in January 2023 and saw so many friends for the first time in years. Carl was surprised more people knew me than him! Even though I was only in Memphis for two years of high school, the community embraced me as a dorm student and I made friendships that will last forever."

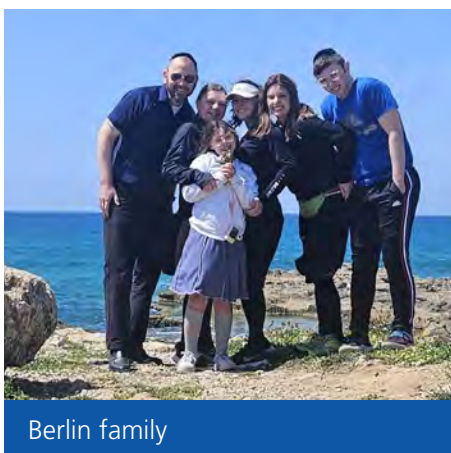
Among the wonderful memories from his years at the FYOS are school trips to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Atlanta, Georgia.

"These were good times spent with my classmates. The camaraderie we had on these trips was unparalleled."

He hopes his classmates will stay in touch with him via social media or by email at [ems1022@hotmail.com](mailto:ems1022@hotmail.com). "I would love to welcome you to my home in Haifa, where we will drink a *l'chaim* to such great years in school and to the Memphis community."

The Saltzmans were visiting relatives in Maryland for Sukkot when war broke out in Israel on Oct. 7; they ended up staying in the U.S. until late November. "This is the first time in nine years we left Israel for the *chagim* (holidays); never again will we leave for the *chagim*," he said. "My family and friends in the U.S. are relieved we're safe and out of harm's way, but Israel is our home. Being away from our new 'family' in Israel during such times has been hard. We want to be with our brethren during good times and bad. It's times like these when the true spirit of *klal yisrael* (the Jewish people) shines through. We will continue to pray for better days."

**Dana (Chafetz) Berlin** (MHA '92, FYOS '96) lives in Passaic, New Jersey, with her husband and children. She works as a commercial real estate loan officer for a New Jersey bank. The Berlins became grandparents this summer, when their oldest daughter, Elana, and husband Shua welcomed a baby girl, Chaya, in Israel.



Berlin family

She has much gratitude to the Memphis Jewish community. "I felt so celebrated, supported and cared for, growing up in our community and attending the MHA/FYOS," Berlin said. "Your personal individualized attention and concern kept me well aware of the expectation to behave and succeed, and I felt the accountability and the love!"

She is also grateful to her many excellent teachers. "Each one provided a different set of perspectives and lessons," she said. "Several of my teachers continue to provide me with invaluable guidance, mentorship and support."



**Deena Katz Yarmush** (MHA '94, FYOS '97) and her husband live in Boca Raton, Florida. They are the parents of five children (two of whom are currently studying in Jerusalem). She works as an early childhood teacher.



"I have a lot of fond memories of being a part of the Margolin Hebrew Academy," she said. "Friends came and went over the years, but the ones who stayed are friends I still have today. We shared so much during the formative years of our lives that we will always hold on to."

Teachers who stand out in her mind from her elementary school years include Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, z'l, Rabbi Baruch Sherman, Mrs. Lisa Frisch, Mrs. **Peninah (Fink) Salid** (MHA '82, YOS '85), Mrs. **Chana (Anet Yaffe) Silver** (MHA '76, YOS '80) and, of course, Dr. Jerry and Mrs. Shelley Kutliroff.

"In fourth grade, I was pulled out each day with three classmates for an advanced math class in Dr. K's office," Yarmush recalled. "I can't say that I remember too much of what we actually learned, but I know we focused on multiplication facts and one of the ones we memorized first matched the age of **Amara Levine-Reich's** (MHA '94, FYOS '97) mother [former MHA/FYOS administrator Phylis Levine] at the time! I won't mention here which fact it was!"

"Mrs. Kutliroff was such an outstanding teacher. There is no way we appreciated in junior high the vast amount of knowledge she had (and still has) and her love for American and world history. Mrs. Silver was incredibly passionate about everything she taught us. She was always so put together, so happy and so ready to impart her love of Torah to us.

"From high school, Rabbi Yonason Gersten and Rabbi Ari Katz stand out as fabulous *rebbeim*. I'll never forget learning *Bereishis* with Rabbi Gersten and the particular way he held his seltzer can during class! For general studies, science teacher Mrs. Ann Ivins, of blessed memory, was by far my favorite. We had a special connection. She definitely knew I did a fabulous impersonation of her, and my classmates certainly remember that as well! Mrs. Karin Schmitt, of blessed memory, was a great math teacher who truly loved each of us. We will never forget the kosher Christmas cookies she was so proud to bring us each winter."

**Amara Levine-Reich** (MHA '94, FYOS '97) lives in Memphis with her husband and their 11-year-old son. She works as a senior marketing advisor for Sedgwick, a global insurance services firm, and volunteers her time as editor of this publication.

Her fondest memories from the school include color war and the canoe trips. Her favorite teacher was Mr. Thomas Johnson, who inspired her love of writing and commitment to proper grammar. She can be reached at [amaralevinereich@gmail.com](mailto:amaralevinereich@gmail.com).





## THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 1991-1995

Where are they now?

# 25



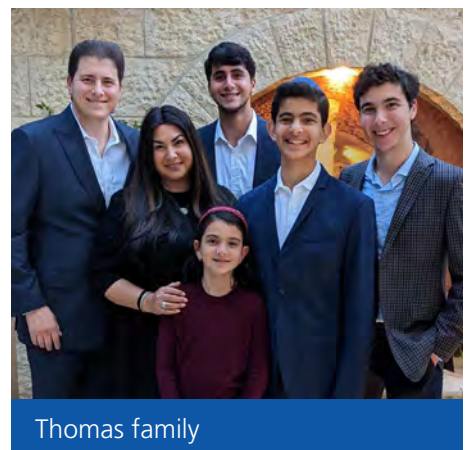
**Nathan Thomas** (MHA '95) lives in Skokie, Illinois. He and his wife, Julie, have four children (including one living in Israel) and a dog (a fact he says his Memphis cousins will appreciate). He works as director of compliance for Shopify, where he focuses on combating financial crimes.

His message to his cohort of classmates — **Nina (Kaplan) Sapir** (MHA '95, FYOS '99), **Rose (Zeitlin) Gold** (MHA '95, FYOS '99), **Sarah (Emerson) Helfand** (MHA '95, FYOS '98) and **Shira (Katz) Nathan** (MHA '95): "I enjoyed our time together as a small class, but I hope your children have more classmates in eighth grade!"

Thomas marvels at how Memphis "bats way above its average in terms of Jewish infrastructure," as he put it. "We lived in a small Jewish community in Palo Alto, California, for a few years while I was working at Google. Despite the wealth in the area, the Jewish communal resources were nowhere near what Memphis has. I encourage everyone to take full advantage of all that Memphis has to offer. If you think it isn't enough, keep in mind the many Jewish communities with a lot less going for them."

His favorite MHA memories include playing kickball on the blacktop and kicking "roofer" home runs, earning rewards from Oriental Trading Company from Rabbi Jay Salid, the Chanukah carnivals and the grits prepared by **Phillip Klitzner** (MHA '92, FYOS '96). Among his favorite teachers were Rabbi Salid and Rabbi Yonason Gersten. "Rabbi Salid gave us better rewards for learning, but Rabbi Gersten was hard to defend in the low post during our 3-on-3 basketball games at recess," Thomas said.

With regard to the situation in Israel, he said, "I continue to be devastated by the massacre committed by Hamas on Simchat Torah and the subsequent terror and rocket attacks. The pain consumes me as I *daven* (pray) and read about what's happening there every day. We have a lot of family in Israel, including our son, who is in university there; my uncle, **Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81); and two of my cousins, who are in the IDF (one of Beryl's sons is in the *chevra kadisha*, or burial society, unit). I connect with Rabbi Ari Katz frequently, and he tells me to encourage everyone to check in with your friends and family in Israel as often as you can, because it really uplifts their spirits."



Thomas family

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## SPOTLIGHT FEATURE



# Rabbi Jay Salid

Sharing the joy of Torah and making the journey fun



Most people don't stay in touch with their fifth grade teacher into adulthood. Fewer still ask their fifth grade teacher to officiate at their wedding. That former MHA Judaic studies faculty member Rabbi Jay Salid has received this honor from multiple former students says everything about the kind of lasting and meaningful relationships he forged during his 13 years in Memphis.



*Rabbi Salid prepared the ketubah at the 2002 wedding of Tanya and **Chaim Lubin** (MHA '93, FYOS '97, pictured above, right).*



*Rabbi Salid traveled to Israel in 1998 to read the ketubah (wedding contract) at the wedding of **Michael Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95, pictured at left) and **Miriam (Amy Goldstein) Kahane** (MHA '89, FYOS '93).*



*At the 2006 wedding of Aviva and **Yoni Freiden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00, center), Rabbi Salid watched as **Ethan Eisen** (MHA '96, left) signed the ketubah.*



*Rabbi Salid read the ketubah and sang the last of the sheva brachos (seven blessings) at the 1999 wedding of **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97, center) and **Elana (Krupp) Kahane** (MHA '92) in Memphis.*

### Finding his calling

For the native of Silver Spring, Maryland, from an old rabbinic family, a career in the rabbinate seemed like the natural choice. With his brilliant mind, encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish law and dedication to Torah study, he could have taught at the most advanced levels of scholarship. Instead, he pursued a career as an elementary school *rebbe*.

"I've always loved dealing with kids," Rabbi Salid said. "Rav Yaakov Weinberg, z'l, and other mentors of mine at Ner Israel in Baltimore encouraged any man capable of doing so to teach Torah in elementary school and never to think that younger grades are 'beneath them.'

"I got similar advice from Rav Nota Greenblatt, z'l. He told me that fifth was the ideal grade for me to teach, because kids that age are sharp enough to appreciate a good joke and still fearful enough to be pushed back into learning." In Rabbi Salid's signature, sharp-witted style, he added, "Rav Nota also astutely pointed out that a piece of me will always be 10 years old."

After completing his rabbinical studies at Ner Israel and teaching for a few years in Birmingham, Alabama, and Baltimore, Rabbi Salid was recruited to the MHA by board member Dr. Larry Wruble, who knew of his stellar reputation through a Jewish medical acquaintance in Birmingham. Rabbi Herbert Russ, dean of MHA in 1987, hired Rabbi Salid to



Rabbi Salid was an enthusiastic participant in Crazy Hat Day at the MHA in 1991.

**"A piece of me  
will always be  
10 years old."**

teach Torah studies in the fifth through eighth grades. During his MHA tenure, he was best known as the *rebbe* for the fifth and sixth grade boys.

"As a teacher of young students, my measure of success was whether I had instilled in them a love of Torah such that they wanted to learn more

after they left my class," Rabbi Salid said. "I also wanted to always keep it fun. In both regards, I believe I accomplished a great deal during my time in Memphis."

#### **A lasting impact**

The many tributes and reflections submitted by his students confirm that Rabbi Salid indeed achieved a lot at the MHA.

"Rabbi Salid is one of the most memorable and favored teachers of my life," said **Chaim Lubin** (MHA '93, FYOS '97). "He brought a joy and enthusiasm to learning that I had yet to experience by my time in middle school. Through his funny jokes, joyous demeanor and general love of teaching, Rabbi Salid allowed us, his students, to grow in Torah and learn to love learning."

"Every boy at the MHA counted down the days until they got to fifth grade; the reason for that was Rabbi Salid," said **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03). "He is one of the smartest, funniest and most dedicated *rebbeim* I have ever known. He broke the mold of what a typical teacher would do. He rearranged the classroom, so that he sat in a rocking chair in the corner and students formed a horseshoe around him with their desks. For him, it was never about studying to pass a test; it was about learning

Torah for the sake of learning. He treated fifth graders like young men, and what he got in return was the respect of an otherwise rowdy bunch.”

“It was a regular experience to walk down the MHA hallway and hear boisterous sounds exploding from Rabbi Salid’s classroom,” said **Dana (Chafetz) Berlin** (MHA ’92, FYOS ’96). “I remember looking in and seeing, seemingly all at once: Rabbi Salid asking a question in learning and tossing a prize to one boy for answering an earlier question, as well as several boys jumping really high as they enthusiastically shouted out answers to the newest question. Rabbi Salid sure made learning Torah exciting and fun!”

“When Rabbi Salid was my teacher, he would reward us with packs of Garbage Pail Kids trading cards if we learned well,” recalled **Miriam (Amy Goldstein) Kahane** (MHA ’89, YOS ’93). “They were treasured prizes! I think about Rabbi Salid’s class every year on Yom Kippur, because I will never



Rabbi Salid teaching (from left) Roman Borochin, who had recently emigrated from the Soviet Union, and **Dovid Schachter** (MHA ’93, FYOS ’97).

forget the exciting and interesting way he taught us *Sefer Yonah* (the Book of Jonah). He made learning so much fun, and we always knew he really cared.”

“Rabbi Salid is an extraordinary teacher and a genius of an educator who succeeded, often miraculously, in reaching and teaching even the most challenging of students,” said **Rabbi Michael Kahane** (MHA ’91, FYOS ’95). “The secret of his success, however, was not his magnetic personality, phenomenal sense of humor, incredible teaching style, the candy and baseball cards he’d throw at us when we got the answer right or even the walkie-talkies and remote-control cars he’d give us for getting good grades. Rabbi Salid’s magic was in his ability to model for his students the inherent joy and pleasure in learning Torah.

“He loved to learn and was always doing it. His iconic, ripped-up six-volumes-in-one *Mishnah Berurah* was part of his wardrobe, and he learned from it during every recess period I can remember. He would often laugh and talk to himself, as if he was engaged with a *chavrusa* (study partner). Anyone who saw him was jealous that he was having such a good time and felt tempted to stop their basketball game and learn with him — simply because he was having way more fun. Rabbi Salid taught us by example that all the pleasures in the world can’t equal the joy of learning Torah. He was an unparalleled *masmid* (diligent student of Torah), yet so incredibly relatable. The only thing he loved as much as learning Torah were his students. Rabbi Salid can be credited with igniting the spark of Torah in so many products of the MHA, many of whom are sharing his love of Torah with their own students.”

“Rabbi Salid was a true *rebbe*,” said **Josh Kahane** (MHA ’93, FYOS ’97). “He excited us to learn when we were children, pushed us to grow when we became young adults, and remained connected with us as we married and began families of our own. The lessons I learned from Rabbi Salid, perhaps more than anyone else, left an indelible imprint and continue to guide so many of my most important decisions.”

### The one missing piece

Rabbi Salid initially didn’t expect to stay at the MHA for long because Memphis was, seemingly, not the best place for a single Orthodox rabbi to find a suitable wife. Hashem, however, had other plans.

A little over a year after he arrived in Memphis, local native **Peninah (Fink) Salid** (MHA ’82, YOS ’85) returned home from seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, to serve as a caregiver for her beloved aunt, Elaine (Margolin) Katz, z’l, in the final months of her life. Several community members — including then-assistant principal **Rabbi Nechemiah (Harry) Kibel**, z’l (MHA ’65, YOS ’69) — suggested that the two consider dating. After hearing Rabbi Salid beautifully *lain* (chant from the Torah) *Parshat Beshalach* at shul, she was impressed enough by his voice to agree to a first date in February 1989.

On their second date, she broke the news that he would have to choose between marrying her and keeping his beloved television, an outside influence she did not want in her home. The couple parted ways for a short time, out of concern that their interests were too different, but they soon got back together (and he agreed to give up the TV). They celebrated their engagement just before Shavuot that summer. Rabbi and Mrs. Salid got married in

Memphis on Aug. 29, 1989 — the first day of school at MHA that year.

“When Rabbi Salid got married, he of course wanted to have his students at the wedding,” recalled Joanne Kahane, alumni chair. “Since this was not feasible, the Salids had a huge *sheva brachos* at the Omni Hotel (also the site of the couple’s second date) so all of his students could attend. It was a joyous and moving experience that my sons, **Michael** and **Josh**, and their friends will never forget.”



On their wedding night in August 1989, Rabbi and Mrs. Salid rode down Yates Road in a horse-drawn carriage.



Rabbi Salid with (from left) **Timothy Burch** (MHA ’93) and **Josh Kahane** (MHA ’93, FYOS ’97) at the festive *sheva brachos* held for all of his students following his wedding.

**A partnership in education and caring**

Together, Rabbi and Mrs. Salid (who also joined the MHA Judaic studies faculty, teaching fifth through eighth grade girls) established a home where students were welcome, day or night. There was nothing they wouldn't do for a student. They hosted lively Shabbos meals, casual get-togethers and beautiful bar and bat mitzvah celebrations. The Salid home on Brantford quickly became the fun neighborhood hangout for all of their students.

"While Rabbi Salid was well known for using prizes to keep his students motivated during long school days, what people didn't always see was what he did for students outside of the classroom," **Richard Lewis** said. "He and his wife were always hosting students at their home and looking for opportunities to connect. By the time a young boy finished fifth grade, he felt he had a new family member, as opposed to simply a teacher."



**Yoni Freiden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00, center) and **Hershel Krupp** (MHA '97, right) visited Rabbi Salid at his Florida home in 2012.

**“Any share in the World to Come that I may acquire will be because of my years in Memphis.”**

"Every Shabbos afternoon for years, the Salids would open their home to our class," said **Deena (Katz) Yarmush** (MHA '94, FYOS '97). "We would talk with Mrs. Salid, enjoy *seudah shelishis* (third Shabbos meal) that she prepared for us, and just have fun. She even let us try on her wigs and clothing! We didn't realize until we were much older just how special that time was and how amazing she and Rabbi Salid were for opening their home so graciously."

"The kids at the MHA weren't just my students; they were like my children," Rabbi Salid said. "Whether it was school field trips, playing ball, or hosting kids at our home, those are the sweetest memories in the world. My wife and I didn't have children of our own for the first five years of our marriage. I now understand that that time enabled us to forge these

truly amazing relationships with our students that never stopped."

**A master Torah reader**

The future Mrs. Salid wasn't the only one impressed by Rabbi Salid's skill at *laining* from the Torah and other sacred texts.

"Every single Purim, when I hear *Megillas Esther*, I will forever think that no one *lains* it as beautifully as Rabbi Salid does," said **Sarah (Katz) Tarkieltaub** (MHA '91, FYOS '95). "Back in the day, we had school on Purim and Rabbi Salid *lained* for the whole student body in the morning. They held up a giant stop sign so we wouldn't go on making noise with our graggers for too long! Rabbi Salid had the most beautiful *laining*, and he emphasized all the words



Each year throughout his time at the MHA, Rabbi Salid read Megillas Esther for the entire school on Purim morning. He also did several other readings around the community, including in the homes of individuals who were ill and a late-night reading for those working late.

in a way that you understood the *megillah* just by hearing it. I hope that he is still *laining megillah*, wherever he is on Purim!”

“I always loved listening to Rabbi Salid *lain* from the Torah,” said **Evan Saltzman** (FYOS '95). “He was near-perfect, if not perfect, and his reading really enhanced my love for attending shul.”

Rabbi Salid shared his gift with dozens of students by teaching them how to *lain* for their bar mitzvahs. These lessons provided him with another avenue to interact with his students outside the classroom.

“In addition to being an incredible school *rebbe*, Rabbi Salid also learned with many of us for our bar mitzvahs,” said **Nathan Thomas** (MHA '95). “I

was fortunate to learn my *parsha* with him, as well as a *masechta* and a half of *Gemara* (I finished the other half as an adult). He was able to connect with students at their level and encourage them to grow in their learning.”

“I was lucky enough to have Rabbi Salid as my bar mitzvah teacher,” **Chaim Lubin** said. “We learned all the way through *shlishi* (the third portion of seven) of *Parshat Noach*, only to discover (by no fault of Rabbi Salid’s) that my bar mitzvah *parsha* was actually *Lech Lecha*. He was not deterred! With the amazing smile and humor that Rabbi Salid always had, we started from the top and learned all of *Lech Lecha*.”

### Heading to the Holy Land

In 2000, the Salids made the difficult decision to leave Memphis and move to Israel in pursuit of a more spiritual climate in which to raise their growing family. There, Rabbi Salid taught at Yeshivas Bircas HaTorah. Continuing the open-door tradition they established on Brantford, their new home in the Old City of Jerusalem became a haven for Memphians visiting, studying in and living in Israel. They hosted countless former MHA students for Shabbos meals and included them in every Salid family simcha.



In 2017, **Yoni Freiden** (far right) arranged for Rabbi Salid to visit Memphis as a scholar-in-residence. They’re pictured here with (from left) **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) and **Zac Kaplan** (MHA '01).

“Rabbi Salid was an exceptional *rebbe* for me in middle school and has continued to be a guiding presence in my life,” said **Yoni Freiden** (MHA ‘96, FYOS ‘00). “He moved to the Old City during my gap year studying at Yeshivat Hakotel, which allowed me to continue my learning with him. Rabbi Salid instilled in me a deep love for learning Torah and how to apply its teachings in my daily life. He’s also one of the smartest and funniest people I’ve ever met, and I’m eternally grateful for the lasting impact he’s had on me.”

### Forging a new path in the Sunshine State

In 2008, the Salids — by then parents of eight: Zvi, Nessia, Basya, Yehoshua, Moshe, Devorah, Refael and Miriam — made plans to move back to the U.S. to secure greater financial stability for their family. Through a contact at Bircas HaTorah, Rabbi Salid learned of a teaching opportunity in Hollywood, Florida, a rapidly growing Jewish community 20 miles north of Miami. The Salids settled in Hollywood and continue to make their home there.

Rabbi Salid now runs an adult Jewish education program called PATH (Project for the Advancement of Torah in Hollywood) and serves as rabbi of a local *minyán* every Shabbos. Mrs. Salid is working on her second master’s degree and teaches third grade Judaics at the Katz Hillel Day School in Boca Raton.

“Working with adults is very different than working with kids,” Rabbi Salid said. “For me, there is no greater joy than teaching kids and watching them advance in their knowledge and understanding. But the great thing about teaching adults is that I don’t get any complaints from their parents.”

He marvels at the extraordinary people his eight children have grown up to be — each with their



*The Salids’ four daughters at Devorah’s (second from right) wedding.*



*Rabbi Salid at Devorah’s wedding with his sons and sons-in-law.*



*Rabbi and Mrs. Salid at daughter Devora’s wedding in 2022.*



own unique *hashkafa* (religious outlook) and pursuing their individual path in life.

“My four sons are all super Torah learners and frightfully efficient, which gives me tremendous *nachas* (pride),” he said. “That all of our children are driven to accomplishment in their respective fields comes from my wife’s family.”

Nessia is married with two children in Baltimore, and Devorah and her husband recently welcomed a baby girl in Cleveland. Yehoshua is the Salids’ only redhead. (“My genes are so recessive that even I can’t fit into them,” he joked.)

### Career reflections

As Rabbi Salid looks ahead to retirement, his only ambitions are “learning Torah and playing with my grandchildren,” he said. “That’s what it’s all about.”

The message he hopes his students carry with them always? “Embrace Torah with all your heart,” he said. “Don’t look at Torah and *mitzvot* as tasks. Make up your mind beforehand that it will be fun. You shouldn’t outgrow that sense of fun just because you get older.”

He considers his lasting impact on his MHA students among his greatest life achievements.

“The 13 years I spent at the MHA were the best years of my life,” Rabbi Salid said. “I am convinced that any share in the World to Come that I may acquire will be because of my years in Memphis.”



*Rabbi Salid serving as sandek at his grandson’s bris in 2022.*



*Salid grandchildren Tiferes and Sruli.*



## IN LOVING MEMORY

# Rabbi Hillel Belsky, z'l



The MHA/FYOS family suffered a tremendous loss with the passing of Rabbi Hillel Belsky, z'l, on Sept. 7, 2023, at the age of 77. His illustrious career as a Torah educator spanned nearly 55 years and included 17 years of dedicated service to our school.

The eldest of the seven children of Rabbi Meir, z'l and Regina Belsky, z'l, he was in yeshiva at Rabbi Chaim Berlin in New York when his parents moved to Memphis as founding leaders of the Yeshiva of the South in the early 1960s. After getting married and studying in kollel for one year, Rabbi Hillel Belsky moved to Memphis with his wife, Judy, and their newborn daughter in 1968 to work under his father at the YOS.

Not much older than his high school students, Rabbi Belsky started out teaching ninth-grade boys. "My father learned quickly that, as a high school educator, you have to leave your ego at the door when you walk into the classroom," said Miryam Biala, Rabbi Belsky's daughter.

A year later, his father asked him to begin teaching in the girls' high school. At first hesitant to accept the assignment, he made the transition with the encouragement and blessings of his *rebbeim*.

He settled into his new role beautifully and became an impassioned advocate for women's Torah education at the highest level. Within a few short years, in the early 1970s, he was appointed principal of the girls' high school — all the while teaching in the boys' high school and serving in other community leadership roles.

"My father had a gift for seeing what young women could become, long before they knew," said daughter Adina Maryles. "At the time, there was no real mentor in the girls' school to help students on their spiritual journey. My father charted his own path — taking all the values he soaked up in his childhood home and yeshiva and bringing that majesty, caring and respect to benefit young women in need of support and guidance."

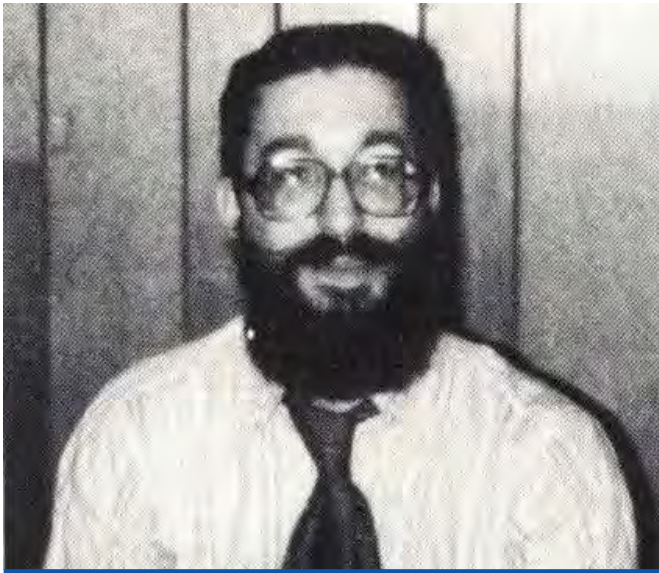


*Rabbi Belsky teaching in the girls' high school in 1978.*

At the shiva for Rabbi Belsky, a YOS alumna relayed that she never forgot the kindness and patience he showed when she was struggling to get along with one of her teachers. "Instead of having this girl go to class and get frustrated every day, he met with her personally for months and discussed all of her religious questions," said daughter Devorah Pinkus. "He saw the path to her heart and what she needed to connect to her Judaism. He was in love with the process of helping students become who they were meant to be."

“Rabbi Belsky had a booming voice, but he had a constant smile on his face and a gentle and genuine way about him,” recalled **Mashie (Greenblatt) Langsam** (MHA '73, YOS '77). “He cared for every person he met. He was so real, honest and giving. He listened, he understood, and he helped shape so many lives. Rabbi Belsky was not that much older than us, yet he had such an impact on us with his powerful insights that one would have thought he was decades older. He was a teacher of *Chumash* and many interesting lessons, but really he taught us to do what is right in the eyes of Hashem.”

“Rabbi Belsky had a magnificent *simchas ha'chaim* (joy for life) and passion for *yiddishkeit* (Judaism),” said **Debbi (Brown) Nissel** (MHA '76, YOS '80). “I'll always remember how much he really cared for each and every one of us.”



Rabbi Belsky at school in 1980.

“I attended the girls' high school as a dormer from Atlanta and was warmly taken in by everyone in Memphis, but especially by Rav Hillel,” said **Elisa**

**(Karp) Zalk** (YOS '81). “Once, when my mother came to visit the school, he spent almost an entire day showing her around. He put her at ease and made her feel comfortable going back home. I will never forget that day. May his memory be blessed always.”

“Though Rabbi Belsky wasn't that much older than many of his students, his demeanor gave us so much respect for him,” said **Chana (Anet Yaffe) Silver** (MHA '76, YOS '80). “He listened and always sought to understand his students. He was supportive of any project or event we wanted to undertake and was very open, never judgmental. After I was involved in a serious car accident in 10th grade, he demonstrated such care. He came to visit and continued to daven for me. It conveyed how much he cared, and his incredible humility always made an impact on me.”



Rabbi Belsky at school in 1979.

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## IN LOVING MEMORY

Rabbi Hillel Belsky, z'l

"Rav Hillel was my first *rebbe* and served as *mesader kiddushin* (officiant) at my wedding," said **Shlomo Seidenfeld** (YOS '76). "I believe in the synchronicity of relationships and events, and Rav Hillel appeared in my life as my love of Torah study began to blossom. His guidance and love were instrumental in my trajectory. I always felt at home in Rav Hillel's company and in his home. He left an indelible impression on me, and for that I am eternally grateful."



**Shlomo Seidenfeld** (YOS '76) with Rabbi Belsky.

"Rav Hillel wore many hats: head of the girls' high school, *rebbe* in the boys' high school, *baal korei* (communal Torah reader) for the Yeshiva minyan, our Hebrew language teacher and leader of adult education classes in the community," said **Bart Ehrenkranz** (YOS '77). "What was consistently remarkable about Rav Hillel was that, in all of these roles, he served as a paradigm for *yiras shamayim* (fear of G-d in heaven).

"The last time I saw Rav Hillel was at his mother's funeral in 2022. All these years later, he never wavered from being a special role model and incredibly caring mentor. As he always did, he asked me, 'So nu, where are you holding?' It wasn't just a request for an update on my family; it was an inquiry about where was I holding spiritually. As it was with his father, z'l, we knew to expect this question and that it clearly came from a place of love and genuine caring. For me, it served as a reminder of what I needed to reflect on — including the amazing impact of Rav Hillel and his entire family on every aspect of our lives."



**Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81) with Rabbi Belsky. Both made aliyah to Israel, living not far from one another, and stayed in touch over the years.

During their years in Memphis, Rabbi and Mrs. Belsky devoted a lot of time and energy to *kiruv* (Jewish outreach). They opened their home to people of all backgrounds and religious levels, modeling respect for one another and at once making everyone feel at ease. Rabbi Belsky started a weekly "Sunday night class" to help members of the community grow in Torah study. The group of regular attendees became extremely close — more like family than friends — and many took on greater observance of *mitzvos* because of Rabbi

Belsky. The “Sunday night class” was featured in the *Jewish Observer*, the former national magazine of Agudath Israel, as a successful model of adult Torah education.



Rabbi Belsky and his wife of 56 years, Dr. Judy Belsky, in 2013.

In 1985, the Belskys left Memphis for Far Rockaway, New York, where he was a high school boys’ *rebbe* for several years. Tragically, their only son, Yosef, z’l, was killed in a car accident there at the age of 16.

Soon afterwards, the Belskys relocated to Chicago, where Rav Hillel served as principal of Hanna Sacks Girls High School for 10 years. Just four years after Yosef’s passing, daughter Dassy, z’l, lost her lifelong battle with cystic fibrosis, also at the age of 16.

“My father sometimes struggled to deal with the day-to-day grief of these losses, but he was a real servant of Hashem and had *emunah* (belief) no matter what,” said daughter Tamar Sokol. “He showed us that, even when we don’t understand, we put one foot in front of the other and accept that Hashem knows what He’s doing. He told the truth as he lived it, sometimes grindingly, and

became a lifeline for students who were mourning losses of their own.”



(from left) **Rabbi Ezra Belsky** (MHA ‘67, YOS ‘71), Rabbi Hillel Belsky, Rabbi Zvi Belsky and Rav Aharon Schechter z’l (rosh yeshiva of Chaim Berlin), circa 1998.

In 1999, the Belskys made *aliyah* to Israel, settling in Ramat Beit Shemesh. Continuing in his mission to provide high-level educational opportunities to women, he founded Ateres Bnos Yerushalayim, a post-high school seminary in Jerusalem.



Rabbi Belsky at his seminary, Ateres Bnos Yerushalayim, circa 2018.

Today, the Belskys’ four daughters all work in Jewish education — three as part of the seminary and one in New Jersey.

“My father was devoted to each of his children and to the *klal* (community),” Pinkus said. “Just like he

did for his students, he helped each of us find our own inner strength. He made us love Torah and proud to do *mitzvos*. He wanted everyone to use all of their gifts to contribute to the world. We'll never be done carrying his message out into the world."



*Rabbi Belsky, surrounded by his grandsons, 2018.*

On behalf of the MHA/FYOS family, we send our sincerest condolences to Rabbi Belsky's wife, Dr. Judy Belsky; their four daughters, Tamar, Devorah, Adina and Miryam; and their many grandchildren. May his memory forever be a blessing.



# ALUMNI REUNITE

We continue to be impressed by the submissions to our “Alumni Reunite” feature.

Any time two or more alumni get together — whether for a simcha (celebration) or otherwise — we would love to get a photo. Submissions can be sent to [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org). Our thanks to those who provided these pictures, especially those who took time out during meaningful family occasions to assemble MHA/FYOS alumni and friends. *Yasher koach* (kudos)!



Amid the difficult circumstances in Israel, a group of young alumni came together to enjoy camaraderie and time with two of their former teachers. Pictured are (back row, from left) **Zev Bosin** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Shachar Cahana** (FYOS '22), **Benjamin Siegel** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Naftali Schochet** (FYOS '23), **Pinchas Cooperman** (MHA '18), **Dovid Reuven Wogan** (MHA '19, FYOS '23), FYOS faculty member **Rabbi Dovid Safier** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Nadav Weiss** (FYOS '22), former MHA/FYOS faculty member Rabbi Yisrael Wende, **Elisha Serman** (MHA '19, FYOS '23), **Gavi Lowell** (FYOS '22); (front row, from left) **Nadav Goldkin** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Noam Cahana** (FYOS '22) and **Ezra Wiener** (MHA '19, FYOS '23).



In a true sign of the times, our courageous alumni reunite in protecting our homeland as part of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Childhood friends **Rafi Epstein** (MHA '90, left) and **Ben Goldstein** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) met up in Gush Etzion in October, shortly after the start of the war.



On Aug. 28, Sammy Baum, son of Greta and **Jeff Baum** (MHA '80, YOS '84) married Sylvie Weinstein in New Rochelle, New York. Among the Memphians and MHA alumni/former students in attendance were (back row, from left) **Jake Baum** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Shelby (Winestone) Baum** (MHA '77), **Lee Baum** (MHA '74), **Judy (Baum) Green** (MHA '76, YOS '80), **Jonathan Wogan** (MHA '94), **Josh Baum** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Aaron Leach** (FYOS '06); (middle row, from left) **Asher Wolmark** (YOS '85), Sam Chafetz, Aileen Cooper, **Pace Cooper** (MHA '77, YOS '81), **Slava Bosin** (MHA '80, YOS '84), **Jeff Baum**; (front row, from left) **Tammi Snyder** (MHA '84, YOS '88), **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99), **Angela Snyder** (MHA '82, YOS '85), Sara Baum, **Brittany (Baum) Lindenfeld** (MHA '04) and Hannah (Baum) Levieddin.





During a visit to Memphis in August, **Chana (Anet Yaffe) Silver** (MHA '76, YOS '80, right) visited with one of her former students, **Sarah (Harris) Bauer** (FYOS '96).



While accompanying her daughter to seminary in Israel, **Nehama (Kutliroff) Teitelman** (MHA '91, left) caught up with classmate **Yedida Lubin** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) in Jerusalem.



In August, alumni (from left) **Avi Klein** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Jason Schubert** (MHA '17, FYOS '21) and **Shoshana Silbermann** (MHA '14, FYOS '18) ran into one another at the newly renovated Memphis International Airport.

During Sukkot, **Yoni Freiden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00) caught up with local and visiting former classmates in Memphis.



(from left) **Freiden**, **Yaakov Ehrenkranz** (MHA '98) and **Lenny Plotitsa** (MHA '97).



(from left) **Mordechai Ehrenkranz**, **Hershel Krupp** (MHA '97) and **Freiden**. *Note: All three were second-generation attendees of the MHA, and now Krupp's and Freiden's children are third-generation enrollees!*



**Dana (Chafetz) Berlin** (left) joined **Masha (Marcia Wogan) Ginian** (both MHA '92, FYOS '96) at the wedding of her daughter, Sima Ginian, to Akiva Markowitz in October.



**Ethan Morris** (FYOS '19, left) came back to Memphis to visit his father, **Ira Morris** (MHA '84), and then could not return to Israel because of the war. While in town, he was recruited by his former basketball coach, **David Winestone** (MHA '74, right) to help coach the CYHSB Macs at the Cooper Yeshiva High School National Invitational Tournament in November.



GMSG schoolmates (from left) **Rebecca (Rubenstein) Gutman** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and **Sarah (Harris) Bauer** (MHA '96) reunited at the Aug. 24 wedding of **Meira Braverman** (MHA '14, FYOS '18) and Avi Rubin in Arlington, Tennessee.



During a late-summer visit to New York City, **Anna (Bakulina) Vladi** (FYOS '96, left) met up with classmate **Dana (Chafetz) Berlin** (MHA '92, FYOS '96).

On Oct. 15, **Jamie Levy** (MHA '11, FYOS '15) married Azi Farr in a beautiful rooftop ceremony at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. *(Fun fact from the alumni chair: The actor who played Corporal Max Klinger in the long-running TV series M\*A\*S\*H is named Jamie Farr!)*



Celebrating with happy couple (seated) were the bride's former classmates (standing, from left): **Alyssa Wruble**, **Alexis Mantell** and **Meryl Musicante** (all MHA '11, FYOS '15).



Friends of the bride in attendance included (from left) **Alyssa Wruble** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Meryl Musicante** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Alexis Mantell** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Sophie (Ostrow) Silberstein** (FYOS '15), **Rachel Brakha** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Emunah Serman** (MHA '11, FYOS '15) and **Michelle Bouchard** (MHA '11).



Alumni from all age groups took part in the wedding celebration, including (from left) **Louis Chapman** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Julie Parker** (MHA '70) and **Gary Wruble** (MHA '77, YOS '81).



While in Memphis for the wedding, **Louis Chapman** (MHA '70, YOS '74, left) was hosted by his former schoolmate, **Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75).



During their brief stay in Memphis, **Louis Chapman** (MHA '70, YOS '74) and his wife, Elke, carved out time to visit the MHA. (Alumni wishing to see the latest enhancements to the school's campus can schedule a visit by emailing [jessica.baum@mhafyos.org](mailto:jessica.baum@mhafyos.org).)

## ALUMNI REUNITE TO STAND WITH ISRAEL

The Memphis Jewish community and MHA/FYOS were well represented at the Nov. 14 March for Israel rally in Washington DC, which drew nearly 300,000 people. Memphis Jewish Federation chartered a plane for more than 180 people (including many alumni of our school), and 70 FYOS students and faculty traveled by bus to be a part of the largest pro-Israel rally in U.S. history. The Memphis delegation also ran into many alumni from near and far. These pictures show just a small sample of our school's presence at the rally.



**Yonadav Tsuna** (MHA '04, FYOS '08, left) and **Rabbi Dovid Safier** (MHA '00, FYOS '04).



Classmates (from left) **Yisrael Wiener** (FYOS '19), **Simcha Osdoba** (FYOS '19), **Ethan Morris** (FYOS '19) and **Ezra Cooper** (MHA '15, FYOS '19).



Sisters (from left) **Alyssa** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Emma** (MHA '20) and **Sophie Wruble** (MHA '16, FYOS '20).



Siblings **Aaron** (MHA '12, FYOS '16) and **Emma Wruble** (MHA '20).



**Batya Bosin** (MHA '14, FYOS '18) and FYOS faculty member Mrs. Talya Tsuna.



**Reuben Stein** (FYOS '20) and Chaim Goldberg.



**Rabbi David Finkelstein** (MHA '75).



**Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75) and his wife, Teri.



**Yoni Freiden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00, left) and **Evan Saltzman** (FYOS '95), with Evan's son in the background.



**Morris** (YOS '72) and **Ann Ellen (Blockman) Gavant** (MHA '70).



**Ari Sauer** (MHA '90, YOS '94) and his wife, MHA faculty member Hanielle.



**Lee Sauer** (MHA '17, FYOS '21) and her mother, Hanielle.



Brothers (from left) **Asher** (FYOS '19), **Aaron** (FYOS '15) and **Zevi Kirshtein** (FYOS '22).



**Reuven Stein** (MHA '98, FYOS '02) with daughter Allie.





(from left) Ariel Abittan, **Jonathan Blotner** (YOS '82), **Eliana (Graber) Abittan** (MHA '05, FYOS '09) and Tania Blotner.



**Jake Baum** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) with his parents, **Shelby (Winestone) Baum** (MHA '77) and **Lee Baum** (MHA '74).



**Rebecca (Wender) Chuback** (MHA '99) and her mother, MHA library volunteer Sally Wender.



**Leib Wiener** (MHA '11, FYOS '15).

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## ALUMNI REUNITE



Siblings **Shayna** (MHA '16, FYOS '20) and **Aidan Kahane** (MHA '19).



(from left) Ari Zelig, **Natanel Brakha** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Hershel Krupp** (MHA '97), **Benjamin Wachtel** (FYOS '13), **Avi Katz** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Justin Wruble** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) and **Yoni Freiden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00).

If you were at the rally and want to share photos, reflections and memories from this historic event, please send them to us at [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org) and we'll include them in our next issue.

ALUMNI BASKETBALL GAME

Save the date

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MHA-FYOS PRESENTS  
THE 32nd ANNUAL  
**IRBY AND BERNICE COOPER**  
**ALUMNI**  
**GAME**  
MOTZEI SHABBAT, JANUARY 13



**ALUMNI VS CYHSB**  
**8:00 PM**  
**MHA MOSS GYM**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL KOBI PINTO AT  
KOBI.PINTO@MHAFYOS.ORG

# FLASHBACKS

# 1991-1995

## Photographs from the past

Celebrating the bar mitzvah of **Isaac Geller** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) at school.



*"I want to tell you a little story. When I was a child, my family and I emigrated from Russia, where conditions forced people to take a big step and leave the country with merely \$500 for four people. You might ask: How did we survive? I'll tell you. Jewish people from all over the world helped us and other Russian families with money, apartments and transportation while we lived in Europe. When we got to Memphis, Jewish Family Service assigned us volunteer families who helped us with transportation and to learn the English language and Jewish traditions. They helped my parents find jobs. I am so thankful to those people for all they did for us; I hope to be able to do the same for others one day.*

*The administrators and teachers at the MHA made a great bar mitzvah for me when I turned 13."*

**-Isaac Geller**

The MHA student council in 1990 (back row, from left): Faculty advisor Mrs. Shelley Kutliroff, **Howie Knopf** (MHA '90), **Yakir Levin** (MHA '90), **Michael Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95); (front row, from left) **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), **Tami (Thomas) Radinsky** (MHA '92, FYOS '96), **Yedida Lubin** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) and **Rochelle (Wruble) Pawlowski** (MHA '90, FYOS '94).



*"Thank you for sharing this wonderful photo. Based on the people in it, I was able to deduce the occasion (student council photo) and approximate timing before you even explained it. In truth, I do not have specific memories of what we actually did as student council members that year, though I do remember giving an uninspiring stump speech for the position of secretary prior to the election! Of course, I recognize everyone in the photo, and it brings back fond memories of friendships from my youth."*

*Interestingly, shortly before you sent this photo, my son Natan happened to share with me that he is friendly with Harry Radinsky, son of Benzi and **Tami (Thomas) Radinsky**, at Yeshiva University. So, it was a wonderful 'coincidence' to see this photo shortly afterward."*

**-Yakir Levin**

The original CYHSB band in 1991 (from left): **Rafi Epstein** (MHA '90, on keyboard), **Dov Katz** (MHA '92, on drums) and **Michael Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95, on guitar).



*"Wow, that's a crazy picture! It brings back memories of jamming for hours at Dov's house, preparing for Chanukah and Purim parties in school. Maybe one day we can get the band back together." -Rafi Epstein*

The *beis midrash* (Torah study hall) suffered smoke, water and fire damage when flames broke out in the Yeshiva wing in January 1991.



*"I remember just following my father [**Alan Kutner** (MHA '62, z'l)], who was concerned about saving the sifrei Torah (Torah scrolls). He ran in to speak with the firefighters to make sure they knew where the aron kodesh (holy ark holding the Torahs) was, and he made sure the high school boys were able to carry each one out to safety." -Yoni Kutner (MHA '88)*

# IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The 29th issue of our newsletter is scheduled for publication around Pesach. In it, we will once again highlight the eighth and 12th grade graduates from the years 2011-2015. Members of these classes will receive questionnaires by email (or regular mail) sometime in February. Please return your completed survey promptly so that you can be included.

Our feature article in that issue will spotlight **Morah Michelle Katz**, beloved kindergarten teacher who has been working at our school since 1996. If you have any stories, photos or memories of Morah Michelle that you would like to share, please send them to Joanne Kahane, alumni chair, at [joannekahane111@gmail.com](mailto:joannekahane111@gmail.com) or to her attention at the school's mailing address below.

Additionally, be sure to submit your "Mazel Tov" events, as well as photos for the "Alumni Reunite" feature, so we can include them in the next issue. Thank you!



Rabbi Yisroel Weiner, head of school  
Deena Davidovics, president, board of trustees  
**Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99),  
director of engagement