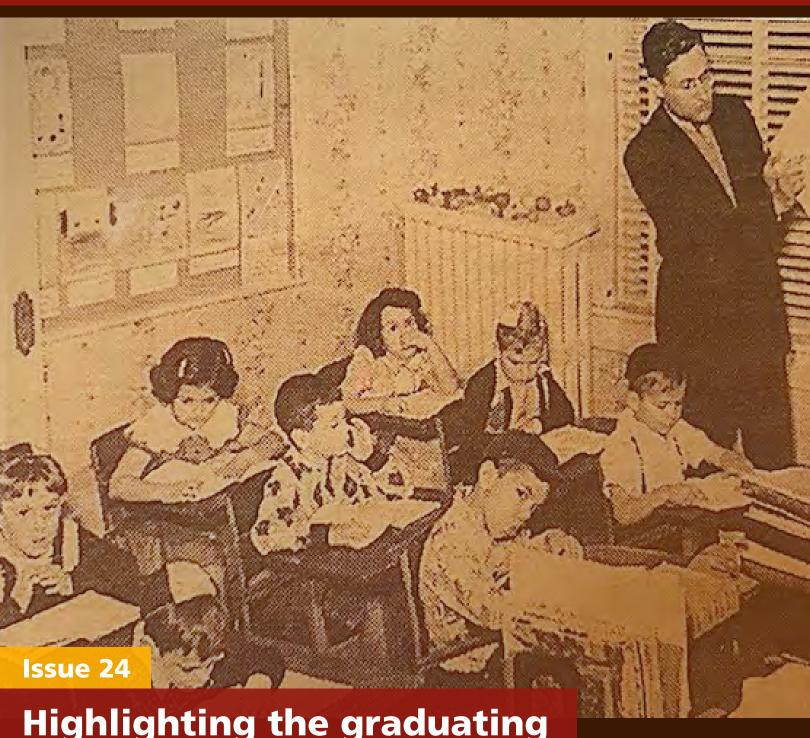
MHA/FYOS

Alumni and Friends



Highlighting the graduating classes of 1957-1965

This issue is dedicated in loving memory of the school's 1957-1965 graduates who are no longer with us:

George Conroy (MHA '58) Steven Epstein (MHA '59) Gerald Kibel (MHA '64)

Rabbi Nechemiah (Harry) Kibel (MHA '65, YOS '69)

Jacob Rubenstein (MHA '63) Harry Schaffer (MHA '58)

Additionally, we mourn with profound sorrow the recent passing of two alumni from this era:

Jerome Epstein (MHA '61) son of Frances Epstein (MHA's first PTA president) and brother of Carole (Epstein) Follette (MHA '68)

Barton Segal (MHA '63)

May their memory forever be a blessing.

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In loving memory

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COVER PHOTO



Soon after relocating to Memphis from New York, a young Rabbi Nathan "Nota" Greenblatt, z'l, helped to found the MHA and is shown here teaching kita aleph (first grade) during the school's first year of operation (1949-50).

Our attempts to identify the children in this picture produced only one confirmed result: **Lester Lit** (MHA '57) admits to being the boy in the center of the photo (who may be picking his nose). If you recognize any of the other students pictured here, please email us at alumni@mhafyos.org.

MISSED AN ARCHIVES

All previous issues of our alumni publication are now conveniently available at mhafyos.org/alumni.

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair

Amara Levine-Reich (MHA '94, FYOS '97), editor
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To learn more about MHA/FYOS, please contact marketing and recruitment director **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99) at 901-682-2400 or jessica.baum@mhafyos.org.

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MESSAGE TO ALUMNI

Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

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Dear MHA/FYOS alumni and friends,



First and foremost, it's my privilege to fulfill my annual responsibility of welcoming our 2022 graduates to the MHA/FYOS alumni community. The bar has been set high by those who have come before you. I hope you will accept the challenge with pride,

because your calling is very important. We hope you will actively participate in our alumni newsletter by letting us hear from you and helping us with pictures and historical information as needed. The alumni committee looks forward to keeping in contact with all of you.

Shortly after Pesach, our community (and the entire Jewish people) suffered a monumental loss with the passing of Rabbi Nota Greenblatt, z'l. Rav Nota played a pivotal role in the founding of the MHA, and he nurtured it with the love and care of a father for a child. Every day for over 70 years, our school was in his heart, his thoughts, his prayers and his activities. While it's impossible to truly do justice to his legacy in just a few pages in this publication, we have done our best to capture and share some of our collective memories of Rav Nota, each one highlighting another aspect of his remarkable persona. (See page 33 in this issue.) We send our love and deepest condolences to his wife, Rebbitzen Miriam Greenblatt, and to his children, Rabbi **Dovid Greenblatt** (MHA '65), **Rochel (Greenblatt)** Lapidus (MHA '68), Leah (Greenblatt) Fink (MHA '71), Rabbi Jacob Greenblatt (MHA '72) and Joey **Greenblatt** (MHA '74). We ask their forgiveness for our clumsy attempt to express our profound gratitude to their father. May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

In December 2021, I received an email from Shani Lubetski, who now lives in Israel with her husband, former FYOS principal Rabbi Uriel Lubetski, and their children. I saved the resulting email chain for the next time we would highlight the early years of the school so I could share it with you.

Shani let me know that a recent guest at their Shabbat table turned out to be Debbie (Fruchter) Robinson, daughter of the first principal of the MHA, Rabbi Alfred Fruchter. Debbie heard Shani mention that they used to live in Memphis, and the conversation flowed from there. She gave me Debbie's email address and asked if I would send her some of our alumni newsletters that might include Rabbi Fruchter.

I did some digging through our archives and came across <u>issue 12</u>. It featured a spotlight article about Rabbi Fruchter written by Debbie's niece (Rabbi Fruchter's granddaughter), Gila Golder, who now lives in Memphis with her husband and two children. Also in that issue were some photos of Debbie as a child, including one with Elvis Presley. I sent Debbie a link to that issue on our <u>archives page</u> and invited her to join our mailing list.



Legendary Memphis musician Elvis Presley (far right) and his cousin (far left) with Harold Fruchter and Debbie (Fruchter) Robinson.

Photo courtesy of the Fruchter family.

* * *

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MESSAGE TO ALUMNI

Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

Soon afterward, I received this response:

I am sitting at my elder son, Avi Robinson's, dining room table in Efrat, crying. I am overwhelmed by the honor which was given to my father, Rabbi Alfred Fruchter, and to my mother, Rebbetzin Jeannette Fruchter. All of the praise is accurate. Yes, that is me, as a preschooler, in the photo with our downstairs neighbor, Elvis Presley. I had never seen the photo of me in the kindergarten class photo, with my beloved father standing in the rear.

I will gladly enroll in your email list to receive future issues. I thank you, and especially Shani Lubetski, for your kindness.

-Debbie (Fruchter) Robinson



Kindergarten graduate Debbie (Fruchter) Robinson is seated in the front row, second from the right. Her father, Rabbi Alfred Fruchter, z'l, is standing in the back row, far right.

I share this experience with you so you can better understand why the alumni newsletter has become

a labor of love for us over the past eight years. Our editor **Amara Levine-Reich** (MHA '94, FYOS '97) and I continue to marvel at the far-reaching impact of this publication, even beyond our alumni community.

* * *

This summer, we were honored to welcome to the MHA/FYOS family Rabbi Yisroel Weiner, the new head of school. He is joined in Memphis by his wife, **Suri (Samberg) Weiner** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), and their seven beautiful children. (His MHA/FYOS roots run deep; in addition to being married to an alumna, Rabbi Weiner is also the son of alumna **Devorah (Adler) Weiner**, YOS '82.) We are excited to have them here and look forward to hearing from Rabbi Weiner in future issues. In this issue, we invited Suri to share her thoughts about "coming home" — see page 30.

In July, Mrs. Joyce Casada, who taught at our school from 1967 to 1992, celebrated her 90th birthday. After being in contact with her family, I put out a call to our alumni to request letters that would be shared with her as part of the celebration. The response was phenomenal, and Mrs. Casada was overjoyed to hear from so many of her past students! We plan to spotlight Mrs. Casada in our Chanukah issue. There, we will share some of the letters and her responses to them. If you missed the opportunity to send a letter, you can still share memories with us and her by sending them to me by Nov. 1.

Earlier this month, we finally celebrated the longawaited dedication of the Irby and Bernice Cooper

Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

Beit Midrash. In order to give the event the respect it deserves, we are saving it as a feature story for our next issue. I can simply say that it was a significant milestone in the history of our school community. Watch for more details in the Chanukah issue; you can also view a recording of the dedication ceremony on the school's <u>Facebook page</u>.

This is more than I usually cover in my message, but I had so much I wanted to share with you!

At this time of new beginnings, my fervent prayer is that all of you will have a year filled with good

health, joy, love and inspiration. May Hashem continue to bless our community and all those who emerge from it.

Please continue to let us hear from you.

L'shana tova,

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair joannekahane111@qmail.com



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Deena Davidovics

Dear MHA/FYOS alumni and friends,



I am humbled and honored to have assumed the role of president of the school's board of directors and to be writing to you today as we approach the High Holidays.

In taking on this position, I've drawn a lot of inspiration from the wisdom of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z'l, on leadership. His first principle of Jewish leadership is that it must begin with taking responsibility. He points out that the opening of Sefer Bereshit (the book of Genesis) provides us with multiple failures of responsibility. As he writes, "Confronted by God with their sin, Adam blames Eve, Eve blames the serpent. Cain says, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Even Noah, 'righteous, perfect in his generations,' has no effect on his contemporaries."

In contrast, *Moshe Rabbeinu* (Moses) rose to become the great leader of the Jewish nation by first assuming responsibility for his fellow man. Time and again, we see that Moshe recognizes injustice and intervenes: from the Egyptian beating the *ivri* (Hebrew) man, to the two *ivrim* fighting, to the shepherds in Midian abusing the daughters of Yitro. Rabbi Sacks writes, "He is the supreme case of one who says: When I see wrong, if no one else is prepared to act, I will."

Rabbi Sacks further says, "At the heart of Judaism are three beliefs about leadership: We are free. We are responsible. And together, we can change the world." I stress the word *together*, as it takes us to

another of his principles about Jewish leadership: no one can lead alone.

As he says, "Only twice in the whole Torah does the phrase *lo tov* (not good) appear. The first is when Hashem says, 'It is not good for man to be alone'— *lo tov heyos hadam l'vado*. The second is when Yitro sees his son-in-law Moshe leading alone and says, 'What you are doing is not good.' We cannot live alone. We cannot lead alone. Leadership is teamsmanship." Even Moshe, the greatest leader in the history of the Jewish people, quickly learned that we thrive through partnership.

Rabbi Sacks explains, "There is no one leadership style in Judaism. During the time in the desert, there were three leaders: Moshe, Miriam and Aaron. Moshe was close to Hashem. Aaron was close to the people. Miriam led the women and sustained her two brothers, and it was in her merit that there was water to drink in the desert. During Torah times, there were three different leadership roles: kings, priests and prophets. The king was a political leader. The priest was a religious leader. The prophet was a visionary, a man or woman of ideals and ideas. In Judaism, leadership is an emergent property of multiple roles and perspectives. No one person can lead the Jewish people."

Leadership is, in fact, a team sport. The MHAV FYOS is blessed with many types of leaders — our dedicated administrators, faculty, board members, committee volunteers, parents and grandparents, student leaders and, of course, our wonderful alumni. In May, we had the opportunity to pay tribute to the seven decades of leaders produced by our school at the annual scholarship banquet. (For

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Deena Davidovics

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more on the banquet, see page 26 in this issue and view the <u>tribute video</u>.) It was so inspiring to see how our seven individual honorees have forged their own paths to community leadership, carving out niches where they can use their passions and talents to make a meaningful difference. It is this kind of diversity that enriches our school, and we are proud that our alumni bring this element of their MHA/ FYOS education to Jewish communities around the world.

With your help and partnership, we can ensure that our school continues to cultivate scholars and leaders who will take on the responsibility of being the Jewish community builders of the future. Thank you for joining us in this mission through your support of the MHA/FYOS.

Wishing you and your family a shana tova u'metukah — a good, sweet new year.

Deena Davidovics
President, MHA/FYOS board of trustees
deenamd@gmail.com



D'VAR TORAH

Robert Appleson (MHA '61)

Connecting the High Holidays to Sukkot

As children, we learned about the question of why the holiday of Sukkot is observed in the fall, rather than right after Pesach, when our ancestors began living in *sukkot* in the wilderness. The answer we were given is that if Sukkot were celebrated right after Pesach in warmer weather, we might think that our eating outside for the holiday was a matter of preference, rather than fulfillment of a mitzvah.

That answer, which comes from the Baal HaTurim, still serves us well today. Yet, after more exposure to the flow of the Torah's text, we began to wonder why Sukkot falls so close to the High Holidays. We learned how the Vilna Gaon links *sukkot* with the clouds of glory that returned in the wilderness after our ancestors were mostly forgiven on Yom Kippur for the Golden Calf. According to this approach, full forgiveness came only when the Jewish people began building the *mishkan* (tabernacle) five days later on Sukkot.

The Vilna Gaon's explanation also serves us well, but I remained puzzled by how building the *mishkan*

relates to atonement. Over the years, however, an approach emerged for me that goes beyond those of the Baal HaTurim and the Vilna Gaon. It involves a pattern leading from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur and then to Sukkot. Drawing on a framework for the Aseret Hadibrot (10 Commandments), this pattern follows the shared principles identified by the Mekhilta, the primary halakhic midrash on Sefer Shmot (the Book of Exodus). Here, I will first describe the framework of the shared principles and then show how the progression from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur to Sukkot fits that framework.

The five shared principles of the Aseret Hadibrot

The shared principles pair each *dibrah* (commandment) on the first tablet with the one adjacent to it on the second. Each shared principle describes the common idea embodied by the adjacent *dibrot*, as illustrated below.

First tablet	Second tablet	Shared principle
(man and G-d)	(man and man)	
1. Belief in G-d	6. No murder	A. Respecting creation
2. No belief in other	7. No adultery	B. Loyalty to primary
gods		relationship
3. No taking G-d's	8. No stealing	C. Limits on spiritual/
name		physical resources in
		vain
4. Remembering	9. No false testimony	D. Duties of testimony/
Shabbat		community (edut)
5. Honoring parents	10. No coveting	E. Accepting one's place/
		status/mission, promise
		of future benefit

D'VAR TORAH

Robert Appleson (MHA '61)

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Let us review each shared principle to see how it embodies its respective pair of *dibrot*.

- A. Believing in G-d as the creator and not destroying His highest form of creation reflect respect for creation.
- B. Being faithful to G-d and to one's spouse follows from loyalty to primary relationship.
- C. Limits on spiritual resources mean not taking G-d's name in vain, while limits on material resources mean not stealing. This leads us to D.
- D. We fulfill the fourth *dibrah* by reciting *kiddush* with *vay'khulu*, testifying to Hashem's creation of the world. The ninth *dibrah* involves not only testimony, but also community, as this testimony is given to others. (The Hebrew word *ed* comes from *edah* = assembly, i.e., a community.)
- E. Finally, we see that honoring one's parents, the fifth *dibrah*, and not coveting, the 10th *dibrah*, reflect accepting one's place, status and mission.

Rosh Hashanah in the shared principles

The High Holidays begin with Rosh Hashanah, which is characterized by the three components of the *musaf* service: *malkhuyot*, *zikhronot* and *shofrot*. We must embrace these three components to engage properly with the *Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah* (10 days of repentance). When we consider these components carefully, we see that they correspond, in order, with the first three shared principles. The Gemara's treatment of *musaf* in Tractate Rosh Hashanah (16a) confirms this correspondence.

First, we have *malkhuyot*, which the Gemara explains as recognizing Hashem as our king. This component corresponds to shared principle A

(respecting creation), linking belief in Hashem in the first *dibrah* with the prohibition of murder in the sixth. In other words, recognizing Hashem as our king requires believing in Him and not destroying any of His highest creations.

Next comes the *zikhronot*, whose purpose (from Hashem's perspective) the Talmud describes as *k'dei sheyaaleh zichroneikhem l'fanai l'tova* (to elevate the memories of the Jewish people before Me for good). As we examine the 10 *pesukim* (verses) in *zikhronot*, we see this purpose achieved through Hashem's special relationship with us. In particular, the word *brit* (covenant) marking this special relationship appears seven times in these *pesukim*. Thus, the component of *zikhronot* reflects shared principle B — loyalty to a primary relationship, linking dibrot 2 and 7 prohibiting idolatry and adultery.

Shofrot, the third component of musaf, is symbolized by the shofar, the sign of coming close to Hashem in the akedah (binding of Isaac). Thus, it embodies the third shared principle — proscribed access to spiritual and physical resources, which links the third and eighth dibrot (not to take Hashem's name in vain and not to steal). At this point, we have aligned Rosh Hashanah with shared principles A, B and C.

Yom Kippur in the shared principles

Upon reaching Yom Kippur, we repeatedly recite the *viduim* (confessions) of "ashamnu" and "al chet" and testify to our sins. Notably, these confessions are said in the first-person plural, thereby associating each one of us with the Jewish community as a

D'VAR TORAH Robert Appleson (MHA '61)

whole. Thus, we have testimony in a communal context, corresponding to shared principle D — duties of testimony/community, which links the fourth and ninth *dibrot* (to observe Shabbat and not to bear false witness). By confessing as part of the community, we strive to achieve the merit of those who do not confront *din* (judgment) as isolated individuals. It is this special merit that was shown by the Shunamite woman who, by her words to the prophet Elisha "*b'tokh ami anokhi yoshavet*" ("I live within my nation," Il Kings 4:13), declined any consideration for herself beyond that of her people.

Sukkot in the shared principles

In one sense, the theme of shared principle D continues in Sukkot. As Rabbi Moshe Francis of the Chicago Community Kollel has pointed out, the mitzvah of sukkah is one of three positive mitzvot with reasons given for their observance — the others being tefillin and tzitzit. (A "reason" distinguishes these mitzvot from those where a result is included, such as long life for honoring parents, but not the reason for observance.) The reason given for the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* is testifying that we dwelled in huts in the wilderness. This testimony marks shared principle D and reminds us that Yaakov (Jacob), who built sukkot for his animals, is the patriarch usually associated with the holiday of Sukkot. He was also the patriarch most challenged in upholding truth (which is implicit in testimony).

Yet, Yaakov lends another sense to Sukkot reflecting shared principle E — accepting one's place/status/ mission, which connects the fifth and 10th dibrot (to honor one's parents and not to covet). When Yaakov

encounters *Esav* (Esau) in reentering Canaan, *Esav* says, "*Yesh li rav*" ("I have plenty," still allowing the desire for more). *Yaakov* replies, "*Yesh li kol*" ("I have everything"). *Yaakov*'s response is the same repudiation of envy and materialism that characterizes our move to the *sukkah*, and that repudiation is exactly the acceptance of one's place/ status/mission that's found in shared principle E.

Sukkot leads into Shmini Atzeret, whose very name can reinforce this shared principle. Usually we understand Shmini Atzeret as the eighth day of staying on, reflecting the familiar *midrash* that Hashem asks the Jewish people (as his most treasured servants) to stay another day after Sukkot. Yet, we can also read Shmini Atzeret as "that My diversity is a treasury," where we take the *shin* in "*shmini*" as the relative pronoun "that" and "*mini*" as a possessive noun related to "*minei*" (diverse) as in the *bracha* over spices "*boreh minei b'samim*." Finally, the word "*atzeret*" relates to *otzer* (treasury). In other words, we recognize every Jew as a valued part of the treasury, with their own individual roles not to be envied.

How building the *mishkan* brought full forgiveness

Finally, we return to the Vilna Gaon's connection between beginning construction on the *mishkan* and full forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf. Consider that the work of the *mishkan* involved particular individuals with particular talents. Throughout the account of its building, we encounter phrases like "maaseh rokem" (the handiwork of an embroiderer) and "maaseh rokeach" (the handiwork of a perfumer).

MADE STORY DOWN THE TAX OF

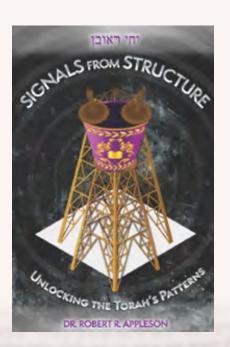
Robert Appleson (MHA '61)

Apparently, each person contributed as they were able, without resenting the role of others. Perhaps that is why the building of the *mishkan* brought full forgiveness. Perhaps, also, that is why, for Sukkot alone, we are directed, "v'hayitah akh sameach" (you shall be only joyous) — for this holiday commemorates the elimination of envy, bringing about our full forgiveness after Yom Kippur.



Robert Appleson (MHA '61) holds a Ph.D. in mathematics and is retired from a career as vice president of a collegiate accreditation organization.

He recently published his third book, "Signals from Structure: Unlocking the Torah's Patterns." It focuses on the Torah's striking patterns that often resolve vital questions or link seemingly unrelated topics. Written for both novices and advanced



readers, Appleson's book explores these signals from structure in an original, textual approach that is steeped in classic sources. The power and pervasiveness of the patterns discussed in this book help readers recognize the divinely synchronized and interconnected design of the Biblical text.

"Signals from Structure" is available for purchase from Amazon. Proceeds from the book benefit the Torah institutions in Skokie, Illinois, through which the book was sponsored: the Illinois Center for Jewish Studies, Kehilat Chovevei Tzion, Skokie Community Kollel and Young Israel of Skokie.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND ALUMNI CHAIR Community Responses

We welcome your feedback on the alumni newsletter at alumni@mhafyos.org. Here are some of the responses we received to lssue No.23.

What an amazing issue! Thank you.

-Julie (Goldstein) Brown (MHA '76, YOS '80)

Great job! Thanks to everyone who puts this together.

-Norm Klar (YOS '71)

With the issuance of the final alumni newsletter within the term of my presidency, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for the hours of dedication you all put in. It is a wonderful publication and reaches so many who clearly enjoy it.

-Yoel Goldblatt, past president, MHA/FYOS board of trustees

Thank you for all you do for the school and all its alumni. We watched the <u>tribute video</u> from the banquet; it was fantastic. I shared it with all my siblings! May Hashem give you strength and health to continue your good work!

-Devora (Kipper) Gradon (MHA '77, YOS '81)

Thank you for keeping your finger on the pulse. You do such a beautiful job of keeping us posted on happy occasions (such as Mrs. Joyce Casada's 90th birthday celebration), as well as sorrowful events of which we should be informed. I always look forward to receiving the alumni newsletter. You should all be blessed with continued energy and good health to continue for many years to come.

-Mashie (Greenblatt) Langsam

(MHA '73, YOS '77)

Thank you for the newsletters you send out. They are always a joy to read and bring back wonderful memories from very formative years.

-Yael (Spiegler) Weil (MHA '82, YOS '85)

I miss Memphis.

-Kathy (Alyesh) Dardashty (YOS '85)

Thank you for coordinating this and continuing to encourage us to think of the MHA/FYOS and all we gained!

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



TRIVIA ANSWERS 2016-2020

Thanks to everyone who sent in responses to the trivia questions featured in our **23rd issue**.

The winner of our trivia contest from that issue is **Dylan Cooper** (MHA '09, FYOS '13). He answered 12 out of 17 questions correctly. This is **Dylan**'s fourth time winning our trivia contest!

He will receive a tin of cookies from <u>Ricki's Cookie Corner</u> — owned and operated by **Ricki** (Thomas) Krupp (MHA '66, YOS '70) — in time for Rosh Hashanah.

Below are the answers to the trivia questions from issue 23. How many did you know?

- 1. Which teacher from this era was extra careful to never spill her tea? ANSWER: Mrs. Lisa Luiken, who taught third grade general studies.
- 2. Which student from these years shares an Aug. 28 birthday with Coach James Nokes? *ANSWER:* **Benjamin Siegel** (MHA '18, FYOS '22).
- 3. Which administrator from this period lived closest to the school?

 ANSWER: Mrs. Shelley Kutliroff and Rabbi Yonason Gersten were both acceptable answers. (One respondent felt that Rabbi Gersten must be the correct answer because he never seems to leave the school.)
- **4.** What was taken when the boys' high school played a prank on the girls' high school? *ANSWER: The brand-new lounge furniture from the girls' high school. It was temporarily moved to the boys' high school lounge.*
- 5. What items did Rabbi Uriel Lubetski ban from the school's hallways? (Hint: Shortly after the ban, the halls became filled with them, in humorous protest.)

 ANSWER: Backpacks.

TRIVIA ANSWERS Questions from Issue 23

6. During the renovation of the gym, what was installed at half court that had to be removed before ever being used because it was the wrong size?

ANSWER: A curtain that was meant to be lowered from the ceiling to divide the room in half. However, the curtain was cut too long, causing people to trip on the excess fabric.

7. Which community member became such a regular at the daily mincha minyan that students joked about him being part of the MHA/FYOS? (Bonus question: What food item was his special request at the annual steak dinner?)

ANSWER: **David Winestone** (MHA '74). His steak dinner special request is a baked potato.

8. Which teacher took her class to a strawberry patch at the end of the semester? *ANSWER: Dr. Debbie Soellner.*

9. To which college did Mr. Dana Vaughn accompany students from the CYHSB on a day trip for a STEM competition?

ANSWER: University of Arkansas.

10. Who was the CYHSB dorm student from Canada during this era? (Bonus: Why was he unable to return to our school to complete his studies?)

ANSWER: Avi Lavin. He encountered visa issues.

11. What did students pose as when helping Rabbi Yonasan Gersten fix the eruv? *ANSWER: Construction workers.*

12. Why was there no hike on the annual Gatlinburg trip in 2017?

ANSWER: The students and their teachers opted to watch the Super Bowl together instead.

13. Which CYHSB student heroically saved the day on a school boating trip to Arkansas by having cellphone reception and calling for help when one of the boats that was far from shore encountered an engine problem?

ANSWER: Sam Lulky (FYOS '18).

14. Where did the scavenger hunt that was planned by the Kollel Torah MiTzion guys take place, and how did it conclude?

ANSWER: It was held at Kroger on Mendenhall, and they all got kicked out of the store.

- 15. Which dorm student's mother drove to town to do her son's laundry and brought extra homemade food to the boys' high school lounge?
 - ANSWER: Mrs. Bonnie Goldmeier, mother of Gary Goldmeier (FYOS '17).
- **16.** Which student dedicated himself to making freshly brewed coffee at school and even went as far as buying a French press?

ANSWER: Aaron Wruble (MHA '12, FYOS '16).

17. Who started the trend of carrying a milk jug full of water around the boys' school, encouraging everyone to stay hydrated?

ANSWER: JJ Kampf (MHA '13, FYOS '17).

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 Erica Stoltz, **Francie Schneider** (MHA '68, YOS '72), Amanda Davidson, Laura Timms and **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99). 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 **Lester Lit** (MHA '57), **Robert Appleson** (MHA '61), **Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis** (MHA '62), **Emily (Evensky) Steinberg** (MHA '63), **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68), **Allan Katz** (MHA '65, YOS '69), **Karen (Katz) Rubenstein** (MHA '69, YOS '72), **Morris Gavant** (YOS '72), **Ronnie Katz** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Ronit (Sauer) Brakha** (MHA '83, YOS '87), **Elana (Sadetsky) Avis** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), Michal Rachlin, Jacques Rebibo and Adina Samberg.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS 1957-1965

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

Send your answers to **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. What was the name of the MHA school bus driver?
- 2. What game was regularly played on the MHA school bus?
- 3. What game was regularly played at recess during this era?
- 4. Which student played the Wicked Witch of the West in the school production of "The Wizard of Oz"?
- 5. Which student from this era was the son of someone in the liquor business?
- 6. What kind of special booth did the MHA ladies run at the Memphis Cotton Carnival each year?
- 7. What was the job of Miss Verna Vickery, who joined the MHA staff in 1952?
- **8.** An MHA special event took place for the first time in 1952, and it remains a staple on our school calendar to this day. What is this annual event?
- 9. Which two original staff members of the MHA worked for years for no pay?
- 10. In the early 1950s, there was a strong movement away from the after-school model of American Jewish education in favor of a new model that was represented by the MHA. What was this new model called?
- **11.** What show, pictured here, did the students perform in 1957?



ALUMNI NEWS Mazel Tovs & More



ENGAGEMENTS/WEDDINGS:

Mazel tov to:

Pammy and **Glenn Graber** (MHA '74, YOS '78) of Hollywood, Florida, on the engagement of their son Judah to Zehava Weiss. They are planning a Nov. 3 wedding in Atlantic Beach, New York, and will live in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City.

Charley Burch (MHA '82) on his June 29 wedding to Rebeca Ramirez at Memphis's Baron Hirsch Synagogue. The couple lives in Memphis.

MHA administrator **Ruth Samuels** (MHA '86, YOS '90)
on her engagement to Richard
Wurzburg. After their wedding
(date to be determined), they
will continue to live in Memphis.
Mazel tov also to the bride's
parents, Rabbi Yochanan and **Carol (Smith) Samuels** (MHA
'60), also of Memphis.

Judi and **Noam Nahary** (YOS '93) of Englewood, New Jersey, on the engagement of their daughter Jordana to Yonatan Blitz. The couple is planning to marry in August 2023. Mazel tov

also to the bride's grandmother, former MHA/FYOS faculty member Mrs. Bracha Nahary.

Aryeh and **Dana (Chafetz) Berlin** (MHA '92, FYOS '96) of Passaic, New Jersey, on the Aug. 18 marriage of their daughter Elana to Yehoshua Zyskind in Passaic. The couple lives in Jerusalem, Israel.

Chanah and **Eli Freiden** (FYOS '96) of Boca Raton, Florida, on the marriage of their daughter Emma to Tani Schochet. Mazel tov also to grandparents Pam and **Jeffrey Freiden** (YOS '72) of Memphis.

Elisa Barrack (MHA '06), daughter of Jon and Cindy (Califf) Barrack (MHA '75) of Memphis, on her engagement to George Castillo. The couple plans to marry in March 2023 in Memphis and will live in Atlanta, Georgia.

Tani Finkelstein (MHA '13) on his Sept. 15 wedding to Sara Schapiro in Passaic, New Jersey. The couple lives in New York City.

Rebecca Brown (FYOS '18) on her engagement to Avi Eisenstadter. They are planning a Nov. 6 wedding in Passaic, New Jersey, and will make their home in Memphis.

Esti Samberg (MHA '16, FYOS '20) on her engagement to Shimmy Klaus. The couple will marry Dec. 25 in Lakewood, New Jersey, and plan to live in Far Rockaway, New York. Mazel tov also to the bride's parents, former MHA faculty members Cantor Aryeh and Adina Samberg.

BIRTHS:

Mazel tov to:

Jonathan and **Abbe (Seiger) Kaplan** (MHA '71) of Memphis, who celebrated the arrival of two grandchildren. On May 24, baby boy Aryeh Moshe (Ari) was born to Momi and **Ezra Kaplan** (MHA '04, FYOS '08) of Givat Shmuel, Israel. Mazel tov to big brothers Ben and Isaac. On May 26, Evyatar and **Franny (Kaplan) Waisman** (MHA '02, FYOS '06) of Efrat, Israel, welcomed son Tamir Malachi; mazel tov to big brothers Yotam, Adam, Dvir and Erez.

Debbie and **Hugh (Freiden) Gordon** (MHA '72, YOS '76) of Memphis on the birth of two

ALUMNI NEWS Mazel Tovs & More

grandchildren. On April 9, Adam and Meirah (Freiden) Weiss (MHA '04, FYOS '08) of Boca Raton, Florida, welcomed son Jordan Jonah. Mazel tov also to siblings Zev, Sarit and Leiv. On June 23, they marked the arrival of grandson Max Jacob, born to Aviva and Yoni Freiden (MHA '96, FYOS '00) of Memphis. Mazel tov to siblings and MHA students Benny, Dahlia and Margalit.

Rabbi Menachem and **Debbi** (**Brown**) **Nissel** (MHA '76, YOS '80) of Jerusalem, who welcomed two grandchildren in recent months. On April 30, baby boy Yitzy was born to Shaya and Aviva Rubin of Jerusalem. Mazel tov also to his siblings, Yehoshua and Lea. On June 22, Noa and Rabbi Dovid Nissel of Miami, Florida, celebrated the arrival of daughter Channa Ori. Mazel tov to big sisters Shevi, Tali and Sarah.

Rabbi Eliyahu and **Devorah** (**Sharon Wolff) Herbst** (YOS '80) of Lakewood, New Jersey, on the June 27 birth of grandson Chaim Pinchas to parents Avraham Yitchak and Chani Orlowek, also of Lakewood.

Marc (MHA '77) and Jan (Slutsky) Hanover (MHA '77, YOS '81) of Memphis on the birth of a grandson to parents Alexandra and Andrew Hanover.

Ilene (Brown) Kravetsky (MHA '78, YOS '82) of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, on the June 19 birth of granddaughter Chava Leah to parents Tuvia and Shoshana Kravetsky of Edison, New Jersey.

Rabbi Daniel and Lauren
(Chafetz) Roth (MHA '84,
YOS '88) of Lakewood, New
Jersey, on the March 27 birth
of granddaughter Sarah Esther
to parents Yocheved and
Yaacov Roth, also of Lakewood.
Mazel tov also to big brother
Mordechai.

Elisheva and **Rabbi Simcha Mirvis** (MHA '85) of Moshav
Sdeh Ilan, Israel, on the June 14
birth of granddaughter Sichi L'El
Yehida. Her proud parents are
Leah Nehora and Nveh Tal of
Tzfat, Israel. Mazel tov also to
great-grandparents David and **Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis** (MHA '62)
of Memphis.

Jonathan and Sarah (Fink) Wachtel (MHA '88, YOS '92)

of Beit Shemesh, Israel, who recently celebrated the arrival of two grandchildren. A practicing doula, she was on-hand to welcome both babies with open arms! On July 13, Shira and Sam Wachtel of Ramat Beit Shemesh, Israel, welcomed daughter Emuna Rina. On Aug. 18, Michal and Benjamin Wachtel (FYOS '13) of Memphis became parents with the birth of baby girl Skylar. Mazel tov also to greatgrandmother **Gerry (Margolin** Fink) Platsky (MHA '59) of Jerusalem.

Josh and **Tali (Bacaner) Levy** (MHA '00, FYOS '04) of New Milford, New Jersey, on the July 11 birth of baby boy Micah Oliver. Mazel tov also to siblings Serena and Henry.

Shaked and **Rivka (Cherney) Raibi** (FYOS '04) of Herzliya,
Israel, on the Aug. 22 arrival of daughter Daniella.

Emily and **Chaim Eli Safier** (MHA '02, FYOS '06) of Skokie, Illinois, on the June 6 arrival of son Liam Natan, making Eitan a big brother. The baby's middle name is a tribute to Rav Nota Greenblatt, *z'l*, one of the founders of the MHA.

Chaim and **Tova (Safier) Frenkel** (MHA '04, FYOS '08) of Atlanta, Georgia, who welcomed daughter Sadie Marie on June 9. Mazel tov also to big sister Adira.

Yaakov and **Gabby (Harkavy) Berger** (MHA '06) of Tekoa, Israel, on the Sept. 8 arrival of baby boy Shachar Tuvia Achishena. Mazel tov also to big sister Levana and grandparents Diane and **Alan Harkavy** (MHA '77) of Jerusalem.

Ari and Molly (Brakha) Hagler (MHA '07, FYOS '11) of Memphis on the Aug. 31 arrival of son Zak. Mazel tov also to big sister and MHA preschooler Allie and grandparents Menashe and Ronit (Sauer) Brakha (MHA '83, YOS '87) of Memphis.

Ariel Futter and **Alexa Wender** (MHA '08, FYOS '12) of Riverdale, New York, on the April 8 birth of their first child, daughter Meira. Mazel tov also to grandparents Penina and **Elliot Wender** (MHA '79, YOS '83) of Memphis and Dror and **Karen (Sigel) Futter** (MHA '78) of Teaneck, New Jersey.

Avigail and **Efroni Schlesinger** (MHA '09) of Jerusalem, Israel, who became parents June 30 with the arrival of baby boy Amichai Yehoshua. Mazel tov also to

grandparents David and **Linda (Ostrow) Schlesinger** (MHA '74) of Memphis.

Sarah and **Natanel Brakha** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) of Memphis on the May 20 arrival of son Samuel, making Eli a big brother. Mazel tov also to grandparents Menashe and **Ronit (Sauer) Brakha** (MHA '83, YOS '87).

Tamar and **Bryan Itkowitz** (MHA '10, FYOS '14) of Givat Shmuel, Israel, on the April 15 arrival of their first child, daughter Nili Minna.

Eitan and Eliana (Schlesinger)
Hornstein (MHA '13, FYOS '17) of Ramat Beit Shemesh,
Israel, who became parents on
Sept. 1 with the birth of son
Elisha Reuven. Mazel tov also to
grandparents David and Linda
(Ostrow) Schlesinger (MHA '74).

Danielle Deutsch and **Gary Goldmeier** (FYOS '17) of New
York City on the May 18 birth of
their first child, daughter Serena
Rose.

BNEI/BNOT MITZVAH:

Mazel tov to:

Roslyn and **Lester Lit** (MHA '57) of Memphis on the July 30 bar mitzvah celebration for their grandson Kenny Wertheimer, daughter of Memphians Illysa and Michael Wertheimer.

Rabbi Joey and **Melissa (Freiden) Friedman** (MHA '79, YOS '83)
of Denver, Colorado, on their
grandson Noam becoming
a bar mitzvah April 2. Mazel
tov to proud parents Tzvi and
Brittney Friedman of Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania.

Josh (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and Elana (Krupp) Kahane (MHA '92) of Memphis on the Aug. 20 bar mitzvah of their son Daniel, an eighth grader at MHA. Mazel tov also to grandparents Michael and Ricki (Thomas) Krupp (MHA '66, YOS '70) and Joanne (alumni committee chair) and Joel Kahane, all of Memphis.

Davida and **Yoni Graber** (MHA '97, FYOS '01) of Atlanta, Georgia, on the Aug. 27 bar mitzvah of their son, Ami. Mazel tov also to grandparents Pammy and **Glenn Graber** (MHA '74, YOS '78). Ari and **Shirli (Freiden) Gotlib** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) of Detroit, Michigan, on the forthcoming bar mitzvah of their son Max on Oct. 29. Mazel tov also to grandparents Debbie and **Hugh** (**Freiden) Gordon** (MHA '72, YOS '76).

Head of school Rabbi Yisroel and Suri (Samberg) Weiner (MHA '99, FYOS '03), now of Memphis, on the June 12 bat mitzvah of their daughter Chana, which was celebrated in Phoenix, Arizona. Mazel tov also to grandparents Cantor Aryeh and Adina Samberg (former MHA faculty members) and Mordechai and Devorah (Adler) Weiner (YOS '82) of Providence, Rhode Island.

Richard (MHA '99, FYOS '03) and Aviva (Krupp) Lewis (MHA '02, FYOS '06) of Memphis on the Sept. 4 bat mitzvah of their daughter Abby, an MHA sixth grader. Mazel tov to grandparents Teri and Larry Graber (MHA '71, YOS '75) and Michael and Ricki (Thomas) Krupp (MHA '66, YOS '70), all of Memphis.

MAZEL TOV!

SEND US YOUR ALUMNI NEWS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE AT ALUMNI@MHAFYOS.ORG.



THE MHA CLASSES OF 1957-1965

Where are they now?



Devora (Nayowitz) Rothenberg (MHA '58), the eldest of Rabbi Joseph *z'l* and Mrs. Libby Nayowitz's children, was a member of the MHA's second graduating class.

"I am widowed, living in Bnei Brak, Israel, and still doing some business teaching English," she said. "I am blessed, thank G-d, with a family of five sons and two daughters, plus many lovely grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"The Academy was basically one big family at the time. We enjoyed shabbatons and celebrated holidays like Pesach and Sukkot in the school. My father, who was MHA principal during the early years, felt that emphasizing many of these Jewish traditions was beneficial for growing the religious community.

(from left) Fradi (Nayowitz) Lampert, **Devora (Nayowitz) Rothenberg** (MHA '58), Mrs. Libby Nayowitz (retired MHA faculty member who recently celebrated her 99th birthday!), Chavi (Nayowitz) Katz (longtime first grade teacher at MHA), Rivka (Nayowitz) Aderet and **Reuven Nayowitz** (MHA '60).

Many of the students at the school were from traditional or secular homes, rather than Orthodox."

She could not pinpoint just one favorite experience from her time at the MHA. "There are many, many small memories that hardly anyone today can share or appreciate."



Robert Appleson (MHA '61) and his wife live in Skokie, Illinois. They have three married children and 10 grandchildren.

He holds a Ph.D. in mathematics and is retired from a career as vice president of a collegiate accreditation organization.

Appleson recently published his third book, <u>Signals from Structure</u>: <u>Unlocking the Torah's Patterns</u>.

THE MHA CLASSES OF 1957-1965

Where are they now?

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He is grateful for the wonderful education he received at the MHA and the outstanding role models he had in his teachers, especially Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, z'l, and Mrs. Joyce Shankman, z'l.

He hopes his schoolmates are enjoying their lives in health and happiness.

Sherry (Goldman) Luber (MHA '62) is retired and living in Jerusalem, Israel, with her husband. They have five grown daughters and 23 grandchildren.

She very much enjoyed her years growing up in Memphis. She fondly remembers Israel Day activities at the MHA, with friendly competition between the blue and white teams. Her favorite teachers were Rabbi David Rebibo, Rabbi Efraim and Mrs. Miriam Greenblatt, z'l, and Mrs. Lucille Jackson.

Luber would love to hear from her MHA classmates.

Emily (Evensky) Steinberg (MHA '63) lives in Memphis with her husband, Alvin. Both retired, they have three daughters—alumnae Penina (Rebecca Steinberg) Simon (MHA '91), Rene (Steinberg) Blitz (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and Jenny (Steinberg) Sved (MHA '99, FYOS '03)—and seven grandchildren. These days, much of her time is devoted to volunteering at Baron Hirsch Congregation and traveling to visit her children and grandchildren in New York, Philadelphia and Maryland.

Among her fondest childhood memories is participating in Memphis's Cotton Carnival by the Mississippi River, where the MHA had a float and a booth. "The Cotton Carnival was a big event when I was growing up," Steinberg recalled. "When I was in first grade, David Bennett and I were carnival 'pages,' and we got to march in Crump Stadium.

"During those early years, everyone at the MHA was good friends. I remember shabbatons at the school.



The Steinberg family in 2017, the last time they were all together before COVID.



Emily (Evensky) Steinberg (second from right) with her daughters (from left) Jenny (Steinberg) Sved (MHA '99, FYOS '03), Rene (Steinberg) Blitz (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and Penina (Rebecca Steinberg) Simon (MHA '91) in 2019.

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THE MHA CLASSES OF 1957-1965

Where are they now?

We slept on the floor of the gym in sleeping bags; it was fun! We ate our meals together and sang for hours."

Steinberg has wonderful memories of dancing in the school's theatrical productions and Purim talent shows. Another memory that stands out in her mind is when teacher Miss Miriam Ross, z'l, got married and became Mrs. Cheruff. Her entire kindergarten class was invited, and Rivki (Nayowitz) Aderet served as the flower girl.

Her favorite MHA teachers included Mrs. Miriam Greenblatt, z'l, and Rabbi David Rebibo. She hopes all her classmates are well and wishes everyone a *shana tova* (good new year).



Carnival in 1957

Steve Katz (MHA '64) lives in Memphis with his spouse of 27 years. Holding a master's degree and two doctorates, he retired as professor emeritus of music and English at Southwest Tennessee Community College. Katz continues to teach piano lessons to adults in his home studio and to arrange piano music.



"My sweet and wonderful parents, Memphians

Lena and Kolman Katz, died within two weeks of each other in 2006. I miss them every day," he shared.

He cherishes the memory of Rabbi Joseph Nayowitz, z'l, pinching his cheek at school and telling him he was a good boy. "I adored that man," Katz said.



"Mrs. Phyllis Wahl, z'l, was one of the best teachers I've ever had at any level," he said. "She expected more than any previous instructor had, and she received it. She was brilliant! Of course, Rabbi Efraim and Mrs. Miriam Greenblatt, z'l, were angelic beyond description."

He hopes his classmates will be able to get together sometime soon and catch up.

Academy Memories

A poem by Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis (MHA '62)

Rabbi Joseph Nayowitz was our principal young, enthusiastic, so many ideas, learning as he went asking us questions, making us think growing a day school a new experience in an America that valued the melting pot.

He walked around and smiled at us and did jumping jacks with us when we moved out East every morning in the front, we'd raise the Israeli and the American flag.

The old building was like a cavern and my mother made curtains for my first grade class a bright spot.

In Sheila Abraham's kindergarten class I colored and colored and colored big murals with my friends she would smile.

Miriam (Ross) Cheruff made the Shabbos parties soft little challah rolls, candles and grape juice and we'd lie on the floor and listen to records, stories I remember "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" open sesame.

My first grade teachers
Celia Lefkowitz
who took us to her house
and we picked pecans from her trees
and had hot cocoa

and Libby Nayowitz who spoke and wrote Hebrew sentences on the board and I was thrilled I could read them.

Miriam Greenblatt
my second grade teacher
oh, the stories and the games
and dancing and singing
Achshav b'eretz Yisroel! heh!
and my special Ashrei pasuk
"Close is the one who calls on Hashem in truth"
she gave it to me
we all had our own
to be ready to recite out loud.

Mr. Fisher
in third and fourth grade
his class was filled with music
I loved his choir and singing
"Lightly row, o'er the hills and dales we go"
and he chose me to be the Statue of Liberty
"Give me your tired, your poor."

Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt
Sixth grade
his stories, oh his stories
of fighting for Israel
during the War of Independence
we were there, with him, all the way.

Rabbi David Rebibo fourth through ninth Ani Maamin, Ha Palmach, Kinneret

ACADEMY MEMORIES

A poem by Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis (MHA '62)

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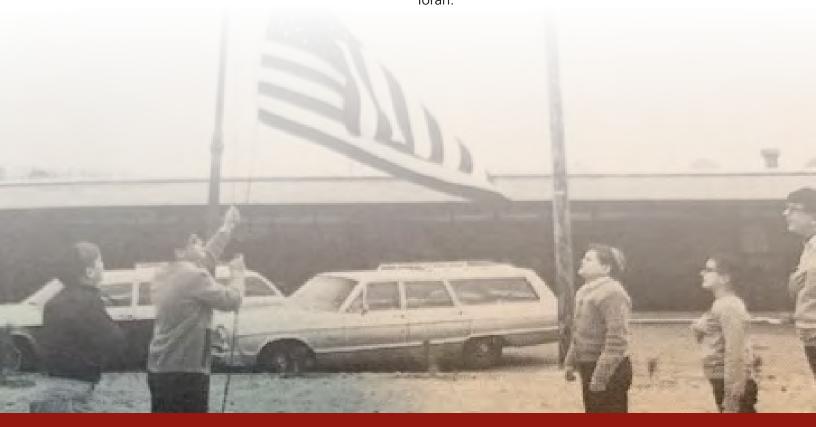
oh, the Jewish music he taught us in the choir, Shabbos at the school we all spent the evening together giggles, food, davening walks and talks the love for Hebrew, for Torah. He made us keep a journal and answer two questions every day: What is the most important thing you learned today? How will you apply it to your life? I still have mine.

His brother came from France and taught us French and Algebra we all had French accents from then on.

Rabbi Nota taught us Talmud ancient texts, within reach.

Joyce Shankman she read Shakespeare to us out loud the whole play "Much Ado about Nothing" she was every character.

We saw ourselves
we learned about the world
we had been together for so many years
read Exodus
my class, many children of Holocaust Survivors
never spoken about until that year
and then in slant
and we had to write and write
and read and read and speak and listen.
We were in plays every year
operettas
music, color, costumes, words and pictures
and the light of
Torah.



2022 scholarship banquet honors seven decades of alumni leaders



Recognized at the banquet were alumni (from left) **Lester Lit** (MHA '57), **Mike Stein** (MHA '68, YOS '72), **Lee Baum** (MHA '74), **Sandra (Loterstein) Osdoba** (MHA '76, YOS '80), **Amara Levine-Reich** (MHA '94, FYOS '97 and editor of this publication), **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) and **Jamie (Epstein) Gibber** (MHA '10, FYOS '14).

Supporters of the MHA/FYOS gathered at Baron Hirsch Congregation on Monday evening, May 30 for the school's 72nd annual scholarship banquet.

In recognition of the MHA serving the Jewish community of Memphis for more than 70 years, the event honored seven alumni who represent its seven decades of graduates. All seven of the honorees have chosen to live in Memphis and have dedicated themselves to bettering the local Jewish community and supporting the MHA/FYOS. The banquet also included a <u>farewell tribute</u> to outgoing head of school Rabbi Benjy Owen for his seven years of service in Memphis.

Banquet attendees were treated to an evening of fine dining, photo displays depicting school memories from 1949 to today and an exceptional video presentation highlighting MHA history and the seven alumni honorees. (The touching video is available for viewing here, and an electronic version of the journal distributed at the dinner is accessible here.)

Placed on each of the tables at the banquet were MHA/FYOS trivia questions prepared by the alumni committee. The questions are provided below so that you too can have some fun with them. (No contest or prize for these; just enjoy.)

The banquet theme was "Strong roots, bright future." Indeed, our school is deeply rooted in the heart of the Memphis Jewish community, and its rich history is embodied in the hundreds of talented and committed graduates it has produced over the past 70 years. Additionally, with current MHA/FYOS enrollment at its highest in years, the future of our school looks brighter than ever.

Banquet trivia questions

- 1. One of the banquet honorees briefly served as a faculty member at our school. Which honoree is it, and what did they teach?
- 2. In 1949, there was only one Sabbath-observant family in the city of Memphis. The family's two children became longstanding pillars of our community. Who is this brother/sister duo?
- 3. Who was the guest speaker at the dedication of the Yeshiva of the South in 1966?
- 4. Who taught kitah aleph (first grade) when the MHA first opened its doors?
- 5. In addition to the honoree mentioned in question 1, we know of at least 17 other alumni who have taught at the school. How many can you name?
- 6. What special crowd-pleasing lunch was served every Friday when Mrs. Sharon Goldfein, z'l, was in charge of the kitchen?
- 7. For many years, the middle school performed annual plays for the community. What type of plays did they perform, and who directed them?
- 8. Former head of school Rabbi Eliyahu Hartman was often quoted as saying, "Moshiach is coming, and he's arriving on a bus." Why did he say that?
- 9. In what year was the first issue of the MHA/FYOS alumni newsletter published?
- 10. What Memphis couple conceived of and implemented the varsity-alumni basketball game and ran the event for its first 15 years?
- 11. Who was the first female president of the school's board of trustees?
- 12. What was the original name of the school, before it became the Margolin Hebrew Academy?
- 13. The MHA's first head of school was related to a current member of our community. What was his name, to whom was he related and how?
- 14. What caused our school population to dramatically increase in just a few days in 2005?
- 15. Who was the "Judo Jew," and why was he given that nickname?
- 16. Our basketball team was not always called the Macs (Maccabees). Under what other names did our team play?
- 17. Which board president oversaw the establishment of the alumni committee and the alumni newsletter?
- 18. Who began the tradition of speaking about each student as they receive their diploma at graduation?
- 19. What musical play did the junior high school perform in 1980, and who played the lead?
- 20. Why did three generations of MHA students make a point of stopping by the office to say hello to Mrs. Naomi Finkelstein? (Hint: It wasn't just her sunny personality.)
- 21. What was the students' absolute favorite lunch prepared by Georgia Thomas?

SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

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- 22. How many past national presidents of NCSY are alumni of our school, and how many can you name?
- 23. Which alumnus won MVP at the YU Sarachek basketball tournament?
- 24. Which alum placed first in the national Chidon HaTanach competition in 2011 and went on to place ninth in the international competition?
- 25. Which alum initiated the successful "100 New Families" program in 2014 to grow our community and continues to work on its implementation?

Answers

- 1. Lester Lit (MHA '57), Latin.
- 2. Carl Kaplan and Miriam (Kaplan) Greenblatt.
- 3. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, z'l.
- 4. Rabbi Nathan (Nota) Greenblatt, z'l.
- 5. Gerri (Margolin) Fink-Platsky (MHA '59), Carol (Smith) Samuels (MHA '60), Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis (MHA '62), Barbara (Katz) Kutner (MHA '64, YOS '68), Rabbi Nechemiah (Harry) Kibel, z'l (MHA '65, YOS '69), Irvin Skopp (MHA '69), Francie Schneider (MHA '72, YOS '76), Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz (MHA '76, YOS '80), Chana (Anet Yaffe) Silver (MHA '76, YOS '80), Peninah (Fink) Salid (MHA '82, YOS '86), Chavi (Adler) Greenblatt (MHA '83), Ronit (Sauer) Brakha (MHA '83, YOS '87), Ruth Samuels (MHA '86, YOS '90), Deena (Katz) Yarmush (MHA '94, FYOS '97), Rabbi Dovid Safier (MHA '00, FYOS '04), Bracha (Stein) Einhorn (MHA '04, FYOS '08) and Chana (Joffre) Goldstone (MHA '08).
- 6. Vegetable soup and grilled cheese.
- 7. Shakespeare, Dr. Jerry Kutliroff.
- 8. The advent of "bussing" in the 1960s as part of the desegregation of the public schools led to surging enrollment at the MHA.
- 9. 2014.
- 10. Joanne and Joel Kahane.
- 11. Aileen Cooper.
- 12. Memphis Hebrew Academy.
- 13. Rabbi Alfred Fruchter, z'l, was Gila Golder's grandfather.
- 14. Refugees from Hurricane Katrina who came to Memphis from New Orleans.
- 15. Rabbi Yaacov Goldfein, z'l, was a black belt and taught judo to the boys after school.

SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

- 16. Bruins and Lions.
- 17. Dr. Joel Siegel.
- 18. Dr. Jerry and Shelley Kutliroff.
- 19. "Fiddler on the Roof," Pace Cooper (MHA '77, YOS '81) played Tevye.
- 20. She kept candy in her desk drawer.
- 21. Fried chicken.
- 22. Seven: Allan Katz (MHA '65, YOS '69), Morris Goldstein (MHA '73), Devorah (Adler) Weiner (YOS '82), Dana (Chafetz) Berlin (MHA '92, FYOS '96), Sarah (Emerson) Helfand (MHA '95, FYOS '98), Denah Emerson (MHA '01, FYOS '05) and JJ (Ariel) Kampf (MHA '13, FYOS '17).
- 23. Josh Kahane (MHA '93, FYOS '97).
- 24. Asher Finkelstein (MHA '11).
- 25. Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky (MHA '99).

Coming home

By Suri (Samberg) Weiner (MHA '99, FYOS '03)

In our circles, "coming home" usually refers to being zoche (meriting) to move to Israel. I cannot say I have truly come home in that regard, but I have returned to what's often referred to as the Jerusalem of the South — my hometown of Memphis, Tennessee.

For the past 11 years, I've lived in Phoenix, Arizona, with my husband Rabbi Yisroel Weiner and our children. This summer, he stepped into the role of head of school at the MHA/FYOS, from which I graduated almost 20 years ago. I remember all those times I said as a kid that if I was principal, I would make sure we never had tests and could enjoy recess all day. Living that dream vicariously through my husband's position is not exactly as I imagined it.

All jokes aside, Memphis has shown us a nice, warm Southern welcome since our arrival. Moving isn't easy, but everyone has been very helpful to ensure we transitioned smoothly. Members of the community have left gifts for us and our children at our door multiple times. That aspect of Memphis has not changed since my days growing up here.

However, some things have changed. There are many new families who have moved to town in recent years, and it's wonderful to see all they bring to the community in their own unique way. At the same time, it's heartening to see the stalwarts remain involved in our institutions and ensuring that Judaism in Memphis remains vibrant and strong. It's also exciting that there are some places I can get to on my own — even without the GPS.

Despite having been back here for only two months, I appreciate going to a simcha, like a *bris*, and knowing the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. There are many other MHA/FYOS alumni living here who have children attending the school, and it's fun to refer back together to the various memories, differences and similarities in the community.

I want to thank alumni coordinator Joanne Kahane, newsletter editor **Amara Levine-Reich** (MHA '94, FYOS '97) and the many others who are involved with putting together this amazing publication. I've always read this alumni newsletter feeling like a bit of an outsider, since I was not living in Memphis. When I came back, I felt up to date on the happenings at the school, thanks to reading up on the various initiatives over the past few years. So keep reading; G-d has a sense of humor and you too may end up coming home soon, even if you don't yet know it!

Wishing y'all a shana tova!





In loving memory of Rabbi Bruce Rachlin, z'l

We were saddened to learn that Rabbi Bruce Rachlin, who served as MHA/YOS head of school from 1988 to 1991, passed away on May 2.

The Rachlins moved to Memphis from Australia, where he served as a school administrator. Rabbi Rachlin was passionate about Jewish education and devoted his entire career to it. During his tenure in Memphis, he said, "The wonder in education is in everyday infinitesimal changes. The fact learned today becomes a new understanding tomorrow. To be an educator is to seek and love those changes and ultimately to love change itself."

Perhaps Rabbi Rachlin's most notable and lasting mark on the MHA was changing the name of eighth grade graduation to "advancement" to convey the message that students must continue to grow in Torah learning into their high school years. Referring to the occasion as an advancement ceremony remains MHA tradition to this day.

Reflecting his wholehearted belief in the power of the day school movement, Rabbi Rachlin wrote in 1991, "I believe that a community cannot survive without authentic Torah education. American Jewry is decimated by the assimilatory process. Nothing can come from nothing. Without Jewish education, all that remains is sentiment, which soon dwindles to Jewish nothingness."

In 1991, after three years of leading the MHA/YOS, the Rachlins relocated to New Jersey, where he

assumed an administrative position in Teaneck. In his parting words to the Memphis community, Rabbi Rachlin noted, "As my family and I contemplate a change in our lives, we do so with unreserved enthusiasm. We hope that if we leave some small legacy, it is our own enthusiasm for change."

After their time in New Jersey, the Rachlins took a one-year sabbatical in Jerusalem. They then returned to the U.S. so he could assume the role of head of school at Beth Tfiloh in Baltimore, Maryland.

Upon retiring from his career as a day school administrator, Rabbi Rachlin and his wife Joyce moved to Israel, where they could be close to their son, daughter-in-law, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. The Rachlins also have a daughter and two grandchildren in California and a daughter, son-in-law and two more grandchildren in Maryland.

Rabbi Rachlin's final professional endeavor was the publication of a book, <u>Avraham Avinu: A</u> <u>Contemporary Biography</u>.

We send our deepest condolences to Joyce and to their children Aryeh, Aliza and Michal. May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem, and may Rabbi Rachlin's memory always be a blessing.



Rabbi Rachlin at the MHA Chag HaChumash in 1989.



Rabbi Rachlin at the MHA program commemorating Yom Hashoah (Holocaust memorial day) in 1990.



Rabbi Bruce and Mrs. Joyce Rachlin at their granddaughter's wedding.



Rabbi Bruce and Mrs. Joyce Rachlin at their granddaughter's wedding.



Rabbi Rachlin with his second-youngest grandchild, Hilde. Regrettably, he was only able to meet his youngest grandchild, Gideon, over a video call due to COVID.



Rabbi Rachlin with his great-grandson, Eitan.

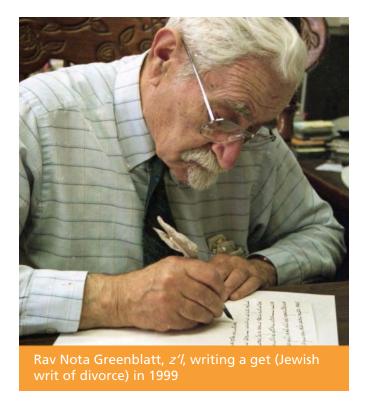


In loving memory of MHA founder Rav Nota Greenblatt, z'l

The MHA/FYOS family, and the Jewish world at large, mourned a tremendous loss with the passing of Rabbi Nathan "Nota" Greenblatt on April 29 at the age of 96. Without Rav Nota's visionary leadership, tireless effort and loving guidance over more than seven decades, there would be no Jewish day school in Memphis. Everyone associated with the MHA/FYOS will forever be indebted to him.

Many beautiful tributes to Rav Nota's remarkable life have been published in the months since his passing, and below are links to a few available online. Here, we've chosen to focus on his legacy as it relates to our school and the Memphis Jewish community — recognizing that his incomparable impact stretches far and wide.

Born in Washington, D.C., where his father was a synagogue rabbi, he spent parts of his childhood in New York and pre-state Israel. Recognized at a young age for his brilliant mind and diligence in learning, Rav Nota studied with some of the greatest Torah leaders of the 20th century, including the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. At Rabbi Feinstein's yeshiva, Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem on Manhattan's Lower East Side, Rav Nota was, in his early 20s, entrusted with the responsibility of answering questions on halacha (Jewish law) from Jews all around the world. (More than 70 years later, on May 1, 2022, Rav Nota's funeral service was held at MTJ.)





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In 1949, Rav Nota saw a job posting for a synagogue cantor and teacher for a "Talmud Torah" (after-school Torah study program) at Anshei Sphard Congregation in Memphis, Tennessee. With encouragement from his father and rabbinic mentors in New York, Rav Nota moved down South to share his knowledge and talents where they were needed most.

While teaching at the Talmud Torah, he quickly realized that after-school Jewish education was not a sustainable model for the long term. Establishing a comprehensive Jewish day school in Memphis became his passion project.

"When Rabbi Greenblatt, z'l, said he was starting a Jewish day school in Memphis, people in town invoked the Yiddish expression, 'Es ver geshen ven bay mir vet oyvakvsn hor af der dlonye' — it will happen when hair grows on the palm of my hand," said Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis (MHA '62). "It wasn't a popular idea at that time, when America was seen as a big melting pot and somehow it seemed un-American not to attend public school.

"But he was a visionary and knew it was crucial that children receive a deeper Torah education along with their general studies. He didn't let anything stop him. He was passionate, dedicated and confident his dream would be a reality with the help of Hashem."

Together with his friend Rabbi Sy Kutner, z'l, Rav Nota went from household to household, trying



News story from the Memphis Press-Scimitar on Rav Nota's induction as cantor of Anshei Sphard Congregation in 1949.

to convince Jewish parents to send their children to a Jewish school. Within the year, about 35 kindergarteners and first graders were enrolled at the fledgling Memphis Hebrew Academy.

"The day Rabbi Greenblatt and Rabbi Kutner came to my house when I was a little girl changed our family forever," Mirvis said. "My parents, Dotty and Harold Katz, z'l, had just built a house on Hawthorne and saw that Vollentine Elementary School around the corner would be perfect for their growing family. But when Rabbi Greenblatt and Rabbi Kutner told them about the new day school, they were excited and enrolled me in kindergarten. It would be a place of deep Torah learning integrated with general studies in an immersive Jewish environment that was imbued with the ideals of love for Torah, the Jewish people and the newly emerging state of Israel. Rabbi Greenblatt lit a fire of enthusiasm in the hearts of early pioneers like my parents, and no one reported any hair growing in the palm of their hands."

Rav Nota feared students wouldn't come to the school in the early days if it wasn't free. In lieu of tuition, community members stepped up to ensure the MHA's success, donating generously and holding bake sales and other fundraisers.

Although Rav Nota had learned Torah at the most advanced levels, he taught *aleph-bet* (the Hebrew alphabet) and the basics of Jewish observance to six-and seven-year-olds during the MHA's first couple

of years. After two years, Rav Nota stepped away from a formal position at the school and assumed an advisory role. He took no salary from the school at any point.

"I remember being a boarder at Rav Nota's house when I was attending the Yeshiva of the South," said **Kathy (Alyesh) Dardashty** (YOS '85). "He and his wife were very kind to me, and they never asked for any payment since they knew my parents were struggling financially. I was very saddened to hear about his passing."

Dr. Jerry Kutliroff sought Rav Nota's counsel on multiple occasions during his tenure as head of school. "When a parent of one of our high school students was scheduled for surgery, a teacher asked if we could cancel classes that day and say *Tehillim* (Psalms) instead," Dr. Kutliroff said. "I told him it would be better to dedicate the day of learning to the surgery's success and the parent's recovery.

"A few minutes later, Rav Nota came into the school [as he often did]. I figured I'd better cover my bases and ask whether I did the right thing. He said in his self-effacing way, 'When I came to Memphis, one of the things I promised myself is that I shall not always be liked and I have kept that promise.' I took that to mean that I should do what I thought was right, without worrying that some might not be pleased. The way he put it left me with a smile. Rav Nota's legacy is all around us, and partly within us."

Rav Nota regarded the founding of the MHA as one of his greatest accomplishments. The school remained close to his heart throughout his life, and he cited his desire to ensure its continued success as his primary reason for remaining in Memphis for 70 years. He had the privilege of seeing the fruits of his labor, as attendees of the school and their families adopted greater Jewish observance and grew in Torah learning.

"Rav Nota was my *mesader kiddushin* (wedding officiant) — as well as my parents' and my grandparents'," said **Charles LaVene** (MHA '05, FYOS '09), referencing Rav Nota's longevity of service to the Memphis community.

Around the same time as the founding of the MHA, Rav Nota met and married Miriam Kaplan, a daughter of one of the few *shomer Shabbos* (Sabbath observant) families in Memphis at the time. Their first date was on a city bus and then taking a walk together. Together the Greenblatts built a home founded on Torah values and raised five children — Rabbi Dovid Greenblatt (MHA '65), Rochel (Greenblatt) Lapidus (MHA '68), Leah (Greenblatt) Fink (MHA '71), Rabbi Jacob Greenblatt (MHA '72) and Joey Greenblatt (MHA '74).

Rav Nota spent much of his career on the road, traveling to communities and small towns across the U.S. to provide whatever services they needed. He performed *bris milahs* (circumcisions), built *mikvahs*

(ritual baths) and *eruvs* (enclosures to allow for carrying on Shabbat), supervised kosher *shechitah* (animal slaughter) and food production, and wrote many *gittin* (Jewish divorce papers). He was known throughout middle America and beyond as an expert resource on these complex areas of *halacha*.

"I lived in Nashville in 1979 and then belonged to a Conservative congregation that still publicly maintained its commitment to the standards of kashrut," said Robert Appleson (MHA '62). "One day, the rabbi noticed something questionable in the kitchen and called Rav Nota, as the *kashrut* authority in the region, to ask about it. Rav Nota confirmed it was a problem, but the congregation refused to stop using the item in question. So great was Rav Nota's standing with this rabbi that he told his board he could not serve if they did not accept Rav Nota's authority — even though the rabbi had accepted other non-Orthodox innovations. As a result, the rabbi let himself be fired. Not only did this incident greatly contribute to my decision to be part of the Orthodox community, but also it speaks volumes about the respect for Torah Rav Nota conveyed."

"I was zoche (merited) to have Rav Nota stay in our house in Albany, New York, quite a few times when he was writing gittin with my husband," said Rochel (Roberta Burman) Bomzer (YOS '68). "Rav Nota was very midakdek (exacting) with the writing and the signatures. His only request of me as a host was sardines in water. I offered to buy them in olive oil, and his answer was always that the water was





These photos were submitted by **Elana (Sadetsky) Avis** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and are displayed on the fireplace mantle in her home. On the left, young Elana is seated with Rav Nota at an anniversary party for her parents, Gregory and Tsilya Sadetsky, at the home of Pearl, z', and Izzy Katz. On the right is Rav Nota at Elana's wedding in 2003. "These pictures are so special to us," she said. "Rav Nota helped my family in so many ways."

healthier. He always traveled with food from his *rebbetzin* (wife)."

Although he was often away from home Sunday night to Thursday night, Rav Nota always made time to learn with and care for those in his beloved Jewish community in Memphis.

"One time I had a *chavrusa* with Rav Nota at his house on the Gemara I was learning at the time," said **Jonathan Tavin** (MHA '07, FYOS '11). "I was trying to get to the next topic, and he was compassionately refocusing me on understanding the material well."

Former Memphian Shari Schwartz has never forgotten the compassion Rav Nota showed her family nearly 50 years ago. "Several days after the birth of our first child, we learned he had a heart defect and wouldn't survive long," she said. "It was about 2 a.m., and a friend suggested we call Rav Nota. He answered and said he would take care of everything. He went to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and personally gave our little one a *bris*. He then took him to the Beth El Emeth Cemetery and buried him with his own hands. Rabbi Greenblatt came to visit and ever so gently explained the *halachos* to us and gave us a blessing. He called and visited frequently and cared for me my entire



life. We had four more sons while in Memphis, and Rabbi Greenblatt was as joyful and reverent as a *mohel* could be. His many kindnesses will be treasured forever."

For nearly 50 years after leaving his position as cantor of Anshei, he hosted a weekly Shabbat *minyan* (prayer service) in his home and served as head of the Vaad Hakehilloth of Memphis.

Because so much of Rav Nota's work was performed without fanfare and with no formal association to a particular institution, many did not realize the scope of his involvements or greatness of his scholarship until years later.

"I thought of Rav Nota as a quiet rabbi in the community who had his own kollel and *minyan*," said **Sarah (Harris) Bauer** (FYOS '96). "Not until I stepped out of Memphis did I learn who he truly

was and his *chashivus* (importance). This rabbi who we in Memphis called Rav Nota was a hidden gem. I was shocked by his humility.

"Also, when I was in Israel after high school, a friend and I went to get a *bracha* (blessing) from Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, z'l. When he learned that I was from Memphis, he told me he and Rav Nota used to play stickball together in New York!"

"Rav Nota was 'Uncle Nutty' to me (and others) because that was his way: endlessly unassuming," his nephew **Anshel Kaplan** (MHA '98, FYOS '02) shared on Facebook. "Whether it was the goatee, the tweed hats or suits or the Memphis domicile, Rav Nota never, ever 'dropped out of character' because it wasn't an act out of which to drop. He wanted to hide in plain sight; it was deliberate. And perhaps that provides a bit of solace — he didn't want to be seen as an enormous *talmid chachum* (Torah scholar) or *baal chesed* (who epitomizes loving kindness), in the way we now recognize we should have."

"Rav Nota loved G-d, he loved studying the Torah and fulfilling the Torah, and he loved every one of G-d's children," said **Rabbi Michael Whitman** (MHA '72) in an online video tribute. "He was my *rebbe* and my mentor. There was no one else like him, and no one can replace him."

Portions of this article originally appeared in a story in The Hebrew Watchman by Shoshana Cenker and are reprinted here with permission.

More tributes to the life and legacy of Rav Nota Greenblatt

- Video of May 8 memorial service at the FYOS
 (also accessible on the school's Facebook page),
 including remarks from Jacob Greenblatt, Joey
 Greenblatt and Rabbi Dovid Safier (MHA '00, FYOS '04), among others.
- Video of May 29 shloshim (30-day memorial) service in Israel.
- Video tribute by Rabbi Michael Whitman (MHA '72).
- <u>"The Humblest Mountain"</u> by Shmuel Botnick,
 Mishpacha Magazine, May 24, 2022.



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. 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)!



Richard Lewis (MHA '99, FYOS '03, right) and **Chaim Eli Safier** (MHA '02, FYOS '06, holding his son Eitan) met up at the MHA back-to-school BBQ during Safier's visit to Memphis from his current home in Skokie, Illinois.



Former MHA/FYOS head of school Rabbi Gil Perl (center) reunited with brothers **Zev** (MHA '18, FYOS '22, far left) and **Shlomo Bosin** (MHA '14, FYOS '18) at Camp HASC in upstate New York this July.



Schoolmates (from left) **Kaylee (Kampf) Stahler** (MHA '03, FYOS '07) of Memphis, **Tamara Schachter** (MHA '01, FYOS '05) of New York City and **Jerilyn (Pocrass) Oppenheimer** (MHA '02, FYOS '06) of St. Louis, Missouri, vacationed together in Houston, Texas, in June.



On July 10, **Dovid Thomas** (MHA '00) married Ashley Gabelman in Closter, New Jersey. Pictured here at the wedding are (from left) father of the groom **Stuart Thomas** (MHA '75, YOS '79) with attendees **Lee** (MHA '74) and **Shelby (Winestone) Baum** (MHA '77).



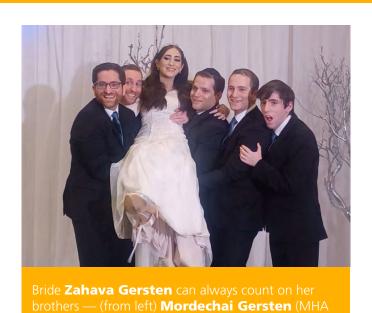
On July 3, **Sophie Ostrow** (FYOS '15) married Daniel Silberstein at Memphis's Baron Hirsch Congregation. Many of Ostrow's schoolmates and teachers were on hand to celebrate with her. Pictured here are (from left) **Shaina (Kirshstein) Salutsky** (FYOS '15), **Sarah (Broniscer) Lent** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), bride **Sophie Ostrow, Racheli Brakha** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), Mrs. Anat Kampf, **Jamie Levy** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Alyssa Wruble** (MHA '11, FYOS '15) and **Meryl Musicante** (MHA '11).

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On April 3, **Zahava Gersten** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) married Binyamin Majowka in Monsey, New York.



Attendees of the joyous occasion included (back row, from left) Rabbi Nosson Schreiber (former MHA/FYOS head of school), **Charlie LaVene** (MHA '05, FYOS '09), **Aharon Marizan** (FYOS '16), **Chaim Gersten** (MHA '13, FYOS '17), **Yosef Gersten** (MHA '07, FYOS '11), Dr. Jerome Kutliroff (former MHA/FYOS teacher and administrator), father of the bride and FYOS administrator Rabbi Yonason Gersten, **Yonadav Tsuna** (MHA '04, FYOS '08), **Lavi Tsuna** (MHA '08, FYOS '12), **Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz** (MHA '76, YOS '80), **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68); (front row, from left) Sharon Soleman, **Rachel (Winestone) Liss** (MHA '10, FYOS '14), bride **Zahava**, groom Binyamin and **Meir Gersten** (MHA '03, FYOS '07).



'00), Meir Gersten (MHA '03, FYOS '07), Shlomo Gersten (MHA '01, FYOS '05), Yosef Gersten (MHA '07, FYOS '11) and Chaim Gersten (MHA



Former classmates and yeshiva roommates **Rabbi Dov Emerson** (MHA '91, left) and **Rabbi Meir (Michael) Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) were
pleasantly surprised to bump into each other
at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, during
Chol Hamoed Pesach. Kudos to them both for
remembering to take a picture and submit it to us!



On a recent visit to Israel, **Lisa (Wruble) Kaufman** (MHA '73, seated) spent time with her cousin **Judy (Baum) Green** (MHA '76, YOS '80, left) and friend **Sima (Greenblatt) Goodman** (MHA '81, YOS '85). Thank you, ladies, for remembering to take a picture of your reunion!



Just in time for inclusion in this issue, we received a picture of several alumni who are currently studying in Israel. Shown here are (standing, from left) **Coby Goldblatt** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Aidan Kahane** (MHA '19), **Moshe Davidovics** (MHA '17, FYOS '21), **Zevi Kirshtein** (FYOS '22), **Benjamin Siegel** (MHA '18, FYOS '22); (seated, from left) **Pinchas Cooperman** (MHA '18) and **Zev Bosin** (MHA '18, FYOS '22).

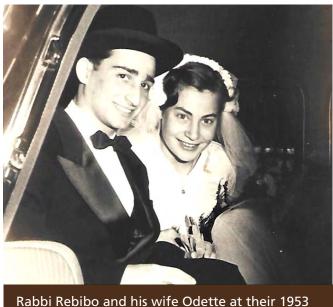


SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

Rabbi David Rebibo

Bringing ancient wisdom, new life to MHA

Although it's been 57 years since Rabbi David Rebibo was on the faculty at MHA, his students from the school's early years continue to feel the impact of his kindness, wisdom, love of music and belief in their future success.



Rabbi Rebibo and his wife Odette at their 1953 wedding.

Journey to Memphis

Born in Morocco, Rebibo went to school in France and later became a close student of Rabbi Avraham Kalmanowitz of the Mir Yeshiva. His mentor advised him he would have an easier time finding rabbinic positions in the U.S., so he and his wife Odette relocated to New York, where he got a teaching job at a Sephardic day school in Brooklyn.

"My wife did not like living in New York and raising a family there, so we were looking for somewhere else," Rabbi Rebibo said. "I got connected with Sam Margolin, z'l, who was recruiting for the growing school he helped found in Memphis, Tennessee. He was very charming and personable, and we made an agreement on the spot."

The Rebibos arrived in Memphis in the mid-1950s during an exciting period of growth for the MHA. Following several years of holding classes in spaces borrowed from local synagogues, the school moved into its own building on White Station Road — where it continues to operate today.

"The community in Memphis embraced us immediately, and we similarly fell in love with them," he said. "The *tzibbur* [congregation] made it a beautiful, wonderful and welcoming place for us."

A master teacher with a lasting impact

During his MHA tenure, Rabbi Rebibo taught Judaic studies to the elementary grades in the mornings and to the junior high school grades in the afternoons.

"I remember Rabbi Rebibo as a strict Hebrew teacher," said **Emily (Evensky) Steinberg** (MHA '63). "I loved listening to his accent — especially when he and his wife would speak French."

"Rabbi Rebibo was my fourth grade teacher about 60 years ago, and I still remember how very much I loved his class," said **Elaine (Riesenberg) Mael** (MHA '67, YOS '71). "We started learning Mishnah that year, and that may be the only time I studied it in a formal classroom. I am grateful to Rabbi Rebibo for the love of learning that he gifted me."

"Rabbi Rebibo was one of the best teachers I ever had, and many things that I learned from him made me a better teacher," said **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68), who subsequently taught at the MHA for 36 years. "He had us fill our notebooks with magazine pictures of the rooms of a house and label the contents in Hebrew. This helped build my Hebrew vocabulary with words that I remember to this day. Under his direction, our class built a model of *mishkan* (tabernacle) with all the *kaylim* (vessels) inside; because of that, my understanding of the *mishkan* was so clear, and it helped me transmit that knowledge to my students."

"He was in his 20s when he was our *rebbe*, but Rabbi Rebibo was wise beyond his years," said **Cheri (Wener) Rubenstein** (MHA '63). "My memories of him include his warm smile and sweet nature. When I think of him, I always feel a sense of inclusion because he wanted to share his love of Judaism and Torah in a way that each of us could understand and appreciate at our own level and in our own time."

"Rabbi Rebibo was my teacher when I was in first grade," said **Jerry Gontownik** (MHA '68, YOS '71). "At the age of six, I stood in awe of him. I

remember him as a very nice man with the darkest black hair. I thought he was incredibly special because he was the first person I saw write in black ink! As an adult, I realized he was mystical and special for something far more compelling: the Jewish communities he nurtured and nourished throughout his career."

"I am grateful to Rabbi Rebibo for making me practice reading Hebrew out loud," said **George Wollner** (MHA '67, YOS '71). "Because of him, I



A trip to the Memphis Zoo in 1957. Pictured are (clockwise from top-right) Rabbi Rebibo, Odette Rebibo holding baby Deborah, son Joel Rebibo (partially hidden), Pearl Katz holding baby Ronnie Katz (MHA '70, YOS '74), Allan Katz (MHA '65, YOS '69) and Izzy Katz holding Karen (Katz) Rubenstein (MHA '69, YOS '72). The Katz family played an important role in helping to establish the MHA.

became a proficient Hebrew reader at the age of eight."

"I consider Rabbi Rebibo to be a significant part of my childhood and a teacher who truly influenced my adult life," said **Debbi Cooper** (MHA '68, YOS '72). "He was my first Hebrew teacher and therefore the one who planted the seed for my settling in Israel. He was my favorite teacher — my six-year-old self recognized how good he was even then!"

Building students' self-worth

Many of Rabbi Rebibo's students still reflect on the confidence he instilled in them.

"The most precious artifact of my Academy days is the journal Rabbi Rebibo had us keep," said **Lynnie** (**Katz**) **Mirvis** (MHA '62). "We had to answer two questions every day: What is the most important thing I learned today? And how can I apply it to my life? That was the first time I remember being asked to reflect on my own experience and to realize my thoughts mattered. That helped me understand I would become a lifelong learner and what I did in the classroom had larger ramifications. I feel so blessed that Rabbi Rebibo was my teacher. Everything I gained from my time with him has somehow found its way back into various aspects of my life."

"Rabbi Rebibo was an amazing *rebbe* and is an amazing person," said **Edie (Ida Sharp) Davis** (MHA '61). "His smile was heartfelt, and he had a



Rabbi Rebibo (right) with Rabbi Yisroel Weiner (new MHA/FYOS head of school) on Purim in 2015 in Phoenix, Arizona, where they both lived at the time.

proprietary interest in all his students. He strove to bring out the best in everyone. I can still hear him telling me, 'Yes, you can! You only need to believe in yourself.' He taught me that I could tackle the hardest debate subject and understand the hardest Rashi."

"He had a love for teaching, and he was so happy when we had learned something well," Mael said. "Rabbi Rebibo had high expectations of us, and it was our delight to reach the goals he set for us."

Bringing music to the MHA halls

Among the gifts Rabbi Rebibo brought to the MHA was a passion for music. He started and directed a school choir and worked with fellow faculty member Mrs. Joyce Shankman, z'l, on theatrical productions performed by the students.



"Mrs. Shankman and I had a good partnership, and the shows became a very popular after-school activity," Rabbi Rebibo recalled. "We put on beautiful productions of Peter Pan and Snow White, and many parents got involved in helping us with the scenery."

"Rabbi Rebibo had such a joyous approach to life, especially when expressed in music," said **Laurie Cooper** (MHA '65). "Some of my favorite memories are of the choir he led. I still remember some of the songs! He is one of my favorite teachers of all time, and he was always so interested in what was going on with all of us."

"I most certainly have fond memories of Rabbi Rebibo," said **Yaakov (Peter) Wollner** (MHA '59). "He was always smiling and cheerful. I remember him singing songs and *bentching* [reciting grace after meals] out loud. I spent a lot of time at his house and learned so much from him. I still consider myself to be his student."

"One of my most cherished memories is singing in the Academy choir," Mirvis said. We were a group of scraggly kids of varying ages with untrained voices, and Rabbi Rebibo whipped us into shape! I carry the music and melodies with me to this day."

Steinberg recalled singing in the choir at the annual MHA banquet under the direction of Rabbi Rebibo.

Moving on to great things

With the MHA well established by the mid-1960s, Torah Umesorah – the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools identified Rabbi Rebibo as a prime candidate to open a new Jewish day school in the growing community in Phoenix, Arizona.

"We knew that Memphis had a strong Jewish communal infrastructure in place, so we went to Phoenix in 1965 to build things there," Rabbi Rebibo said. "We learned in Memphis far more than we taught. The many families that rallied around the MHA left a lasting impression on us."

"Phoenix was a desert for Orthodox Jewry at the time," said **Suri (Samberg) Weiner** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), who lived there with her family for 11 years. "He started the Phoenix Hebrew Academy in 1965 and shortly thereafter started Beth Joseph Congregation. Despite many obstacles in securing students and funds, Rabbi Rebibo persevered and went on to lead both the school and shul for 55 years. Today, the greater Phoenix area boasts multiple Orthodox shuls, day schools and kosher restaurants. This is all thanks to Rabbi Rebibo's

foresight and dedication to bringing Torah to the desert over 50 years ago."

Bringing things full circle, Weiner's husband, Rabbi Yisroel Weiner, worked under Rabbi Rebibo for over a decade as a faculty member and administrator at the Phoenix Hebrew Academy; he recently assumed the role of head of school of the MHA/FYOS.



Rabbi and Mrs. Rebibo during the summer of 2022.

Now retired after a career in Jewish education and communal leadership spanning more than six decades, Rabbi Rebibo and his wife live in Jerusalem.

"Even though we left Memphis almost 60 years ago, we have many beautiful, lasting friendships from our time there," he said. "It's always a pleasure to see my students and their families."

"I so enjoyed being a student of Rabbi Rebibo's," said **Sherry (Goldman) Luber** (MHA '62). "I have

met him and his wife here in Jerusalem on several occasions, and we've enjoyed sharing different things about our lives. I hope we meet again soon on the streets of the holy city of Jerusalem."

Reuven Nayowitz (MHA '60) — whose father, Rabbi Joseph Nayowitz, was principal of the MHA during the Rebibos' time in Memphis — shared a story that perhaps best summarizes Rabbi Rebibo's legacy as an educator.

"We attended a wedding where the groom had grown up in Phoenix," Nayowitz said. "When the mother of the groom got up to speak, she relayed that someone asked her son as a little boy what he wanted to be when he grew up. His immediate and unequivocal answer was, 'I want to be like Rabbi Rebibo.'

"I can only imagine how many other students of Rabbi Rebibo's have felt the same way."

FLASHBACKS 1957-1965

Photographs from the past

The MHA's first class of eighth-grade graduates in 1957 (seated, from left): **Samue** (**Brooksie**) **Gold** (MHA '57), **Nachum** (**Herbie**) **Lansky** (MHA '57) and **Lester Lit** (MHA '57). The girls in the photo are members of the kindergarten class of 1957 (standing, from left): **Lynn** (**Kutner**) **Levine** (MHA '65, YOS '69), Beverly Bilsky and Esther Silber



"To this day, whenever the opportunity arises, Brooksie still brags that he graduated third in his class from the MHA." -Lester Lit

Bricks like this one were given as thank you gifts to the families who helped bring the MHA building on White Station Road to fruition. The inscription reads: "The Builders for G-d, they are beloved."



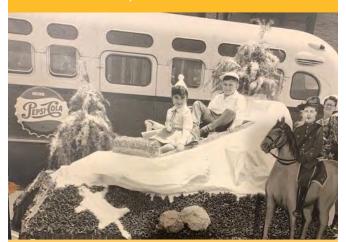
"When I was growing up in Memphis, we were one of only a handful of observant families. Everything I knew about Judaism, I learned from my father. I helped establish the MHA because I wanted my children to have a real Torah education. Once the Academy opened, Yiddishkeit mushroomed in this city." -Izzy Katz, one of the founders of the MHA, father of four alumni and grandfather and greatgrandfather of many more.

Photographs from the past

Gerry (Margolin) Fink-Platsky (MHA '59) donated these artifacts from the school's early years, but she could not recall what they were used for. **Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis** (MHA '62) remembers the decals being displayed in the car windshields of MHA families



Elaine (Goldstein) Strajcher (MHA '61, left) and **Phillip Rubenstein** (MHA '61) on the MHA float at the Memphis Cotton Carnival in 1954.



"The theme of the float was Canada. My mother, Dotty Katz, z'l, made much of the float and the costumes, along with Anna Wollner, z'l, Pearl Katz, z'l and others." -Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis (MHA '62). Performers in a school production included (back row, from left) Emily (Evensky)
Steinberg (MHA '63), Paulette (Goldstein)
Mitchell (MHA '61), Bracha (Barbara Cohn)
Whiter (MHA '61), Sherry Meer (MHA '62);
(front row, from left) Joanne (Wener) Cohen (MHA '65) and Elaine (Goldstein) Strajcher (MHA '61).



"I'm not sure what play this was; we did so many of them. I think this might have been 'The Wizard of Oz.' We all loved doing the plays. I loved to dance, and the plays gave me the opportunity to dance. We all worked so hard, but we loved every minute of it." -Emily (Evensky) Steinberg.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The 25th issue of our newsletter is scheduled for publication around Chanukah. In it, we will highlight the eighth and 12th grade graduates from the years 1981-1985. Members of these classes will receive questionnaires by email (or regular mail) sometime in October. Please return your completed survey promptly so that you can be included.

Our feature story in that issue will spotlight Mrs. Joyce Casada, who taught in the middle school from 1967 to 1992 (and who recently celebrated her 90th birthday). If you have any stories, photos or memories of Mrs. Casada that you would like to share, please send them to Joanne Kahane, alumni chair, at joannekahane111@gmail.com or to her attention at the school's mailing address below. (Note: We will use excerpts from the birthday messages that we received for Mrs. Casada this summer. If you submitted something about her then, there is no need to do so again.)

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



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