

FEATURING LAKEWOOD

Yeshiva Yesodei Hatorah

Each Sunday night, the ezras noshim in Coventry Shul serves as the home for Yeshiva Yesodei Hatorah. The hasmada and bren for learning by the talmidei

HaYeshiva is readily apparent as one walks into the room. It matches the milchamta shel torah that is found in any yeshiva.

Yet what is unique about this

yeshiva is that nearly all participants have never learned in a traditional yeshiva before. They haven't grown up learning Gemorrah since they were ten

years old, getting used to the nuances of a blatt Gemorrah. Yeshiva Yesodei Hatorah helps them shteig in their learning in a traditional yeshiva setting. Its philosophy is simple: to teach authentic Torah learning without the need of external embellishments in a regular yeshiva atmosphere. The talmidim learn together with a chavrusa and hear a shiur on the Gemorah afterward.

The yeshiva was originally established in Baltimore about 14 years ago by Rabbi Tzvi Goode. It has grown from a starting group of ten people learning together in a basement to a full fledged yeshiva where over 400 people gather weekly in its own building. It has also expanded to other cities, such as Silver Springs, Detroit, Atlanta and St. Louis.

Dr. Yaakov Zamel was part of the program in Baltimore; he decided to start one in Lakewood when he moved here two years ago. Dr. Zamel explained how he originally joined Yeshiva Yesodei Hatorah:

"I did not grow up religious, nor since becoming frum have I had the opportunity to learn in Yeshiva for an extended period of time. Since becoming frum, I have tried to make-up for "lost time" in learning by attending shiurim. However, the one program that I feel I have gained from the most is Yesodei HaTorah of Baltimore. Nothing compares to working through a piece of Gemorrah with a Chavrusa on your level, on your own! Working together to figure out the sugyah ourselves, then having the rebbe clarify and explain the sugya in more depth is extremely enriching. Nothing compares to this self-taught, yet rebbe guided style of learning in expanding a novice's skills."

Dr. Zamel approached Rabbi Eziel Munk of Torah Links to get the yeshiva off and running. Last year they opened the Lakewood branch, which is called Ye-

shiva Yesodei Hatorah - Chazon Yechezkel in memory of Chezky Kleiner, a ben Torah who had a special place in his heart for such outreach projects.

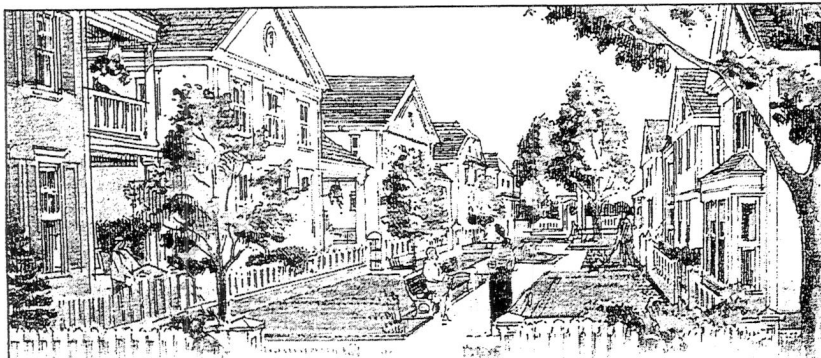
One may choose one of three shiurim, each geared to a specific level of learning. The advanced group, who know how to make a laiming on their own, first learn the Gemorrah with a chavrusa. Rabbi Chaim Moshe Levi says a regular shiur with the meforshim to elaborate on the Gemorrah. The next track is for those who have a rudimentary understanding of a blatt Gemorrah. They first learn it together with Rabbi Yehuda Tendler and review it on their own afterward. Another track spends the entire time with Rabbi Moshe Katz as he explains the essentials of the Gemorrah.

In addition, Rabbi Levi says a weekly Chumash shiur every Tuesday night as he takes the timeless teachings of Chazal and applies them to everyday life and personal growth. A special women's program given by Mrs. Munk gathers every Tuesday morning where they learn Chumash together with Rashi and other meforshim.

The participants relish their weekly yeshiva. They feel proud that it's geared for them, and enjoy the camaraderie of their weekly get-together with those who share the same experience. "There is tremendous excitement when everyone learns together in one place," says Dr. Zamel.

The doctor is quick to point out that aside from their own personal growth, the participants gain in other areas too. "Not only have I grown in Torah, but more than that, I am gaining the life-long tools to teach myself and my children."

After all, this is the foundation of every Torah Jew: to constantly grow in Torah and Yiras Shomayim and to impart these yesodos to future generations.



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