



Dear members of the Eretz Hemdah family,
 May we all flourish spiritually and materially.
 We wish that the entire Jewish people and our country will continue to plant the values of love of one's fellow and love of our Land, wherever we may walk.



To the entire Eretz Hemdah family and friends,
Ours is a phenomenal generation! So asserted Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook zt"l, the teacher and mentor of the Gaon, Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli zt"l.

The spiritual and material achievements, evident to our eyes, when we see the State of Israel, the state of the Jews, and the people of Israel, prospering and flourishing in both domains of life, **the spiritual and the material** - that is phenomenal!

Regretfully, this phenomenon is also accompanied at times by repulsive extremism and contemptible actions that seem to place a cloud over certain areas of life, including those most sensitive to us.
 We open with a prayer: May it be G-d's will that Eretz Hemdah will always stand out positively and raise a generation of leaders who will guide the Jewish people and the State of Israel in the spiritual realm.

Updates from the Beit Midrash

Beit Midrash in Jerusalem

With G-d's help, in the 5776 academic year we will **complete our fourth cycle** of study of the Order of Neziqin and the Shulhan Aruch Hoshen Mishpat - an almost impossible task. We are all but certain that no more than a thousand rabbis (and probably less) in our generation, have managed to complete this task. More than 10% of them are graduates of Eretz Hemdah.

The results of the Chief Rabbinate's exams for "Yadin Yadin" ordination, for which we waited interminably, demonstrated that the winning combination of Heavenly help and very hard work, produced an astounding result: all of the **Eretz Hemdah rabbis passed the examinations.**

Six new rabbis have been admitted to the beit midrash for the 5776 academic year, graduates of Merkaz Harav, the Yeshivat Yerucham, Har Hamor, Kerem Beyavneh, Or Etzion and Siach Yedidya.

The participants of the program for Torah leadership in the Diaspora are approaching the home stretch of their commitment. Their test results for certification as "City Rabbis" were outstanding, at the top of the national rankings. The first two couples made a get-acquainted tour of the community in Johannesburg, South Africa. Both sides' impressions were very favorable.

During the year just completed, the course of study included intensive engagement in the area of making practical halachic rulings in the changing conditions of modern age, with an emphasis on issues that communities face today. This coming year, we will be offering a mediation course. The course in public speaking will continue, and there will also be a course on strengthening the Jewish family.

Yeshivat Torah v'Avodah of Bnei Akiva

A new group of teenagers, students of Yeshivat Torah v'Avodah of Bnei Akiva of North America, has arrived in Israel and are studying in our Beit Midrash. The successful experience of last year was reflected in the registration for this year. One of the graduates enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces and the others returned to the United States to attend college. This 'gap year' program at Eretz Hemdah prepares them for a life with **love of Torah, of the Land of Israel, and of the State of Israel.** In addition, it will guarantee their future, as well as that of those in their close circle, as Jews, despite the situation of growing assimilation. We attach utmost importance to cultivating these groups.

Graduates

The 5775 graduates of Eretz Hemdah have found employment in various institutions:
 Rabbi **Elyakim Sharir** will be a ram at the hesder yeshiva in Rishon Lezion.

Rabbi **Daniel Westfried** will be a ram in the Magen Shaul premilitary academy in Nokdim, named after Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli zt"l.

Rabbi **Daniel Rosenfeld** will be a ram in the Yeshivat Torah v'Avodah at Eretz Hemdah, as well as in the overseas students programs at the Sha'alvim hesder yeshiva.

Rabbi **Aharon Feldman** has been appointed administrator of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit rabbinical court system. He will also be a research fellow of the Mishpetei Eretz Institute.

We wish our graduates and their wives continued success in spreading Torah and sanctifying the name of Heaven in all their endeavors.



Beit Midrash Eretz Hemdah for communal Rabbis in Ra'anana

headed by Eretz Hemdah's graduate, Rabbi Isaac Steinberg and his wife Yifat, has started with great energies its eighth year with the beginning of its **3rd cycle** of the Rabbanut ordination curriculum. The Beit Midrash's programs include high-level learning together with intensive programming of various sorts for the "Ohel Ari" community, our gracious hosts, and for the entire city. From year to year the avreichim pass the Rabbinat tests successfully, while being deeply **involved in the community**, providing 8-9 hours a week of learning one-on-one or in small groups with teenagers, and Torah chugim for children as they fill up from year to year.

Three new members have joined the Beit Midrash this year, taking the place of three who have left after having completed the program (happily, two of them have remained in town to enhance the Torah education with their talents): Rabbi **Tomer Engelsman**, Rabbi **Yogev Ovad**, Rabbi **Ohad Weiss**. The three newcomers came from various yeshivot across the country: one from Yeshivat Ramat-Gan & counseling in Yeshivat Makor Chaim; one from Yeshivat Netiv Arye; and one from the Eili Yeshiva for Army graduates. Wishing the students, the alumni and all of Am Israel a good & fruitful year.



Shnat Hasheva - Let's Delve Into Shmita

Thousands of teenagers and adults have been taking part in the study project "Shmita is your time," in cooperation with the *Shnat Hasheva* organization. So far, **22 lessons** have been uploaded to the Eretz Hemdah website. Additional lessons will be added between now and Hanukkah (the end of the agricultural year in Eretz Yisrael). The project served as the basis for a profound scholastic discussion of this important topic and the participants' reactions were enthusiastic. **The General Beit Din** that was established specially to oversee an *Otzar Beit Din* ("Rabbinical Court Storehouse"), with representatives of **all sectors**, functioned throughout the year. It held Torah discussions every few weeks, in a moving and uplifting atmosphere. The unity was exciting and created a special climate of sanctity, as is appropriate to the topic of *kedushat shevi'it*. Millions of kilograms of fruits and vegetables, which have "*Kedushat Shvi'it*" (Shmita year produce sanctity), were distributed to all sectors at cost price (agriculture laborers' wages only) **throughout the country.**



This cooperation serves as an example of the feasibility of observing the precept of Shmita with joy and delight, and as a reminder that **"in a year without profit, everyone profits."** Eretz Hemdah in Jerusalem also served as a distribution station at different times during the year.

Batei Midrash Abroad

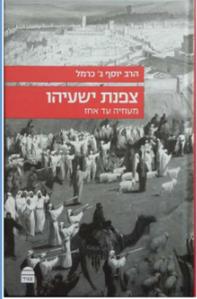
The study programs in the Diaspora continue to develop.

The course in **divorce laws**, a collaboration between the **RCA** and Eretz Hemdah, for rabbis in the **United States and Canada**, is about to complete its first year. Additional rabbis have joined the program.

The participants in the program for training dayanim for communities in **Ashkenaz and Northern Europe** sat for one of the internal exams on the road to ordination by Eretz Hemdah. The results proved that they are up to the task.

Our link with rabbis in **Italy** has become a regular feature. The cooperation with the communities there helps them grow stronger in many respects.

We are currently in negotiations with another important community in **Europe** about opening a joint program to train rabbis.



Tzofnat Yeshayahu: From Uziya to Ahaz

The Prophet Yeshayahu performed in one of the most stormy and dramatic periods of the Israeli nation's life, a period of anticipation for the Messiah that was broken by a terrible earthquake, and also caused a spiritual and political upheaval. The light at the end of the tunnel shone again only in the days of Chizkiyah.

"Tzofnat Yeshayahu - from Uziya to Ahaz" introduces us to three kings who stood at this crossroad in our nation's history: Uziya, a king who sought God but was stricken with leprosy because of his sin; Yotam, the most righteous king in the history of our people; And Ahaz, the king who knew God but did not believe in His providence.

In his commentary on the prophecies of Yeshayahu, Rabbi Yosef Carmel, Head of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit rabbinical court and a disciple of Rabbi Shaul Israeli zt"l, clings to the words of Hazal, our sages, and to the commentaries of the Rishonim, the great Jewish scholars of the middle ages, and offers a fascinating way to study Tanach. This reading attempts to explain the Divine Plan in this difficult period and to clarify fundamental issues in faith. Tzofnat Yeshayahu reveals to the reader the meaning of the prophecies in the context of the prophet's generation and their relevance to our generation. The book can be ordered through the Eretz Hemdah website.

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The Institute plays a central role in our family's life. For me the emphasis, and measure of success, is not only the high caliber of the rabbis who study at Eretz Hemdah, but chiefly their ethical efforts and interpersonal relations. My blessing and support to the kollel students' wives, who play a very important and significant role in Eretz Hemdah's success.



A True Partner who Insists not to Interfere

A conversation with Batsheva Carmel, wife of Eretz Hemdah's Rabbinical Dean, Rabbi Yosef Carmel

The years of my childhood in Jerusalem, in the 1950s and 1960s, were very different from the life and climate experienced by our children and grandchildren. That was a period of making do with little, but I always tried to be happy and give thanks for what I did have.

One of the most significant experiences of my childhood was the Six Day War and the great deliverance it brought. I remember as if it were yesterday, the great excitement when they announced: "The Temple Mount is ours!" Along with thousands of the Jewish nation, I made my way that Shavuot, for the first time ever, to the Western Wall, with my late father. Today it is hard to imagine the spiritual exaltation of that time.

I was the only daughter of the late Moshe and Rachel Fellner, born after two sons. My parents, thank G d, were able to make aliya before the Holocaust. Unfortunately I never knew my grandparents' generation, including the grandmother whose name I bear.

Today, a grandmother myself, I understand what an amazing experience I was deprived of. Therefore, I make every effort to give my grandchildren a double dose of what I never knew.

When I completed high school, I did National Service in Kiryat Arba, Hebron. It was a very special year for me. I left the warm cocoon of a young and spoiled girl and learnt to deal with challenges and solve problems without my parents' constant support.

It was near the end of that year that I met my husband, who was in the first class of the hesder yeshiva in Kiryat Arba. We had never known each other before, even though we grew up in the same neighborhood in Jerusalem. I can say that this was the best thing that ever happened in my life. I thank G d (but never enough) for the great privilege of being my husband's true partner.

We made our home in Kiryat Arba, where our son Ariel and our daughters, the twins Shira and Na'ama, and Racheli, were born.

The privilege of raising identical twins, with all that entails, is a real challenge. On the one hand, the physical resemblance was total; at the same time, we tried to raise them as unique individuals.

Life in Kiryat Arba revolved around the learning at the yeshiva, and the activity at home began only at midnight, when the evening session there was over.

In 5744 we decided to return to Jerusalem, where we had been born. That was when the idea of establishing Eretz Hemdah first took shape. There, our youngest daughter Avital was born.

We were privileged to be partners with Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli zt"l. I greatly admired his modest ways and unique virtues. I also formed a friendly and significant bond with his late wife, Batsheva. I would like to share an experience that made a great impression on me. At the conclusion of their grandson's brit milah, Rabbi Yisraeli went over to his wife, kissed her on the head, and wished her mazal tov. For me, this restrained demonstration of love, was an outstanding lesson of what a true and profound marital partnership is all about.

If you ask my husband what was the second-best thing that ever happened to him, he'll say it was meeting Rabbi Moshe Ehrenreich, and I certainly agree with that. Rabbi Ehrenreich has been a genuine partner in everything, a great Torah scholar who is cordial to everyone. Along with him, Eretz Hemdah has had an outstanding educational staff, a devoted and talented administration that puts in great efforts and makes it possible for the institution to succeed, and above all, a public board, composed of volunteers, supporters, and donors.

I made two important decisions: First, I would never interfere in Eretz Hemdah matters. Second, I would develop a field in which I could make a contribution to the Jewish people in some other direction.

For almost 30 years I have been working in the education and rescue of teenagers who could not find their place in the regular frameworks. I have had the privilege of being engaged in this important mission, which I see as a sacred task in every sense. I try to provide my pupils with life skills and values that are based on trust and respect, as the admission ticket to integration in Israeli society as citizens with equal rights and obligations. This is an extremely demanding assignment, but I derive great satisfaction from it.

Although I am not involved in the running of Eretz Hemdah, the institution occupies a central place in our family's life. For it to blossom, there is a need for around-the-clock work, which frequently includes trips abroad to spread Torah all over the world. I confess that I still do not like it when my husband is away, but I understand that there is no alternative.

Eretz Hemdah's development in various areas continues to move me. For me, the emphasis and measure of success are not only the high caliber of the rabbis who study at Eretz Hemdah, but chiefly their efforts at ethical improvement and interpersonal relations. On a personal note I want to add my best wishes and support for their wives, who play a very important and significant role in Eretz Hemdah's success.

Finally, may all of us enjoy many more years of joint effort and renewed vigor, with the entire staff, in full health, harmony, and happiness.



Ask the Rabbi – The Webbe Rebbe

New volumes of our English-language responsa project will be published soon. The Eretz Hemdah archives contain more than 20,000 responsa in foreign languages that have been sent to community members all over the Jewish world. The questions and answers provide a mirror that reflects Jewish life in the Diaspora. This constitutes a new form of cooperation between a Torah center that is Israeli in every respect and communities that are struggling to maintain Jewish life in a world of great spiritual and technological challenges. The responsa exemplify full commitment to Halacha alongside a special understanding of the situation that confronts the questioner. The possibility of asking questions and receiving answers in a language other than Hebrew opens a window to a broad spectrum of Jews all over the world. This project is run in cooperation with the OU - the largest kashrut-supervision and kiruv organization in the world.

Ask the Rabbi: Hosting a Difficult Guest

Question: We have a friend who, when visiting from America, stops by for meals often when she is in our area. For the first time, last night, she slept over. It was, shall we say, a nightmare! She received several phone calls in the middle of the night, which woke us, and also, despite being warned, tripped the alarm. She now seems to want to stay for another night and perhaps return in the future. Are we permitted to refuse her request?

Answer: This is a very hard question to answer, not just because it is hard to predict the likely potential scenarios, but because there is a conflict between values, as we will explain.

Hachnasat orchim (welcoming guests) is a rabbinically mandated application of the Torah command to love one's counterpart (Rambam, Avel 14:1). It applies both to poor and rich guests and, in theory, can be accomplished even when taking money for expenses (food, telephone calls, etc.) by providing a warm, welcoming place to be (Ahavat Chesed 3:1). Thus, even if someone can afford to stay in a hotel, (and, maybe, from her perspective, should do that) if she asks to stay at one's house or the situation is such that such an invitation is the normal nice thing to offer, the mitzva is normally a responsibility.

There is a general question about the obligation to fulfill a mitzva that has a large physical or emotional price, and this comes up in different contexts. In Living the Halachic Process (vol. II, D-15) we dealt with someone who can expect to have a moderate allergic reaction to eating matza on Pesach. The basic assumption is that one does not have to make himself sick in order to fulfill a mitzva, and while it is hard to do, one has to try to figure out what is a normal "price" one has to pay to fulfill a mitzva. In this case, when it is a matter of your needs against another person's needs and feelings, the matter is certainly not easy to determine, but one should try to consider this in an idealistic but realistic manner. The availability of alternative arrangements is a factor in this context (see Ahavat Chesed 3:2)

There is another element to the complex nature of this question. Just as a host is urged and, to a great extent, commanded to extend himself to make the guest happy and welcome (ibid. 1) so is the guest required to not take advantage or overdo her welcome (Halichot Bein Adam Lachveiro 8:28). If she is outright damaging to her hosts, they are not required to keep her (ibid. 6, in the name of Sefer Chasidim). We would certainly say that if she were stealing from her host, presumably even if the host is willing to spend similar amounts of money to feed her), she can be asked to leave. You could make the claim that gezel sheina (deprivation of sleep) would be equivalent. On the other hand, it is hard to know where to draw the line on such a matter (otherwise, we would all be thieves at one time or another).

A final, related issue is that if your guest continues to grossly abuse her rights, she is seriously sinning. By letting her continue to do so, in some ways you are wrongly facilitating her sins. The Rambam (Sefer Hamitzvot, Aseh 205) says that rebuke, in addition to correcting "religious" sins and those affecting third persons, is intended for people who are being abused (as opposed to harboring resentment – see Vayikra 19:17). While we are cautious about the use of rebuke, having your guest continue to upset you is unlikely to be in her best interest.

All this being said, we think you should consider seriously the likelihood that your guest was not aware of how her behavior disturbed you. She is less likely to trip the alarm again, and you can probably unplug the phone or mention calmly how its ringing disturbs you greatly. Hopefully, your friend is a nice person who will be a much improved guest in the future. So, if you can put up with her for one night and see how it goes, you would probably be doing a big mitzva, even if you arguably can get out of it. Feel free to follow up as things develop.



Shalom Wasserteil
Chairman of the Board



Shana Tova

Rabbi Moshe Ehrenreich
Heads of the Institute

