

Harav Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron Visits U.S. on Behalf of Marpeh Lanefesh

The Rishon Letzion Chacham Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron is traveling on a special mission to the United States on behalf of Marpeh Lanefesh, the largest organization in Israel serving the mentally challenged through a network of 31 hostels and apartments.

Israel's former Sephardic Chief Rabbi will be a guest at an open house at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Celler, in Deal, N.J., on July 16. Rav Bakshi-Doron is making the trip because of his strong feelings about the importance of an organization that offers "a wonderful alternative" to institutionalization.

Rav Bakshi-Doron has a long distinguished career in the rabbinic and is considered one of Israel's leading Torah scholars. The grandson of an immigrant from Shiraz, Persia, the Rishon Letzion grew up in Nachlaot, one of Yerushalayim's oldest neighborhoods. He studied in Yeshivas Hadarom and the Chevron Yeshiva, one of the most prestigious yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael. Hagaon Harav Yechezkel Sarna, *zt"l*, would "try out" his *shiurim* on the young scholar before delivering them to the yeshiva.

Chacham Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron was a neighbor and protégé of the well-known former Chief Rabbi Harav Ovadia Yosef, *shlita*, in whose yeshiva, Porat Yosef, he studied. Harav Bakshi-Doron served as the chief rabbi of Bat Yam, a Tel Aviv suburb, and then for 18 years as the chief rabbi of Haifa, before being elected the Rishon Letzion and Sephardic Chief Rabbi in 1993.

Harav Bakshi-Doron has long been considered one of the most active Rabbanim in Eretz Yisrael, taking leadership roles in kashrus, *geirus* and *agunos*. To this day he is a spiritual mentor for thousands who seek his counsel and blessing.

Rav Bakshi-Doron is a Torah scholar of international repute. He has published many halachic works on many contemporary topics, including medical ethics. He is the author of several volumes of the *sefer Binyan Av*, which is also the name for a network of *kollelim* and other institutions he supports.

Harav Bakshi-Doron is amongst the leading Torah authorities in Israel who champion the cause of Marpeh Lanefesh for its professionalism and for

giving former patients of psychiatric wards a new lease on life by returning them to the community. Many will eventually make the transition back to their families and communities.

Marpeh Lanefesh serves some 450 patients in its network of apartments in hostels. Through better management of medication, providing them with jobs as well as love and esteem, the Marpeh Lanefesh model has become the gold standard in Eretz Yisrael and elsewhere.

Marpeh Lanefesh was founded by Rabbis Yosef Buchsbaum and Shmuel Polak. Mental health professionals in Eretz Yisrael and America have marveled at the success of Marpeh Lanefesh in placing their clients in gainful employment, thus easing the process of a full return to the community.

At least 1,700 other Israelis, many children of Holocaust survivors, victims of terror and IDF members, could benefit from the unique approach and remarkable track record of Marpeh Lanefesh. In addition, Marpeh Lanefesh also sponsors Alumim, a summer camp program for nearly 150 children in psychiatric wards in Eretz Yisrael.

'Maaneh Lev' Advising and Assisting 'Chutznik Bachurim' in Israel

By M. Borofsky

Thousands of *bachurim* from Europe and America study in Eretz Yisrael, because there is no Torah like *Toras Eretz Yisrael*.

Many of these *bachurim* have a difficult time acclimating to their new yeshivos in a faraway country. Six thousand miles distant from loving family and good friends, they are more vulnerable to problems that arise. Who will help them navigate the unexpected difficulties and hardships that inevitably come their way?

Maaneh Lev's Listening Ear Program

Maaneh Lev's listening ear program was created to help solid, good *bachurim* from *heimishe* homes abroad who are learning in Eretz Yisrael and who are lonely and in need of a listening ear or a good word. Aimed exclusively at *chutznik bachurim* who are studying in Israel (it is affiliated with the acclaimed Eitzah hotline program in the U.S.), *bachurim* can call anonymously or turn directly to experts in Maaneh Lev.

"I don't need a psychologist! There's nothing wrong with me!" This is often the first reaction of a *bachur* when he hears about a self-help organizational program.

The plethora of self-help organizations in the world have proven the fallacy behind this attitude. People mistakenly believe that only disturbed or problematic youths need advice and a listening ear. They think that if a youth free of the burden of a livelihood and a family is overwhelmed with loneliness and frustration, it must be a sign that he's weak or lazy.

This goes against what Shlomo Hamelech tells us in *Mishlei*, "If one has a worry in his heart, he should speak of it." *Chazal* explain it to mean that he should tell it to others. It is wise to get help and speak of one's problems when they are small, rather than letting them fester inside until they are overwhelming. The hotline enables those uncomfortable with revealing their identities to express themselves.

Maaneh Lev is staffed by a team of American and European educational professionals and *talmidei chachamim* with extensive experience with youth. The Maaneh Lev hotline was founded several months ago by a group of educators and *askanim* from Eretz Yisrael and the U.S.

Hagaon Harav Moshe Halberstam, *zt"l*, and, *yblc"t*, Hagaon Harav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz,

shlita, from Bnei Brak, were strongly supportive of Maaneh Lev and gave enthusiastic approbations for it.

All Maaneh Lev's activities are *al taharas hakodesh* and are under the advice and guidance of *Gedolim*, *mechanchim* and *Rabbanim*. Harav Yosef Nechemya Hirshler, *shlita*, a *R"m* in Yeshivas Nezer HaTorah, is the program's advisor to the program. He also heads Sheves Achim, the umbrella program for *chassidishe bachurim* learning in the Mirrer Yeshiva from abroad.

Maaneh Lev also offers practical assistance by intervening with yeshiva staff and friends and helping a *bachur* with basic needs that his parents would normally provide him with. Maaneh Lev is a *bachur's* family away from home.

Summer Camp for Chassidishe Bachurim

Maaneh Lev is now offering another vital service for *chassidishe bachurim* — a two-week, American-style camp, which will run from 12 Av to 26 Av ((Aug. 6 - Aug. 20). The camp will provide an active, busy, enjoyable framework during most of *bein haze-manim*. The camp is under the supervision of Rav Yosef Hirshler and Harav Yosef Kaufteil, *shlita*, Rav of the Chernobyl *chassidim* in Elad.

The camp will be run according to the highest standards — in beautiful, comfortable campgrounds in a country atmosphere in northern Eretz Yisrael, including 5-star meals and daily trips and activities. The daily schedule includes *davening*, breakfast, a 2-3 hour *sefer limud*, with everyone learning what they choose, recess and lunch, trips to sites of interest, hiking, swimming, kayaking and more. After supper and *Maariv*, the night program will feature *kumzitzes* and interesting speakers. For the two camp *Shabbosos*, eminent *talmidei chachamim* will join the campers to add to the special camp atmosphere.

Maaneh Lev is particular to only accept *bachurim* from standard *heimishe* yeshivos and requires the recommendations of the yeshiva that applicants are suitable candidates for the camp.

With every passing week, Maaneh Lev's services are being taken advantage of by more and more *bachurim*. After all, why shouldn't a *bachur* enjoy his precious years in Israel to the utmost without suffering hardship?

For information & reservations please call: 718-701-0566

U.S. Senators Support EFRAT

World-renowned humanitarian and prominent surgeon Dr. Eli Schussheim, founder of EFRAT, an organization dedicated to saving Jewish lives, spent June 6 in Washington, D.C. He was warmly received there by several senators, including Senator Jim Bunning of Kentucky, Senator James Inhofe of Oklahoma and Michael Schwartz, Chief of Staff for Senator Tom Coburn of Oklahoma. These senators are members of powerful committees such as finance, armed services and environment.

The meetings are a significant step towards full recognition of the humanitarian and selfless dedication of Dr. Schussheim, who single-handedly adopted the cause of children yet to be born in Israel and towards spreading the valuable work of EFRAT in the States.

EFRAT saves lives by providing expectant women with basic social and financial support. Last year alone, EFRAT saved the lives of 1,658 Jewish children in Israel. During the last 25 years, EFRAT has succeeded in saving close to 20,000 children, to the everlasting gratitude of both the children and their parents.

Dr. Schussheim made a strong impression on the United States senators, who expressed their deep appreciation to the doctor for his commitment to his cause. The senators proudly support Israel and indicated that they are interested in learning how they can be of assistance to EFRAT in its mission of saving lives.

Senator Bunning commented,



With U.S. Senator James Inhofe

"I want to congratulate you for the success that you have. ... I wish we were as successful here in the United States as you are in Jerusalem."

Senator Inhofe expressed his support of EFRAT: "I support the work of EFRAT and the work that you're doing...."

Michael Schwartz said, "Dr. Schussheim, you are truly blessed, because I can't think of any work that anyone could be doing that could be more satisfying or more enriching than what you do to save people's lives...."

The meetings with the senators were coordinated by The Friedlander Group. For more information

and to contact Dr. Eli Schussheim, please contact The Friedlander Group at (718) 436-5555 or email: Info@FriedlanderGroupPR.com.

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