

Federation Chevrah Kaddisha Seudah

The annual *seudah* of the Federation *chevrah kaddisha* on 7 Adar was held this year at the Yeshurun, Edgware. The *seudah* was attended by members of the *chevrah kaddisha*, representatives of the Federation's shuls, *Dayanim*, Rabbanim and *askanim* from across the *kehillah*. Despite the large crowd, there was a tremendous feeling of *achdus* in the room. As guest speaker Rabbi Meilech Schwartz pointed out in his address, a different selection of the *chevrah* is convened for each *taharah*, so that all the members know and feel close to each other. Similarly, their supporters from local shuls as well as of the centralised organisation feel much warmth and gratitude toward the dedicated *chevrah kaddisha*.

As well as the beautiful *seudah* provided by Shefa Mehadrin Catering, the assembled crowd was treated to "food for thought" by the various speakers. Rabbi Yehuda Boruch Lieberman, *Rosh Kollel* Beis Aharon, spoke movingly about the significance of celebrating a day which, while being Moshe Rabbeinu's birth date, was nevertheless also his *yahrtzeit*, which some might perceive as a sad occasion. Contrasting the *Yiddische hashkafah* with

that of the "whisky mentality" – being upset that something is finished and therefore depleted – he expounded upon the meaning of this day and the gifts *Klal Yisrael* continue to enjoy from the righteous ones who came before us.

The evening was chaired by Dayan Yehoshua Posen, who paid tribute to the commitment and ultimate *chessed* performed regularly by the *chevrah kaddisha*. He introduced Rabbi Meilech Schwartz, who completed the *siyum Mishnayos* and offered *divrei brachah*.

The evening also marked the launch of a new publication. Distributed as a souvenir to attendees was a book celebrating the history of Edmonton Federation Cemetery. Compiled by Rebbetzin Aviva Landau, Federation Projects and Communications Coordinator and Associate Rebbetzin at Yeshurun Edgware, the work includes a history of the renowned *beis hakevaros* as well as over 50 detailed biographies and rare photographs of distinguished Rabbanim and communal leaders buried at Edmonton. The book serves as a guide to those wishing to *daven* at the *beis hakevaros*, by highlighting grave

locations of both famous and lesser-known personalities, while also aiming to inspire readers through learning about the life stories of these great leaders. It will be available for purchase via the Federation website, head office and cemetery offices.

Dayan Yisroel Yaakov Lichtenstein, *Rosh Beis Din* of the Federation, described the book as an important work that represents, to him, the Federation of the past – a glorious era of *tzaddikim* and role models for the *frum kehillah*. Also present in the room, he insisted, is the Federation of the future – a young and dynamic team paving the way forward. He commended the hard work of Andrew Cohen, President of the Federation, and of the two *Dayanim* who have joined in the past couple of years – Dayan Hool and Dayan Posen – together with other new members of staff, expressing confidence and pride in the growth and development of the institution.

Concluding this positive speech, Dayan Lichtenstein decided to bless the *chevrah* not with the "usual" *brachah* of being unneeded, but that they should always do their work well and with proper intent.



Rabbi Meilech Schwartz was the guest speaker at this year's Federation of Synagogues *chevrah kaddisha seudah*.

Mrs. Bertl Halberstadt, a"h

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kosher patients in the Greater Manchester area. At the same time airline travel became increasingly available to the general public, and once again our parents initiated and provided kosher meals to the specification of each airline.

Her devotion to the needs of the living was equally matched by her devotion to the respect and dignity of those no longer alive. Within a few years of her arrival in Manchester she had joined the *chevrah kaddisha*, and in due course rose to head the Women's Chevrah, a position she held until well into her nineties when she passed the baton on to the capable hands of Mrs. Rosita Roberts. In her position as head of the Chevrah she fearlessly confronted authority, ensuring that, time and time again, unnecessary autopsies were not performed, that death certificates were issued promptly and that each *taharah* was carried out with halachic perfection and utmost dignity. With her knowledge of these intricate *halachos* and *minhagim*, she was asked to teach the next generation of women throughout England, to ensure that this high standard of care should continue.

At the *taharah/levayah* of our mother in Yerushalayim, the women of the Perushim Chevrah emotionally voiced what a *kavod* they felt it was to be able to perform this last *mitzvah* for the person who had taught them these timeless *halachos*.

After our father was *niftar*, our mother relocated to a granny bungalow next to her son. Her house became a warm and welcoming place for many sem girls, who not only enjoyed her delicious Shabbos meals but also her *divrei Torah*. She, together with her sister, Mrs. Gluckstadt, learned *b'chavrusa* for many years, covering most of *Nach* in their genuine love of learning.

Our mother lived more than 100 years. She survived and rebuilt anew during tumultuous times. Her vision and bravery allowed her to provide not just for her family but also for the larger community in an uncompromising *Torahdik derech*.

Breinle bas Hechaver Reb Dovid Halevi represents the unswerving commitment to *Torah im derech eretz*, Torah and a life dictated by Torah. The underlying trait that she leaves for us to admire and emulate is her vital and fearless responsibility for all of *Klal Yisrael*, both the individual and community.

Reb Yakov Mayer and Mrs. Mala Kacenberg, Z"l

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Reb Mayer *davened* in Beis Hamedrash Yisocheer Dov of Rabbi Gershon Hager, who said of him that he wasn't just an ordinary *mispallel* but he was an integral part of the *beis medrash*, having the keys to open up and being the first one in shul.

The Kacenbergs ran a small guesthouse, both when they lived in Stamford Hill and later in Golders Green, where the guests were treated as part of the family. The Kacenbergs were an example to all who came into contact with them of unshakable *bitachon* and *emunah* in the *Ribbono*

shel Olam, no matter what hardship or tribulation they were forced to endure.

Reb Yaakov Mayer Kacenberg was a true *mentsch, ehrlich* in his dealings, modest in his conduct and shunning the limelight. He was the personification of "Ivdu es Hashem b'simchah – serve Hashem with joy." He was a devoted husband and father. Reb Mayer was *niftar* just four months after his *eishes chayil*. They leave *doros* of over 100 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, *ka"h*, who follow the *derech* of Torah, *mitzvos* and *middos tovos*.

Rabbi Shimon Ohayon, Zt"l

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hashgachah, the guard decided not to act himself but merely alerted the police. The police arrived and opened fire, but by then the group had moved on.

After his eventual arrival in Eretz Yisrael, Reb Shimon served in the army, but was greatly disillusioned by the personal standards of the officers and by the general *chillul hadas* taking place in Eretz Yisrael at the time. This was tremendously distressing to all those who had been led to believe that the nascent Jewish State would develop in a very different direction. After much difficulty, Reb Shimon was given permission to travel home, on condition that he return within four months.

Back in Morocco, Reb Shimon met Harav Aharon Monsonogo, *shlita*. This was a clear example of *hashgachah pratis*, as Rav Aharon had been away for seven years learning in the yeshivah of Aix-les-Bains and came back exactly when Reb Shimon took his leave from the army. Rav Aharon, who was then influencing and inspiring the local *kehillos* with *yiras Shamayim* and *shemiras hamitzvos*, persuaded Reb Shimon to start learning in yeshivah. Breaking off any connections with the army in Israel, Reb Shimon travelled to France and began learning in the yeshivah of Aix-les-Bains. The *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Chaikin, *zt"l*, had been sent by the Chofetz Chaim to France. Reb Shimon began a close relationship with Rav Chaikin and maintained it throughout his life.

After getting married in France to his wife, *tbl"t*, Simone Weill, a descendant of the Maharil Weil, and a relative of the Korban Netanel, the couple decided to move to Gateshead, where Mrs. Ohayon had spent time in seminary. Gateshead was renowned as a unique *makom Torah*, with a yeshivah and outstanding Torah personalities, and would surely be a worthy place in which to bring up a family, despite the practical difficulties involved.

Reb Shimon learned in the yeshivah and became very close to the *menahel*, Rabbi Eliezer Kahan, and to Rabbi Moshe Schwab, *zt"l*. Learning from and interacting with these Rabbanim, as well as the *Roshei*

Yeshivah Harav Leib Gurwitz and Harav Leib Lopian, *zt"l*, gave Reb Shimon a powerful appreciation for *limud haTorah* and *ahavas talmidei chachamim*. These values became deeply ingrained within him and formed the outlook by which he lived the rest of his life.

Reb Shimon spent many weeks a year travelling abroad for the yeshivah, taking responsibility to raise funds enabling *bachurim* from France and Morocco the opportunity to study in Gateshead Yeshiva. Many of these *bachurim* are today Rabbanim and *Maggidei Shiur*. He did this for many years totally *l'shem Shamayim*, without any remuneration. At a later time, he would also perform this altruistic service to assist one of the *kollelim* in Gateshead.

After leaving Gateshead and moving to Eretz Yisrael, where he had more time available for learning, Reb Shimon would go to the *beis medrash* with the enthusiasm of a young *bachur* and remain learning there for several hours a day. This sometimes involved great effort, but Reb Shimon was undeterred; there was nothing more valuable to him than learning through a piece of *Gemara*. Those in the *beis medrash* observing Reb Shimon entering with such *cheishek* at his advanced age gained great *chizuk*.

Last year, on 16 Adar, Reb Shimon returned his *neshamah* to his Creator, leaving behind a *dor yesharim* of *bonei Torah*, living in accordance with the elevated values he embodied and the *derech* for which he was so *moser nefesh*.

May he be a *meilitzyosher* for all the family and friends.

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