

# IMREI BINAH

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## FEEDING THE DUCKS

*By Rabbi Reuven Lauffer*

Once saw someone counting empty bottle after empty bottle of alcohol with great glee. No, it wasn't the day after the Darchei Bina graduation party. It was post-Purim. "Wow," he said with awed reverence. "It must have been some party!" It was. And that is what was so strange.

We Jews are known by many names. Some of them were given to us by Hashem. Some have been given to us by the other nations of the world. Some we bestowed upon ourselves. Some are complimentary. Some, unfortunately, are very derogatory. What we do not have, however, is a reputation for being a nation of boozers. Even when I reached my teens I remember that one of the highlights of Shabbos morning was having a small glass of cherry brandy. Not exactly the stuff that drunken binges are made of.

And yet we get to Purim and it seems as if the whole day is built around making up for lost time – a year's worth of sobriety needs to be rectified! Getting drunk on a holy day? Ah, but that's the beauty of Purim. The Gemara teaches that there are three ways that a person reveals his true, inner self. In personal monetary matters; when he gets angry; and when he gets drunk. All too often, in our dealings with other people, we project the kind of personality that we would like them to see. Who we really are is carefully camouflaged and instead we show what we imagine to be our more presentable side. The Gemara is telling us that, like it or not, there are moments when we are going to "lose control" and that is when the real person slips out.

As we all know the most basic prerequisite to becoming a better person is knowing that there are many flaws and negative character traits that need to be dealt with. If a person hasn't even reached that point there is very little chance that they will be able to better themselves. So, what happens if a person knows that at least once a year they are going to place themselves in a situation that *requires* that they lose control of their carefully self-designed image? Not only that, but that it is going to happen amongst other people. What does one do then?

I was always reasonably wary of one of my childhood

friend's father. He was quite a fearsome looking fellow. He had, in my young mind, wild eyes and an untamed beard (no, he wasn't on the faculty). Clearly not someone to get on the wrong side of. For years I was convinced that there were some latent homicidal instincts lurking underneath the surface. Of course he never once proved me right but I could never quite shake off the feeling until one Purim afternoon. I went round to deliver *Shelach Manos* and there was this object of terror completely drunk sitting on the kitchen floor trying to feed pieces of bread to a duck that he had drawn on the floor! He looked up at me with a beatific smile and told me (somewhat indistinctly) that just as it was a *mitzvah* to be kind and thoughtful to other people so, too, was it a *mitzvah* to be kind to animals. Homicidal? No, just a compassionate and considerate husband and father.

So it seems that one of the many lessons of Purim is that when a person spends the year working on their character, striving to become a better person, they do not need to fear the loss of control that comes with being drunk. When I think back to the truly memorable Purim seudos that I have participated in (and there have been many of them!) I always conjure up the image of one of my cousins, a *Rosh Yeshiva*, a true Talmid Chacham, being supported by his talmidim as he recites, absolutely drunk, but with such heart-felt fervor, the entire Book of *Tehillim* by heart. Or his brother, playing the keyboard so that we can dance and sing with spiritual abandon. As the seuda progresses he becomes more and more inebriated and his ability to remain upright becomes more and more precarious. But never at any point does he stop playing! Towards the end of the proceedings he can be found lying semi-comatose on the floor, fingers still moving feverishly over the keys. Why? So that *our* enjoyment shouldn't be lessened in any way. And always, *always* in my mind are the ducks.

Purim is all about internalizing the precious idea that if I better myself the year can truly belong to me. It is all about making the most of what's available. Success will turn Purim into a truly glorious day of pure pleasure. And that's worth drinking to!

# FROM THE DESK OF

*Rabbi Shimon Kurland*

**W**here do I begin? There are so many things happening at Darchei Binah that it's hard to focus on any particular development. In this issue of **Imrei Binah** we have your typical magazine inserts, but don't let these float to the floor. Inside you will find applications for our summer Binah Yesirah (BY) program and our summer adult Poland trips. Let's start with Binah Yesirah. Last years program was a smashing success according to our participants. We had a wide range of girls join us for the month, including past alumni and graduates of other seminaries. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 26, with girls bringing their varied life experiences to the classroom and dorm. For those of you that have participated in BY before, we have made several changes in the program since your last visit. Mrs. Shira Smiles teaches every morning before our daily guest lecturer. Of course, we bring you the best Yerushalayim has to offer during the morning teaching slots. Afternoons are composed of Rabbi Jonathan Taub, Rabbi Ilan Segal and myself. Kiruv rechokim training is the topic of our nightly segments. In the past we have utilized the various kiruv Yeshivos in Yerushalayim to provide us with the most experienced and informative lecturers. This year we will be rearranging the timing of the shiurim to give you both more shiurim and more free time in the evenings. As always we have kept the cost down to the bare minimum and we believe you will find BY to offer the most hours of shiurim.

That brings me to our next insert. As we mentioned in our last newsletter we are conducting two trips to

Prague and Poland. We are very excited to present these trips especially because both Rabbi Leff and Rabbi Wein have agreed to lead the tours. When it comes to Jewish history and overall Jewish knowledge both Rabbis Leff and Wein are regarded as the premier experts in their field. We also are pleased to have Jewish Heritage Tours provide the catering for our trips. We hope that this will be an inspiring and informative trip that will give our parents insight into our yearly trip to Eastern Europe. Hopefully the proceeds of the trip will bring us one step closer to building the campus of our dreams. Be sure to book early before we publicize this trip to the general public. We only have 40 spots per trip available.

Lastly, many of you have already participated in our newest program, Binah Yesirah, for post seminary students. We have sponsored speaking events in New York and Baltimore and hope to reach many more communities in the months to follow. Rabbi Roll has been organizing inspiring shiurim tailored just for you. Our latest shiur is **Rabbi Zev Leff** who will be speaking about "**Simchas Hachamyim: Finding Happiness in Everyday Life**". The shiur will take place **Monday February 23, 2004 at 8:00 PM at the Jewish Center of Washington Heights on Bennett Avenue**. At 6:30 PM Rabbi Roll will be giving a workshop entitled "The Self Esteem Diet: A Pathway to Healthy Eating".

Our website should be up and running very soon so that you can keep up with all our latest developments. We hope it will contribute in a meaningful way to your continued growth in Yiddishkeit.

Best regards from Yerushalayim.

## **BINA YESEIRAH'S NEW TAPE SERIES**

### **BY RENOWNED LECTURERS**

Binah Yeseirah is open to all post seminary students who are seeking ongoing Torah inspiration following the seminary experience. Binah Yeseirah is a project of DARCHEI BINAH Seminary - Yerushalayim.



**CONTACT RABBI YISROEL ROLL [yisroelhillel@aol.com](mailto:yisroelhillel@aol.com) FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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# ALUMNI SHIURIM

*by Talya Granat*

**N**ever one to be bored, even during vacation, the latest job I took on was that of Alumni Residence Coordinator. A couple of weeks into November, when calls were filtering in from lucky alumni who were coming to Israel for vacation, Mrs Kurland asked me if I could find beds for some of them in the Shana Bet apartments. Blithely I agreed, not realizing I was committing myself to carrying half of Shana Bet's flight schedules around in my head for the next month. And yet I can never remember to do my laundry! Memory is a fickle creature.

As vacation approached I grew more and more excited, anticipating the arrival of many of my friends from last year who were coming to Israel for the alumni shiurim.

"Alumni shiurim?" ask the uninitiated. "What are they?" Personally, I think they are one of the strongest signs that Darchei Binah's care and support for all its talmidot continues even after they have passed through its portals on the way out of the messibat siyum. While Shana Aleph were having fun on tiyul in Eilat, many of our teachers volunteered time during their well-deserved vacation to give shiurim to all the alumni who came. The topics ranged from teshuva to reasons for making aliya to simcha in tefilla. It was clear from the energy and content of the shiurim that all our teachers held those who were there in highest regard; everyone gave of their best. I can genuinely say it was a privilege to attend.

Even after the last shiur of the day the room took a while to empty. Filled with girls whose ages spanned seven years, almost the years of the school, there was many an emotional reunion. Although I did not know many of the girls there personally, as a shaliach for Darchei Binah's hachnasat orchim I introduced myself to a fair number with the question, "Do you need a place to sleep?" Yet even just watching the animated interactions from the sidelines filled me with enthusiasm. I had a sense of continuity and fellowship, of a community through time gathered together in a Yerushalayim classroom. All these girls shared the same ideals, the same goals, were here for the same reason – to learn Torah. All so different and yet all headed in the same direction. And all willing to help each other along their individual paths, to answer my questions about issues in Chutz La'aretz, just as I was happy to answer their eager questions about developments here in Darchei Binah.

As R' Taub said, "Nobody goes back to their university to sit in on a lecture." Torah is unique. You never stop learning. Perhaps the most important thing I learned last year was that there is always more to learn; hence my decision to return for Shana Bet. The alumni return every winter for the same reason. I owe a big debt of gratitude to our teachers for both showing me the infinity of Torah, and giving me the ongoing opportunity to learn more and more and more. Perhaps I'll see you next winter in Yerushalayim – if not before!

**SOON TO BE RELEASED!**



**BINA YESEIRAH'S**

**CD WITH 15 INSPIRING SHIURIM  
BY DARCHEI BINAH'S FACULTY  
CONTACT RABBI YISROEL ROLL  
[yisroelhillel@aol.com](mailto:yisroelhillel@aol.com)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

# Sharing Corner

*Darchei Binah extends its most heartfelt Mazel-Tov to the following Alumnae*

5756

LEAH (LISA YANOFKY) SHENKER  
on the birth of her daughter  
CHAVI (BRAUN)  
on the upsheren of her son  
RIVKA DERMAN  
on her engagement

ROCHIE (ROSENBAUM) GOLDBERG  
on the birth of her daughter  
(MARISSA) MIRIAM (GANIN)  
on the birth of Levi Yitzchok  
MALKI (SCHILLER) OGOREK  
on the birth of her son

CHANA (NEWMARK) TISSER  
on the birth of her daughter

5757

ZEHAVA (GOLDMAN) SCHREINER  
on the birth of her son  
DEVRA (BARR) MARKOWITZ  
on the birth of her daughter  
NAAMA (BACHRACH) SHECHTER  
on the birth of her son  
ALIZA (WEINER) CAPLAN  
on the birth of her daughter

KALLY (RUBIN)  
on the birth of Matan Ovadya  
ESTHER KOSOFF  
on her engagement  
ESTHER (ORBACH) GOLDMAN  
on her marriage  
FAYGIE (HIRSHMAN) RATTNER  
on the birth of her daughter

5759

5759

FAYGIE BOMZER – on her engagement  
SHIRA FEDERMAN – on her engagement  
SHIRA (ABROMOWITZ) GOLDFISHER  
on the birth of Yosef Shalom

5760

DINA (AZOSE)  
on the birth of her daughter  
RENA (GREENWALD) ALLSWANG  
on her marriage  
YELLY WASSER  
on her marriage  
ADINA (BASCH) GELBER  
on the birth of her son  
DB FREEDMAN – on her marriage

5761

ALIZA RABINOWITZ  
on her marriage  
PENINA (BAUMAN) METH  
on her marriage  
MORIYA JAKOBOV  
on her marriage  
DEBORA KACHANI  
on her marriage  
BLUMIE (DREBIN) WEIL  
on her marriage  
ALIZA KIFFEL  
on her engagement

5762

ALIA KAY  
on her engagement  
SARA YOUNGER  
on her engagement

5762

MINDY GROSS  
on her marriage  
CHANA MOINZADEH  
on the birth of her son  
RENA KINDERMAN  
on the birth of her twins!!  
ILANA GALSTER  
on her engagement  
CHAYA SARA (LIBERMAN) AUERBACH  
on her marriage  
RUCHOMA ROSENBLUM  
on her marriage  
SHOSHANA (MENDLOWITZ)  
on her marriage  
SHIFRA LEVINE  
on her marriage  
AVIGAYIL (STRENGER) ROSENBLUM  
on her marriage  
SHIRA TROPPER  
on her engagement

5763

MIRA STEINBERG – on her marriage  
AMIT KATTAN – on her engagement  
BASHI APPLEBAUM  
on her engagement  
SARA CHAMAMA  
on the birth of her sister  
NURIT BARZILAY  
on her engagement  
(to Malki Brown's brother!)

*Please stay in touch  
and keep us part of your lives!!*

## עמי אנכי בצרה

We were grieved by the loss of Mikey Butler a"h, brother of Shoshi Butler (Darchei Binah 5763), who was *niftar* after a 24 year struggle with Cystic Fibrosis.

Shabbos, mid-November, 1994. Klal Yisroel had just gathered in the street, davening heart-wrenching *tefillos* that the Nachshon Wachsman saga should come to (our concept of a) successful conclusion. Despite our valiant attempts to preserve Kedushas Shabbos, media reports were circulating that the rescue mission had failed. Later, at his Parsha Shiur, a woman inquired if Rav Leff had heard the dismal speculation in the street. His response reverberates to this very day: "I don't know what happened, but I can state with certainty that this particular *nes homo* is very precious if it had the power to be "*meorer tefilah* - to be the catalyst of so many hearts turning to the *Borei Olam*."

The *emuna*, *bitachon*, *simchat hachaim* and *mesirut nefesh* of the entire Butler family is legendary, and needs no approbation. Yet the lasting legacy of Mikey Butler is his "*precious neshomo*".

The "Mitzvah-for-Mikey" program, the innumerable Tehillim meetings, and the Shiurim dedicated to his recovery were *mezakeh* the *klal*. Like the hands of Moshe Rabeinu, like the *nachash hanechoshes*, Mikey's illness became a tool, an accoutrement for all of us to be "*mishabd'im es libam l'Avi'hem Shebashamayim*. ( Rosh Hashana 29a). To those who weren't *zoche* to follow the daily struggles, to receive the frequent "Mikey Updates" on the E-mail, it sounds a bit surreal. Believe me that with regard to the Butlers, the conventional feelings of pity for the *avelim* are supplanted by more sublime emotions: awe, reverence, even a gnawing conjecture of "could I possibly be *omed b'nisayon* like them...?" As the Butlers continue to express gratitude to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* for the gift of Mikey, Darchei Binah expresses gratitude to the *Manhig L'kol Haberuim* who guided Shoshi to our school, thus providing an unremitting source of inspiration.

## יהי זכרו ברוך