

Flatbush Focus

Yeshivah Gedolah of Cliffwood Holds Annual Flatbush Reception

BY YOSEF GESSER

Yeshivah Gedolah of Cliffwood, in Cliffwood, N.J., under the tutelage of the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Shimon Alster, shlitza, held its annual Flatbush reception on Wednesday evening, 26 Tammuz/July 23, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Zevi Samel. The annual event, always held during the Three Weeks, provides an abundance of chizuk and inspiration to all those in attendance. As in years past, there was an outpouring of support for the yeshivah from the Flatbush community, talmeidei hayeshivah, and mispalleitim of Harav Alster's shul, Khal Torah U'Tefillah, Bais Yaakov Yitzchak, a major Torah center in Flatbush.

In his drashah, Harav Alster noted that there is an obligation during the present time to be mishatef with other Yidden in their time of tzaar, especially in regard to the threats confronting acheinu Bnei Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael. He cited a letter sent by the wife of Harav Shabsi Yogel, Rosh Yeshivah in Slonim in Lithuania, to a friend living in Eretz Yisrael, concerning the Yogels' son Shlomo, who had been mortally wounded during the Arab massacre of Jews in Chevron in 1929, where he had been learning in Yeshivas Chevron.

She writes that her words are intended to effect a sense of hishtafut (participation) with all other Jewish mothers whose children are in danger. She writes that the blood of her son, which was shed al kiddush Hashem, whose life was taken b'kedushah uv'taharah, along with the blood of all the kedoshim v'tehorim, will not rest until such a time that the Eibershter manifests His Rachmanus on His people and His land with the coming of the Geulah.

She requests her friend to relate to her in detail everything that went on during that catastrophic time. She wishes to know where her son was brought to Yerushalayim after the massacre, where his wounds were, whether he was able to speak on the day he was nifrar despite his pain, and what his last words



A partial view of the large crowd at the reception for Yeshivah Gedolah of Cliffwood listening to the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Shimon Alster, deliver his drashah.



L-R: Rabbi Mordechai Alster, Mr. Zevy Samel, Harav Shimon Alster, Rabbi Aryeh Brodsky, Mr. Shmuel Basch.

were. She wishes to know the location of his kever, and who was occupied with kevarah. She tells the recipient of the letter not to fear that her health will be affected by learning these facts. "My heart yearns to know all this," she tells her friend.

Harav Alster said that the inability to take a share in another's distress may stem from sinas chinam. Dislike should move us to ask ourselves, are we so self-centered that we cannot feel for others and understand their wants and what they lack. He quoted from Iggros Chazon Ish in which the Chazon Ish wrote to someone that to rectify this fault one should do something for someone else since "hamaaseh poeles al halev — an action impacts on the heart."

The Chazon Ish also recommends davening on behalf of someone's else anguish, "of she'ein hadevarim yotzin min halev — even if one's tefillos don't emanate from the heart." This is

the manner in which we awaken in ourselves a sense of being mishatef with another's pain, said the Rosh Yeshivah, and by which we can be zocheh to Hashem's salvation.

This concept is a fundamental of Yiddishkeit, said the Rosh Yeshivah, and proceeded to offer examples of how Gedolei Yisrael personified this middah. During the Russo-Japanese War, Gerrer Chassidim were drafted into the Russian army, and were sent into harm's way. Their Rebbe, the Sfas Emes, slept on the floor, sharing in their suffering. Such deeds awaken Rachamei Shamayim, in addition to demonstrating the obligation to feel for someone else in their state of discomfort.

Similarly, when there was a fire in Brisk, Harav Chaim Brisker, zt"l, went out of his way to sleep alongside the masses who had become homeless in the special locations set up for them. "How can I sleep comfortably at this time?" he said.

It is therefore appropriate to make some kind of change in one's style of living in order to have some sense of the awesome challenges being experienced by our brethren in Eretz Yisrael, said Harav Alster.

The Chofetz Chaim in his time declared that we are holding in the last tekufoh before Moshiach's arrival, the period of Ikvesa d'Meshicha. Chazal tell us that, in this time, chutzpah will increase (Sotah 49a). Chutzpah results from arrogance, which is evident on all levels in our present society. Medicine, technol-



The Rosh Yeshivah with Reb Avrohom Reiss.

ogy against our adversary: Sham'u amin yirgazon, chil achaz yoshevi p'lashes — People heard, they trembled; convulsive terror gripped the dwellers of Philistia ...tipol aleihem emasah vafachad bigdol z'ro'acha yidmu ka'avem — may fear and terror befall them; at the greatness of Your Arm may they be quiet as stone. This shirah allows us to imbue ourselves with the proper hashkafah on what is transpiring now, and we should strive to internalize the message during its recitation.

The adversity of the past several weeks in Eretz Yisrael is a hemshech, a continuation, of the travails of Klal Yisrael in galus throughout the doros, said the Rosh Yeshivah. It stems from the hester panim of the churban habayis, the greatest manifestation of which is that we fail to see the truth of this reality.

The avodah of these days is to intensify our Torah and tefillah as well as improving our actions bein adam lachavero. It should behoove us to exert ourselves to transcend our presumptuous mindset and humble ourselves to the reality of what is happening al pi hashkafas haTorah, and make the necessary changes that are called for in our lives, said Harav Alster.

The hosts at the reception were Mr. Zevi Samel, Mr. Menachem Friedman and Mr. Chaim Rosenfeld. An interesting historic tidbit was mentioned that Reb Zevi is a son-in-law of Reb Avraham Reiss, brother of Reb Meyer Reiss, who formerly resided in the same apartment where the reception was taking place, ironically the site of the first Flatbush parlor meeting for the Lakewood Yeshivah hosted by Reb Meyer many decades ago.

One goes to a doctor for a medical issue with the attitude "Of course the doctor has the solution — he is an authority." Observers of the matzav in Eretz Yisrael posit proudly that the technology of the Iron Dome is what is preventing missiles from wreaking havoc. We need to understand that the failure of enemy rockets to inflict harm and the skill of the army to protect depends on our recitation of Tehillim and strengthening ourselves in ruchniyus.

The Satmar Rebbe, zy"a, said around the time of the Six Day War that the zeclus of the tinokos beis rabban — the Torah and tefillah of small yeshivah children — is what shields Klal Yisrael and brings success.

The Rosh Yeshivah quoted from the Shiras Hayom which we recite each morning wherein we proclaim that Hashem is waging

from 12:00 PM to 12:00 AM

The Yeshivah Gedolah of Cliffwood has been in existence for 10 years and, at present, 80 bachurim learn in its beis medrash, in addition to 20 yungeleit. The event was an opportunity to pay tribute to the more than four decades of Harav Alster's harbotzas haTorah and his efforts and devotion on behalf of his talמידim at Mesivta of Long Beach and now in Cliffwood.

Advertisement for Binah magazine featuring a 12-hour call-a-thon on Wednesday, September 3rd, with subscription rates and contact information.

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood Holds Annual Flatbush Reception

YOSEF GESSER

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood, in Cliffwood, N.J., under the leadership of the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Harav Shimon Alster, *shlita*, held its 11th annual Flatbush reception on Wednesday evening, 28 Tammuz/July 15, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Itchy Goldbrenner. The annual event, always held during the Three Weeks, imparts abundant *chizuk* and inspiration to all those who participate.

As in years past, there was an outpouring of support for the yeshiva from the Flatbush community, *talmidei hayeshiva*, and *mispallim* of Rav Alster's shul, Khal Torah U'Tefillah/Bais Yaakov Yitzchak, a major Torah center in Flatbush.

In his opening remarks Reb Itchy Goldbrenner cited the *Ohr Hachaim*, who says in his commentary on *Parashas Tetzaveh* that in each generation there exist individuals with a *nitzotz*, a spark, of Moshe Rabbeinu. In fact, all *marbitzei Torah* possess this *nitzotz*. The *Zohar* similarly states that there is an extension of Moshe Rabbeinu in each generation. The directive in the *parashah*, "You shall command *Bnei Yisrael*" — stated in the future tense — therefore is directed not only to the generation of Moshe Rabbeinu but to future generations as well. In each *dor* there are Torah leaders in *Klal Yisrael* who transmit Torah, which is akin to building the *Beis Hamikdash*.

"The *Rosh Yeshiva*, Harav Alster," he said, "personifies this ideal and responsibility of carrying this *nitzotz* of Moshe, having been *marbitz Torah* to *talmidim* for so many years. He maintains a *kesher* not only with *talmidim* who now are in the yeshiva, but also with those who previously learned in the yeshiva."

In his *drashah*, Harav Alster noted most *zmanim* have *mitzvos maasiyos* — for example, Pesach has matzah, Sukkos has *sukkah* and *arbaah minim*. What is the *mitzvah* of the *zman* of *Bein Hametzarim*? The *mitzvah* is our focus on *aveilus*, which is a *mitzvah sheb'lev* — feelings of mourning for *churban haBayis*. Of course there are relevant *halachos*, such as refraining from haircuts or bathing during the Nine Days but these essentially constitute a *toladah* — an outgrowth — of the mourning. The Three Weeks therefore is a time of *avodah shebelev* — service of the heart.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* explained that when the *Beis Hamikdash* stood there was a sense of *he'aras panim*, manifestations of the light of Hashem's Countenance in the world. When the *Churban* took place, these



L-R: Mr. Moshe Rosenthal, Harav Shimon Alster, Mr. Itchy Goldbrenner, Rabbi Mordechai Alster at the Flatbush reception for the Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood.



Rosh Yeshiva Harav Shimon Alster addressing the crowd at the Flatbush reception for the Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood.



L-R: Mr. Shamai Hartman, father-in-law of the host, Mr. Itchy Goldbrenner, with Mr. Mordechai Friedman and Mr. Yossi Rabinowitz.

giluyim, revelations, of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu's* Presence ceased. There was now *hester panim*, and Hashem's Countenance was concealed. This *hester panim* resulted in a diminution of Torah and *ruchniyus* in the world. As a result, there is less *kedushah* in the world. This deficiency is the main *aveilus* that we as a nation should focus on during the Three Weeks, above and beyond the absence of the actual physical structure of the Mikdash.

Events have taken place in the world of late that shake us to the core. Violent terrorist activity which is transmitted worldwide via media,

the recent Supreme Court decision that wreaks havoc on all that we consider sacred, the precarious situation facing Yidden in Eretz Yisrael, agreements our government makes with known murderers, the heretofore-unknown *nisyonos* confronting our young people, and the 80% intermarriage rate among secular Jews — these issues are interrelated because *galus* and *hester panim* are the origin of all Yiddische *tzaros*. They are not limited in scope to the time and place in which they occur. They are a *hemshech* — a continuation — and a consequence of our over-2,000-year *galus*.

Rabbi Mottel Pogromanski, one of the *iluyim* of the Telshe Yeshiva and a towering figure of the *olam hayeshivos* in Europe, survived the Holocaust, but lost his entire family. He observed, in his time, the lack of virtue and how low the state of morality in the world had sunk. His reaction was, "There is no world. All that there is, is each individual Yid and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*."

He meant to say that the glitter that exuded from the outside world was valueless, as demonstrated by the *Churban* that took place in Europe. The concept of *Churban* and the primary lesson of *galus* is that there is an *Eibershter* — His concealment notwithstanding. This realization, and the anticipation that He will soon once again shine His brilliant Countenance upon *Klal Yisrael*, prompts us to strive to get close to Him — and that is the beginning of the *nechamah*.

The *Churban Beis Hamikdash* is the source of all Jewish tragedy through the centuries. *Bein Hametzarim* is a *zman* to ponder the *Churban* and all the Jewish tragedies, as well as the incomprehensible happenings of our times and to remind ourselves of this truth.

Yet, *ein lanu al mi'hisha'ein ela al Avinu she'baShamayim* — we have no one to lean on except our Father in Heaven. Ultimately, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said, there will be a sense of *giluy panim* leading to the *Geulah Sheleimah*, at which time there will likewise be a new manifestation and an upsurge of Torah and *ruchniyus* in the world. At that time we will experience, as we say in *davening*, "*Ohr Chadash al Tzion ta'ir* — a new light shining over Tzion and Yerushalayim." May we speedily be *zocheh* to this brilliance, Rav Alster concluded.

The Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood has been in existence for 11 years and, at present, 80 *bachurim* learn in its *beis medrash*, in addition to 20 *yungeleit*. The event was an opportunity to pay tribute to the more than four decades of Rav Alster's *harbotzas haTorah* and his efforts and devotion on behalf of his *talmidim* at Mesivta of Long Beach and now in Cliffwood.

Mr. and Mrs. Itchy Goldbrenner were presented with a unique and rare gift — an edition of the *Smag* printed in 1807 in Kapust, containing *haskomos* from both Harav Chaim Volozhiner, *zt"l*, and Harav Levi Yitzchok Berditchever, *zt"l*, on the same page.

The event was co-hosted by Mr. Moshe Rosenthal and Mr. Binyomin Bass, and was also graced with the presence of Reb Itchy Goldbrenner's father-in-law, Mr. Shamai Hartman.

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YOSEF GESSER

Yeshivah Gedolah of Cliffwood, in Cliffwood, New Jersey, under the tutelage of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Shimon Alster, *shlita*, held its annual Flatbush reception on Tuesday evening, 20 Tammuz/July 26, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hillel Jaffa.

The yearly event, always held during the Three Weeks, provides much *chizuk* and inspiration to all who attend. As is the case every year, there was a great demonstration of support for the yeshivah from the Flatbush community, *talmidei hayeshivah* and *misppalleim* of Harav Alster's shul, Khal Torah U'Teffilah/Bais Yaakov Yitzchak, a major Torah center in Flatbush.

In his *drashah*, Rav Alster noted that while we are distant from authentic feelings of *aveilus* for the Beis Hamikdash, feeling sorrowful about our low state in *galus* is more easily attainable. One manifestation of *galus* is the existence of *sonei Yisrael* who seek our harm. We must shoulder the burden with Yidden in pain who are being victimized by them. Regrettably, some have absorbed a corrupt mindset to sympathize with their cause, due to the world of turmoil and impurity around us. Such awareness readily enables us to feel *galus*.

Yet, we can look ahead. *We daven "Sheyibaneh Beis Hamikdash bimheirah biyameinu v'sein chelkeinu b'sorahsecha — May the Beis Hamikdash be rebuilt speedily in our days, and grant us our portion in Your Torah."* This implies that when the *Geulah* comes, "we will be on a higher *madreigah* in *ruchniyus* eventually," said the *Rosh Yeshivah*.

In *Parashas Balak*, we read in Bilaam's prophecy with regard to the coming of Moshiach: "*Darach kochav me'Yaakov, v'kam shevet me'Yisrael — a star will step forth from Yaakov and a staff will arise from Klal Yisrael.*" A *yeshuah* will come not just for *Klal Yisrael* but, through the Jewish people, for the entire world, as Harav Samson Raphael Hirsch, *zt"l*, explains that, eventually, the world will recognize the Torah and the greatness of *Klal Yisrael*.

Bilaam knew that it was impossible to curse *Klal Yisrael*. He knew, however, that by causing them to sin and descend from their greatness, Hashem would distance Himself, allowing for an opening to harm them. Bilaam therefore suggested to Moav a course of action that would bring them to sin, which succeeded. They engaged in the *avodah zarah* of *Baal Pe'or*, resulting in a shameful downfall, arousing Hashem's wrath — an enduring lesson to future *doros*.

Pinchas stood up for *kvod Shamayim*, killed the perpetrators and merited the special *brachah* of "brisi



Harav Shimon Alster, *Rosh Yeshivah*, speaking.

shalom" — Hashem's pact of peace.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* quoted Rav Hirsch, who explains that such a reward was not intended for weak, complacent people, "advocates of a *laissez-faire* philosophy who wake up to a good cause only if it has gained universal popularity and hence is no longer in need of defenders." He also did not seek partners in His sacred cause of the type who seek "peace at any price."

Rather, his covenant is meant for men who demonstrate through their actions the "zeal symbolized in the spirit of Pinchas" who champion the



L-R: Mr. Chaim Loeb, Rabbi Mordechai Alster, Mr. Hillel Jaffa, Harav Shimon Alster, and Mr. Shamai Goldstein.

Klal Yisrael is identified.

Yet, Bilaam saw another facet of *Klal Yisrael's* greatness, stating, "*Meirosh tzurim er'enu — From its origins I see it rock-like.*" He saw the foundations of the Jewish People — the *Avos* and *Imahos* — and observed that they were steadfast and deep-rooted, as are rocks and hills. He saw the *middos tovos* that the *Avos* and *Imahos* bequeathed to us. This too is the identity of *Klal Yisrael*.

These two spiritual qualities correspond to the first and second Batei Mikdash respectively. In the time of

him, leading to the *Churban* — meant that the national identity of exemplary *middos* — our strength — was lost.

The *Baalei Tosafos* comment that this low point was reached because everyone was overly complacent with their satisfying situation. Such comfort can unfortunately lead to feelings of arrogance, envy and a tendency to defame others. The *Tosefta* says that love of money is linked with hatred. This is because when one is full of oneself, the result is envy and a pursuit of honor. This is synonymous with *sinas chinam*, said Rav Alster.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* offered some illustrations of *sinas chinam*: "When a collector comes to your house, do you look down on him?" One who is in the position to give should be grateful to Hashem that he can give. Another example is envy of a wealthy person which can lead to speaking negatively about him, even though he may be a fine person. Both recipient and donor must relate to one other in a respectful, nonjudgmental manner.

"Our *avodah* at this time is to strive to recapture our double identity of *kedushah* and *middos tovos*," concluded the *Rosh Yeshivah*. Our approach to dealing with *Yiddishe tzaros* and bringing the *Geulah* is not dependent upon political figures or global considerations but, rather, the quality of our *Yiddishkeit*.

The co-hosts at the event were Reb Chaim Loeb, chairman, and Reb Shamai Goldstein. Reb Chaim encouraged everyone to contribute generously to the yeshivah to help it carry on its *harbotzas haTorah*.

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The event was an opportunity to pay tribute to the more than four decades of Rav Alster's *harbotzas haTorah* and his efforts and devotion on behalf of his *talmidim* at Mesivta of Long Beach and, now, in Cliffwood.



A partial view of the crowd at the Yeshivah Gedolah of Cliffwood parlor meeting.

supremacy of Torah, and not those who peddle a "pseudo-peace" who claim to speak in G-d's name and yet defend those who seek to undermine Torah. "Peace can be attained only if the Law reigns supreme," writes Rav Hirsch.

Rav Alster suggested that this episode should stir us to seek ways to fortify the *kedushah* in our homes and surroundings, in the spirit of Bilaam's own words "*Mah tovu oholecha, Yaakov, mishkenosecha, Yisrael — How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, and your dwelling places, O Israel!*"

He was struck by the Jewish tents in the desert being positioned in a way that *tznius* was maintained — the quality of the *kedushah* by which

Bayis Rishon, the nation lost its identity as an *am kadosh* — a holy nation — via the violation of the three cardinal sins — *giluy arayos, shefichas damim* and *avodah zarah* — which led to the *Churban* and consequently, the loss of our identity, our Beis Hamikdash and our land.

At the time of *Bayis Sheini*, although we had lost our *kedushah* we had the traits of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs — *middos tovos*. Yet, we transgressed in that regard as well — through *sinas chinam* (baseless hatred), and lost that identity as well and in its wake, *Bayis Sheini*.

The incident of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza — through which G-d allowed Bar Kamtza's plot to succeed because of the humiliation caused

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Harav Shimon Alster, *shlitza*, speaking.



L-R: Mr. Tolly Mandel with Rabbi Mordechai Alster.

CHARLES DICKMAN

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood, in Cliffwood, N.J., under the leadership of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Shimon Alster, *shlitza*, held its 13th annual Flatbush reception on Wednesday evening, 25 Tammuz/July 19, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Feivish Loewy.

The annual event, held always during The Three Weeks, imparts abundant *chizuk* and inspiration to all those who participate. As in years past, there was an outpouring of support for the yeshivah from the Flatbush community, *talmidei hayeshivah*, and *mispallelim* of Rav Alster's shul, Khal Torah U'Tefillah/Bais Yaakov Yitzchak, a major Torah center in Flatbush.

In his opening remarks, the host Reb Feivish Loewy related the famous story about a town where the residents were remiss in donating generously to their new shul, leading to a situation where the new shul was built without a floor. The Chofetz Chaim told the townsfolk that *Chazal* say that all the shuls and *batei medrash* will go to Eretz Yisrael when Moshiah comes. "But your shul has no floor..."

Reb Feivish explained the message of the Chofetz Chaim was that donating to shuls and yeshivos are a part of the process of bringing the long-awaited *Geulah*.

He then quoted the *passuk* where Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem to appoint a successor who will "lead them and bring them." He noted that this is a redundant statement: if you lead and they follow then you are bringing them.

He answered that there are leaders that can lead in front but they don't relate well to the condition of their followers. Moshe Rabbeinu was asking for a leader who can bring them, relate to, encourage and advise them.

Reb Feivish noted that the Rav and *Rosh Yeshivah*, Rav Alster, resembles this type of leader. Although his *gadlus* puts him well above his *talmidim* and



L-R: Mr. Feivish Loewy with Mr. Heshy Botknecht.



L-R: Mr. Nochum Stein, Harav Shimon Alster, Mr. Feivish Loewy and Mr. Yaakov Y. Loewy.

mispallelim, he still has the ability to relate to everyone and to advise them on their level.

In his *drashah*, the *Rosh Yeshivah* spoke about the 42 *massa'os* — travels and stations. He remarked that the stations were only significant because

of the *kinyanim* and levels in *ruchniyus* that *Klal Yisrael* achieved at each stop. Because the travels were "*al pi Hashem*, by the word of Hashem, and only when the *Aron* moved did *Klal Yisrael* move, such travels are *ruchani*, spiritual, and are part of the eternity of *Klal Yisrael*

and the Torah."

Rav Alster implored all the assembled to recognize that everything in their lives, good and bad, is part of the long trip of *Klal Yisrael*, and to recognize that every step and every stop is *al pi Hashem*, part of Hashem's remarkable plan that will culminate in the *Geulah*. It is that type of awareness that will help us through difficult times and give us the ability to withstand all of our trials and *nisyonos*.

The difference between Eliezer, Yishmael and Yitzchok, is that Yitzchok was able to recognize that if there is *kiddush Hashem* there must be the presence of the *Shechinah* on the mountain; whereas Eliezer and Yishmael saw nothing.

He went on to say that with all the trials and tribulations that Yidden endured for thousands of years, the cycles of difficulties followed by relative respite have to be viewed in the context of the travels and the stations that Hashem has planned for us.

He then thanked the co-hosts Mr. Heshy Botknecht and Mr. Tolly Mandel for helping the *makom Torah* where their sons, Asher and Yehuda, are currently learning.

As a token of *hakaras hatov* he then presented the host, Mr. Feivish Loewy, with a rare copy of the *sefer*, *Shav Shmeitza* written by Reb Aryeh Leib Hakohen, famed author of the *Ketzos Hachoshen*. He noted that this copy, printed in 1837, has a remarkable statement in the *shaar blatt*, (title page), where the author humbly identifies himself as an *eved*, a servant to those who learn Torah.

The event was well attended by a cross-section of Torah supporters in the Flatbush community. Also in attendance was Mr. E. Loewy, father of the host, as well as his father-in-law, Mr. Nochum Stein.

All the participants left with a feeling of *chizuk* and appreciation for the *Rosh Yeshivah's* efforts in *harbotzas haTorah*.

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood Holds Annual Flatbush Reception

ARYEH SEGAL

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood, in Cliffwood, N.J., under the leadership of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Shimon Alster, *shlita*, held its 14th annual Flatbush reception on Wednesday evening, 28 Tammuz/July 11, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rafi Hassan.

The annual event, always held during the Three Weeks, imparts abundant *chizuk* and inspiration to all those who participate. As in years past, there was an outpouring of support for the yeshivah from the Flatbush community, *talmidei hayeshivah* and *mispalletim* of Rav Alster's shul, Khal Torah U'Tefillah/Bais Yaakov Yitzchak, a major center of Torah in Flatbush.

In his opening remarks the host Mr. Rafi Hassan greeted all the attendees thanking them for participating in this worthy cause of *harbotzas Torah*. Mr. Hassan then implored the assembled to join in the efforts of *hachzakas hayeshivah*. He then introduced his Rav, the *Rosh Yeshivah*, to address the audience.

In his *drashah*, Rav Alster spoke about the essence of *Klal Yisrael*. He said that whereas the nations of the world are groups made up of individuals, with some being on top because of their success and some on the bottom, *Klal Yisrael* is different. They are one entity; there are no individuals, everyone is only a part of the *klal*.

The success of a Yid is not to be looked at as an accomplishment of that person. Rather, his success is that of the entire *tzibbur*, with that individual being the conduit through which Hashem



Rosh Yeshivah of Cliffwood, Harav Shimon Alster, addressing the crowd.



L-R: Rosh Yeshivah of Cliffwood Harav Shimon Alster, *shlita*, Mr. Rafi Hassan, Mr. Yitzchok Blumenkrantz, Rabbi Mordechai Alster.

bestows that benefit.

Korach's mistake when he said "*kulam kedoshim*" was not that *Klal Yisrael* was lacking in *kedushah*. On the contrary, they definitely were holy. His error was that he should have said the singular "*kulo kadosh*," because the holiness of *Klal Yisrael* is not represented by individuals but by the entire nation as a whole.

Rav Alster implored all the assembled to recognize that everyone, whether successful or not, should view themselves as a *chelek of Klal Yisrael* and participate with others. Rejoice in their joy and empathize in their sorrow, help them in their need, share your success and don't view yourself as any better than them because we are all one.

He then thanked the co-hosts Mr. Binyomin Berger and Mr. Yitzchok Blumenkrantz, whose son Shragi is currently learning in the yeshivah.

As a token of *hakaras hatov* he then presented the host, Mr. Rafi Hassan, with a copy of the *sefer Kehillas Yaakov* on *Chullin*. This

unique copy was given by the Steipler Gaon, *zt"l*, to Hagoan Harav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz, *zt"l*, as payment for an *esrog*. The *sefer* was accompanied by a let-

ter from Rav Michel Yehudah's two sons verifying that anecdote.

The event was well attended by a cross-section of Torah supporters in the

Flatbush community.

All the participants left with a feeling of *chizuk* and appreciation for the *Rosh Yeshivah's* efforts in *harbotzas haTorah*.

בשורה טובה לשוחרי תורה ומוסר

הופיע ויצא לאור
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Partial view of the crowd at the reception.

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood Holds Annual Flatbush Reception



L-R: Harav Mordechai Alster; Host Shaul Greenwald; Rosh Yeshiva, Harav Shimon Alster, *shlita*; Mr. Shragie Lieber, and Mr. Motti Gluck.



The Rosh Yeshiva with Mr. Moshe Fuchs (C) and Mr. Raphael Hertzka (R).

ARI SILBER

Yeshiva Gedolah of Cliffwood, in Cliffwood, N.J., under the leadership of the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Harav Shimon Alster, *shlita*, held its 15th annual Flatbush reception on Tuesday evening, 27 Tammuz/July 30, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Shaul Greenwald.

The annual event, held always during the Three Weeks, imparts abundant *chizuk* and inspiration to all who participate.

As in years past, there was an outpouring of support for the yeshiva from the Flatbush community, *talmidei hayeshiva*, and *mispallelim* of Rav Alster's shul, Khal Torah U'Tefillah/Bais Yaakov Yitzchak, a major Torah center in Flatbush.

In his opening remarks, host Mr. Shaul Greenwald focused on the relationship between a *Rebbi* and a *talmid*. He noted that the *Gemara* in two places in *Sanhedrin* categorizes that relationship — one time describing the *Rebbi* "as if he created the *talmid*," and another time using the stronger term "as if he gave birth to the *talmid*."

He explained that the relationship of Moshe Rabbeinu to *Klal Yisrael* was as if he gave birth to them. Because they had a two-way relationship, Moshe taught them Torah and *Klal Yisrael* in turn attached themselves to him.

He said that the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Alster, resembles this type of leader. Although his *gadlus* puts him well above his *talmidim* and *mispallelim*, he still has the ability to relate to everyone in a way that they feel comfortable to attach themselves to him. He then spoke of his own close relationship with the *Rosh Yeshiva*



The Rosh Yeshiva with Rabbi David Greenwald.



A view of participants during the Rosh Yeshiva's address.

and that of his son Yechiel, who was a *talmid* in Cliffwood Yeshiva.

In his *drashah*, the *Rosh Yeshiva* observed that the unpredictability

of world events, the resurgence of anti-Semitism, along with economic instability, cause us to recall the *Mishnah* at the end of *Sotah* that says "the only thing we have is to lean on our father in Heaven."

He discussed a *vort* in the name of Harav Chaim Volozhiner that when people say "Hashem will help" as a knee-jerk reaction to adversity, that is part of the problem. Passing off our responsibilities by saying Hashem will help is not the solution. However, if we live our lives with that motto and constantly lean on Hashem by incorporating *bitachon* into every aspect of our lives, then we can be confident that Hashem will truly help.

Rav Alster then said that the *achdus* of *Klal Yisrael* was revealed when everyone together was focused on the fate of Rabbi Reuven Bauman, *z"l*, as rescuers searched, and we all waited and *davened*. That is the image of *Klal Yisrael* that defines us, and it is through that kind of unity that we can merit *yeshuos*.

Rav Alster thanked the co-hosts, Mr. Shragie Lieber and Mr. Motti Gluck, for helping the *makom Torah* where their sons, Duvi and Simcha, are currently learning.

As a token of *hakaras hatov*, he presented the host, Mr. Greenwald, with a rare copy of *Shas* — the only *Shas* ever printed in two volumes, published in Barditchev in 1897.

The event was well attended by a cross-section of Torah supporters in the Flatbush community. Also in attendance was Rabbi David Greenwald, father of the host.

All the participants left with a feeling of *chizuk* and appreciation for the *Rosh Yeshiva's* efforts in *harbotzas haTorah*.