

## Harav Dovid Ostroff, shlita, Spends Shabbos in Baltimore

Last week, HaRav Dovid Ostroff of Har Nof, spent an exhilarating, whirlwind Shabbos in Baltimore. The Rav is the maggid shiur of Hilchos Shabbos for Yeshivas Iyun Halacha, a worldwide, on-line Halacha learning program. Additionally, for the past seven years he has also served as the beloved co-principal of Me'ohr Bais Yaakov Seminary in Yerushalayim which enjoys a strong Baltimore presence. Over the course of the weekend hundreds of members of the Baltimore Jewish community – current, present and future talmidim of the yeshiva and their spouses, seminary girls and their parents, rabbonim, community leaders and members-at-large - got to meet and hear the rav speak and experience firsthand the sweetness of his gentle personality and wisdom-filled divrei Torah.

The Rav spoke briefly before kabbolas Shabbos at Tiferes Yisroel (Rabbi Goldberger's shul). He spoke about *anivus* – genuine humility - as a prerequisite for a loving, permanent relationship with Hashem. His easy-going manner and warm sense of humor - the legacy of his years with his own Rebbe, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *ztz"l* and more than two de-

acades learning *b'chavrusa* with Rav Azriel Auerbach – spurred the lively davening and dancing which followed - and for which the shul is known - to even greater heights.

After dinner, a community Oneg



Shabbos was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Nossi Gross. The simcha was compounded by the engagement of their daughter Temimah - a seminary student of Rav Ostroff – to Chesky Silverman of Atlanta, Georgia that very day. Rav Ostroff pointed out that it was nothing less than *chasdei Hashem* that he was able to participate in the impromptu *l'chayim* held erev shabbos – as well as the vort Sunday immediately prior to his departure – as he had just completed his year of *aveilus* for his father *a'h* the previous day!

The divrei Torah and singing

flowed as freely as the nosh and as the evening grew late and the Oneg began to wind down, a surprise visit from local Jewish music sensation Piny Schachter “stoked the coals” and re-invigorated the singing. Indeed, the

haunting *zemer* “*Kah Echsof*” sung in four-part harmony soared to the heavens and beyond. No one – including Rav Ostroff who was staying across town – wanted to leave.

Shabbos afternoon saw a flurry of local activity. A shiur entitled “Pirkei Avos with Punch on the Porch” took place at the home of Rabbi Shmuel Simenowitz, Dean of Yeshivas Iyun Halacha. Due to the heat, the shiur was moved indoors to the air-conditioned home but a wide cross-section of the community was nevertheless able to enjoy the insights that Rav Ostroff added to the familiar mishnayos. The mishneh “*hevei mispallel b'shloma shel malchus*” – “pray for the welfare of the government for were it not for fear of it, people would eat each other alive” assumed an eerie significance in the light of the recent Baltimore disturbances and highlighted the timelessness of *Chazal's* eternal wisdom.

The shiur was immediately followed by a shiur for women at Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion. More than 100 women – many of them students of Rav Ostroff together with their mothers – were treated to an inspiring shiur on how to infuse shabbos with *kedusha*. Thereafter, the men enjoyed a playful yet powerful shiur on the concepts of “Oneg” versus “Simcha” complete with an inspiring line by line exposition of “*Mizmor shir l'yom hashabbos*” as explained by the Slonimer Rebbe in his classic work *Nesivos*

Sholom.

Following a late night *melava malka* with students and alumni of Me'ohr Beis Yaakov, Rav Ostroff began his morning as the guest of Kollel Nachlas HaTorah, a morning Kollel for men where he gave a guest shiur in hilchos shabbos to a crowded beis medrash filled with members of the Kollel and community at large. The kollel sessions and shiurim takes place each week day morning at Machzikei Torah under the auspices of the Rosh Kollel, Harav Nechemia Goldstein, *shlita*. The shiur was followed by a breakfast reception which quickly devolved into a lively question-and-answer and at which Rav Ostroff graciously shared anecdotes about his beloved rebbe, Rav Shlomo Zalman, *ztz"l*.

Finally, a Yeshivas Iyun Halacha banquet was held at a local restaurant where talmidim and alumni of the yeshiva were able to spend time with Rav Ostroff, Rabbi Simenowitz and R' Dovid Engel, Menahel of the Yeshiva who flew in from Bnei Brak for the occasion. The crowning moment of the weekend was when Rav Ostroff gave semicha to one of his longtime talmidim, Rabbi Moshe Litwak of Silver Spring, MD in the presence of his family and friends.

Despite the diverse venues, the community rabbonim all commented on the readily apparent love and warmth with permeated Rav Ostroff's relationship with his talmidim and talmidos. To see faces light up in smiles as talmidim saw their beloved rebbe sitting unobtrusively in the corner of a shul with a sefer was a sight that many said they would carry with them for a long time to come.

As the dancing died down, Rav Ostroff slipped away, heading north to New York and New Jersey where more talmidim awaited him and where his innovative shiurim and the sweetness of learning Torah awaited them.

For information about Yeshivas Iyun Halacha's innovative learning initiative contact [info@iyunhalacha.com](mailto:info@iyunhalacha.com).



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