

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

June 27, 2014 | Section 2

News, Events and More

NEWS

Videos of Rabbi Asher Lopatin's Installation as President now Available

Rabbi Asher Lopatin was formally installed as the second president of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School on October 6, 2013. Technical difficulties with the professional recording of the proceedings have unfortunately delayed the release of any video from the installation. However, two videos of the event, edited from video captured on a hand-held camera, are now available online.



The first video contains highlights of the roundtable discussion that preceded the installation ceremony. The discussion, titled "Training New Rabbis for a New Generation," was hosted by Rabbi Lopatin and featured four prominent figures from across the Jewish spectrum: Rabbi B. Elka Abrahamson, President, the Wexner Foundation; Dr. Arnold M. Eisen, Chancellor, the Jewish Theological Seminary; Rabbi David Ellenson, President, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; and Rabbi Arthur Green, Ph.D., Rector and Irving Brudnick Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Hebrew College. This video can be found by clicking [here](#).

The second video contains footage of the installation ceremony, a memorable, warm occasion filled with love and marked by a general air of enjoyment. Included in the video are excerpts of Pastor Christopher T. Harris, Sr.'s soul-rousing renditions of the "Star Spangled Banner" and "HaTikva"; the *d'var Torah* of Rabbi Dov Linzer; Rabbi Avi Weiss' touching words of blessing; Rabbi Daniel Landes' energetic and humor-filled installation of, and charge to, Rabbi Lopatin; and Rabbi Lopatin's inspiring words, in which he relates his vision for YCT's role in the global Jewish community. You can watch this video by clicking [here](#).

Rabbi Dov Linzer to Devote Full Time to Role of Rosh HaYeshiva

Rabbi Dov Linzer will be handing off his administrative responsibilities to devote himself more fully to the role of Rosh HaYeshiva. This narrower focus will allow Rabbi Linzer to bring his Torah to a wider audience through increased writing, teaching, and lecturing as he continues to serve as the spiritual core and inspiration for YCT students, *musmakhim*, and the broader yeshiva community.

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YESHIVAT CHOVEVEI TORAH RABBINICAL SCHOOL

Rabbi Linzer is a leading proponent of a Modern Orthodoxy that is thoughtful, open, and Torah-true. He teaches *gemara* and *halakha*, has published articles on *halakha* and *machshava* in Torah journals, lectures widely at synagogues and conferences, and is the author and presenter of a widely acclaimed *daf yomi shiur* available on YouTube and iTunes. He was named an Avi Chai Foundation Fellow in 2008 for his work in introducing a pedagogical component to the yeshiva curriculum, and was the convener of the first Modern Orthodox Siyum HaShas in 2012.

Rabbi Linzer has held the position of Rosh HaYeshiva of YCT since the school's founding in 1999. He assumed the administrative duties of Dean from Founding President Rabbi Avi Weiss in 2007. Rabbi Dov Lerea has been named as Rabbi Linzer's successor for the position of Dean.

From Austin to West Hartford: 2014 Rabbinic Placements

We are delighted to share with you the placements of our newly ordained rabbis as well as new positions assumed by our alumni. We are proud of the fact that 95% of our 87 graduates are serving in *avodat hakodesh*, the highest percentage of any rabbinical school. These remarkable placements are a testament to the extraordinary quality of our new *musmakhim* and our alumni in the field.

Austin, Texas

- Daniel Millner
Rabbi, Congregation Tiferet Israel

Baltimore, Maryland

- Noah Leavitt
*Rabbi, Netivot Shalom
Campus Rabbi, Towson University*

Binghamton, New York

- Akiva Weiss
*Director, Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus, Hillel at
Binghamton*

Chicago, Illinois

- Joshua Feigelson
Founder and Director of Ask Big Questions, Hillel International

- Benjamin Greenberg
Director of Programs, Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
- Seth Winberg
Executive Director, Metro Chicago Hillel

Columbus, Ohio

- Alexander Kaye
Assistant Professor, Department of History, Ohio State University

Los Angeles, California

- Devin Villarreal
Department Chair, Jewish Studies, New Community Jewish High School

Nashville, Tennessee

- Aaron Finkelstein
*Assistant Rabbi, Congregation Sherith Israel
Judaic Studies Teacher, Akiva School*

New Orleans, Louisiana

- Gabriel Greenberg
Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel

Riverdale, New York

- Aaron Frank
Associate Principal, SAR High School
- Haggai Resnikoff
Rebbe and Director of Community Learning, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School

West Hartford, Connecticut

- Daniel Braune Friedman
Director of Pastoral Care, Hebrew Health Care

White Plains, New York

- Yossi Pollak
Northeast U.S. Director of Synagogue and Educational Outreach, Koren Publishers
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More from YCT Student Visit to Nairobi

As reported last week, students Ben Elton (YCT '15) and Andrew Scheer (YCT '15) traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, to visit Rabbi Brachyahu Schonthal (YCT '13) and his wife Rebecca. Their two-week trip was devoted to community development, pastoral work, engaging the under-affiliated, programming, and working with Rabbi Schonthal on a strategic plan for the near future. A selection from Elton's blog of Friday, June 20, follows.

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YESHIVAT CHOVEVEI TORAH RABBINICAL SCHOOL

Nairobi Diary, Day 12 – Friday, June 20



It has been another busy *erev Shabbat*. This afternoon, the Rabbi met with a woman and her son. She has asked for financial assistance for her son while she prepares her application to emigrate, and a judgment has to be made as to whether she should be

given help by the congregation. This has to be done with the greatest sensitivity: She has a complicated story and claims to be Jewish, but this is far from clear. The resources of the community have to be managed responsibly without turning away a Jewish person who needs support.

In the morning, the Rabbi went shopping – we have 11 coming for dinner and there will probably be some guests for lunch too. Andrew worked on his *drasha* for Friday night, and I prepared the *shiur* I will give over dinner (readers of my *d'var Torah* in this week's *Shabbat Echod* from Lincoln Square Synagogue will see the main themes). We are expecting a smaller turnout this week because there is no bar mitzvah, giving Andrew and me a better understanding of what the synagogue is like on a regular basis. We know there has been trouble getting a *minyan*. The people we have invited for dinner should provide enough for *tefilla betzibur*, and I am looking forward to leading the davenning.

As ever, the cleaning and the cooking were done by Doreen, the housekeeper who has been looking after us very well since we arrived. It is very common to have household staff here. Some of the people we visited have up to five servants: a driver or two, a cook and housekeeper, a security man, gardeners, and more. They often live on-site, and new developments advertize that they have domestic servants' quarters. The work is better and safer than many other available jobs, and good employers look after their staff and their children well. Having no domestic chores to worry about makes life a lot easier. When we arrived back late last night with just a short window of time before our evening meetings started, it was a relief that there was food waiting for us (*bishul akum* is a much more immediate issue for us here than it is for most Jews around the world; it applies to breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We left the oven on before

we went away overnight).

But of course it is troubling to have servants. Although they are paid well by local standards (Doreen sends money to her children in their village 500 kilometers away), they earn little compared to Western incomes. Some of the employers are aware of, and concerned by, the isolation that comes with having servants. There is a sense that an unreal world has been created inside the security barrier. That is why some send their children abroad to be educated – so they do not confuse the white lifestyle in Kenya with reality elsewhere.

This situation is largely due to the inequality in Kenya. Even after independence, wealth and opportunity were not fairly distributed. There are shining new buildings, plush suburbs, and fine residences on gorgeous grounds standing side-by-side with grinding poverty and the crime and violence that accompanies it. There is repression amongst the 42 tribes who live here, settling old scores and striving for power. The Asian population (brought over by the British in the nineteenth century) long fell between two stools – being accepted by neither the whites nor the blacks – and their social standing still does not directly reflect their wealth, which in some cases is very great. There is a growing black middle class, members of which we have seen in the plusher hotels and clubs, but it is difficult to see how the children in the slums will reach this position.

This is the wider context in which the Jewish community and its future must be understood. One can prosper here and enjoy a quality of life which, in some senses, is far beyond what is possible for the same money in the West. But the price is exacted in other ways, and each person who comes to live here or chooses to stay here has to make that balance. Perhaps that is one reason many people are so attracted to the synagogue. Although it is in the center of town and surrounded by traffic, within the walls of the synagogue compound there are five acres of grass, trees, flowers, plants, and pleasant buildings. It is an oasis of calm. There is a lot to think about and a lot to worry about, but for now, Shabbat Shalom!

YESHIVAT CHOVEVEI TORAH RABBINICAL SCHOOL

EVENTS

Yemei Iyun on Bible and Jewish Thought Begins Sunday

When:

June 29-30

Where:

Manhattan Day School;
310 West 75th Street



Our annual Yemei Iyen on Tanakh and Jewish Thought will take place this Sunday, June 29 and Monday, June 30, at Manhattan Day School on the Upper West side. For full information, including the complete class schedule, click [here](#).

On-site registration will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. On-site registrants will only be able to choose from classes with space remaining at the time of registration.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Name: Jacob Seigel

Home Town: Apple Valley,
Minnesota

Graduation Year: 2016

Special Interest: Sacred Skills



Jacob believes in being Jewish fully, with all of his fingers and toes. He has earned two certificates as a *shochet* and regularly offers workshops in synagogues and college campuses on Judaism and the meat we eat. His hope for this coming year: learning *brit milah*.

Jacob became interested in the rabbinate after working in direct service for people in need in Washington, D.C. He was inspired to train as a spiritual leader when he noticed many of his peers facing regular burnout, seeing the need individuals and communities have for help in making their holy work more sustainable.

Jacob cares about sustainability for the environment, too, and is blessed to share this passion with *chevruta* Garth Silberstein (see the Student Spotlight in the June 12 YCT newsletter). Jacob has worked with the Jewish Farm School, Eden Village Camp, Hazon, and other Jewish environmental organizations.

After graduation, Jacob hopes to make use of his diverse skill set as a community rav, bringing his expertise as an educator and pastoral counselor to a community in need of spiritual resources. He also hopes, God-willing, to build a family with his *eishes chayil*, Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein.

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