

# RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

an affiliate of  
**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY**

## S E P H A R D I C **BULLETIN**

Sephardic Community Program • Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies  
Institute of Yemenite Studies • Dr. Joseph and Rachel Ades Sephardic Outreach Program  
*Sephardic Council of Overseers*



VOLUME XXX

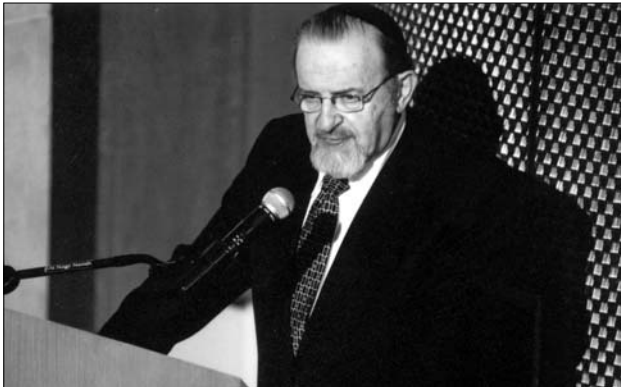
NO. 1

IN DEDICATION TO A HERITAGE

5764 • 2003–2004

### THE EDMOND J. SAFRA SYNAGOGUE IN NEW YORK CITY IS INAUGURATED

RABBI DR. NORMAN LAMM OFFERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS ALONGSIDE ISRAEL'S SEPHARDIC CHIEF RABBI,  
THE RISHON LE ZION HAKHAM ELIYAHU BAKSHI DORON AS THE EDMOND J. SAFRA SYNAGOGUE OPENS ITS DOORS



*YU Chancellor Dr. Norman Lamm addresses the audience at the Hanukat Beit Haknesset.*



*Rishon Le Zion Hakham Eliyahu Bakshi Doron and Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie*

**D**uring his lifetime, Edmond J. Safra provided much needed philanthropy to Jews everywhere, and his generosity is widely recognized within the Sephardic community. Mr. Safra's vision in establishing the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University in memory of his late father was indeed an historic event for Sephardim.

Before his death in December 1999, Mr. Safra initiated a building project on East 63rd Street for the Sephardic community. Guided by Mr. Safra's wife, Lily, who

spearheaded the project after her husband's death, construction of the Edmond J. Safra Sephardic Synagogue on Manhattan's Upper East Side was completed in December 2002 under the religious guidance and supervision of Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie, Jeff Keil, a personal representative of Mrs. Safra, and Les Bohm, an associate of Mr. Safra.

Mr. Safra's dream of a thriving Sephardic presence in New York City became a reality when the newly-dedicated Edmond J. Safra Synagogue officially opened its doors

in March 2003 under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Dr. Abadie, ordained at the YU affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. A graduate of Yeshiva College and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Rabbi Dr. Abadie, who also earned an M.D., was also a longtime consultant to the late Mr. Safra.

The Edmond J. Safra Synagogue hosted a Hanukat Beit Hakneset on Dec. 8, 2002. Speakers included Rabbi Dr. Abadie, Dr. Norman Lamm, chancellor and former president of Yeshiva University who offered a keynote presentation, and the Rishon Le Zion, Hakham Eliyahu Bakshi Doron, Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi. Mayors Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City and Ehud Olmert of Jerusalem both thanked Mrs. Safra for honoring her husband with this gift to the Jewish people and to New York City.

#### THE SYNAGOGUE

The synagogue the Safras envisioned was to be of timeless and elegant beauty. The building's façade features Jerusalem limestone quarried from the Judean Hills. The blocks, slabs, and columns were cut to measure and then transported to New York. The 18-foot-high double bronze doors depict the Tree of Life, which open to a lobby of a Jerusalem stone floor and walls. Hanging on the wall is a magnificent portrait of the late Mr. Safra. Behind the entrance is a small Sanctuary-Bet Midrash—used for daily Minyanim.

The main second-floor Sanctuary is decorated with Jerusalem stone and pale American oak, topped off by an oval wooden dome canopy.

#### EDMOND J. SAFRA

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, into a banking family, Mr. Safra and his family embraced Torah education and its values. Mr. Safra supported many Jewish causes, often giving anonymously or in honor of his father and mother.

Through the dedication of his widow, Lily, Edmond's charitable deeds live on via the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation.

Rabbi Abadie and his wife, Esti, have provided a warm and welcoming environment in the synagogue. The synagogue has hosted an array of events, including a meeting of Yeshiva University's Sephardic Council of Overseers. ■

### SEPHARDIC STUDIES PROGRAM ESTABLISHED IN 1964 WILL MARK ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A DINNER ON FEBRUARY 29, 2004



*Left to right: Albert Allen, Dr. Zevulun Lieberman, and Tomás L. Ryan at the SCO mid-year meeting.*

According to the Mishnah of Pirkei Avoth, one attains wisdom, "Ben Arbaim LeBina," at age 40. Indeed, the Sephardic Jewish Community of North America has undergone a renaissance of Jewish learning and living since the YU Sephardic Studies Program began 40 years ago. The many individuals whose leadership caused the single, most important educational achievement of North America's Sephardic community will be recalled with abiding gratitude at a major dinner scheduled for Sunday, February 29, 2004.

#### GUARANTEEING CONTINUITY

The 40th Anniversary Dinner Committee of the Sephardic Council of Overseers will soon meet to determine the format of the celebration. It is anticipated



*Left to right: David Eshaghian, chairman of the SCO, Albert Allen, member of the SCO, Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky, and Morrie R. Yohai, member of the SCO, at the SCO's mid-year meeting.*

that new, major gift donors will be recognized publicly for their generosity, which will guarantee the continuity and growth of YU programs for the next 40 years and beyond.

David Eshaghian, chairman of the SCO, announced they will seek Benefactor-level gifts to build the scholarship endowment for Sephardic students, who today represent about 10 percent of YU's undergraduate enrollment, as well as a large number of graduate students at YU affiliated schools. Today, approximately 400 Sephardic students are enrolled, up from 10 in 1964.

Organizers describe the 40th Anniversary as a wonderful occasion to recall the past and to build a secure future for Sephardic Jewry at YU, already key for major academia, and serves as a communal resource for rabbinic and educational placement and numerous other communal activities. ■

**INVESTITURE OF  
RICHARD M. JOEL  
AS FOURTH YU PRESIDENT  
ON SEPT. 21**



*Richard M. Joel*

Few occasions in the life of a University are more momentous than the Investiture of a new president. Nowhere is this truer than at Yeshiva University, where only three presidents have presided over 117 years.

Richard M. Joel, distinguished educator and accomplished chief executive, will be formally invested by Chairman Ronald P. Stanton and the Board of Trustees, as YU's fourth president on Sunday, Sept. 21. The gala event will take place at the Nathan Lampport auditorium, Zysman Hall, on the Wilf Campus.

The Investiture, followed by an on-campus reception with music and other celebratory activities, will culminate a week of events, including a student Shabbaton at the Midtown Campus, as well as receptions and events for students, faculty, alumni and staff on all campuses. All YU faculty, alumni, and students are invited to the Investiture. Please contact the Department of Communications and Public Affairs for information and tickets at 212-960-5285 or at [publicaffairs@ymail.yu.edu](mailto:publicaffairs@ymail.yu.edu). ■

THE INVESTITURE OF  
THE FOURTH PRESIDENT  
OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY



*Richard M. Joel*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2003 • 24 ELUL 5763 • 2:00PM  
WILF CAMPUS • ZYSMAN HALL • LAMPOR T AUDITORIUM  
186TH STREET AND AMSTERDAM AVENUE  
NEW YORK CITY

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
PLEASE EMAIL: [PUBLICAFFAIRS@YMAIL.YU.EDU](mailto:PUBLICAFFAIRS@YMAIL.YU.EDU)

## SEPHARDIC STUDENTS MEET WITH DONORS OF THEIR SCHOLARSHIPS

Several major donors attended the recently instituted annual Donor Recognition for Scholarship Donors, which enables supporters to meet recipients of their scholarships. Other attendees included Yeshiva University Chancellor and former President Dr. Norman Lamm and Vice President for University Affairs Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky.

During the joyous occasion, students chatted with the families who helped to make their education at YU possible and personally expressed appreciation, in addition to the letter of thanks they send donors each year. David Eshaghian, who established the David and Simone Eshaghian Scholarship Fund for Undergraduate Sephardic Students from Iran, met with several students. Another donor, Baruch Glaubach, met his scholarship recipient, who comes from Azerbaijan.

All donors of \$25,000 and more receive a letter of thanks from students every year. Students also advise donors on their progress and career aspirations. It is heartwarming to know that your gift of education to these young men and women will have an important impact on their future professions and lives. ■

## YU MUSEUM & SEPHARDIC HOUSE/ASF CO-SPONSOR SEPHARDIC CELEBRATION OF ISRAEL'S 55TH ANNIVERSARY AT THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

Jewish communities nationwide typically organize annual celebrations to mark modern Israel's rebirth in 1948. In May, the YU Museum, Sephardic House/ASF, and Yeshiva University's Sephardic Program, presented a program of music, prayer, and words of Torah celebrating Israel's statehood at



*Hazzan Moshe Tessone at the Center for Jewish History tribute to Israel.*

the Center for Jewish History on West 116th Street in New York City.

The concert featured upbeat Sephardic music performed by Hazzan Moshe Tessone and his authentic oriental ensemble, which played to a packed auditorium. Hazzan Tessone performed both classical and popular renditions of many Sephardic chants in Hebrew, Arabic, and Ladino, as the audience sang and danced in the aisles.

### IN TRIBUTE

Beyond celebration, the program also recognized and remembered Israel's fallen heroes. Hazzan Tessone also offered a musical tribute to Jerusalem, to those who live in our holy city,



*Hazzan Tessone performed with his son, Jacob.*

and to Israelis who put their lives on the line in defense of their country. Hazzan Tessone recounted his father's dedication to the Haganah, the pre-state underground force, as a young man who, at 17, risked his life to guard the old city in November 1947.

As part of the program, Hazzan Tessone sang an emotional duet with his son, Jacob.

Special prayers were then offered for Israel and for the Israeli Defense Forces by Rabbi Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky, vice president for University Affairs at YU, and by Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Haim, Sephardic Rosh Yeshiva at YU's affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, respectively. The ceremony also featured an inspirational address by Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie, spiritual leader of the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue in New York City. Rabbi David Israel, director of the Max Stern Division of Communal Service at Yeshiva University, was master of ceremonies for the event.

"I laughed and I sang for Israel," one attendee said. "But I also felt the dedication and pain of what it means to have a Jewish State with Jerusalem as its capital. . .next year in Jerusalem!" ■

## HAKHAM ELIYAHU BEN-HAIM'S SHIUR: YU'S BEST KEPT SECRET...

BY YONATAN GROSS



*Hakham Eliyahu Ben-Haim delivers his shiur in the Sephardic Beit Midrash.*

About 20 to 25 fortunate students attend Hakham Eliyahu Ben Haim's class in Talmud. The shiur (lecture) lasts for an hour and a half and is conducted in Hebrew. Students prepare a portion of the Gemara, usually about one full page ("amud"), with Rashi, Tosefot, and the Ran during "seder," the study preparation session. The shiur concentrates on learning and analyzing the pertinent practical halakhoth found in the Talmud.

### IN THE CLASSROOM

The lecture is interactive, relaxed, and intimate. Eschewing a traditional classroom setting, students gather around a large table in the Sephardic Bet Midrash with Hakham Ben-Haim, who sits at the head. Students do all the textual reading. Hakham Ben-Haim spices his lectures with challenging questions that prompt students to draw conclusions. He encourages students to participate and makes sure they understand the issues at hand before beginning a new topic. Students are also encouraged to ask questions related to the discussion.

According to Rabbi Ben-Haim, the shiur seeks to teach students how to think and use common sense to arrive at their own conclusions, to give stu-

dents practical halakhoth they can take with them "in their pockets" and, above all, to encourage students to blossom into talmidei hakhamim and committed Jewish communal leaders.

### HAKHAM BEN-HAIM

The Hakham's encyclopedic knowledge of the Talmud and commentaries knows no bounds. By the end of class, the table is covered with books quoted throughout the shiur, which immerses students with Talmud texts and exposes them to sources they otherwise may never see. The Hakham stresses the importance of seeing all sources "inside," in the original source. Thus, the teacher can recreate an environment for Torah learning similar to what Hakham Ben-Haim himself experienced at Yeshivat Porat Yosef in Jerusalem.

Hakham Ben-Haim is always available to his students. Students are invited to his house in Queens, NY for Shabbath, and he is never too busy to talk and to consult with students on Halakhic or personal issues. Both inside and outside the classroom, he encourages students to improve their Torah learning and their "midot."

Hakham Ben-Haim makes Torah and Judaism come alive through field trips, including a viewing of "the writing of a Get" or the "slaughtering of an animal" (shehita) so students can experience the teachings of the Talmud and Shulhan Arukh (Jewish Code of Law) in real life situations.

Most important, the Hakham is insightful and cares for his students. He often teaches life lessons and insights drawn from his own life experiences, including encounters with famous Jewish personalities, his Israeli army experience, or his current rabbinic pulpit position as head of the large and dynamic Meshedi (Iranian) Jewish community in Queens and Great Neck, NY.

The class is a prudent shiur choice for anyone who wishes to improve his Hebrew and to learn practical Halakhoth in the traditional Sephardic style of learning. Students who partake in the daily shiur with our Sephardic Rosh Yeshivah at RIETS forge a unique and personal relationship with a world-renowned Torah Scholar, Hakham Eliyahu Ben-Haim is chairholder of the Maxwell R. Maybaum Chair in Talmud and Sephardic Halakhah. ■

## SEPHARDIC STUDENTS RECEIVE TOP AWARDS AND HONORS AT 2003 COMMENCEMENT

### *Sy Syms School of Business*

#### VALEDICTORIAN

Albert Jacob

### *James Striar School of General Jewish Studies*

- Omid Nikrouz, Isaac Araten Memorial Award for Excellence in Bible
- Victor Rakhimov, Isaac Araten Memorial Award for Excellence in Talmud
- Robert Nowbakht, Siegbert, Manfred and Mignon Fischel Memorial Award for Excellence in Jewish Studies and Character

### *Irving I. Stone Beit Midrash Program*

- David Ammach, Excellence in Jewish Studies
- Isaac Sassoon, Excellence in Jewish Studies

### *Yeshiva Program/ Mazer School of Talmudic Studies*

- Albert Jacob, Meyer and Bella Rhine Memorial Award
- Allan Houben, Meyer and Bella Rhine Memorial Award
- Ovadiah Jacob, Yechezkel and Channah Leipziger Memorial Award

- Evan Liviem, Rabbi Solomon Polachek Memorial Award
- Elisha Yacobi, Rabbi Solomon Polachek Memorial Award

#### *Yeshiva College*

- Emil Lavian, Mina Belkin Memorial Award for Service and Dedication to the College
- Omid Nikrouz, Mina Belkin Memorial Award for Service and Dedication to the College
- Isaac Sassoon, Stanley Broff Memorial Award for Excellence in Economics
- Ouri Cohen, Professor Arnold N. and Bertha Lowan Memorial Award for Excellence in Physics
- Eli Hami, Emile Offenbacher Memorial Award for Excellence in Athletics
- Shmuel Kadosh, Edward A. Rothman Memorial Award for Best Essay on Orthodox Judaism
- Shmuel Kadosh, Sociology

#### *Sy Syms School of Business*

- Albert Jacob, Bernard Brown Award for Excellence in Business Studies
- Ovadiah Jacob, Dean's Award for Scholastic Achievement in Finance
- Joshua Malka, Dean's Award for Scholastic Achievement in Management
- Albert Jacob, Sy Syms Alumni Award for Excellence in Service
- Paul Ghermezian, Student Council Award for Outstanding Service

#### *Stern College for Women*

- Rachel Mandil, Sarah and Abraham Lowin Memorial Award for Overall Academic Achievement and Superior Performance in Elementary Education ■

## **YU SEPHARDIC-SUMMER KOLLEL AT SHAARE ZION IN GREAT NECK A HUGE SUCCESS**

The motto in Great Neck, NY, this summer was: "Get out of the heat and come into the Stephen Isaiah Ades Bet Midrash and learn with the Kollel at Congregation Shaare Zion."

Yeshiva University's affiliated Max Stern Division of Community Services (MSDCS) arranged for five Yeshiva University students to spend the month of July at Congregation Shaare Zion under the tutelage of Rabbi Yamin Levy, Shaare Zion's senior rabbi, as part of this year's nationwide Yeshiva Summer Torah Seminars (YSTS). The program was organized and coordinated by Rabbi Ari Rockoff, director of Youth and Outreach at MSDCS, and Cantor Moshe Tessone, director of the Sephardic Community Program at YU, in cooperation with Rabbi Levy. The Rosh Kollel, Ohad Shalom Yishai from Columbus, OH, a Sephardic Semikha student at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, selected the young men. Rabbi Levy, a Judaic Studies faculty member at Yeshiva, designed the curriculum and program.

The young men spent approximately nine hours each day in the Bet Midrash, and community members were invited to study with the young men.

One participant, Bob Ades, the primary patron of the Stephen Isaiah Ades Bet Midrash, said, "I am very proud to see the Bet Midrash being used this way. Having the boys here from Yeshiva University with Rabbi Levy is exactly what we had in mind when creating this space for our educational center. Our goal is to have the most extensive Judaic collection in Long Island."

Rabbi Shalom Carmy, professor of Bible and philosophy at Yeshiva College, was invited to lecture on the Talmudic tractate the kollel members was studying, Ketuboth. Rabbi David Bassous of Highland Park, NJ, also spent a day teaching the young men the laws and art of Safruth (Hebrew calligraphy).

Reflecting on the summer Kollel, Rabbi Levy said, "I am especially gratified that the members of our synagogue have the vision to support these kinds of programs. Our synagogue enjoyed unique inspiration from the young men. They also gave me a brief respite. On Shabbat they delivered the sermon and taught weekly shiurim (torah classes). The future looks very good for the Jewish community when you realize that our future leaders are going to be so talented." ■

## **WORLD SEPHARDIC CONGRESS INAUGURATION**

**NEW ORGANIZATION TO REPRESENT SEPHARDIC JEWRY WORLDWIDE**

The inaugural celebration of the World Sephardic congress this spring included a Shabbat service and luncheon at the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue in Manhattan. The WSC seeks to preserve traditions of the Sephardic culture and to oversee other Sephardic advocacy groups.

Founding members include Sami Shamoan, WSC president, Leon Levy, founder and honorary president of the American Sephardic Foundation and former chair of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish organizations. ■

## **SEPHARDIC CLUB LENDS SPICY FLAVOR TO SCW**

**AN UPDATE ON THIS YEAR'S STUDENT HANUKKAH CELEBRATION**

By Danielle Yunatanov

There's a rumor circulating that Sephardim are known to be fun, extreme-



*YU students Yehoshua Samra and David Amach.*

ly exciting, and especially spicy. It's true. That is why the Sephardic Club Dinner on the fifth night of Hanukkah, December 4, 2002, was such a popular event. Even Ashkenazim made it their business to attend.

"We were very impressed with the turnout and were especially grateful for the warm and humorous environment," said Shirly Dayan, Stern College for Women Sephardic Club president, who worked with Yeshiva College Sephardic Club President Josh Malka to make the evening at Café Classico on 57th Street a terrific success. Twenty-five students from SCW and 35 students from YC attended the University-sponsored dinner.

The Sephardic Club helps link Sephardic students to their heritage. Its events enable all Sephardim at YC, SCW, and Sy Syms School of Business to know from where they came, and most important, where they are going.

"We want to show that even though we attend an Ashkenazi school, our culture is very important to us, and even though we are all Jewish, we do have some differences in our everyday activities," said Joe Rahmani, vice president of the Sephardic Club. "It is essential for the Sephardic community to participate in these events."

The students who attended the

dinner reflect the nature of the Sephardic club, which is open to anyone interested in Sephardic and Middle Eastern culture. The club attempts to ensure that Ashkenazim also feel comfortable at club events.

#### FESTIVITIES

The ambiance was pleasant, the lights were dim, and the people were friendly at the Hanukkah dinner. Waiters circled tables, offering students samples of classical ethnic Sephardic dishes—hot and spicy peppers and platters of humus and tehina salad and steamed chicken, and sweet and sour meatballs.

"It was a pleasure to dine on such delicious food while being entertained by such exceptionally stimulating company," said Lisa Sutton, a SCW junior.

Middle Eastern music filled the air as students conversed in Arabic, French, Hebrew, English, Persian (Farsi), and several other languages.

After dinner, YC student Ronnie Ben-Ishay delivered a d'var Torah about Hanukkah, and students indulged in the elegant platters of fruit and pastries.

According to Dayan, Sephardic Club events are a great way to meet people. Club Presidents Dayan and Malka encourage students at YC and SCW to participate in future club events.

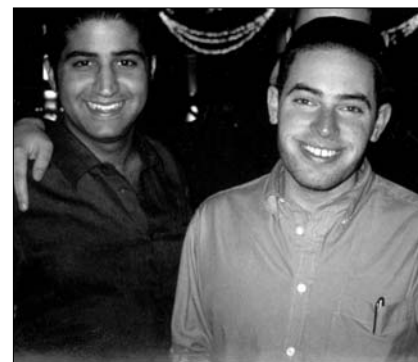
*Reprinted with the permission of the Yeshiva University Observer, Volume XLVI Issue 6, published December 26 2002. ■*



*Sephardic Club students celebrating Hanukkah*

## SEPHARDIC GRADUATES OF 2003

YESHIVA COLLEGE



*Danny Levy and Albert Hasson.*

Bachelor of Arts

*as of September 30, 2002*

David N. Nachbar  
Farzin Rahmanou

*as of January 31, 2003*

Jesse Albert Asher  
Payam Yosef Bina  
Sanford Aaron Cohen  
Avraham Y. Giladi

*as of May 22, 2003*

David Ammach  
Ouri Cohen  
Erez David  
Payam Farzanfar  
Joseph Mehrdad Hadi  
Yonathan Haroonian  
Shmuel Kadosh  
Ruslan Kimyagarov  
Emil Lavian  
David K. Mahchade  
Elias Marcovici  
Anton Naftaliev  
Omid Nikrouz  
Ely Pinto  
Viktor Rakhmimov  
Gabriel Romano  
Isaac Sasson  
Joseph O. Sebeo  
Max Sredni  
Joseph S. Sutton  
Alon Avraham Tamir  
Joseph Zeitouni

SY SYMS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
WILF CAMPUS

Bachelor of Science

*as of September 30, 2002*

Mayer Chemtob

*as of January 31, 2003*

Micah Ariel Cohen  
Elior D. Shiloh  
Oren B. Shimoni

*as of May 22, 2003*

Jacob Asher  
Amichai S. Avraham  
Albert Babayev  
Vassil I. Balgariev  
Ronnie Ben-Ishay  
Daniel Bensimon  
Jonathan M. Cohen  
Shimi Cohen  
Elliot Dabah  
Yaniv Gabbay  
Paul James Ghermezian  
Eli Hami  
David J. Hazan  
Albert Jacob  
Ovadia Noam Jacob  
Abraham Kopyt  
Evan Liviem  
Joshua Mark Malka  
Rodney E. Nassimi  
Robert Shlomo Nowbakht  
Ariel Zvi Schochet  
Meir M. Sutton  
Morris Tabush  
Isaac Tawil  
Elisha Assaf Yacoby

**MIDTOWN CAMPUS**

Bachelor of Science

*as of January 31, 2003*

Alissa Benishai  
Yifat Bichin  
Sarit Nadav

*as of May 22, 2002*

Laurence Baloul  
Tatsiana Bayeva  
Anna-Aliza Benzaquen  
Jennifer Esther Chetrit  
Stephanie Chalva Chetrit  
Yaelle Levy  
Cherise Mizrahi  
Yuliya Yusupov

**STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN**

Associate in Arts

*as of September 30, 2002*

Josefa Usdan

*as of January 31, 2003*

Tanya Aharonoff  
Alissa Benishai  
Ronit Elias  
Cherin Hasbani  
Pamela Levy

*as of May 22, 2003*

Hope Abraham  
Esther J. Azar  
Laurence Baloul  
Sharon S. Barouk  
Tatsiana Bayeva  
Anna-Aliza Benzaquen  
Jennifer Esther Chetrit  
Stephanie Chalva Chetrit  
Shaina Laia Cohen  
Shirly Dayan  
Tamara Dzhanashvili  
Adi Gidali  
Renana Julie Harary  
Victoria V. Kanevskaya  
Pouneh Kheirbakhsh  
Yaelle Levy  
Rachel Mandil  
Elizabeth Anne Marciano  
Cherise Mizrahi  
Sophia E. Rabbenou  
Betha K. Salem  
Shira Sasson  
Farinaz Sedaghat  
Sahar Solaimanzadeh  
Yuliya Yusupov

Bachelor of Arts

*as of September 30, 2002*

Sarit Basharel

*as of January 31, 2003*

Tanya Aharonoff  
Ronit Elias  
Tamar Bracha Ellman  
Allison Shira Gabe  
Cherin Hasbani  
Pamela Levy  
Michal L. Mikhli  
Avigal Zion

*as of May 22, 2003*

Esther J. Azar  
Sharon S. Barouk  
Shirly Dayan  
Adi Gidali  
Renana Julie Harary  
Victoria V. Kanevskaya  
Pouneh Kheirbakhsh  
Rachel Mandil  
Elizabeth Anne Marciano  
Sophia E. Rabbenou  
Betha K. Salem  
Shira Sasson  
Farinaz Sedaghat  
Sahar Solaimanzadeh

**WURZWEILER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Master of Social Work

*as of September 30, 2002*

Robert M. Sasson  
BA, Yeshiva University

*as of January 31, 2003*

Esther J. Azar  
Sarah Muriel Nikpour  
BA, University of Maryland

**AZRIELI GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JEWISH EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

Master of Science

*as of September 30, 2002*

Jacob Benamou  
BS, Bar-Ilan University-Israel  
Ruth Kestenbaum Benamou  
BA, Bar-Ilan University-Israel

*as of January 31, 2003*

Syma Aliza Hanon  
BA, Yeshiva University

**BENJAMIN N. CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW**

Juris Doctor

*as of June 11, 2003*

Natanel BenChaim  
BA, Yeshiva University  
Natanella Cohen  
BA, Yeshiva University  
Joseph D. Levy  
BA, CUNY-Queens College  
Jason A. Mizrahi  
BS, Rutgers University  
Lynn Z. Mizrahi  
BA, Univ. of California-Los Angeles  
Raymond Mouhadeb  
BBA, CUNY-Bernard Baruch College  
Jeffrey M. Nachem  
BE, The Cooper Union  
Abraham E. Sharabi  
BS, CUNY-Brooklyn College  
Isaac Yedid  
BS, CUNY-Brooklyn College

**BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES**

Master of Arts

*as of September 30, 2002*

Selim S. Dweck  
BA, Yeshiva University

**JAMES STRIAR SCHOOL  
OF GENERAL JEWISH STUDIES**

Associate in Arts

*as of September 30, 2002*

Farzin Rahmanou

*as of May 22, 2003*

Payam Farzanfar

Asher Jacob

Emil Lavian

Omid Nikrouz

Robert Shlomo Nowbakht

Viktor Rakhmimov

**ISAAC BREUER COLLEGE  
OF HEBRAIC STUDIES**

Associate in Arts

*as of May 22, 2003*

Shimi Cohen ■

*If we omitted any Sephardic students, we apologize and will correct this in the next issue if you notify us.*

## **BURMA NATIVE REALIZES DREAM OF ATTENDING YU**



*YC student and Burma native  
Sammy Samuels*

Coming from a country of only eight Jews, Sammy Samuels was overwhelmed at his first Shabbat dinner on the Wilf Campus.

A native of Rangoon, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Sammy found himself surrounded by more than 500 Jewish young men at Friday night services as students returned for the fall '02 semester.

"I've never seen anything like that in my life," he said.

### **SAMMY'S JOURNEY**

Sammy arrived in New York on August 14 through the help of Columbia University Professor Ira Weiss, who met Sammy in Rangoon during a trip there in 2000 and gave him his frequent-flyer miles to make the trip from Rangoon.

Prof. Weiss also met Sammy's father, Moses Samuels.

"As caretaker of the country's only synagogue and Jewish cemetery, he (Moses Samuels) showed me around and told me about his son, who very much wanted to attend university in the US," Prof. Weiss said.

Prof. Weiss sent Sammy a directory of 300 major universities in America, which included YU, as well as college application information and assisted Sammy via e-mail.

In a *New York Times* article last July, the Samuels family is described as the last remnant of Burma's Jewish community. The story also mentioned Sammy's desire to attend Yeshiva University and Prof. Weiss immediately e-mailed it to Sammy.

Ironically, the same day, Sammy had an interview at the American Consulate. Sammy presented *The Times* article to consular officials, and believes the piece proved instrumental in securing a visa. Indeed, although 10 individuals were already accepted into American colleges, Sammy was one of two to receive a visa.

Dubbed the "last hope for the Jews of Myanmar" in *The Times*, Sammy is of Iraqi descent.

"Sammy is the proud heir of a beautiful legacy," said Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky, vice president for university affairs and consultant to YU's Sephardic Studies Program, which he co-founded with the late Dr. Solomon Gaon. "His experience at YU will enable him to go back to Myanmar and perpetuate his forbears' traditions."

Sammy spent Rosh Hashana at

the home of Rabbi Yamin Levy, a faculty member of the undergraduate Jewish studies program. "Sammy had a wonderful experience in terms of seeing how a Hag [festival] is observed according to Halakhah in America," Rabbi Levy said.

Another tourist who met Sammy in Burma was Carole Basri, a New York attorney also of Iraqi descent who has documented Iraqi Jewish life. Ms. Basri produced a documentary on her exotic travels, "Searching for Baghdad: A Daughter's Journey," in which Sammy appears.

"I met Sammy and his father in November 2000 in Rangoon at the synagogue. Sammy told me he wanted to apply to university in America but had limited access to the Internet," Ms. Basri said.

Basri, who taught corporate law at YU's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in 1994, also suggested he apply to YU and offered to assist him.

### **AT YU**

Sammy plans to major in computer science, and having previously spent a year in Israel, he is familiar with Hebrew and is tackling Talmudic studies (in Aramaic) with enthusiasm. The hope is that Sammy's success will help determine the future of Burma's shrinking Jewish community, where he plans to return to carry on his family's rich heritage. ■

## **RABBI YAMIN LEVY, DEDICATES HIS MOST RECENT BOOK TO THE MEMORY OF HIS MENTOR AND TEACHER, HAKHAM SOLOMON GAON, Z"L.**

The Sephardic Studies Department of Yeshiva University proudly announces the publication of Rabbi Yamin Levy's (YC '84 RIETS '87) second book, *Journey Through Grief: A Manual For the Bereaved and Their*



Rabbi Yamin Levy

*Community* (KTAV Pub.). Rabbi Levy is a faculty member of the undergraduate Jewish Studies department at Yeshiva University.

The book covers the laws and traditions of the Sephardic rituals of mourning and draws on Rabbi Levy's many years as a pulpit rabbi. It also offers the bereaved and their community insights on coping with loss and resolving grief.

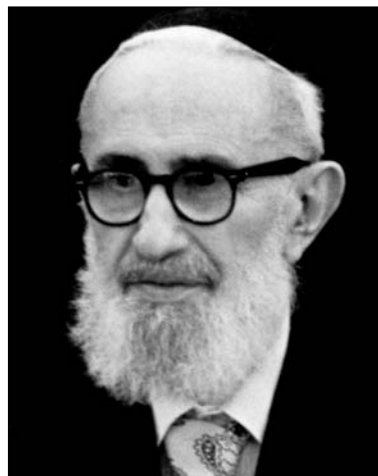
*Journey Through Grief* is dedicated to the memory of the late Hakham Solomon Gaon, who held the Maxwell R. Maybaum Memorial Chair In Talmud and Sephardic Codes (Halakhah) at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary from the late 1960's until the mid-90's, when he passed away. In his dedication, Rabbi Levy writes he conceived the idea of the book from Rabbi Gaon, who encouraged him to write for the English public about Sephardic traditions and rituals.

Rabbi Levy's first book, *Confronting the Loss of a Baby: A Personal and Jewish Perspective* (KTAV Pub.) was recently translated into Hebrew and published in Israel. This book, which has received international acclaim, has assisted families who have suffered the loss of a baby. The book is being published by Ruben Mass Publishers and is unique for the Hebrew reading audience. ■

## YESHIVA COMMEMORATES 10TH YAHRZEIT OF THE RAV'S PASSING

The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and Yeshiva University commemorated the 10th yahrzeit of one of modern Judaism's greatest pillars of wisdom and learning: the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

Distinguished faculty presented a wide-ranging series of lectures, tributes, and reminiscences from March 25 through April 9 on the Wilf and Midtown campuses. Former YU Chancellor Dr. Norman Lamm presented The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spektor annual shiur in Lamport Auditorium, broadcast live via satellite to YU's Caroline and Joseph S. Gruss Institute in Jerusalem. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, the Rabbi Henoch



Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

and Sarah D. Berman Professor of Talmud, delivered a shiur at the Gruss Institute in Jerusalem, which was broadcast live to New York. ■

## YESHIVA SENDS MISSION TO ISRAEL

One hundred Yeshiva University men and women flew to Israel March 16, 2003 for a week-long solidarity mission. Like its predecessors dating back to the 1991 Gulf War, Operation Torah Shield III sought to strengthen and

support Israel's people during trying times in the Middle East. Inspired by the declaration, "Hazak, Hazak, v'Nithazek" ("Be Strong. Be Strong. And May We Together Be Strengthened"), participants combine Torah study with visits to soldiers, Israeli communities, and wounded terror victims. The response from YU students was overwhelming: in one hour, more than 300 applications had been submitted to the Website, <http://www.torahshield.com>, and were accepted on a first come, first serve, basis. The Sephardic students of YU were well represented. ■

## US NEWS 2003 RANKINGS

For the eighth consecutive year, Yeshiva University has been ranked one of America's top tier universities in the annual *US News & World Report* survey. The 2003 survey ranked YU in 40th place.

The national university category includes YU along with 249 other schools. Yeshiva's ranking places it among the top 50 schools that comprise "tier one." Other schools in "tier one" include Columbia, Harvard, MIT, NYU, Princeton, and Yale.

"Our outstanding faculty and students, our dedicated deans, administrators, and trustees play a key role in this continuing recognition of the excellence of our academic programs," said Chancellor Dr. Norman Lamm.

Officials attribute YU's steady rise in the rankings to a high rate of retention and graduation among students, high SAT scores, strong faculty resources, availability of faculty to students due to small class size, and strong financial resources.

This year, *US News* changed the names of the ranking categories to better reflect their missions. Colleges and universities are divided into four categories: national universities-doctoral; national liberal arts colleges-

bachelor's; universities-master's, and comprehensive colleges-bachelor's. The national universities-doctoral offers a full range of undergraduate majors, plus masters and PhD degrees, and emphasize faculty research.

Schools are categorized primarily by mission and, in some cases, by region. Data is gathered from each school on up to 16 indicators of academic excellence. The ranking formula gives greatest weight to reputation which ultimately spurs the success of graduates entering top graduate programs.

The complete rankings are available online at <http://www.usnews.com>. ■

**RONALD P. STANTON,  
CHAIRMAN OF YESHIVA  
UNIVERSITY BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES, MAKES  
PACESETTING GIFT TO  
YU'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**



*Ronald P. Stanton*

Ronald P. Stanton, chairman and chief executive officer of Transammonia, Inc., was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees of Yeshiva University in September 2001. A vice chairman of the university since 1992, he joined the Board of Trustees in 1976. Mr. Stanton is the university's seventh chairman of the Board and also chairs YU's \$400 million capital campaign

launched in spring 2001. Thus far \$375 million has been raised.

A distinguished New York industrialist and philanthropist, Mr. Stanton established Transammonia, Inc. in 1965. The company trades, distributes and transports fertilizer materials, liquefied petroleum gases, and petrochemicals, and is listed by *Forbes* magazine as one of the nation's 100 largest private corporations. He is chairman of the Ministerial Committee and honorary trustee of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Manhattan, and a member of the boards of Lincoln Center, Inc. and the New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Mr. Stanton's most recent gift to YU—a contribution from him and his wife, Mei—is one of the campaign's largest and most innovative. The gift establishes a revolving capital fund to provide the university with resources to enhance current facilities, modernize infrastructure, and acquire new facilities for the benefit of students on the Wilf Campus, Midtown Campus, and Brookdale Center. Assets drawn from the fund are replenished as named gifts for these facilities are received from other donors.

Born in 1928, Mr. Stanton graduated from City College of New York. The library at Stern College for Women is named for Mr. Stanton's mother, Hedi Steinberg. He also dedicated the Sephardic Reference Room in memory of Judge Edgar J. Nathan II and Ivan Salomon, as well as the Yad Samuel Belkin Memorial Room in the Mendel Gottesman Library and the Kern Library at the Samuel H. Wang-YUHS for Girls in memory of his grandparents. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Yeshiva University in 1982. He is the father of three children, Oliver, Philip, and Hedi, and two grandchildren, Bradley and Alexandra. ■

**RABBI DR. MARC D. ANGEL,  
FIRST RABBINIC GRADUATE  
OF YU'S SEPHARDIC  
PROGRAM, EDITS NEW  
SEPHARDIC BIRKAT  
HAMAZON BOOKLET**



*Rabbi Marc D. Angel*

Rabbi Dr. Marc D. Angel, the distinguished minister of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue (Congregation Shearith Israel) in New York City, has edited a Grace after Meals booklet. It is based on the Rabbi David De Sola Pool edition, previously published by the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. This augmented edition has a revised, updated translation, and includes the following additional prayers: Havdala with various communities' liturgies (including Moroccan); Kiddush for Yom Tob; Commentary and some transliterations. Printed in a beautiful full-color edition, the booklet retails for \$4 (\$2.40 in quantity). For an additional 50 cents, it can be imprinted to mark a special occasion in quantities more than 50.

The booklet is available from Ktav Publishing House at 930 Newark Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07306 or (201) 963-9524. ■

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The President, Chancellor, Board of Trustees, and Sephardic Council of Overseers  
extend best wishes to you and your family for the New Year.

**תזכו לשנים רבות נעימות וטובות**

**URGENT APPEAL FOR SCHOLARSHIP AID FOR IMMIGRANT SEPHARDIC STUDENTS**

Many foreign Sephardic students from Morocco, Syria, Iran, Bukhara, and elsewhere are ready to enter Yeshiva University this year. They will all require major scholarship assistance beyond our normal ability to provide for their needs. An urgent scholarship appeal for these foreign students is being launched to raise the necessary funds to accommodate them. The cost for tuition, dormitory, and the minimum food plan is \$29,240 per student.

Please detach this form and send it with your tax deductible scholarship gift made out to **Yeshiva University Sephardic Student Scholarship Fund**, addressed to the attention of:

Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky, Yeshiva University, 500 West 185th Street, New York, NY, 10033-3201

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTRIBUTION**

Please indicate the amount of your scholarship gift for Sephardic students at Yeshiva University:

One year Full Expendable Scholarship:  \$29,240

Endowed Scholarship:  \$25,000

Partial Scholarships:

\$18,500       \$5,500       \$520

\$10,000       \$2,600       \$101

\$ 7,500       \$1,000       Other \_\_\_\_\_

A contribution of \$25,000 or more will establish a personal endowed scholarship in your name that will be listed in all appropriate University publications in perpetuity.