

Yeshiva University's Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies



Dear Friends,

We are honored to present to the YU community, friends and supporters the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies newsletter. With it, we invite you to learn more about the GPATS experience *lhagdil Torah u'lhadira*, to further the growth and splendor of Torah learning for the women in our community.

Yeshiva University's Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies is a two year Masters-conferring program where women are able to study on a high-level and further their growth in Talmud, Torah knowledge, and Halakha. While being in this program, the students can also take classes at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education & Administration and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies to improve their pedagogical skills and knowledge of Bible and Jewish History.

This program creates an elite cadre of female scholars of Talmud and Halakha who study for the sake of growing as Torah observant Jews with strong *Ahavat* and *Yirat HaShem*. Many go on to serve as formal leaders and role models for the Jewish community. We are so proud of our alumni, of over 100 women, who decide after the program to become teachers in many high-schools throughout the country, in countless seminaries in Israel, involved in JLIC (Jewish Learning Initiative on College campuses all over the country), NCSY, and as Yoatzot Halacha in Israel and America. They are literally sharing Torah all over the world.

In this newsletter, you are presented with highlights about our program, students, faculty and alumni. We speak with Alumna Shayna Goldberg, Mashgicha Ruchanit and faculty at Migdal Oz, about her experiences before, during and after her time in the GPATS program. Additionally, we will highlight our current third-year student, Zissy Turner, the recipient of the Wexner Fellowship, who has interned in the Keshet Israel Synagogue, Washington DC during her second year at GPATS, and will be the intern of Lincoln Square Synagogue this year. We will spotlight our new class of fifteen students and update you on the progress of our graduates.

We look forward to your support of this important program and sharing in many future accomplishments.

Thank you in advance for your partnership,

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander
Vice President for University and Community Life,
Yeshiva University

Professor Nechama Price
Director of Graduate Program
in Advanced Talmudic Studies

GPATS Celebrates 17th Graduating Class

GPATS celebrated its 17th graduating class on Wednesday, May 24, with seven women who marked the end of their journey studying advanced Talmud and in-depth Halakhah. Parents, friends, teachers, and university leadership gathered to commemorate the joyous occasion with words of Torah, speeches, personalized acknowledgements, and, of course, diplomas.

Professor Nechama Price, the Director of GPATS and a graduate of the program herself, welcomed everyone to the celebration. A program that has been revived and thrived under her leadership now boasts 13 women. Price has expanded the degree to which GPATS women have opportunities to gain experience and share their wisdom with the larger Jewish communities of North America and beyond.

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander, a seminal part of GPATS' flourishing, shared words of Torah and encouragement to the graduates. After spending much time throughout the year ensuring the well-being of the students and meeting with every graduate, his encouraging, personal message was inspiring and empowering. President Emeritus Richard Joel

also offered kind and inspiring words to the graduates, expressing the university's support for the future of women's advanced Torah learning and leadership in the Jewish community.

GPATS boasts an outstanding caliber of faculty, and a highlight of the program for many students is the relationships they cultivate and the skillsets they acquire from their teachers. Most notably, Keynote Speaker Dr. Norma Bamuel Joseph, a preeminent Judaic scholar and professor at Concordia University in Montreal, and mother of YU's Senior Vice President Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph, laid out a fascinating perspective on Women's Torah Leadership in Jewish History. Joseph shared a compilation of historical accounts about pivotal female leaders including seventeenth century's Asenath Barzani of Iraq, who took over the administration and teaching for her ailing husband in his yeshivah.

Joseph spoke of her support for the female pursuit of academia and Torah learning and served as both an engaging lecturer and role model to the graduating and continuing students. As seven students become a part of the GPATS alumni family, they bid farewell to the familiar walls of the Lea and Leon Eisenberg Beit Midrash as they embark careers in the Jewish education, Jewish communal work, business, and medical fields. Mazal tov!

WHERE THEY ARE NOW- CLASS OF 2017

- **ZISSY TURNER**
Shana Gimmel Student, GPATS; Fellow, Wexner Graduate Fellowship/Davidson Scholars Program
- **BLIMA ZELINGER MAGED**
Tanach and Talmud Teacher, Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School

- **SARAH ROBINSON**
Tanach and Yesodot Teacher, Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School
- **ELEORAH SANDMAN**
Gemara and Halacha Teacher at Yeshiva University High School For Girls/Central
- **RACHEL SHAPIRO**
Analyst, JP Morgan Chase

- **MICHAL SCHECHTER**
Medical Student, Albert Einstein School of Medicine
- **CHANA BRAUSER SHESTACK**
Communications Associate Business Office, Sinai Schools; Rebbetzin, Ahavat Achim in Fairlawn, New Jersey



Back Row: Eleorah Sandman, Michal Schechter, Chana Brauser Shestack, Zissy Turner, Rachel Shapiro, Blima Zelinger Maged, Sarah Robinson. Front Row: Mrs. Nechama Price, Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander, Rabbi David Nachbar, Rabbi Moshe Kahn, Rabbi Gedalyah Berger

What My Eyes See

BY RABBI DAVID NACHBAR

As I enter my seventh year of teaching at GPATS, it brings me great delight to share a glimpse of my personal experience and what my eyes see in the Stern College for Women Beit Midrash. My initial interest in and arrival at GPATS seven years ago was, undoubtedly, initially inspired by my exposure to the Torah, the worldview, and the personality of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein zt”l during the formative years of my schooling.

Rav Lichtenstein zt”l shaped my attitude toward women’s learning on a dual plane. From a broad perspective, Rav Lichtenstein’s frequent citation in speeches and writing of F.H. Bradley’s essay, “My Station and its Duties,” encouraged me to thoughtfully reflect on my own “station” in the 21st century Modern Orthodox community and its attendant “duties”. More directly related, Rav Lichtenstein’s position that a woman’s engagement in Talmud study, in all of its depth, breadth, and grandeur, was not merely an outgrowth of historical exigency but a lofty fulfillment of the mandates to know, to love, and to serve God with all of one’s heart and soul was simultaneously deeply impactful, resonant, and inspiring to me.

The confluence of both lessons provided me with a strong impetus to contribute toward and further enrich advanced learning opportunities for the segment of women in the Modern Orthodox community for whom the study of Torah She’be’al Peh is a vital channel in their religious service to God. Two of the core values which shape the contours of an idyllic Modern Orthodox community are the centrality of Torah study in our relationship with God and as it informs and elevates our religious lives, on the one hand, and the prioritization of the religious and intellectual worlds of the women in our community, on the other. I cannot imagine a program better suited than GPATS for pursuing these lofty twin goals.

Aside from the communal importance of ensuring the vitality and strength of women’s learning, generally, and at GPATS, in particular, my participation as a Rebbe at GPATS has been immensely gratifying on a personal level. The opportunity to challenge my students to think critically and deeply about God’s Torah and its values, and be equally challenged by them to do the same is a dynamic process



which fosters reflection and growth for students and teacher alike. The opportunity to closely examine texts together and attempt to unearth their underlying concepts has demanded my own and their rigorous dedication and perseverance to secure an accurate understanding. Finally, the opportunity to share thoughts and insights about God’s Torah with my students and be reciprocally enlightened by their perspective is a testament to the Talmudic adage – “and from my students more than all.”

I feel extraordinarily privileged and blessed by what I am able to see on a daily basis in the Stern College for Women Beit Midrash. I see women who earnestly and genuinely seek to broaden and deepen their understanding of God’s word simply because it is important to them and their relationship with God. I see women who with quiet humility and in the most unglamorous of ways dedicate hours combing through the lines of a difficult passage in a Yerushalmi or Ramban simply because they yearn to understand it. I see women who are committed to mastery and have joyously celebrated their completion of the entire corpus of Tanakh and all six orders of Mishnah. I see women who thirst for religious guidance to properly understand our tradition and its values and how those values offer insight toward processing world events and surrounding society. I see women who support and assist one another in their efforts to grow as thinking, religious beings and sensitive human beings as well. I see women who aspire to enrich the Jewish community and general society through numerous familial, communal, and professional roles. This is the reality before me that my eyes are so privileged to see, and for that I feel deeply fortunate.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR

- **June Zman at Stern College—a month of intensive Talmud Study for Women in various universities**
- **Scholar-in-Residence for Shavuot in London, England**
- **Facilitated Tuesday night seder program at Stern College for Women**
- **GPATS Beit Midrash Program at Jamaica Estates**

Life After GPATS

- 1. Could you tell us about your early background?** I grew up in Great Neck, NY where my father is the rabbi of the Young Israel of Great Neck. For high school I went to Central-Yeshiva University's High School for Girls where my mother taught Women in Jewish Law and was the director of Admissions. After my year in Michlalah I was excited to start Stern College. I had wonderful teachers and learned a lot wherever I went, but my parents have always remained my primary role models and most influential teachers.
- 2. What would you say was the most rewarding aspect of GPATS?** GPATS was my first opportunity to study gemara seriously and uninterrupted for many hours at a time. The learning was challenging and intense, and for the first time in my life I felt utterly overwhelmed and humbled by the breadth and depth of Torah. Rabbi Kahn forced us to make sure we understood every word of what we were learning. There was no glossing over for even a single line in a very difficult rishon.
- 3. Has that answer changed since you graduated?** The further I get from GPATS, the more I yearn to return to serious Torah study. Sometimes I think about what it would be like to stop everything and enroll in another advanced learning program. Teaching Torah has been very rewarding but I miss the level of intense learning that I enjoyed over my time in GPATS.
- 4. What does it mean to you to be a YU graduate living in Israel?** Even in Israel, I continue to feel connected to other YU graduates who have made aliyah because of all of the values, ideals and passions we share. This past March my family and I were at a reunion shabbaton for 10 years worth of Yeshivat Har Etzion bogrim who have made aliyah. Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh, the founding Halacha teacher of GPATS was also there and commented that he felt like he was at a GPATS reunion!! It was wonderful to see so many fellow alumnae of GPATS all in Israel.
- 5. Why do you think a program like GPATS is important?** I believe deeply that learning on a high level empowers us to feel like insiders to our Judaism. It keeps us connected to our mesorah. Learning Torah can be an incredibly humbling experience as you begin to understand the complexities and the ins and outs of the system and what it takes to be a real Talmidat chachamim and know something before you just state your opinion. Most importantly, I find that the more one learns the more potential she has to develop her ahavat Hashem. A powerful way that we can come to know and love Hashem is through His Torah.
- 6. What opportunities came from being in the GPATS?** Immediately after finishing GPATS, I began teaching Gemara and Tanach in Stern Hebrew High School (now Kohelet) in Philadelphia. From there I went on to the



SHAYNA GOLDBERG, '02

Mashgicha Ruchani
Bnot Chul

Beit Midrash L'Nashim
Migdal Oz

Yoetzet Halacha program in Israel and then later taught Halacha in Ma'ayanot in Teaneck. Both when teaching in high schools and when learning in the yoetzet program I was very well aware that the skill set that I had developed had been honed in GPATS.

- 7. Since you graduated from the GPATS program, what have you been up to?** Since we made aliyah in July of 2011 I have been teaching in Migdal Oz-the Beit Midrash for Women of Yeshivat Har Etzion. It is a powerful experience to be part of a Beit Midrash for women that is buzzing with learning from early morning until late at night and where limmud Torah and spiritual growth is on the forefront of everyone's minds. Every day when I arrive and take a seat at my makom, I feel incredibly blessed that I can continue to be part of a learning community. It is not something that I take for granted.

GPATS INTERNSHIPS

- Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, Chicago, IL
- Chaplaincy in Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, NY
- Congregation Keter Torah, Teaneck, NJ
- Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- JLIC NYU, New York, NY
- Keshet Israel, Washington, DC
- Lincoln Square Synagogue, New York, NY
- Young Israel of Scarsdale, Scarsdale, NY
- The Ramaz School Friday Kollel, New York, NY
- Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills, New York, NY
- Young Israel of West Hartford, CT

1. Can you tell us about your pre-college background?

I grew up in the lovely enclave of Far Rockaway, NY. I attended Shulamith School for Girls and Stella K Abraham High School. Both places instilled within me a love of Torah She'Bikhtav. From there, I went straight to Queens College, where I studied Neuroscience.

2. When/how did you decide you wanted to do GPATS?

During my time in college, it was very important to me to be involved with the Jewish community on campus. I was on the student board, and I facilitated learning, programming, and helped cultivate a vibrant Orthodox community on campus. As I prepared to graduate, I knew that in whatever path I took, I wanted to be involved with the wellbeing and education of my Jewish community. GPATS was the natural choice, where I could study gemara and halakha on a level that would allow me to have the content and cultural currency to be a communal educator.

3. What do you think is special/unique about GPATS?

GPATS provides opportunity upon opportunity for its students to discover and further their passions for Torah, whether that be in the Beit Midrash, in Jewish education, or in the Jewish communal world. If you'd like to teach in day school, GPATS gives you the opportunity to meet Heads of Schools. If you want to be a communal educator, you can interview for shul internships. If you want to learn before going to medical school, GPATS is still the place for you. GPATS is what you make of it, and that's what makes GPATS amazing.

4. Can you tell us about your Wexner Fellowship? How has GPATS prepared you for this next exciting step? The Wexner Fellowship/Davidson Scholars Program is awarded each year to 20 outstanding individuals who seek to prepare themselves through graduate training for careers in Jewish Education among other fields. I am the first scholar chosen from GPATS. My voice as an Orthodox woman interested in community education is unique. GPATS has given me the ability and knowledge to articulately advocate for the increased presences of female Jewish communal educators



ZISSY TURNER, '17

Shana Gimmel Student at GPATS, Wexner Fellow

5. Why do you think a program like GPATS is important?

GPATS is one of the only institutions in North America where Modern Orthodox women can learn Torah at a post-college level. Thank G-d, in Israel, the choices of learning programs for women are numerous, but that isn't so in America. Torah is the bedrock of our lives as religious Jews, and it is vital for programs like GPATS to exist to inculcate and further a love of Torah learning and Torah knowledge for women in North America.

6. What are you looking forward to about the year to come as a "Shana Gimmel" student? I can't wait to be back in the Stern Beit Midrash. The hum of women learning is music to my ears. I am excited as a Shana Gimmel student to truly deepen my learning with a group of women who are equally passionate about Torah.

7. As a student, you have been very involved in GPATS internships. Could you describe your experience as a synagogue intern? It has been an incredibly moving, and meaningful experience being a synagogue intern. They say you can learn a new language by being immersed in it. I learned the language of communal education by being immersed in a different community. I interned at Keshet Israel Congregation in Washington DC and I can say that from start to finish, the warmth of the community allowed to me grow as a speaker and educator.



Esti Zacharowicz and Aliza Chase learning b'chavrata at GPATS June Zman program.

GPATS Women | Our Monthly Lecture Series

BY JUDY BERMAN, *Member of GPATS Advisory Council*

This past spring, the Young Israel of Jamaica Estates (YIJE), in conjunction with Yeshiva University's Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS), began a monthly lecture series featuring the women of GPATS. Each month, on Wednesday evening, men and women from Jamaica Estates, Queens and nearby communities, were privileged to hear lectures delivered by different GPATS scholars. The topics ranged from a Purim shiur on "Matanot L'Evyonim" delivered by Rivka (Kaminetzky) Rosenbaum, a Pesach shiur by Sarah Robinson on "How Crypto Jews celebrated Pesach". Our series continued with a shiur by Wexner Graduate Fellow Zissy Turner on "Kedushat HaPeh". Our final lecture, delivered by Chaya Kanarfogel Rayman, enlightened us on the "Hidden Figures of the Gemara: Learned Women Who Made Their Mark". The audience for each lecture was evenly split between men

and women and of all age groups. The lectures were illuminating and all who attended enjoyed and learned a great deal.

The grand finale to our lecture series was a scholar in residence weekend in which we were honored to host GPATS Director, Professor Nechama Price, for Shabbat. Scores of people were fortunate to hear the Shabbat drasha on the parsha, delivered after davening. The shiurim continued in the afternoon with a shiur on the "Leadership of Moshe, Aaron and Miriam". Our final shiur, delivered at a sumptuous seudat shlishit was on the transition of the leadership role to Yehoshua. Our shul and the entire community has benefitted greatly from the close association between YIJE and GPATS.

We look forward with great anticipation to continuing our monthly beit midrash program when Yeshiva resumes.

GETTING TO KNOW THE INCOMING CLASS



Lizzi Peled

Where are you from?

Los Angeles, CA

Where did you attend high school?

YULA

What was your major in college?

Political Science

What are your career aspirations?

Lizzi will be attending the University of Pennsylvania Law School to become a lawyer and eventually a federal judge

What were you involved with on campus?

YUPAC, YU College Democrats, SCWSC President, Pre-Law Society, YUNMUN, START

Who is your favorite author?

William Shakespeare and JK Rowling



Tzivya Beck

Where are you from?

Monsey, NY

Where did you attend high school?

Shaarei Torah of Richmond

What was your major in college?

Political science

What are your career aspirations?

Tzivya will be attending Harvard Law School. She hopes to study Public Interest Law and focus her legal career on benefiting others.

What were you involved with on campus?

Israel Club, Jacob Hecht Pre-law Society, J. Dunner Political Science Society

Who is your role model?

My mom - she passed the NYS Bar and began her legal career after having nine kids!

Who is your favorite author?

J. K. Rowling



Briana Friedman

Where are you from?

Merrick, NY

Where did you attend high school?

YUHSG/Central

What was your major in college?

Cellular & Molecular Biology

What are your career aspirations?

A career in Medicine

What were you involved with on campus?

Project START!, College EDge, The BMC, Physics Peer Tutor, Medical Ethics in Halacha Committee

Who is your role model?

The Rav

What is your favorite movie?

The Princess Bride

Who is your favorite author?

J.K. Rowling



Avital Habshush

Where are you from?

Brooklyn, NY

Where did you attend high school?

YUHSG/Central

What was your major in college?

Biology

What are your career aspirations?

To be a genetic counselor

What were you involved with on campus?

President of the Shabbat Enhancement Committee, President of Project START, Madricha for Migdal Oz, Nishmat, and Sheirut Leumi first year students on campus

What is your favorite movie?

The Little Rascals is my favorite movie because it clearly shows to never underestimate anybody's capabilities even if they are kids.

Do you have any hidden talents?

I paint in my free time and also run instructed paint nights.

Who is your favorite author?

J.K. Rowling



Zahava Schwartz

Where are you from?

Queens, NY

Where did you attend high school?

Midreshet Shalhevet High School

What was your major in college?

Marketing and a minor in Judaic Studies

What are your career aspirations?

Creating Judaic studies related educational material and become a Scholar in Holocaust studies

What were you involved with on campus?

Student Life Committee as the liaison for Libraries

Who is your role model?

A Rabbi of mine from Seminary, Rav Jason Knapel—a Master of the Torah and a leader in a Holocaust Education

What is your favorite movie?

Anything by Christopher Nolan

Who is your favorite author?

S.Y. Agnon



Racheli Schuraytz

Where are you from?

Valley Village, CA

Where did you attend high school?

YULA Girls High School

What was your major in college?

Neurobiology

What are your career aspirations?

I hope to be a pediatric neurologist.

What were you involved with on campus?

Writing Center, Housing & Residence Life, Shabbat Enhancement Committee

Who is your role model?

Eleanor Roosevelt

What is your favorite movie?

It's a Wonderful Life

Do you have any hidden talents?

Playing the harp and speaking a bit of French

Who is your favorite author?

Sally Watson



Rachel Blumenthal

Where are you from?

New Rochelle, NY

Where did you attend high school?

The Frisch School

What was your major in college?

Math and English Literature

What were you involved with on campus?

Yavneh (the Orthodox student group on campus), BMC (the Beit Midrash Committee), and all things Hille! (I went to Columbia University for Undergrad!)

Who is your favorite author?

Thomas Hardy. His books are what caused me to fall in love with English literature and ultimately led me to becoming an English major.



Ziona Isaacs

Where are you from?

Lawrence, NY

Where did you attend high school?

SKA

What was your major in college?

Biology and Psychology

What are your career aspirations?

Right now I work for NY NCSY as the Manhattan Director and Advisor Coordinator. I'm passionate about playing an active role in the Jewish community while I would also like to pursue interests in psych. or biomed. eng.

What were you involved with on campus?

TAC!

Who is your role model?

My mom



Shoshana Klafter

Where are you from?

Cincinnati, OH

Where did you attend high school?

RITSS and The Seven Hills School

What was your major in college?

Biology

What were you involved with on campus?

BMC and START as well as many other organizations

Who is your favorite author?

Orson Scott Card



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- \$18,000 dedicate a GPATS shiur for a year
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- \$5,000 support a GPATS shiur for a week
- \$2,500 support the learning in the Beit Midrash for a week
- \$1,800 support a GPATS fellow for a week
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