

Agudath Israel 2016 Yerushalayim Yarchei Kallah Report

January 18, 2016



The Torah communities of the United States and Eretz Yisroel derived a boost of ruchniyus and mutual chizuk last week, during the annual Agudath Israel of America Yarchei Kallah in Yerushalayim.

For the 16th consecutive year, a large group of businessmen and professionals, from North America and beyond, many accompanied by their wives, spent a full week – from Monday through Thursday – in Yerushalayim, learning Torah the entire day. The banquet hall at the Ramada Hotel was turned into a vibrant Bais Medrash, with a kol Torah and pilpul chaverim that you would expect to find in a prestigious yeshiva or kollel.

Even with the pace of life seeming to speed up, and the security situation perennially volatile, the Yarchei Kallah's show of force on behalf of Torah learning and the bnei Eretz Yisroel only intensifies each year. The 2016 Yarchei Kallah drew close to 225 men and 75 women. Not only does the number of participants increase each year, but the diversity does too. There are participants from every major community – American, European,

Chassidish, Litvish, Sephardic – and an increasing number of younger and middle age professionals, including several father-and-son pairs.

Day One

“It is heartwarming to see the oilam...”

With these words, Rabbi Asher Weiss, Av Beis Din of Darchei Hora’ah and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Darchei Torah, opened his shiur hakdamah on the sugya of the Yarchei Kallah: Tzitzis. Rabbi Weiss has delivered a shiur at the Yarchei Kallah since its inception, and feels a powerful kinship with the program’s participants. “This is a very special yeshiva in Yerushalayim...and it grows from year to year,” he remarked. Rabbi Weiss spoke emotionally about the legacy of his father zt”l, a talmid chacham and Holocaust survivor who recently passed away, who would eagerly accompany him to the Yarchei Kallah each year.

Click [here](#) for photos from Day 1

The sight of so many successful businessmen traveling to Yerushalayim to immerse themselves in learning, with little or no time to do anything else, makes an enormous impression on the Yidden of Eretz Yisroel, especially during the current precarious security situation. The chizuk it gives them can not be overstated.

Rabbi Weiss’s shiur was delivered on Monday afternoon, after participants spent morning seder learning the sugya b’chavrusa, utilizing the maarei mekomos that were meticulously prepared by Yarchei Kallah organizers.

In his inimitable manner, Rabbi Weiss articulated the fundamental chiyuv of Tzitzis. The mitzvah is primarily the responsibility of the individual, with the type of garment necessary for the chiyuv being a secondary consideration. On the other hand, the mitzvah of Mezuzah is primarily on the home. The chiyuv only manifests itself on the one who resides there. He discussed a variety of halachos and maamarei Chazal that are better understood due to this explanation. One example is why we make a bracha on putting on the Tzitzis on our bodies, as opposed to when we fashion them.

This extensive lomdishe discourse drove home the personal importance that this mitzvah has for each Yid, and how it elevates him while being worn.

Shiurim by Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Rosh Yeshivas Chevron; and Rabbi Tzvi Meyer Zilberberg; followed.

On Monday, as on each of the subsequent days, there was a Hachanah Shiur by Rabbi Shlomo Gottesman, Esq., editor of Yishurun, as well as a hachana/chazara shiur by Rabbi Shlomo Cynamon, Rav of Khal Bnai Torah of Flatbush. Each day also featured an English language Daf Yomi shiur by a variety of Maggidei Shiur.

Day Two

Each one of the following three days featured a similar all day schedule of diligent learning, preparation, chavrusos, and shiurim from some of the world's most coveted maggidei shiur.

On Tuesday, shiurim were delivered by Rabbi Pinchos Friedman, Rosh Hakollelim, Belz; Rabbi Boruch Dov Povarsky, Rosh Yeshiva, Ponovezh; Rabbi Nisan Kaplan, R"m, Yeshivas Mir, Yerushalayim; and Rabbi Moshe Chodosh, Rosh HaYeshiva, Ohr Elchonon.

Click [here](#) for photos from Day 2

Rabbi Pinchos Friedman delivered a warm discourse on the symbolic importance that mitzvas tzitzis has for those who fulfill it, and how it helps us excel in all other mitzvos and our avodas Hashem.

He concluded that our avodas Hashem in this world needs to be based primarily on ahava and rachamim - with the necessary "partnership" of din - which is why we virtually always pasken like Bais Hillel.

Later that afternoon, Rabbi Kaplan delivered an intriguing shiur on various lesser known halachos of tzitzis, with intense input from the audience. Rabbi Kaplan stressed that although one is patur from tzitzis if he doesn't wear a four cornered garment, leading poskim throughout the generations warned about the importance for every yid to wear tzitzis, throughout the day. Moreover, one must have proper kavana to fulfill the mitzvah and remember yetzias mitzrayim. If one lacks proper kavana, he may not be fulfilling the mitzvah, perhaps even transgressing an aveira of wearing a four cornered garment without tzitzis.

Other halachos discussed by Rabbi Kaplan included the prohibition of giving young children pasul tzitzis to wear, and whether one fulfills the mitzvah and can make a beracha when borrowing someone else's tzitzis or wearing a Tallis that belongs to the shul. Rabbi Kaplan advised the audience to make sure to have the tzitzis, including the chutin, purchased before completing the pair or wearing it.

In the evening, Rabbi Hirsch gave a live presentation on how to make tzitzis, according to the rulings of HaRav Elyashiv zt"l.

The Learning Continues

"Our dear brothers, there is no other nation like you..."

On Wednesday, Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein, Rosh Kollel, Bais Dovid and Rav, Ramat Elchonon, Bnei Brak, was back to deliver one of the Yarchei Kallah's annual highlights featuring his trademark infectious zest and intriguing halacha rulings.

Click [here](#) for photos from Day 3

Rabbi Zilberstein presented some unique halacha questions: A father collecting money for his baby's surgery was given \$30,000 by a donor's secretary who confused him with a different collector with a similar name. Is he permitted to keep the money? A meshulach was given a generous donation after being tipped off on the Torah question that a particular donor wanted answered. Is he allowed to take the increased donation or is he required to 'fess up to his prior knowledge - and opportunity to prepare? An American family paid for an armed guard to accompany them in the Old City of Yerushalayim during their son's Bar Mitzvah trip, but the guard discovered, after the outing, that his gun wasn't loaded. The guard's question was that while the trip proceeded without incident, he had really not provided the services for which he was contracted. Is he allowed to keep his fee?

The venerable poseik and son-in-law of Rabbi Elyashiv zt"l also mentioned several halachos related to tzitzis, including the heter of the Chayei Adam to snip kosher tzitzis in order to replace it with thicker chutim, and his own psak years back permitting the use of a Tallis to tie up a thief who broke into

a shul on Shabbos.

Maggidei shiur on Wednesday included Rabbi Asher Arieli, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Mir, Yerushalayim; Rabbi Meir Tzvi Spitzer, R"m Yeshivas Mir; and Rabbi Reuvain Leuchter, Mashgiach who delivered Divrei Chizuk v'Hisorirus.

In a fascinating panel on the topic of techeilis in Tzitzis, Rabbi Shlomo England, Ho'Admor M'Radzin delivered a comprehensive shiur on the issue of techeiles in our times. This was followed by an interesting audio-visual presentation on the topic by Rabbi Meir Hellman. Following Maariv, R' Mottel Tenenbaum delivered a shiur on various practical applications of hilchos tzitzis.

Thursday, the final day, featured another full day program packed with learning and shiurim. This was despite the fact that many participants were heading back to their respective homes overseas that evening, into a short Erev Shabbos. Maggidei Shiur included Rabbi Mattisyahu Deutsch, Rav, Ramat Shlomo Yerushalayim, Rabbi Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Ateres Yisroel, Yerushalayim; Rabbi Naftoli Green, Maggid Shiur, Kaminetzer Yeshiva; Rabbi Gershon Meltzer, Yeshivas Mir; and Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Beis Yehuda, Bnei Brak.

Click [here](#) for photos from Day 4

In addition to the sessions described above, there was also a special English track, offering English language shiurim for men from noted personalities such as Rabbi Yeshaya Portnoy, Rosh HaYeshiva, Bais Medrash L'Torah, Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yochanan Rudensky, Rosh HaYeshiva, Mercaz HaTorah; Rabbi Dovid Hirsch, Mechaber, Sifrei Pe'er Halacha; Rabbi Moshe Aron Friedman, R"m Yeshivas Mir, Yerushalayim; Rabbi Meir Tzvi Spitzer, R"m, Yeshivas Mir; Rabbi Yehoshua Eichenstein, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yad Aron; and Rabbi Chaim Pass, Rosh Yeshiva, Chochmas Shlomo, Bnei Brak.

The program included a special women's program featuring shiurim by world renowned speakers such as Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller, Rebbetzin Rena Tarshish and Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi; coupled with exciting tours of Yerushalayim and other parts of the Holy Land.

This Yarchei Kallah, as in previous years, was organized by a team of

Agudath Israel staff members including Rabbi Shlomo Gertzulin, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration; Rabbi Labish Becker, Executive Director; Rabbi Avrohom Nisan Perl, director of Torah Projects; Rabbi Eliyahu Simcha Bamberger, coordinator for the Daf Yomi Commission, and Mrs. Debby Jacobs, director of Special Programming.

“The enthusiasm and hasmada we saw this year was extraordinary,” remarked Rabbi Perl. “The Yarchei Kallah is a monumental Kiddush Hashem that inspires participants for a long time to come.”

(Author: Shimmy Blum)