

Photos/Video: Banim U'vnei Banim: Generations Dedicated to Torah at Agudath Israel's 18th Annual Yerushalayim Yarchei Kallah

By all accounts, this year's Agudath Israel of America's Torah Projects Commission's annual Yerushalayim Yarchei Kallah was one for the history books, with more than 500 participants spanning five continents, 30 cities and several groups that spanned two and even

three generations. Now in its 18th year, the Yarchei Kallah delved into Sugyos throughout Shas that deal with refuah and pikuach nefesh, a topic that had attendees alternately transfixed and engaged in animated debate. This was indicative of an extremely high level of intensity on display throughout the week-long event which also attracted many additional participants who flocked to the Ramada Jerusalem Hotel to take part in the program.

Known for attracting top magidei shiur and rabbonim, the Yarchei Kallah participants themselves represented a veritable universe of talmidei chachamim. The group spanned decades in age and represented every segment of the Jewish community, with some earning their livelihood in klei kodesh with others successful professionals and businessmen. All were united by a burning desire to devote themselves exclusively to four solid days of limud.

Monday

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“The concentration here was unbelievable,” said Rabbi Labish Becker, executive director for Agudath Israel of America. “Normally everyone is always busy but here you didn’t even hear a phone ring. Walking through the room and around the tables no one even looked up at you because they were all so focused on their learning.”

The Sugya D’Kallah lent itself to countless fascinating discussions as a wide variety of questions arose that addressed dozens of different medical scenarios that impact daily life as well as emergency situations. Important issues such as the halachic ramifications of kidney donations and heart transplants were considered. Other fascinating issues such as whether it is better to use a gas powered, hybrid or an electrical vehicle under circumstances that necessitate going to a hospital on Shabbos were also discussed. Medical questions of every variety were raised during the Yarchei Kallah, with additional shiurim added at the last minute to accommodate participants’ outpouring of interest on the many topics that were covered

The program included luminaries of the Torah world, giving participants an unparalleled opportunity to hear shiurim of the highest caliber. Shiurei Iyun were given by HaRav Boruch Mordechai Eizrachi, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Ateres Yisroel, HaRav Boruch Dov Povarsky, Rosh Yeshiva, Ponovez, HaRav Asher Arieli, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim, and HaRav Dovid Cohen, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Chevron, with the English track featuring HaRav Yochanan Rudensky, Rosh HaYeshiva, Mercaz HaTorah, HaRav Yosef Elefant, R’M, Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim, HaRav Binyomin Moskowitz, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Medrash Shmuel, Harav Yeshaya Portnoy, Rosh HaYeshiva, Beis Medrash L’Torah, HaRav Shrage Kallus, Rav, Khal Imrei Pi, Ramat Shlomo and Rosh Kollal, Machon L’Haraah L’Rabbonim and HaRav Meir Tzvi Spitzer, R’M, Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim.

Tuesday

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Shiurei Halacha were presented by HaRav Asher Weiss, Av Beis Din, Minchas Asher and Rosh HaYeshiva, Mosdos Minchas Asher, HaRav Yitzchok Zilberstein, Rosh Kollel, Bais Dovid, Cholon and Rav, Ramat Elchanan, Bnei Brak and HaRav Nisan Kaplan, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim,

With the 13th Siyum Hashas less than two years away, Daf Yomi shiurim were given by HaRav Naftoli Prizant R'M, Yeshiva Gedola Chechnov and Maggid Shiur Daf Yomi, Tiferes Menachem, Boyan, HaRav Chaim Yehuda Ullman, R'M, Yeshivas Bircas Aryeh Pressburg, and HaRav Naftoli Gefen, Maggid Shiur, Kaminetzer Yeshiva, with English Daf Yomi delivered by Rabbi Yochanan Stengel, Menahel, Bnos Yisroel of Baltimore, Rabbi Gedaliah Weinberger, Chairman, Agudath Israel of America, Daf Yomi Commission and Magid Shiur, Agudath Israel Zichron Chaim Tzvi of Madison and Rabbi Moshe Matz, Rav, Agudath Israel of South Florida.

Hachana shiurim were given throughout the Yarchei Kallah by Rabbi Shlomo Gottesman, co-chairman of the Yarchei Kallah, with Chazara Shiurim presented by Rabbi Shlomo Cynamon, Rav, Khal Bnai Torah, Flatbush.

Special nightly shiurim addressed several fascinating issues, with a symposium tackling end of life issues by Rabbi Eliezer Gewirtzman, member of Machon Chayim Aruchim and Rabbi Benzion Leser, coordinator of Machon Chayim Aruchim, with introductory remarks by Rivie Schwebel, member of Agudath Israel of America's Board of Trustees. Other topics included a presentation on genetics and stem cell research in halacha by Rabbi Dr. Avraham Steinberg, President, Yad Harav Herzog and Mechaber, Refuah B'Halacha and ethical and medical dilemmas in medicine by Harav Hillel Dovid Geller, Rosh Kollel, Bais Dovid, Cholon and HaRav Yosef Hoffner, Rav, Mayanei Hayeshua Hospital.

Wednesday

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There were emotional moments as well, on both Monday and Tuesday nights, with Divrei Hespud given for Maran HaRav Aron Leib Shteinman zt'l by HaRav Dovid Cohen and HaRav Yakov Hillel, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivat Chevrat Ahavat Shalom, Yerushalayim and a siyum on Shisha Sidrei Mishna combined with a Daf Yomi siyum on Maseches Shavuos given by HaRav Moshe Shteinman, Rosh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, son of HaRav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt"l. Zichronos were also related by Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Sneider, chavrusa of Rav Aron Yehudah Leib Shteinman zt"l, and the guest speaker was HaRav Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Rosh Yeshiva, Mesoras Mordechai and Rav B'Khal Chasidim, Sha'arei Chesed, Yerushalayim.

Inspiring Divrei Chizuk and warm Divrei Neilah were offered on Thursday, the final day of the Yarchei Kallah, by HaRav Moshe Chaim Denderowitz, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Ketana Sfas Emes and HaRav Pinchos Friedman, Rosh Hakollelim, Belz.

Thursday

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The women of the Yarchei Kallah took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy full day tours which included opportunities to daven at kivrei tzadikim, Kever Rochel and the Kosel, as well as Kosel tunnels tours and visits to various sites including the Israel Aquarium and Maaleh Adumim. There were also special women's shiurim given by Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi, Rebbetzin Rena Tarshish, Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer and Rabbi Yaacov Haber.

Organizers described this year's Yarchei Kallah as extremely powerful, saying it was a truly unique experience that left participants glowing with excitement.

"We have watched this beautiful Torah event grow for 18 years and the impact is unbelievable. The shiurim and chavrusas of the Yarchei Kallah that initially comprised a one-week event now extend throughout the entire year," said Rabbi Avrohom

Nisan Perl, national director of the Agudah's Commission on Torah Projects.

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