SHANA TOVA

Dear Friends,

As we are approaching the High Holidays, we would like to take this opportunity to connect with you and express our sincere gratitude for your continued support of the Mayanot Institute of Jewish Studies. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, invites us to reflect on the past and inspires us to make resolutions for the future. Although it is a deeply personal and introspective time of year, it is also a time of community and unity. As we gather in synagogue together, we stand before G-d as one people, forever connected by our shared past, present and future.

We commend you on your active interest in Mayanot. Through your support of Jewish education, you are playing a vital role in ensuring the continuity of the Jewish people. You are empowering young Jews to spread the wisdom of the Torah and become ambassadors for Israel, our Jewish homeland. We would like to extend to you our most heartfelt wishes for a happy and healthy New Year. Shana Tova U’metuka. May we continue to work together in our mission to strengthen the Jewish people through inspirational Jewish education.

Rabbi Shlomo Gestetner
Dean

Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov
Executive Director
Bringing Torah to Life at Mayanot

Rabbi Weisberg makes Torah relevant to students with his hands on educational approach

In a series of tours in and around Jerusalem, Rabbi Joshua Weisberg opens the eyes of Mayanot students, showing them that the Bible is unfolding beneath their feet. Using the Bible as their Google maps, the students watch the e-characters of the Bible and Temple, from Samuel through Jeremiah, from Gedaliah through the Hasmonaens, come to life in the archaeology and landscape before them.

Rabbi Weisberg describes the style and importance of his tours, saying, “Since I fancy myself an amateur chef, I teach the students that the hills and forests of Jerusalem are full of things to taste: wild fennel, figs, zaatar, fresh almonds and wild carrots. Plus it is great to just get outdoors, breathe the air of Jerusalem and catch the evening prayers just before sunset after a dip in a 2000 year old spring pool.”

Rabbi Chaim Moss, Educational Director of Mayanot, admires Rabbi Weisberg’s outdoor approach to teaching Bible and believes it plays an important educational role. “Rabbi Weisberg’s tours are incredibly enriching, since he takes the learning from being book based, to being alive. It’s something that every teacher struggles with, making the subject matter relevant. Our students are completely involved and engaged during Rabbi Weisberg’s tours, which makes these tours a highly valuable educational experience.”
Birthright Alumni Stay Connected to Mayanot

Mayanot Birthright alumni activities in New York and across America are thriving! As the New York Area Alumni Coordinator, Rabbi Dov Oliver has been proactively reaching out to alumni by planning and managing activities that facilitate lasting relationships among Birthright participants.

![Rabbi Dov Oliver at the Mayanot Alumni Wine Tasting Event](image1)

Rabbi Oliver has organized various popular activities, including a Shabbat reunion in New York City, with over 60 alumni in attendance and also planned a successful wine tasting event. The Hebrew classes that Rabbi Oliver organizes in Midtown Manhattan have been met with a high level of interest and a second session is being planned for October.

![Birthright Alumni Reunion Shabbat Dinner](image2)

Which activities can alumni look forward to participating in the coming months? “I am looking to bring alumni to a dinner and Krav Maga class at the JEC reunion and I’m looking to team up with the Chabad Relief Project, which is part of Chabad of Midtown, doing food packing for poor people before the Chagim. It should be nice, since our alumni love to give back”, Rabbi Oliver said.

Rabbi Kasriel Shamot, explains that “We feel that it is essential to maintain relationships with alumni, and encourage them to stay connected to Jews and Judaism in America after their inspirational Birthright trip in Israel.”

Mayanot would like to thank Adam and Jodi Weinstein and Kurt and Helen Feuerman for their continuous support of the Post-Birthright programs.
Mayanot Sponsors Panel Discussion

Mayanot co-sponsors panel discussion on Jewish values with Dr. Mehmet Oz, television personality, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach and Natan Sharansky at the Jerusalem Press Club. Birthright participants actively participated in the discussion and enjoyed being a part of such a monumental event.
Mayanot Remembers Myra Kraft z”l with Yarzheit Lecture

Mayanot commemorated the 2nd yarzheit of Myra Kraft z”l with a lecture by Barbara Sofer

Rabbi Gestetner opened the program by speaking of Myra Kraft and her dedication to supporting the education of women, especially the women of Mayanot. He explained that Myra was not only a generous philanthropist, but she was also a woman who was genuinely interested in helping people on a personal level. Myra was an impeccable role model for our students, since she was a shining example of a strong Jewish woman who made a large impact in the world.

Barbara Sofer was chosen to speak on the occasion of Myra’s yarzheit, since Barbara is also a highly accomplished female Jewish leader, acting as the director of public relations for Hadassah in Israel, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America. Mrs. Sofer captivated the women at Mayanot with her stories and inspired them to be more aware of the miracles that happen around us in Jerusalem.
Canadian Philanthropist Mr. Irwin Beutel Visits Mayanot

Mayanot student Aaron Leaf wishes Mr. Beutel a Happy Birthday.

Mayanot supporter Mr. Irwin Beutel celebrates his Birthday at Mayanot.

Mr. Irwin Beutel joins Rabbi Shlomo Gestetner on a mission to Hebron to support IDF soldiers.

Nir Barkat

Nir Barkat, the full-of-life, always exciting mayor of Jerusalem spoke with a Mayanot Birthright group after attending a ceremony to celebrate the Bar Mitzvahs of several group members. The mayor’s daughter actually joined the group Mayanot 582 as one of the “Mifgashim” (Israelis who join Birthright buses for a few days).
Scottish Torah Brought to Mayanot

Mayanot was honored and privileged to receive a Torah scroll that was generously donated by Orry and Cynthia Lovat this past July.

The Torah, originally from Glasgow, Scotland, belonged to the Netherlee, Clarkston and Queen’s Park Hebrew Congregation. Orry Lovat’s late parents, David and Sara Lovat z”l, were the founders of the synagogue and were highly involved in the Jewish community.

Ms. and Mrs. Lovat were searching for a new home for the Torah scroll and chose to send it to Mayanot, since they wanted it to be used to enhance the prayers and learning of Jewish students in Jerusalem. “The sheer enthusiasm, dedication and energy that pervade Mayanot is awe inspiring”, Orry Lovat exclaimed after the ceremony. “It was a fantastic ceremony full of life and vigor as well as respect and tradition. The Yeshiva is a shining example to us all.”
Alumni Letters of Appreciation to Mayanot

From a religious standpoint, the Mayanot Birthright trip completely surprised me. From what I had seen in my life before the trip, an Orthodox Jew was a boring Jew who spent his or her whole life, and every minute of it, reading the Torah and praying. But then, on the trip, I realized that my preconceptions were misconceptions. I’m excited to get into Judaism... For the first time in my life, I am very proud to be a Jew.

Blake M., IL

I am especially grateful because the Mayanot Birthright trip helped me to get back in touch with my Yiddishkeit that had suffered during four years without a Jewish community. Being in a group of Jewish peers, and traveling where Judaism suffuses public life, helped to remind me, time after time, “this is why it’s important to keep in mind such and such; that’s what’s really valuable about Shabbat,” and so forth. In that sense, this highlight of the trip did not end with my return to the States; since I’ve been back, I’ve been working out Mitzvot to do, books to read, and other practices I can do to keep that connection. I’ve also started looking into scholarships that will help me to return to Israel for a longer stay in the future.

Jesse D., IL

This past month at the Mayanot Women’s Program has been such a great experience for me and I cannot thank you enough for it. I have learned and grown so much in this past couple of weeks that it’s unbelievable. I feel like Mayanot has changed my perspective of life. I came home and everyone told me they saw a different spark in me. I hope all is well and I can’t wait to come back one day, hopefully in the summer!

Shante B., CA

As soon as I got to the Mayanot Men’s Program, I knew I was in good hands. It’s hard to describe in words the welcoming, friendly atmosphere that I felt during the three weeks I’ve been here. Although I only spent a short amount of time at Mayanot, I feel like I have gained some great insight into the Jewish world (and of course, I have a lot more questions to ask from when I started). I hope to bring back what I’ve learned in the classroom as well as from the Shluchim and expand my Jewish knowledge... one step at a time.

Jake D., TX

When I was on Mayanot Birthright, I walked up to the Wall in the pouring rain, and although not planning to pray to God as I don’t believe in him, I touched the Wall. And I just felt something. I was moved. It was nothing I’d ever felt before. I didn’t know what it meant and to this day I don’t know either, but never have I ever felt that feeling before. Maybe it was God, maybe it wasn’t. All I know is that there is that possibility, and I owe it to myself to explore that possibility.

Anonymous
Mazel Tov

Engagements and Weddings
Liba Katz and Yoel Rosen
Sara Cohn and Yitzchak Shulkin
Rochel You and Zalman Leib Miller
Raizel Gutnick and Mendel Deitsch
Eli Reyder and Sara Aizenman
Miriam New and Eli Herbst
Batsheva Altein and Boruch Lieberman
Akiva Goodman and Chava Silverstein
Ariella (Ash) Gowransky and Nissim Goldman
Adam Dorkay and Sara Fine
Rika Konfino and Erez Nagar
Ariella Malka and Moshe Krentz
Rachel Dombler and Adam Rodkin
Eli Reyder and Sarale Aizenman

Births
Levi and Sarena Cohen, girl
Alex and Toby Clare, girl
Yuval and Aliza Ginsburg, boy
Leibel and Malka Tzipora Babich, boy
Avraham and Racheli Shandrovsky, boy
Yehuda and Yitzchak Smith, boy
Adam Sadowitz and Menucha Howell, boy
Eliezer and Rochel Bushman, boy
Romy Grunblatt and Dan Gruhn, boy
Emilio and Sharon Cohen, boy
Mordy and Naomi Gutnick, boy
Alex and Eti Levkovich, boy
Rafi and Naama Brown, boy
Zev and Ariella Johnson, boy
Yehoshua and Chana Tibor, girl
Yehuda and Rachel DeVries, boy
Josh and Ilana Mandel, girl
Alan Charoch and Chana Miriam Golub, boy
Rachel and Zalman Centner, boy
Able and Tanya Minutz, boy
Sharon and Michal Weiss, boy
Shmuel and Esther Greene, boy
Nechumia and Dalia Barkai, girl
Yonasan and Sara Sanford, girl
Shamaya and Rivka Krinsky, boy
Alex and Shlomit Brodchandel, son
Avi and Toby Margalit, boy

New Homes
Daniel and Leigh Kohn on their new home
Eli and Shaibel Ben-ader on their new home