

## BMG's *Yarchei Kallah* and the Proliferation of Serious Learning for Those in the Work Force

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The *frum* community is very good at highlighting the many collective challenges that we face, but we are often not as good at recognizing how far we have come in many areas.

Just as it is important for a community to engage in introspection to try to rectify communal shortcomings, so too it is important to take inventory and realize how the community has improved in so many ways.

One of the most remarkable, positive developments in the *frum* world is the tremendous strides that have been made in Torah learning by those who spend most of their days engaged in earning *parnassah*.

The amount of Torah being learned and the level of learning that today's so-called *baalei batim* have attained and maintain is breathtaking in its scope and profoundly beautiful and inspiring.

### Then and Now

In previous generations, it was difficult to find *baalei batim* engaged in serious learning. Today, there is a proliferation of yeshivah and *kollel* graduates who, after many years and often decades of engaging in serious *limud haTorah*, join the workforce. These *bnei Torah* have taken their advanced learning and their yeshivah *chinuch* and made the conscious decision to keep on *shteiging*, no matter what is going on in their lives.

Upon entering shuls in Lakewood, Brooklyn, Monsey, Toronto, Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore and even smaller communities like Dallas, Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis and Cincinnati, one finds them full of *baalei batim* learning in the evening and early morning hours. They are deeply immersed in learning, struggling and often arguing vociferously over a *svarah* in the exact same way they did when they were in yeshivah. Even those who have not merited a yeshivah education have been swept up with this *limud haTorah* revolution and have also made tremendous strides in their own Torah learning.

For example, the Lakewood yeshivah has a program entitled "Shivti" where over 30 shuls in Lakewood and across the nation engage in the learning of a new in-depth *sugya* every week. The sources are sent out to the shuls and more than 30 *chaburos* of *baalei batim* are learning these deep and engaging *sugyas* every week. This is in addition to their regular *sedarim*.

In truth, so many of today's *baalei batim* are *bnei Torah* who share the ethos and *hashkafah* of *bnei yeshivah* and only want their children to become or marry *talmidei cha-*

*chamim*.

This is a tremendous tribute to *Klal Yisrael* and the yeshivah system that has produced such dedicated alumni who maintain their spiritual connection despite the tremendous spiritual and material challenges presented by the *parnassah* rat race.

### A Proliferation of *Bnei Torah Baalei Batim* and a Proliferation of *Yarchei Kallahs*!

This recognition of the greatness of this generation in this area came to me at the sight of ads for several *yarchei kallahs* this winter. There is the Agudah *yarchei kallah* in Eretz Yisrael, the Mir Yeshiva of Yerushalayim *yarchei kallah* in Yerushalayim, and then, closer to home, is one of the most intriguing *yarchei kallahs* – Beth Medrash Govoha, the Lakewood Yeshivah's *yarchei kallah* to be held during the weekend of December 26-28 in the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Princeton, New Jersey.

These *yarchei kallahs* where *baalei batim* totally leave their businesses and *parnassah* obligations to engage in in-depth *limud haTorah* are a testament to how far we have come as a community and how even those who are not learning fulltime are intensely engaged and involved with *limud haTorah hakedoshah*.

The concept of *yarchei kallah* is not a new one. The *Gemara* discusses how the months of Adar and Elul were "*yarchei kallah* months," consecrated to learning. In the agrarian society those were months when there was little work to be done in the fields, thus all of those engaged in difficult labor throughout the year would gather in the great yeshivah for the "*yarchei kallah*."

This idea was rejuvenated in modern times by the Ponovezher Rav, Harav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, *zt"l*, who instituted a *yarchei kallah* for *baalei batim* during the summer *bein hazmanim*.

Today there has been a proliferation of new winter *yarchei kallahs*, usually coinciding with weekends when people are more easily able to take off from work. For many years now there has been a European *yarchei kallah* featuring as its main *Maggid Shiur* Harav Berel Povarsky, *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Ponovez.

### A Unique Business-Halachah-Focused *Yarchei Kallah*

One of the most fascinating *yarchei kallahs* is that of Beth Medrash Govoha. The reason why it deserves to be studied and understood is because it offers a special niche that perhaps no *yarchei kallah* until now has been able to offer. In the three years since its inception it has devoted itself to areas

of *halachah* that have true practical significance in the business world. It is the opportunity for people living in the world of business and commerce to learn a *sugya* in all its depth and clarity and come out with practical knowledge that will empower them to better bring Hashem into their day-to-day business interactions.

For example, the upcoming *yarchei kallah* slated for December 26-28 will be devoted to the *sugya* of *Yoreid L'Umnes Chaveiro* that governs competition in the open market. All kinds of issues related to competition will be discussed. Is one permitted to take away a customer or client from a competitor? If so, under what circumstances? Are there ways that one is or is not allowed to advertise one's product or service when it will adversely affect someone else's business? The list goes on with literally thousands of practical examples that happen in the professional and business world on a daily basis.

The Lakewood yeshivah community provides the *talmidei chachamim* with the wide-ranging knowledge to comprehensively address these questions. Indeed, the sheer amount of information transmitted at such a two-day *yarchei kallah* is mind-boggling! Additionally, world-renowned *poskim* and *Rabbanim* also join to give *shiurim* and answer questions, thereby providing *baalei batim* the experience that a leading *posek* would have as he unravels the *sugya* on his quest for a final *psak halachah*.

### World-Renowned *Poskim* In Business Halachah Share Their Expertise

The major guest *shiurim* at the event will be delivered by Harav Yisrael Belsky, *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath and one of today's preeminent *poskim*, who will also answer practical halachic questions that arise during the course of the two days of learning.

Harav Yaakov Horowitz, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshiva Beis Meir and Rav of the Telzer Minyan in Brooklyn, will be the guest speaker at the opening *melaveh malkah*. In fact, the kickoff of the *yarchei kallah* with a *melaveh malkah* on *Motzoei Shabbos Parashas Vayechi*, and an opening address by *Rosh Yeshivah* of Beth Medrash Govoha Harav Aryeh Malkiel Kotler, *shlita*, sets the tone.

The three other *Roshei Yeshivah* will also address the participants during the course of the *yarchei kallah*.

Everyone settles into the hotel on *Motzoei Shabbos*, thus ensuring that first thing Sunday morning they are ready to completely immerse themselves in the learning.

Other *Maggidei Shiur* will be Harav Yehoshua Krupenia, *Rosh Kollel* of Beth Medrash Govoha; Harav Chaim Meir Roth, Rav of Sterling Forest, Nusach Sefard, and *Dayan* in Beis Din Meysharim; Harav Michoel Frank, Rav of Kehal Ohr Torah in Silver Spring, MD, and Harav Yosef Kushner, author of a groundbreaking *sefer* on the laws of Shabbos as they relate to business.

In addition, this year, for the very first time, the wives of the *yarchei kallah* participants will have the unique opportunity to hear *divrei chizuk* via teleconference from Rabbi Nosson Muller, *Menahel* of Yeshiva Toras Emes and popular lecturer and author.

### Total Immersion in Learning!

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about these *yarchei kallahs* is the degree of total immersion in learning. "So many of the participants told me that they leave their Smartphones at home or in their hotel rooms throughout the *yarchei kallah* because they want to be totally immersed in learning during those hallowed days," said Reb Moshe Yosef Drew, a participant in the last three *yarchei kallahs*.

A person in the nursing home industry came to the *yarchei kallah* with a group of employees. While there, a crisis transpired in a facility that was not under their ownership. That facility had to evacuate and wanted to send 30 new patients to the facility whose owner and employees were attending the *yarchei kallah*, a tremendous financial boon. When the owner was approached by one of his managers and asked what they should do, he said succinctly, "We came here to learn!" The message was clear: "These days are consecrated for Torah growth and spiritual growth. Hashem will send his *brachah* in other ways."

Rabbi Avraham Colman, BMG's vice president of Student and Alumni Affairs, put it most pithily when describing the *yarchei kallah*: "It is an opportunity for those engaged in the workforce throughout the year to truly immerse themselves in a *sugya* and hear from *Maggidei Shiur* who really understand both the practical side of business as well as the true depth of *Halachah*."

Reb Moshe Yosef Drew concluded, "I come to the *yarchei kallah* every year to recharge my batteries!"

What a blessed generation we live in where today's *bnei Torah*, who happen to work for a living, find the true recharge not in a vacation in some exotic spot but rather in two days of intensive learning in a hotel in Princeton, NJ!