



ק"ק ד'עיר באלטימאר,

After learning under HaRav Meir Stern שליט"א in the Yeshiva Gedolah of Passaic, and then under HaGoan HaRav Meir Soloveitchik's זצ"ל Brisk for 14 years, I moved to Baltimore and immediately became involved in חנוך הבנים. My goal has always been to share the "wealth" I have gained from my illustrious Rabbeim with young aspiring בני תורה. An עיקר, I believe, that is held sacred by the גדולים of Brisk is their "מהלך" in learning - how they approach a סוגיא and how they teach it to תלמידים. As Rav Chaim Volozhiner writes in a letter:

וגם העקר לאחוז בסברא הישרה כו. וכד דייקת שפיר תשכח שכל גדולי הראשונים והאחרונים ז"ל לא נשתבחו אלא בסברא הישרה [ו]כל הישר בסברא גדול מחברו עכ"ל

Rav Chaim Volozhiner is telling us that the more "glatt" a person is able to think, and the greater the clarity in his learning - knowing how to ask properly and answer properly - that is the measure of his greatness in learning.

This is something that can be taught to all בחורים, and this is the foundation upon which Mesivta Shaarei Chaim was founded. What I have discovered over the years is that when בחורים learn in this way - with a special focus on clarity and "glattkeit" - not only do they develop into מצוינים, they are also inevitably filled with true שמחה in their learning and, by extension, in life itself. These בחורים are also קבול כלי for growth in all areas of their יהדות and *menshlichkeit*.

At the very onset of Mesivta Shaarei Chaim, I recruited my brother-in-law, Rav Yona Yaakov Lapidus, to join me to ensure that our בחורים are well taken care of and can grow in a healthy and happy way. His innate understanding of בחורים and their multi-faceted personalities, along with his talent in relating individually to each בחור, allows for motivation of the תלמידים to maximize their potential while keeping the atmosphere pleasant and non-pressured. Next year will be our fourth year בע"ה, and I am proud to say that our תלמידים are developing tremendously, both in their learning and as בני תורה. We have been very fortunate to engage Rabbeim who share our vision and have been doing a remarkable job in spreading these values to all the תלמידים of the Mesivta. Our תלמידים are satisfied, and even thrilled, with their Mesivta experience. Feedback from the parent body has been extremely positive as well. It is clearly apparent that the love, concern, and total commitment to each תלמיד and his growth as a בני תורה is one of the hallmarks of Mesivta Shaarei Chaim.

I am constantly מתפלל that we should continue having the סייעתא דשמיא in creating a מקום תורה where Mesivta בחורים can grow into outstanding בני תורה who have a true שמחה in their learning and עבודת השם.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Daniel Wilhelm
Rosh Mesivta