

Seed Dinner Raises £400,000

A crowd of around 500 people attended the tremendously successful Seed dinner last Monday evening at The London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square. The guests were welcomed by Rabbi Yosef Grunfeld, national director of Seed, who, in his inimitable style, described the authenticity of Seed and explained how it had changed with the times over the last 32 years, continuing to facilitate adult and family Jewish education and strengthen Jewish families.

The dinner was hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Alan Lee and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lee, in memory of their parents Arnold and Helen Lee, z"l, who were long-term friends and supporters of Seed. Mr. Alan Lee spoke briefly about his parents at the dinner, and the beautifully produced brochure included biographies of them as well as reproductions of obituaries published in national newspapers.

Rabbi Grunfeld introduced the guest speaker, the Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, who responded by describing Rabbi Grunfeld as one of the "extraordinary people of the country" and a "national asset." Rabbi Sacks praised the work of Seed very highly,

saying that for over 30 years, Seed has been quietly transforming the United Synagogue. When Rabbi Morris Hool hosted the first Seed one-to-one centre in Kingsbury shul, it was considered a rather strange and revolutionary idea. Now, the whole shape of Anglo-Jewry has changed. Seed promotes *chavrusas* – learning friendships, which, the Chief Rabbi said, are like nothing else in the world. The learning relationship is a true and transformative friendship.

Rabbi Sacks described the revolution in Anglo-Jewish life which has taken place over the last 20 years or so, quoting statistics such as that in 1993 only 25 percent of Jewish children were in Jewish schools, whereas nowadays nearly 70 percent of Jewish children are. Seed has kept up with this change in the community, constantly redesigning and creating new programmes to fit the changing face of the community. Whereas once only a small proportion of the community valued Jewish learning, more and more people are recognising that "To be a Jew is to learn," said the Chief Rabbi. Seed, in partnership with the United Synagogue, has made

Anglo-Jewry a learning community.

A film was shown, in which three families described how Seed had enriched their lives, enabling them to live as fulfilled Jewish families. The presentation also showcased some of Seed's innovative programmes, which include "Babies and Bagels," a six-week course on Jewish parenting for first-time mothers; "Time for Two," specifically aimed at second-time-round mothers; one day seminars; *Shabbatonim*, *Gemara* and other *shiurim*, and parental education programmes in Jewish schools. The Seed team estimate that 123 people across the country are involved in a Seed activity every day.

Following the film, Rabbi Malcolm Herman made a brief appeal asking the guests to enable Seed to continue to support Jewish families. Through the generosity of the donors, and the hard work of the brochure committee, the evening raised £400,000. As a finishing touch to the dinner, expertly organised by Jam Events, guests received a key-shaped USB stick, containing not only the Seed film, but also six samples of Seed *shiurim*, so they could experience Seed learning firsthand.

Hot Weather Warning

Doctors at Barts Health NHS Trust are warning people to take care after a spate of falls from open windows during the hot weather. Staff at The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel have reported a sharp rise in the number of cases over the last few days, with several youngsters being admitted to hospital.

Royal London A&E consultant Mr. Alastair Wilson, warned, "We have noticed a big rise in the number of children who have fallen out of windows during the recent hot spell. We would ask parents and carers to be careful and ensure children are kept well away from open windows."

Orah Holds Shavuot *Shiurim* For Women

Orah held two *shiurim* on Shavuot afternoon for women and post-sem girls. This local initiative, which was launched in January of this year and has been increasing its numbers ever since, is an exciting programme of *shiurim* and social activities for women of all ages throughout the community. It runs every Sunday and Wednesday evening at Hasmonean Girls' School.

On the first day, Rabbi Yaakov Hamer, Rav of Finchley Central *shul* and director of Shaarei Orah, gave a *shiur* in Hendon Adath, attended by nearly 100 women, from across the community. He expounded on the character traits of Rus, which enabled her to be the progenitor of royalty in *Klal Yisrael*, showing both her deep sense of *achrayus*, responsibility, and *hisbatlus*, the annulment of oneself and one's own personal

interests for the sake of others.

On the second day, too, about 100 participants came, this time to Beis Yissochor Dov (Hager's), to hear Rabbi Yehoshua Hartman, head of the Beis Hamedrash programme of Hasmonean Boys' School, give a *shiur* entitled "In Our Mothers' Ways."

Rabbi Hartman explored a possible rationale for Jewish identity being passed down through the mother, whereas status within the Jewish people is passed through the father. Looking at the roles of the Avos and Imahos, he explained that the aspect of "doing" is embodied by the father, whilst the aspect of "being" corresponds more closely to the role of the mother. It is for this reason, said Rabbi Hartman, that the deeper identity of a Jew – that of "being" – can only be passed on by the mother.

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pleasantness that comes from hard work, especially the dedication needed to learn Torah. Rabbi Angel inspired his listeners to continue on their journey through *Talmud Bavli* and not to give up on the way.

Rabbi Cohen's lucid explanations continue to inspire participants, together with listeners to Kol Haloshon who can access the *shiur* on the telephone. The *shiur* now looks forward to completing the whole of *Shas* together with the many thousands of worldwide *Daf*

Yomi participants.

Neglected Sefarim Buried

An enormous hoard of old *sefarim* was discovered in a house in Crumpsall, Manchester, recently. The house had been let to non-Jewish tenants who ignored the piles of books throughout the building that had been left by an unknown person.

However, during building renovations, workmen uncovered a far greater cache of books that had been hastily stored away in the loft. On a recent Shabbos morning, an alert member of the public noticed the

sefarim that had already been thrown into a skip for disposal.

He spoke to Rabbi Saunders, Rav of the nearby Crumpsall Shul, who in turn contacted members of Misaskim. They negotiated with the builders, who agreed to allow them to remove the *sefarim*. Under the direction of Rabbi Yehoshua Sofer, Rav of Beis Yisroel Shul, and Mr. Nussi Burns, a large number of volunteers managed to recover nearly 5,000 *sefarim*

from the building. Over 40 helpers, including boys of Mesivta Ohr Shlomoh, sorted out useable *sefarim*, some of which had been removed from local *mosdos*.

After contacting the previous owners, the remaining *sefarim* were stored in a warehouse in Prestwich and offered for sale on Wednesday evening, the proceeds going to *tzedakah*. The vast majority had to be buried, and a formal *levayah* was held from

Machzikei Hadass car park on Thursday afternoon.

The *Mara D'asra* Harav M.M. Schneebalg spoke *divrei hisorerus*, followed by Dayan Gavriel Krausz, of the Manchester Beis Din, and Harav Yitzchok Aryeh Weiss, Horedenke Rav. The speakers emphasized the importance of the *kedushah* of *Klal Yisrael* in general and in particular the need to care for the dignity of *sifrei kodesh*.

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European Agudas Yisroel, also compiled a major study on "Protection and Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries and Mass Graves in European and National Law."

The resolution, based on these major essays, declares: "The Assembly asserts that right of freedom of religion guaranteed by Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights upholds the right of the deceased to rest in peace in accordance with their religious belief and the responsibility to protect human dignity in a broader sense, by ensuring that deceased persons are preserved in their place of burial in a manner compatible with their religious practice."

The explanatory memorandum of the resolution was built on a detailed report written by European Agudas Yisroel experts. It contains a description of Jewish burial sites, the threats they face, consequences of desecration, case studies, examples of difficult cases and good practices for protection of Jewish burial places.

The resolution recalls the historical contribution made by Jewish communities toward creating the social, cultural and economic fabric of Europe and underlines the importance of preserving the religious, historical and cultural identity of Jewish communities.

The resolution recognizes Jewish cemeteries and mass graves as part of the European cultural heritage, to be protect-

ed under the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention 2005), which establishes an important link between the protection of fundamental rights and heritage protection and affirms a "common European responsibility" toward cultural heritage.

The resolution proposes the establishment of programs for locating Jewish burial sites, using non-invasive technical devices, facilitating technical investigations, and identification and establishing up-to-date libraries of the sites, with maps, photographs and testimonies, while at the same time promoting knowledge of local history and of Jewish local cultural heritage.



Rabbi Shlomo Angel (L.) was the guest speaker at a *siyum* held by the participants of the *Daf Yomi shiur* given by Rabbi Y.C.D. Cohen (second L.) on *sefer Kodshim* in the Pagoda Restaurant Manchester.