



# Congregation Ohr Torah

## Weekly Announcements

<http://www.ohrtorah.net>

48 Edgemount Road Edison, NJ 08817

Rabbi Yaakov Luban – Rabbi

Robert Kreitman - President

*Parshas Vayigash*

4 Tevet 5774

December 7, 2013

**Candlelighting:** 4:12 PM  
**Mincha:** 4:20 PM  
**Shacharis:** 7:45, 9:00 & 9:15 AM  
*Rabbi Hoffman's Shiur after Hashkama*  
**Z'man Krias Shma (G'RA):** 9:28 AM  
*Rabbi Luban's Sota Shiur cancelled this week*  
**Mincha:** 1:30 & 4:05 PM  
**Shalosh Seudos Speaker: R. Josh Rapps**  
**Maariv:** 5:15 PM  
**Weekday Shacharis:**  
**Sunday** 7:15, 8 & 9 AM  
**Mon & Thur** 6:20, 7:05, 8 AM  
**Tues., Wed.,** 6:30, 7:05, 8 AM  
**Fri. (Asarah Beteves)** 6:07, 7:05, 8 AM  
*Earliest Talis and Tefillin: 6:14 AM*  
**Weekday Mincha/ Maariv:** 4:20 PM  
**Weekday Maariv** 7:30 & 10:10 PM  
*Rabbi Luban's Sheilos U'teshuvos Shiur:*  
 9:10 PM Monday  
 , Tuesday Tehillim: 9:50 PM  
 Wednesday Night Kollel Learning: 8-10:10 PM  
**DAF YOMI SCHEDULE FOR WINTER:**  
 Shabbos Morning – 8:15 AM and/ or after  
 Hashkama. Sunday: After 8 AM Shacharis  
 Monday – Thursday: after 7:30 Maariv

**KIDDUSH SPONSORSHIP**

Kiddush sponsorship is available for December 28<sup>th</sup>, January 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. To sponsor a Kiddush or reserve the Kiddush room, please contact Mel Barenholtz in person, or by phone or email: [mbarenh@yahoo.com](mailto:mbarenh@yahoo.com).

To sponsor a Shalosh Seudos, please contact Moshe Wiesel.

**OHR TORAH NEWSLETTER**

To subscribe to these Announcements, please see the Ohr Torah website: [www.ohrtorah.net](http://www.ohrtorah.net)

**BUILDING DEDICATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Contact Moshe Schneider at 732-618-4702 or at 8848 (cell), [reenagreenspan@yahoo.com](mailto:reenagreenspan@yahoo.com) or Gene Wasserman 732-397-0130 or [genew@compugene.com](mailto:genew@compugene.com) or [mschneider19@yahoo.com](mailto:mschneider19@yahoo.com).

**TREE OF LIFE and/or YAHRZEIT PLAQUES**

To dedicate a Yahrzeit Plaque or a Leaf for the Lobby EitzChayim Tree, please contact Moish Nat by sending a detailed fax with all dedicatory wording to 732-759-8558. For more info, call Moish at 732-759-8070 during work days or 732- 572-4132 in the evening.

**SEFORIM DEDICATIONS**

Book/Seforim Dedications of all types are available contact Barry Siegel [siegeldad@optonline.net](mailto:siegeldad@optonline.net).

**HOUSEKEEPING**

For housekeeping issues and inquiries contact Lou Smith at [ludeeju@gmail.com](mailto:ludeeju@gmail.com) or 732-572-5633.

**OHR TORAH YOUTH PROGRAM EVENTS**

Children can register for events on Ohr Torah's website "ohrtorah.net" or by calling Mayer Berg at 732-572-3429.

**REFUAH SHLEIMAH LEARNING**

Please see the Ohr Torah website, [www.ohrtorah.net](http://www.ohrtorah.net), for the various schedules of learning as a Z'chus for a RefuahShleimah for members of our shul and community.

**FUNERAL/ SHIVA ANNOUNCEMENTS**

For funeral and Shiva email and phone mail announcements contact Reena Greenspan 732-828-5642 (home) 732-678-8848 (cell), [reenagreenspan@yahoo.com](mailto:reenagreenspan@yahoo.com) or Gene Wasserman 732-397-0130 or [genew@compugene.com](mailto:genew@compugene.com)

**E-MAIL LIST**

To get on the Ohr Torah e-mail list, please contact Gene Wasserman at [genew@compugene.com](mailto:genew@compugene.com).

**MAZEL TOV**

... to Lynn and Marc Hanfling on the birth of a daughter to their children Shana and Chananya Kopciel. Mazel Tov to the great grandparents Mr. Hersz Hanfling and Mrs. Ellen Schochet

...to Esther and Yonasan Rosenberg on the engagement of their son, Moshe Aryeh, to Ruchy Silberman.

**KIDDUSH**

Kiddush is sponsored by Debbie and Moshe Schneider in memory of the Yahrzeit of Debbie's father Emanuel Libin, Imanuel ben Shimon A"H.

**SHALOSH SEUDOS**

Shalosh Seudos is sponsored by Eva and Theodore Stahl in honor of the Yahrzeit of their son Doug Stahl A"H.

**BNEI AKIVA**

Bnei Akiva resumes this week

**ASARAH BETEVES SCHEDULE**

**Friday December 13**

Fast Starts 6:01 AM  
 Shacharis 6:07, 7:05 & 8 AM  
*Earliest Talis and Tefillin: 6:14 AM*  
 Mincha 4:05 PM  
 Fast Ends 5:11 PM

**OHR TORAH ANNUAL SHUL DINNER**

We are pleased to announce that the Ohr Torah Annual Dinner will take place on Sunday, February 9, 2014. We are further pleased to announce that our distinguished honorees for the dinner will be Moshe and Glenda Sherman and Zev and Rachelle Stern. We are looking forward to greeting each and every one of you at the dinner where we will have the opportunity to pay tribute to these most worthy guests of honor.

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The General Membership Meeting which will include the election of the next Ohr Torah Governing Board will take place on Monday, December 23 at 8:30 PM.

**THANK YOU**

The Mondrow and Mauskopf family express their sincere gratitude to the community for their support in a most difficult time..

**OT FIRST COMMUNITY POLAND**

**PILGRIMAGE JOURNEY**

OT is excited to announce it's First Community Poland Pilgrimage Journey which will take place this summer JULY 20-28. The intensive 7 day journey will focus on the rich life and heritage of Polish Jewry as well as very meaningful visits to the major sites of the Shoah. Participants who have family roots in Poland and family stories from the Shoah, will have the opportunity to influence

the itinerary and programming. Rabbi Luban will Be'ezrat Hashem be joining us on this very special trip. For more details contact Nitza Adler at [732-819-9294](tel:732-819-9294) or email at [morahnitza28@gmail.com](mailto:morahnitza28@gmail.com)

**SEFORIM DONATIONS**

- Michael & Toby Eleff in memory of Marcia Freedman's father Chaim Hartman Z"L
- Sunday morning Carpool in memory of Rivka Adler's father Moshe Beinhorn Z"L
- Michael & Toby Eleff in memory of Jesse Mintz's father Elias Mintz, Z"L
- Michael & Toby Eleff in memory of Jay and Jerry Blum's father Melvin Blum Z"L
- Golda & Akiva Bossewitch in memory of Golda's mother Ruth Hansell Z"L

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**RPRY SCHOLARSHIP FUND BREAKFAST**

The Annual Toby Mayer Memorial Scholarship Fund Breakfast will take place [Sunday morning, December 22, 2013 at 9:30 A.M.](http://www.ohrtorah.net) This year's Educational Excellence Award will be presented to Mrs. Michal Falk. The breakfast is the keynote event of RPRY's annual scholarship fund campaign, which helps the Yeshiva continue in its mission to provide a Jewish day school education to every Jewish child, regardless of the family's ability to pay.

**6TH ANNUAL HP COMMUNITY**

**KOLLEL BREAKFAST**

Please note that the 6th Annual Breakfast on behalf of the Highland Park Community Kollel will take place at Congregation Ohr Torah Sunday Morning, Dec 29th 2013 at 9:30am. The Highland Park Community Kollel is pleased to announce that Dr. Barry Schanzer will be chairing this year's Annual Community Breakfast.

The Kollel will be honoring Drs. Jeff and Lee Ann Schein. The Kollel will as well be bestowing the *Oheiv Torah Award* upon Mr. Mitchell Rottenstreich. The Guest Speaker will be Rabbi Yosef Eichenstein, Rosh HaYeshiva of Rabbi Jacob Joseph School (RJJ), Edison. We look forward to greeting you there.

**SIYUM AND SEUDAS MITZVAH**

L'IluY Nishmas Rabbi Mordechai (Motty) Green, ZT"L. Divrei Torah by Rabbi Reuven Drucker, Rabbi Shraga Gross, Rabbi Noach Sauber *Mesaymim*- Fred Glatter and Danny Goetz Thursday, December 12, 2013 Agudat Israel of Edison/Highland Park. Siyum/Seuda at 7:00 p.m. Bentsching at 9:00 p.m. Maariv at 9:15 p.m. Families welcome. Please RSVP to [MishnayosSiyum@aol.com](mailto:MishnayosSiyum@aol.com)

**RAV TEITZ MESIVTA ACADEMY**

A Parlor Meeting in the Highland Park/Edison area will take place on Monday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 PM at the home of Rabbi & Mrs. Kramer, 75 Marshall Dr Edison, NJ .

**RPRY MISHMAR PROGRAM**

Mishmar learning program is held at RPRY every Motzei Shabbat @ 7:00 Please bring your own

**REMINDER: The emergency Defibrillator is mounted on the wall in the hallway. PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR MORE OHR TORAH INFORMATION**

seforim. Cost is still only \$3.00 which includes, pizza, donuts, prizes and raffles

Sharon Stern [732-777-7326](tel:732-777-7326)

#### **DOVID RAPPS FOR TEAM YACHAD**

I am looking to raise \$3,000 for Yachad/NJCD by running in the Miami half Marathon this upcoming February 2nd in Miami, Florida as part of Team Yachad. Please donate by clicking <http://miami.teamyachad.com/runner/dovidrapps> or by writing out a tax deductible check to Team Yachad and writing in the memo: Dovid Rapps. Checks can be mailed to Team Yachad 11 Broadway, 13th Floor New York, NY 10004 or we can arrange for me to pick it up from you.

#### **CAMP KOBY SUMMER EXPERIENCE**

The Camp Koby Summer Experience is having an Open House Community Info Night on Wednesday, Dec 11th at 7:30pm at the home of Gary & Stacy Kaplan, 8 Hamlin Rd, Edison. Roy Angstreich, Exec. Dir, will present this year's exciting program. In addition to touring in Israel, participants serve as Counselors at "Machane Koby", a special camp for children affected by acts of terror. Parents and kids in 10th and 11th grade are encouraged to attend the Info Night. For more information, contact [info@kobymandell.org](mailto:info@kobymandell.org) or [301-576-6235](tel:301-576-6235).

#### **THE SURI GRANEK TOMCHE SHABBOS**

Since 2009, The Suri Granek Tomche Shabbos has been providing food for Shabbos and Yom Tov to those in need in our community. Each and every Shabbos we deliver everything from meat, challah and grape juice, to fresh fruits and vegetables. As with any community organization, we can only succeed with dedicated volunteers and the community's generosity. We are looking for volunteers to help us create new and exciting fundraising activities and programs, so that we can continue in our mission.

Please contact us at [info@tomcheshabbosmc.org](mailto:info@tomcheshabbosmc.org). Donations can be mailed to:

The Suri Granek Tomche Shabbos PO Box 1341 Highland Park, NJ 08904

#### **RJJ LADIES LUNCHEON & CHINESE AUCTION**

Sunday Dec 15th at Noon at Cong. Ohr Torah. Honoring - Mrs. Adina Pruzansky. Honorary Chairlady - Mrs. Nitza Bodlander. Special guest entertainer - Leah Forster.

#### **ACTT**

(Achieving Change Through Torah) program, now in its 8th year, helps individuals succeed in making meaningful and lasting changes in their lives. The source book for the entire year is: Step by Step compiled by Rabbi Dovid Weinberger. See the ACTT web-site, [www.actt613.org](http://www.actt613.org), for the current Learning Schedule (Modules page) and for all the event audio presentations. For more info, e-mail [info@actt613.org](mailto:info@actt613.org) or call Phil Rosen ([732-572-8762](tel:732-572-8762)).

#### **RPRY**

Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva, a National Blue Ribbon School, invites prospective and current students, toddlers through age 6, and their parents to "SHMA UNDER THE STARS". This will be held Saturday night, Dec 14, from 7:00-8:00 PM. at RPRY. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to our Early Childhood Specialist, Mrs. Helene Lockspeiser [732-572-5052](tel:732-572-5052) ext. 215.

#### **THE ROLE OF YOETZET HALACHA**

The Orthodox Forum presents Nechama Price, Stern College Professor and recent graduate of the

Yoetzet program, and Rabbi Kenneth Auman of the Young Israel of Flatbush and Dean of the U.S. Yoatzot Halacha Fellows Program who will discuss The Role of a Yoetzet Motzei Shabbat, December 7 at 8:00 p.m. at Ahavas Achim. Yoatzot Halacha (Women Advisors in Jewish Law) are women who have completed a special course of halachic training in matters of family life, marriage, sexuality and women's health. Operating in compliance with halacha and within mainstream Orthodoxy, Yoatzot assist in finding halachic solutions to problems. For more information visit the Orthodox Forum website: [www.orthodoxjewishforum.org](http://www.orthodoxjewishforum.org).

#### **CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING**

The Ahavas Achim youth department is organizing a day of Adult/Child CPR and First Aid training. It will take place on Sunday, Dec 15th from 9:00-4:00 and will be led by Ari Lewitter. The cost for this life-saving opportunity is \$70 per person and is open to both teenagers and adults. Please contact Rafi Katz at [spedteach289@yahoo.com](mailto:spedteach289@yahoo.com) or [732-985-9161](tel:732-985-9161) for more info or to register. The deadline for registration is Sunday, Dec 1st.

#### **HASC DONATION OPPORTUNITY**

Janna Akin just moved to Highland Park and is running a marathon for HASC- Hebrew Academy for Special Children. She needs to raise \$3,000. The link to her HASC page is <http://www.hasc.net/marathon/mtmypage.php?kwoAdvocateId=889N127>

#### **JFVS EVENT IN SUPPORT OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SERVICES**

The number of Middlesex County Holocaust survivors in need of services and their level of need continues to grow as they become older and frailer. Community dollars are required to allow JFVS to continue to provide home care, housekeeping, Kosher Meals on Wheels, and transportation for Holocaust survivors. Please join us at a Supper and Show in support of Holocaust Survivor Services Supper & Show Featuring JOHN PIZZI Comedian, ventriloquist, magician (America's Got Talent/ David Letterman) Dec 14, 2013 at 8PM at JFK Conference Center 70 James St, Edison \$50 pp Catered by Jerusalem Pizza. Go to [www.JFVS.org](http://www.JFVS.org) or call 732-777-1940 If you can't attend, please purchase a raffle for a 7 Day Celebrity Lines Cruise: \$36 each or 3 for \$100. Or purchase a raffle for a new Apple iPad (\$25/raffle ticket). See or call Murray Katz for raffle tickets (732-985-7348)

#### **CNJKIDS**

The transfer of appreciated assets allows donors to support Central New Jersey Kehilot Investing in Day Schools, Inc. (CNJKIDS) while reducing exposure to capital gains taxes. Donors are also able to claim immediate income tax deductions for these gifts. For more info please contact CNJKIDS' Treasurer Jon Caplan at [732-249-8600](tel:732-249-8600).

#### **CAMP SHOSHANIM**

Info session for CAMP SHOSHANIM at the home of Shmuel and Esther Greene, 38 South Fourth Ave, at 8PM on Sunday, Dec 15. Camp Shoshanim is exclusively for girls entering grades 3-10, located in Lake Como, PA, in our glatt kosher, peanut free facility. Camp sessions run from June 30 to August 18th, 2014. Options for 3, 4 and 7 week sessions as well as a 5-day "Taste of Shoshanim" program. Outstanding programs in athletics, arts, sciences, aquatics, waterfront,

music, drama, ropes challenge course, chesed opportunities and daily chinuch. Call or email for more info (973) 575-3333 ext 171.

[shoshanim@njcamps.org](mailto:shoshanim@njcamps.org)

Staff positions also available. Campers, potential campers and their parents are welcome to attend. [www.campshoshanim.org](http://www.campshoshanim.org)

#### **FOR WOMEN**

The Women's Learning Initiative can conduct a women's Torah class in your home. For more information on how to initiate a class, please call [908-208-7144](tel:908-208-7144).

-Rebbitzen Eichenstein's classes for women: Tefillah and Parsha class will not be held (Sunday, Dec. 8 and Monday, Dec. 9). For more info, please contact Aviva Siegel at [732-572-4408](tel:732-572-4408) [siegelmom@optonline.net](mailto:siegelmom@optonline.net), Ricki Stern [732-828-6939](tel:732-828-6939) [rickistern@yahoo.com](mailto:rickistern@yahoo.com).

-Mrs. Miri Cohen's Parsha class: Monday, Dec. 9 at 9:00 AM at 203 North 3rd Ave, Highland Park. Change of location for this week only.

-Mrs. Leah Drillman's Shimiras Haloshon class: Monday night, Dec. 9 from 7:30 to 8:15 PM at the home of Ellen Smith, 407 North Eighth Ave., Edison. For more info, please call Ellen at [201-410-1893](tel:201-410-1893) or [732-777-6787](tel:732-777-6787).

-SemPlus shiur for post seminary girls on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at the Aguda, upstairs classroom. For more info, please call [908-420-0253](tel:908-420-0253).

-Join women of all ages from the Highland Park/Edison community and beyond as we learn together at Rabbi Bassous's Sunday morning classes. We meet at Cong. Etz Ahaim, 230 Dennison Street, Highland Park 10-11 AM. We are now learning from the book "The Six Constant Mitzvos" by Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowitz. Join us at the class and start the year in a spiritually-charged way!

-OE Youth Department is having Mother and Daughter Simcha Dancing with Tova Halpern! Motzi Shabbos Dec 7th and 21st! From 7-8pm \$10 for mother and daughter Or \$5 a person For Girls in Elementary School First 10 to RSVP will receive a FREE hair accessory at the door!! RSVP @ [oechildren@gmail.com](mailto:oechildren@gmail.com)

-Tiferes, a Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation program for women, will meet Motzai Shabbos, Dec 14 at 8:15 PM at the home of Aviva Siegel, 16 Edgemount Rd, Edison. An inspirational DVD will be shown. Weekly teleconferences with topics such as shalom bayis and parenting are also available to Tiferes members.

Current teleconferences: Relationships 101 - How to improve and deepen our relationships with the ones we love the most; Speaker: Mrs. Debbie Selengut. For more info or to become a member, please contact Aviva [siegelmom@optonline.net](mailto:siegelmom@optonline.net) or Debbie Schneider [732-572-4713](tel:732-572-4713). The Highland Park / Edison group of Tiferes is zecher I'nishmas Malka bas Shalom.

- Collecting Sheitels: Keren Kol Kallah - established to provide orphan and destitute kallahs in Israel with essential needs. Donated custom sheitels, some brand-new, some gently worn, are sold to women in Israel who would not otherwise have the funds to buy a quality wig. All the money raised at the sale goes towards a hachnasas kallah fund which helps needy brides in Eretz Yisrael. Sheitels can be dropped off by Aviva, 16 Edgemount Road, Edison. For more info, please

see contact Aviva Siegel (732) 572-4408 [siegelmom@optonline.net](mailto:siegelmom@optonline.net)

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-NEW WEDNESDAY MORNING SHIUR FOR WOMEN Ahavas Achim University presents a new shiur for women by Rabbi Miodownik on "Exploring the Siddur." Wed. from 10:30-11:15 am. in the Beit Midrash.  
- The Women's AMEN Group meets weekly on Sundays at 9:30 AM in a downstairs classroom at Cong Ohr Torah. The group meets in the zechus of a refuah shelaimah for Menachem Mordechai ben Ophira and other Cholim in the community  
-Collecting Sheitels: Keren Kol Kallah - established to provide orphan and destitute kallahs in Israel with essential needs. Donated custom sheitels, some brand-new, some gently worn, are sold to women in Israel who would not otherwise have the funds to buy a quality wig. All the money raised at the sale goes towards a hachnasas kallah fund which helps needy brides in Eretz Yisrael. Sheitels can be dropped off by Aviva, 16 Edgemount Rd, Edison. For more info, please see contact Aviva Siegel (732) 572-4408 [siegelmom@optonline.net](mailto:siegelmom@optonline.net)  
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#### **KIDNEY NEEDED**

My close friend, Jewish Male (52) father of 2, is in desperate need of a kidney (Type O blood). Please respond via the Renewal Organization at [R652@renewal.org](mailto:R652@renewal.org). Please have Tzvi ben Frimmet in your Tefilos for a Refuah Shleimah.  
- Dr. Alan Singer

#### **NCSY NEWS**

There will be no Friday night oneg this week due to winter regional!

#### **EMPLOYMENT NETWORK RARITAN VALLEY**

Looking for work? We can help. Go to [www.ENRV.org](http://www.ENRV.org) or contact Bob Lansey at [ENRVInfo@gmail.com](mailto:ENRVInfo@gmail.com). We post over 100 jobs each month, and help people with their resume and search strategies. Please help: If you know of any professional, part-time, or temporary job openings, please e-mail the info to [ENRVInfo@gmail.com](mailto:ENRVInfo@gmail.com)

#### **PARK MIKVAH**

The Edison/Highland Park Mikvah will be open Sunday-Thursday 8:30pm to 10:30pm, and Saturday nights 7:30pm to 10:pm. Friday nights are BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.  
You must arrive and leave during regular Mikvah hours. Fee is \$20. OUT OF HOURS: additional \$20.

For more info or to schedule an appointment, please call 732-249-2411

- The Highland Park Mikvah is currently having its annual virtual tea. It is the only fundraiser for the local mikvah. If any woman did not receive an invitation, please leave a message at the mikvah, [732-249-2411](tel:732-249-2411). The mikvah has incurred many expenses this year, including a new water heater, new heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system. Please respond generously.

#### **KEYLIM MIKVAH HOURS OF OPERATION**

Ohr Torah Keylim Mikvah hours are, officially, 7:15 - 9:45 AM on Sunday mornings. Additionally, the Keylim Mikvah can be used when the Shul is open during Minyan hours. The Shul is locked (for security purposes) during non-Minyan hours. If you need special access, please speak to a Shul Gabbai. Please leave the area clean and neat.

#### **LOCAL ERUV**

Please call 732-247-ERUV for status of the Eruv.

#### **Parshas Vayechi**

Candlelighting	4:13 PM
Mincha	4:05 PM

Ohr Torah can be found on the internet at <http://www.ohrtorah.net>. You can join the email list for Weekly Announcements. Any ideas and comments about the site can be sent to [webmaster@ohrtorah.net](mailto:webmaster@ohrtorah.net). Announcements should be sent to [announcements@ohrtorah.net](mailto:announcements@ohrtorah.net). Please submit all announcements by 7 PM Wednesday.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Please make sure that you leave a contact/callback name and phone # in case here is a question regarding the item you wish to be printed, otherwise it may not be included.

#### **Sof Davar**

#### **R. Jacob Joseph and the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol**

by Moshe Sherman

At 60 Norfolk near Grand Street, on Manhattan's Lower East Side, stands a dilapidated synagogue, in a bad state of disrepair - the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol. Once a striking building purchased in 1885 from the Norfolk Street Baptist Church, the structure has two towers with Gothic arched windows, carved pews, a vaulted ceiling, and an ornate gallery for women. The building was designated as a New York City landmark, yet it now lies ragged and abandoned. The story of the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol forms part of the lively history of New York Jewish life.

In the last issue of Sof Davar, I told you that Rabbi Abraham Joseph Ash helped establish the Beth Hamidrash on the Lower East side, in 1852, and seven years later, led a breakaway group of followers in founding a rival shul, which they called Beth Hamedrash Hagadol. Ash served, on and off, as a part time rabbi, at other times, as full time rabbi, for almost three decades. He was frequently consulted on matters of practical halakha, and periodically corresponded with European rabbonim.

When Rabbi Ash died in 1887, the Beth Hamedresh Hagadol began a search for a successor. Together with several nearby shuls, they formed the Association of American Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, to bring a distinguished *talmud chacham* from Europe, to serve not only as rabbi of Beth Hamedrash Hagadol but as Chief Rabbi of New York City. The search for a Chief Rabbi was opposed by many, including Henry Pereira Mendes, rabbi of Shearith Israel, the uptown Spanish and Portuguese synagogue. Mendes and his supporters felt that the money and effort would be better spent establishing a rabbinical seminary to train American-born rabbis. He argued that young, native English-speaking rabbis would appeal to the next generation of immigrant children far more than imported, Yiddish-speaking European rabbis. But the Eastern European immigrants who supported the consortium of Lower East Side shuls rejected this approach. Several eminent East European rabbonim were offered the position but turned it down. The field was narrowed to two candidates: Rav Zvi H. Rabinovitch, son of R. Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor and R. Jacob Joseph, who a few years earlier, in 1883, became the official *maggid* in Vilna. Although Rav Zvi H. Rabinovitch received considerable support from many leading East European rabbis, R. Jacob Joseph was hired by the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol, the Eldridge Street Synagogue, and 13 other Lower East Side shuls to become the first, and what would turn out to be, the only Chief Rabbi of New York. R. Jacob Joseph had studied at the Volozhin yeshiva under R. Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, and was regarded as a disciple of R. Yisroel Salanter. Though Joseph's appointment was, in part, intended to bring prestige to the downtown Orthodox congregations, and develop a European style kehilla to New York, his primary task as Chief Rabbi was to bring order and regulation to New York's chaotic kosher slaughtering industry.

Joseph arrived in New York on July 7, 1888, and later that month delivered his inaugural Shabbos derasha at the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol. Newspaper reports indicate that R. Joseph's appearance attracted a huge crowd of over 1,500 men inside the shul, with thousands more standing outside. Police were called as extra reinforcements to control the crowd, and to help escort Rabbi Joseph to shul. Notwithstanding the initial excitement, R. Jacob Joseph had a difficult challenge. His Yiddish derashos had little impact on the younger generation. He had no administrative experience or training, other local Orthodox rabbis outside his congregation did not accept his authority, and non-Orthodox Jews and groups criticized him. Sadly, he suffered a stroke in 1895, and a relapse in 1900, which left him bedridden. Nonetheless when he died in July 1902, tens of thousands of people lined the streets of the Lower East Side to offer respect to the illustrious Rav.

*Next time we will discuss the person who succeeded R. Jacob Joseph at the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol.*