

Rav Moshe Weinberger Meets His Spiritual Grandchildren

By B. Berman

There was no advertising, yet word of mouth brought over 500 people out after a fast. It started with a full-capacity crowd breathlessly awaiting the evening and ended with spirited dancing and a feeling of spiritual uplift. On Tuesday, *motzaei Asara beTeves*, Hagoan Harav Asher Weiss and Hagoan Harav Tzvi Meir Silberberg spoke in honor of Rav Moshe Weinberger, who was the keynote speaker. These three Torah giants are joined by one vision, fueled with one mission — building the yeshiva Derech HaMelech.

It began with the dream of one man. Rav Baruch Gartner had met too many English-speaking boys who were thirsting for a yeshiva with the fire and joy of Chassidus. He wanted to create a place to quench that thirst. He shared his dream with Rav Silberberg, who sent him across the ocean to involve Rav Moshe Weinberger and to observe his Aish Kodesh community in Woodmere, NY.

As Rav Weiss noted on Tuesday night, “What Harav Weinberger has accomplished in Woodmere is nothing short of a miracle. To bring so many people together, crossing boundaries, bridging gaps! I saw in that shul, Aish Kodesh, hats of all sizes, shapes and colors — all united.” R’ Gartner was also inspired by what he saw. “I met a man of incredible honesty and integrity,”

he says, “a man who helps a multitude of people every day.”

Armed with Rav Weinberger’s *brachah* and advice, R’ Gartner set out to build a yeshiva from thin air. His first step was to follow Rav Weinberger’s counsel, and ask Rav Weiss to serve as the Rosh Yeshiva. To his surprise and happiness, this great scholar agreed to lead a not-yet-existent yeshiva. Soon the other aspects fell into place. Students, *maggidai shiur*, and other essentials were obtained, and this Elul the dream began to become reality.

Rav Weiss and Rav Weinberger continue to guide the yeshiva’s direction. The yeshiva’s proximity to Harav Silberberg’s Nachlas Yaakov minyan has caused a fruitful relationship to blossom between him and the students. The influence of these three tzaddikim has had a powerful impact on the *bachurim*. “In a way,” explains Rav Gartner, “you can say these Rabbanim helped bring the yeshiva into being. People would hear Harav Tzvi Meir’s *seudah shelishis shiur* or spend a Shabbos in Aish Kodesh, and find their *neshamos* ignited. They wanted more; they wanted this inspiration all the time.” One of the goals of the yeshiva is to help people connect with these tzaddikim and provide them with spiritual nourishment all week long.

On Tuesday, a circle was closed when Rav Weinberger finally met with the entity that he had helped create. “It was like a

grandfather meeting his grandchildren for the first time,” said Rav Gartner.

“Rav Baruch’s dream of Derech HaMelech has been such an inspiration for me,” declared Rav Weinberger in his address, “but it was still something I didn’t fully understand. It was all theoretical until I had the merit to spend time with the *bachurim*. They are such a special group of young men, filled with longing to grow in learning and *avodas Hashem*.” Rav Weinberger spent the entire day with the students.

The highlight of the visit was the gathering in the evening. Hundreds crowded into the *beis medrash* of Rav Weiss’ *kollel*. Rav Weinberger’s topic was *kedushas einayim*. He spoke of how every child is born with purity and *bachurim* must strive to retain their innocence. The outside world is not conducive to seeing ourselves as *neshamos*. He urged the assembled to try to look beyond externals, and find inner meaning.

Rav Weiss was the next speaker; he spoke about the importance of learning Torah with joy and *kedushah*. Then Rav Silberberg gave fiery words of *chizuk*. The evening ended with spontaneous dancing, and many streamed to Rav Weinberger to receive a *brachah* from him.

What, in a nutshell, is the goal of Derech HaMelech? Rav Gartner tries to sum it up. “Shabbos is called *‘me’ein Olam Habah*,” it gives us a tiny taste of the de-

lights of the World to Come. When it ends, unfortunately, we often feel an emptiness. Derech HaMelech attempts to be a *‘me’ein Shabbos* and hold onto that special feeling from Shabbos to Shabbos.”

Derech HaMelech is a most suitable name for the unique institution. The Mishnah speaks of the *derech hamelech*, the path that the king takes. A king and his entourage are allowed to go anywhere they please, breaking down all barriers. Derech HaMelech is also breaking down barriers — the barriers that are dividing *Klal Yisrael*.

The lectures on Tuesday were an inspiring success. But it is just the beginning. “People are thirsty,” says Rav Gartner passionately, “and we must provide for them.”



Rav Moshe Weinberger delivers the keynote speech.



Rav Moshe Weinberger (C.), Rav Tzvi Meir Silberberg (R.), and Rav Baruch Gartner, Mashgiach Yeshivas Derech HaMelech.