



By: Shlomo Weinrib

We live in scary times. We all want our children to grow up and follow the derech Hatorah, ignoring the enticements the street throws their way. Where can we find the hope for a strong future of Torah amidst the storm of illusory pleasures the world presents to our young and impressionable children? How can we be sure they'll have the strength to with-



stand the pull of the yetzer hara?
The words of the Rosh Yeshiva Harav Elya Brudny, who was the guest speaker at the Bonai Chavivai Melava Malka on Motzei Shab-

bos Parshas Teruma, give us hope that our generation holds a key, an answer to these unsettling questions. After witnessing over 800 bar mitzvah-aged boys who are working towards "owning" a masechta, chazering it tens of times, and hearing the boys speak about how the level of ahavas Hatorah they acquired has changed them in every area of their lives, the Rosh Yeshiva addressed the crowd. "Once we acquire the taam of Torah, when the yetzer hara comes to offer us his cheap thrills, we look at him like he's out of his mind! Our neshama responds, "Do you know the thrill of knowing a masechta!? Can you compare your 'thrill' to that of Torah!?" It is the connection with Torah, and the feeling of simchas Hatorah that can battle the threatening world out there.

Bonai Chavivai is a program adapted from the world-famous Vhaarev Na program, geared towards boys approaching their bar mitzvah, to encourage them to learn and know a masechta in honor of their bar mitzvah.

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Through this program, boys who are just beginning to



learn gemara develop an appreciation for the importance of chazara and knowing a masechta "in the bones." With the *haskama* of their rebbi and menahel, they choose a masechta

suitable for them, and learn it during their free time, guided and motivated by the Bonai Chavivai staff of handpicked rebbeim. The goal is not to finish, but to know, to have the masechta "go through you, not just to go through the masechta."

Beginning just a few years ago with a handful of boys in Monsey, Bonai Chavivai has since spread to Lakewood, Brooklyn, Far Rockaway, Passaic, Baltimore, Florida and Los Angeles. The success of Bonai Chavivai has been its own advertisement, leading to exponential growth year after year.

It was on that Motzei Shabbos that over 1,100 boys and fathers flocked to The

Atrium Ballroom in Monsey for the Annual Melava Malka and Siyum to celebrate together in an evening of chizuk and simchas Hatorah. The evening began with a seder, during which the boys and their fathers filled the chuppah room wall-to-wall to grab another opportunity for chazara.

Following the seder, Rabbi Moshe Baruch Newman addressed the crowd, calling



attention to the phenomenon that was taking place in the world as a result of Bonai Chavivai. "The same way every bar mitzvah bachur has a bar mitzvah parshah, every bachur should have a bar mitzvah masechta! You can be *koneh* a masechta that will be with you for life!"

The gathering then entered the ballroom for a lavish seudah in honor of the siyum. During the seudah, Rabbi Dovid Newman, founder of the Vhaarev Na and Bonai Chavivai programs, explained where the power of Bonai Chavivai comes from. It is through pushing our limits, breaking out of our comfort zones, that we acquire ahavas Hatorah and simchas Hatorah. He then quoted the gemara in Chagiga that contrasts one who chazers 100 times and one who chazers 101 times, referring to the former as one who

Grand Siyum



does not serve Hashem, and the latter as one who does serve Hashem. How can it be that one who chazers 100 times is not considered an eved Hashem? The Shem M'Shmuel explains that 100 times doesn't mean the number 100; this number merely represents a comfort zone. One who goes beyond that, putting in the extra effort to chazer an additional time hasn't just chazered one more time. He demonstrated that he was willing to go out of his comfort zone, to do more than he thought he could, and that makes all the difference. It is this show of determination that deems him worthy of the title "eved Hashem."

It is pushing beyond our perceived limitations, explained Rabbi Newman, that allows us to develop a true keshet with our masechta. He then read a letter sent by one boy who wrote that through Bonai Chavivai he has developed such an attachment to his masechta that it became his "go-to" when bored, and such a familiarity with it that learning through it is like taking a walk in his own neighborhood.

Secondly, it is through pushing beyond our limits that we develop an ahavas Hatorah in general and a real cheshek for learning. Rabbi Newman then read a letter sent by another boy who wrote how he used to go to yeshiva because he *had* to, and learn on Shabbos because he needed to prepare for the test on Sunday. Since beginning Bonai Chavivai he goes to yeshiva because he *wants* to and chazers on Shabbos because he *loves* to.

And lastly, Rabbi Newman explained that it is through pushing beyond our limits that we develop a deep connection with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Our davening is different, our behavior is different. We feel closer to Hashem, the Nosein Hatorah, when we press on de-



spite any difficulty. This point was demonstrated with yet another letter received from a Bonai Chavivai boy, who relates that since starting the program, he has become from the best boys in his class, and his davening has been completely transformed – he really feels a connection with Hashem.

While everyone was enjoying the seuda, a number of boys shared with the crowd the impact Bonai Chavivai has had on them. Hearing directly from the boys how it changed their lives was extremely powerful. One boy shared that al-

though at first it was not easy to push himself to chazer, it got easier with time, to the point that he could sit on a Shabbos afternoon and learn for two hours straight! He was mesayem his masechta ten times, and is now on to

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learning another masechta with the same method. Another boy expressed that although the Bonai Chavivai rebbeim brought him an ex-

he loved to learn, the more he chazered!

Then came one of the highlights of the evening. The grand siyum of all the boys who had chazered their masechta again to finish it specifically for



that night. The kol of the hadran was heard loud throughout the hall as 250 bochurim proudly said “hadran alach – we will return to you,” and really meant it.

Following the kaddish, R' Baruch Levine roused the

pensive pencil and a shas, the greatest gift he received was the feeling of genuine ahavas Hatorah. The more he chazered, the more he loved to learn, and the more

crowd to leibidige dancing, resembling that of a chasuna. The bochurim were indeed like chassanim at their own wedding, joined with bonds of everlasting love to their masechta. The dancing in the Atrium that night was the result of the ecstasy that comes from genuine ahavas Hatorah. The love of Torah was noticeable on the faces of every boy in attendance, as Rabbi Moshe Hauer, who was present at the event commented: “The masses of young men who were there had a visible light in their eyes and an energy that comes from an experience of וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ.” Rabbi Chaim Zev Levitan expressed a similar sentiment on what he saw there. “I was completely taken by the sight of hundreds of bachurim, dancing and truly rejoicing with the Torah that they had learned, all sharing the same camaraderie – ahavas Hatorah.”

A hartzige kumzitz ended the evening, leaving all who attended with a new appreciation for the importance and power of chazara, and renewed commitment to pushing themselves out of their comfort zones, the keys to a powerful and everlasting simchas Hatorah and ahavas Hatorah!

For more information or to bring Bonai Chavivai to your community, please contact Rabbi Dovid Newman at vhaarevna@gmail.com.

