

Marathon Mishnayos effort rewarded

Dina Rosell

SEVEN thousand hours of learning *Mishnayos* by two Golders Green chavrusos was marked with a special siyum on Sunday.

Rabbi Refoel Berisch and Mr Jack Goodman have been learning for an hour and a half four times a week for ten years, helped on their way by generous injections of caffeine: four thousand cups of coffee to be precise.

The siyum at Agudas Yisroel's banqueting suite was conducted in the presence of a number of choshuve Rabbonim, including Rav Berel Knopfler, Rosh Yeshivah of Chayei Olom and Rav of Sinai Shul, Dayan Menachem Elzas, Rabbi Ziskin, Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy, head of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Rabbi Mark Kampf, head of Limudei Kodesh at JFS, Rabbi Gavin Broder, the London Universities Chaplain, and many other mechanchim.

Both chavrusas spoke about their learning. Mr. Goodman said he was inspired to start the learning *Mishnayos* after attending a *Mishnayos siyum* that his son made thirteen years earlier at the home of Rabbi Bernie Fagil. Both Rabbi Fagil and his rebetzin were present at the seudah.



L-R: Rabbi Mitchell Goodman, Mr Jack Goodman, Rav Berel Knopfler, Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy and Rabbi Refoel Berisch.

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Mr. Goodman's son, Rabbi Mitchell Goodman, of JEM in Manchester, spoke about their achievement. There was also an address and *divrei brochah* from Rav Knopfler to whose shul both Rabbi Berisch and Mr. Goodman are affiliated.

Rabbi Berisch's brother-in-law, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy, spoke and all the guests were given a sefer, *Pas Lechem*, which he authored.

Voices present the past for the future

David Rose

HOLOCAUST survivors and refugees who escaped Nazi-occupied Europe and who rebuilt their lives in Great Britain now have their stories filed for posterity.

Refugee Voices is a collection of 150 interviews and was completed by the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR). It is now housed in the Wiener Library.

At a launch event at the library's headquarters in Mayfair, Andrew Kaufmann, AJR Chairman, spoke of the desperate need to record this material before it is lost forever. "This oral tradition in historical evidence is of great historical importance. It is a resource that future generations can use to examine the legacy of an era that affects the very way we live today."

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, who, with Dr Anthony Grenville, is the Project Director of Refugee Voices, presented a live demonstration of the collection. Unlike other archives this one has been scientifically researched by leading academics in the field. All the interviews follow a set format. Sophisticated techniques of interviewing were employed to ensure a response based on modern psychological research. It differs from Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation in that the material is

digitally stored rather than on film.

The 150 interviews cover the period before and after the war as well as during it. There is an extensive database cross-referencing it. It is split into 47 categories.

Among other things, we saw recorded contributions from Arieh Handler, who had been involved in organising the Kindertransport, and Mirjam Finkelstein, the daughter of the founder of the Wiener Library Dr Alfred Wiener, who herself survived Bergen Belsen. She now lives in Hendon. Her son Daniel is Associate Editor of *The Times*.

Several actual contributors and their families were there at the meeting too, including Trude Silman, who came here from Germany in April 1939. She talked about her own experience of being interviewed and described her own experiences of having to adjust to life in England when she arrived, of having to suppress her feelings of homesickness and of her attempts to appear inconspicuous. She eventually married and had three children, as well as pursuing a successful career as a medical biochemist.

The resource will not be generally available as it was felt that control will be needed over the use of the material. But access can be obtained in person for research purposes.

Primary care for parents

Dina Rosell

A NEW initiative designed to encourage learning among the parents of its pupils has been launched by Edgware Jewish Primary School. The idea for the project, named *Veshinantom*, came from members of Edgware Adath shul with which the school has strong links, both ideological and geographical. It was decided to run *Veshinantom* from the school itself. In this way, parents would become practical role models for their children, who see them learning and preparing for the shiur delivered on a Monday evening every month by a guest Rov. The shiur is focused on topical subjects of interest to parents, such as ways of helping children to appreciate the beauty of Torah and how to encourage learning during the summer

holidays.

A pilot shiur was given last term by Rabbi Malcolm Herman of *seed* and on Monday night it was the turn of Rabbi Yoni Sherizen, Chief Executive of the University Jewish Chaplaincy Board.

School governor Rafi Youngerwood told the *Jewish Tribune* that as well as promoting Torah and *achdus* within the school, in strengthening the link between the generations the monthly shiur is a recipe for success. Together with Rabbi Sherizen, Mr Youngerwood has been instrumental in setting up *Veshinantom*.

"Forty out of fifty families attended the first shiur, an excellent response from our friendly, community school," Mr Youngerwood said. "Parents recognise the virtue of learning and discussing Torah in front of the children."

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