

Harav Avrohom Chaim Levin, *Rosh Yeshivah*, Speaks to Adopt-a-Kollel

RABBI AVROHOM BIRNBAUM

Adopt-a-Kollel spoke recently with Harav Avrohom Chaim Levin, *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivah*, Telshe, Chicago.

Adopt-a-Kollel was founded less than three years ago, and with tremendous *siyatta diShmaya*, is on the cusp of completing its 250th partnership. To what does the *Rosh Yeshivah* attribute this remarkable *hatzlachah*?

It is truly gratifying to witness Adopt-a-Kollel's success and the true *kiddush Hashem* it has brought about. I am not surprised by its *hatzlachah*. When a *dvar kadosh* such as this is undertaken *l'shem Shamayim*, Hashem gives it special *siyatta diShmaya*.

Adopt-a-Kollel has been *zocheh* to help match *kollelim* in Eretz Yisrael with shuls around the world. What are the *Rosh Yeshivah's* thoughts on this wide-ranging support of *Toras Eretz Yisrael*?

Indeed, it is difficult for any person to understand *darchei Hashem Yisborach* but we can say that perhaps one of the reasons Hashem made the terrible *gezeiros* against the Torah community at the time of Adopt-a-Kollel's founding was because we, *bnei chutz laAretz*, desperately needed the *zechus* of supporting *Toras Eretz Yisrael*. It is a remarkable *zechus* that so many people in *chutz laAretz* are now collectively supporting *yungeleit* and their families who learn Torah with great *mesirus nefesh*.

We should all collectively thank the *Ribbono shel Olam* and His faithful emissaries, the founders of Adopt-a-Kollel, for giving us that *zechus*. At the Agudah Midwest Convention I said publicly, "We think we are supporting *lomdei Torah* with our financial help, but in reality it is they who are supporting us!"

Taking that point further, what does the *Rosh Yeshivah* feel is the special niche of Adopt-a-Kollel?

There is a concept in *Chazal* of *makom hinichu l'hisgader*. I feel that the unique place occupied by Adopt-a-Kollel is that it changed the dynamic. In the past it was primarily the wealthy who bore the lion's share of supporting *Toras Eretz Yisrael*. Adopt-a-Kollel has succeeded in giving all *Yidden*, even those of lesser means, the *zechus* to constantly be



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supporting *talmidei chachamim* in Eretz Yisrael.

The beautiful thing about Adopt-a-Kollel is that everyone can become part of it. Certainly, those who can should sign up for larger amounts, but even those with limited means can sign up and partner with *yungeleit* in Eretz Yisrael for as little as ten

correct response to this?

I was asked this very question by a *kehillah* in the Midwest whose Rav I know very well. That Rav came with a number of his distinguished *baalei batim* and said, "On the one hand we feel that we should undertake to help a *kollel* in Eretz Yisrael, but on the other hand, closer to home we have

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dollars or even one dollar a month!

Often *kehillos* say, “We have so many causes in our own community and in our own shul that we don't know if it is justified to adopt a *kollel* in Eretz Yisrael as well.” What is the

our own struggling institutions and individuals who need our *tzedakah* dollars. How can we adopt a *kollel* in Eretz Yisrael under such circumstances?”

I told him, "If your shul adopts a *kollel*, the *zechus* of *hachzakas haTorah* will ensure that the local com-

munity will also experience a *shefa*, and there will be enough to support the local *mosdos* and individuals as well as the adopted *kollel* in Eretz Yisrael!”

Many of the original government cuts to the *kollelim*, which were the impetus of starting the organization, have been restored under the present government. Does that mean we no longer need to adopt these *kollelim*?

Halevai that it should be that way. *Halevai* that all of the *kollelim* in Eretz Yisrael should not need any help from us here in *chutz laAretz*. The fact, however, is that poverty is still rampant in Eretz Yisrael. The *kollelim* have always needed support from *chutz laAretz* and they still do.

Does the *Rosh Yeshivah* have any additional thoughts to share with the *tzibbur*?

I am very familiar with *kollelim* that are being helped by partnerships through Adopt-a-Kollel. I have seen what a difference a supportive shul can make for a *kollel*.

A while back when I was at a family *simchah* in Lakewood, I had the *zechus* to visit Adopt-a-Kollel's main office. I spoke with the Adopt-a-Kollel *askanim* and walked away deeply impressed by their professionalism and passion. They are deeply dedicated to their mission of ensuring that *yungeleit* in *kollelim* across Eretz Yisrael, representing every segment of Torah Jewry, should have food and clothing for their families.

After I returned home to Chicago, I called a meeting in my house of local *askanim* and expressed the wish that every shul in Chicago should adopt a *kollel*.

As *maaminim bnei maaminim* we must believe that we, through our *limud haTorah* and *avodas Hashem*, are contributing to the security of Eretz Yisrael more than anything else!

Every *ehrlische frum* Yid must understand that by engaging in Torah learning we are doing the biggest favor possible for the entire Eretz Yisrael. Certainly by supporting *Yidden* who learn Torah in Eretz Yisrael we are contributing to the safety of Eretz Yisrael and our own safety as well.

In this increasingly dangerous world, we need Hashem's *shemirah* more than ever. Learning Torah and being *machzik Torah*, especially *Toras Eretz Yisrael*, can invoke *rachamei Shamayim* in a truly profound way.