

Bukharian Jewish Community Displays Outpouring of *Hakaras Hatov*



At the Chanukah *mesibah* launching the partnership; Rabbi Yaakov Maliab speaking.



R-L: Rabbi Shlomo Tzvi Levine, Adopt-a-Kollel *gabbai*, and Mr. Neri Kandinov.



At the Chanukah *mesibah* launching the partnership — Rabbi Moshe Rosenbaum speaking.

MATTISYAHU LAZAR

One of the most remarkable developments in *Klal Yisrael* is the fact that distinguished *kehillos* with rich, centuries-long histories of Torah and *mesorah*, are returning en masse to Hashem and His Torah despite efforts to spiritually annihilate them.

One of the most ancient among Jewish communities is the Bukharian Jewish community. The rabidly anti-Semitic Communists in Soviet Russia did everything possible to extinguish the light of this great community. On this past Chanukah, however, there was an event that showed more than anything that the light of Torah and *mesorah* of such a hallowed community can not be extinguished.

The truth is, that even under the Communist regime, so many members of the community did their utmost to keep some semblance of Jewish tradition. Yes, the Communists may have robbed them of their Jewish knowledge, of their ability to observe *halachah*... but they couldn't snuff out their warm feelings for Hashem and their innate *emunah*.

That *emunah* is now sprouting forth in a most wonderful way and producing the most amazing results.

Kollel Shaare Zion Igniting the Spark of Torah in the Bukharian Community

One of the *mosdos* in Eretz Yisrael most instrumental in fanning the flames of *ohr haTorah* among Bukharian Jews the world over is Kollel Shaare Zion, headed by Rabbi Shmuel Elishayev.

Rabbi Elishayev is a Yid who was born and raised in Bukharia and came to Eretz Yisrael knowing practically nothing about *Yiddishkeit*. Not only did he completely return to his roots in Eretz Yisrael, but he



L-R: Rabbi Yaakov Maliab, Rav of the Bukharian Community of Toronto, with *gabbai* Roman Isakov and Rabbi Shlomo Tzvi Levine, of Adopt-a-Kollel.

became one of the greatest *marbitzei Torah* that the Bukharian community has ever known.

He established a whole network of *mosdos*, with the crown jewel being the Kollel Avreichim that has produced dozens of Rabbanim who went on to serve the Bukharian community both in Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora.

That brings us to an amazing development in far-off Toronto. One of the most successful Bukharian communities outside of Israel is the thriving Toronto Bukharian community. Primarily located in the northern suburb of Thornhill, the community has more than 300 members and two shuls.

The *kehillah* also has two young, dynamic Rabbanim who teach Torah, providing guidance and *chizuk* to the community. Both Rabbanim, Rabbi Yakov Maliab and Rabbi Yisrael Yakobov, are graduates of Kollel Shaare Zion of Tel Aviv and *talmidim* of Rabbi Shmuel Elishayev.

The Optimum *Hakaras Hatov*

Rabbi Maliab relates, "I always sought a way of showing my *hakaras hatov* to Rav Elishayev and Kollel

Shaare Zion for all that they have done for me, and by extension, the spiritual bounty that has been bestowed upon our *kehillah* as a result of their *hashpaah*.

"Finally, I have found a way to do it. By joining Adopt-a-Kollel and having our community, the Bukharian community of Toronto, partner with our *kollel*, I and our *kehillah* are able to show at least a small token of our appreciation for the profound spiritual impact that they have had on me."

What was the odyssey of this partnership? Rav Maliab explains, "For the last 16 years, Rabbi Avrohom Kahan, a prominent Rav here in Toronto, has been instrumental in establishing and guiding the Toronto Bukharian community, serving as our guide and *moreh derech*.

"He introduced us to the idea of Adopt-a-Kollel several months ago. I and Rabbi Yakobov were extremely enamored with the idea because we felt that we finally had an opportunity to show our *hakaras hatov* to Kollel Shaare Zion and Rav Elishayev.

"Rabbi Kahan thus put us in touch with Rabbi Moshe Rosenbaum and Rabbi Shlomo Tzvi Levine, Adopt-a-Kollel's Toronto coordinators,

and with tremendous dedication and professionalism, they walked us through the entire process."

Rabbi Shlomo Tzvi Levine explained, "I found the two Rabbanim of the community, as well as the *baalei battim*, extremely receptive and enthusiastic. They said, 'We want to support the *kollel* that has produced our own Rabbis so that more Rabbis can be trained and go out to help the Bukharian Jewish community all over the world.'"

A Chanukah Party That Culminated in a Partnership

The culmination of all the joint efforts of both the Rabbanim and the Adopt-a-Kollel coordinators was the beautiful Chanukah party on the first day of Chanukah at the Bukharian shul where the partnership was launched. Over 200 members of the community attended.

"The *achdus*, combined with the outpouring of warmth and enthusiasm that we witnessed was remarkably heartwarming," said Rabbi Moshe Rosenbaum, who addressed the event on behalf of Adopt-a-Kollel, explaining to the *kehillah* how the partnership works.

"They were amazed to hear that Adopt-a-Kollel doesn't even have a bank account and every penny collected goes straight to the *kollel*."

The two Rabbanim also addressed the event, explaining to their congregants that the greatest dividends from supporting the *kollel* will be reaped by the Bukharian community, because they will have more Rabbanim and more spiritual leadership as a result.

Rav Maliab concluded, "My *kehillah* was mostly impressed with the unique fact that the monthly donation is relatively small money, but in the aggregate makes a huge difference to the *avreichim*, the future leaders of our community!"