



Latest News From The

CENTER FOR MODERN TORAH LEADERSHIP

TOWARD A TRUER TESHUVAH

Is a community's repentance more than the sum of its constituent members' repentance? The Talmud (Rosh haShannah 17b) says yes - only communal repentance can undo "sealed" Heavenly verdicts. But why is the teshuvah of a community more than the sum of its parts?

I suggest that communities are not about the present, but rather about the future - about the way children will develop, about making moral, ethical, and religious choices attractive in every citizen's life. Individual repentance begins with regret for the past, and sees future commitment primarily as a measure of the genuineness of regret; communal repentance cares about regret only insofar as it is necessary to improve the future.

The observant community has much to regret about the past year. Ethical lapses from Postville to Deal created massive desecrations of G-d's Name; abuse scandals are rife; and the sight of rabbis in handcuffs has רחמנא לצלן become commonplace. But it is not sufficient to cry and beat our chests - we must find ways to ensure that next month, next year, next decade will be better.

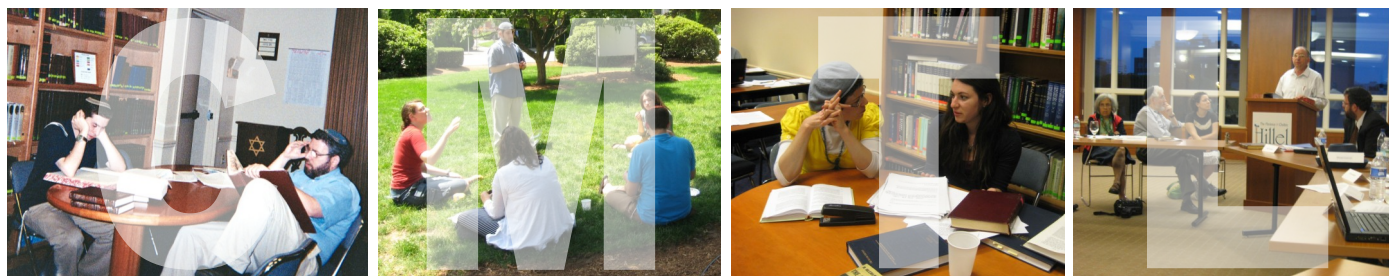
A key element of that repentance must be to make sure that the Torah we teach unambiguously condemns the physical, psychological, and financial mistreatment of all human beings, and mandates deep concern for their wellbeing. Here Modern Orthodoxy at its best is crucial: we are the bearers of the traditions - European, American, and Israeli - of halakhic humanism and humane virtue that must become the face of Torah in our day. The Center for Modern Torah Leadership is dedicated to spreading and deepening that masoret. Please join us in that sacred task.

Bivrahkah,

Aryeh Klapper, CMTL Dean



Summer Beit Midrash fellow Jonathan Ziring (right) consults R. Meir Sendor (left) at the Young Israel of Sharon.



SUMMER BEIT MIDRASH CONVENES



By Michael Pershan (SBM Fellow '09)

That the [Summer Beit Midrash](#) was a unique program became apparent to me on the very first day of shiurim from the fascinating issues broached. We discussed the controversial position of R. Elchanan Wasserman that all sins against man are abrogated when they fulfill some purpose. We debated whether communities and societies may build art museums and parks, if it comes at the expense of building a hospital and saving lives. We even contemplated the position of the *Rivash*, that the gemara is simply exaggerating when it states that speaking *lashon hara* is as severe as murder. And this was all on day one!

It wasn't only *what* I was learning that was unique, but also *who* I was learning with.

The group that gathered for SBM was relatively diverse for an Orthodox program. There were both men and women - of differing backgrounds - learning together in the kollel. There were several students from Yeshiva University. There was one student from Pardes, and another enrolled in Yeshivat Chovevei Torah. And there were also students from Johns Hopkins, Princeton, Rutgers and Harvard. The diversity in backgrounds led to a real diversity in perspectives and opinions. All this was very unlike any other kollel or yeshiva I had been to.

At the program's close, we were challenged to apply all that we had learned. Rabbi Klapper carefully constructed a case, and asked us to rule on it. As we had been studying the *halachos* of *lashon hara* and

journalism, the case concerned a journalist who approached a posek - us! - and asked for our *halachic* ruling. For days, all the members of the kollel worked to formulate an approach to the question. In the end, we all presented our responses. Remarkably, though each kollel member had access to the same sources, every *teshuva* ended up looking very different, as in actual *psak halacha*.

Overall, I'm glad I learned in the Summer Beit Midrash this year. Though I don't know what my career plans are, I do know that many of my new friends from the summer are planning on becoming teachers and rabbis. For the sake of the future of our community, I'm very happy that some of the next generation of our leaders were there learning in the kollel this summer.

Under a heading of "Toward Orthodox Ethics for Journalism", SBM Fellows tackled traditional sources, were addressed by guest rabbis, journalists and scholars, and ultimately each authored a responsum in halakhic journalism. Fellows also led a variety of public learning opportunities during the seminar, including one-on-one study, thematic text-study groups, and formal classes at the Young Israel of Sharon and other near-by venues.



SBM FELLOWS 2009:

(from left to right)

Jonathan Ziring, Aron Wolgel, Avi Miller, Yael Klausner, Jesse Abelman, Tamara Frankel, Avishai Gebler, Hod Klein, Rivky Stern, Michael Pershan, Rob Golder, Anne Sendor, Rabbi Aryeh Klapper.

Not Pictured:

Daniel Goykhman and Deborah Klapper.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

RABBI SHLOMO (MYLES) BRODY



When he first met CMTL Dean Rabbi Aryeh Klapper, Shlomo Brody was an undergraduate at Harvard University, where Rabbi Klapper served as Orthodox Rabbinic Advisor. The Texas native would spend the summer learning at the Summer Beit Midrash and go on to complete a senior thesis in Jewish studies.

Today in Israel, Rabbi Shlomo Brody teaches at Yeshivat HaKotel, pens the "Ask the Rabbi" column in the [Jerusalem Post](#), and is the online editor of [Tradition](#) as well as its new blog, [Text and Texture](#). Of his SBM experience, Rabbi Brody recounts: "SBM provided a unique environment to deeply explore a central contempo-

rary halakhic issue and go beyond the stereotypes and misconceptions that are usually brought to the table with regard to hot-button issues. The depth and sincerity of Rabbi Klapper's shiurim created an open-minded yet committed atmosphere necessary to understanding halakha and the halakhic process."

AT CMTL'S EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE

"A central value of modernity is authenticity - "the right and obligation to both live and be perceived in accordance with one's true self". One defining ideological characteristic of Modern Orthodoxy at its best is a drive to find genuine and substantive Torah worth in the central values of modernity. A second is the willingness to acknowledge the inevitable influence of modernity on our Torah ideas and to reflect on how best to control, manage, and channel that influence. It follows that Modern Orthodoxy needs to seriously engage with the value of authenticity."



By Rabbi David Maayan
(Teacher, Maimonides School)

Attending the most recent [conference](#) convened this past August by the Center for Modern Torah Leadership was an inspiring and profoundly rewarding experience for me. The topic chosen was an essential one for Torah teachers and rabbis to reflect upon, namely how one adopts and uses a persona in relationships with students: "Authenticity and Authority." The theme was thoughtfully subdivided and approached from a variety of angles. I loved the format, in which an in-depth presentation was followed by two short,

more personal reflections on the same topic, followed in turn by an open discussion and sharing. The participants were a diverse group, but all were articulate and deeply reflective about their own experiences as educators.

As the conference went on, what most impressed me was how the discussions, while all of a high intellectual caliber, were far from purely theoretical discourses. Intellectual acuity was employed to carefully examine living paradoxes and dilemmas - never to pretend that they could be reasoned out of existence by verbal sleight-of-hand. There was a true sharing of practical,

personal, and emotional reflections, in an atmosphere of trust. I also appreciated the rare combination of unwavering focus with real openness to new angles and perspectives. The openness assured a certain spontaneity along with maximum participation from everyone present, while the attention to detail assured a thorough examination of the subject at hand, and a sense of movement and new ground covered with each session.

After this engaging, inspiring and illuminating experience, I very much look forward to participating in future CMTL conferences.

Previous CMTL Educators' Conferences: The Process of Psak (2007), Teaching Halakha (2008)

"An excellent presentation and exchange of important ideas in an open atmosphere."

Rabbi Menachem Schrader
Founder, Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC); Nishmat

"It is exhilarating and invigorating to learn from and debate with forward-thinking leaders who care so deeply about responsibly executing and transmitting our *Mesorah*. This conference truly reinvigorated my sense of purpose and values. I feel ready to return to the classroom!"

Atara Eis
Teacher, Stern High School; Yoetzet Halakha

"A wonderful opportunity to think creatively with like-minded rabbis, teachers, and educators about the nature of Torah leadership."

Rabbi Don Seeman
Associate Professor of Religion, Emory University

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

ANNE SENDOR, CMTL PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Anne Sendor joined CMTL last November after 25 award-winning years in Jewish Education. She holds certificates in Special Education from Gratz College and Early Childhood from Hebrew College, and recently began working in Marriage Education after completing the PREP program.

Anne's organizational skills helped CMTL recruit one of the strongest SBM classes ever, and have put it in position to build on that success. Her efficient administration of SBM and the Conference allowed participants to focus exclusively on Torah, and her human skills helped the SBM Fellows bond tightly as a

group and form deep connections with the Sharon community. She is particularly excited to work on SBM, a program her shul has hosted and nurtured for over a decade. Some of her former kindergarten students have become SBM fellows, giving her almost as much *nachas* as her grandchildren.

CMTL IS ON THE WEB!

Thanks to the Center for Modern Torah Leadership's new internet home (www.torahleadership.org), you can take part in our conferences, college campus Yemei Iyyun, Summer Beit Midrash and so much more, from the comfort of your home. With over 1300 lectures downloaded in August alone, the site is an ever-growing center for Modern Orthodox Torah online. Be sure to check out some of our latest online content - MP3 audio, streaming video and digital articles - covering the sort of topics you won't find anywhere else. Some recent highlights:

[DISCUSSIONS IN HALAKHIC JOURNALISM](#) (mp3 series)

Join Rabbi Klapper and the 2009 Summer Beit Midrash fellows as they engage with professional journalists and legal theorists in a continuing effort to produce a halakhic ethic of investigative journalism. Recordings are available of lectures by and conversations with *Binyamin Appelbaum* (reporter on national economic issues for the *Washington Post*), *Gary Rosenblatt* (publisher of the *Jewish Week*), *Mark Jurkowitz* (Associate Director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, former *Boston Globe* Ombudsman) and Jeffrey Rosen (Professor of Law at George Washington University Law School, Legal Affairs Editor of *The New Republic*).

[ORTHODOXY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES](#) (mp3 panel discussion)

CMTL Dean Rabbi Aryeh Klapper, former Orthodox Rabbinic Advisor of Harvard Hillel, and Rabbi Menachem Schrader, founder of the Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus, discuss the possibilities and pitfalls of Orthodox life and spirituality on campus.

[SO LONG...OR THANKS FOR THE FISH? - A NEW READING OF SEFER YONAH](#) AND [DO ANGELS FAST ON YOM KIPPUR?](#) (mp3)

As the *Yamim Noraim* approach, listen to Rabbi Klapper's unique take on *maftir Yonah* and listen to his theological insights into *Yom Kippur* gleaned from an unlikely midrashic inquiry - whether angels are said to fast on *Yom Kippur*.



Online [audio and video archive](#) at torahleadership.org.
Visit the site to sign up for Rabbi Klapper's [weekly dvar torah](#)
and to check for [upcoming CMTL events](#) near you.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT CMTL

"Speaking to the Fellows in the 2009 Summer Beit Midrash was an intellectual highpoint of my year. Under Rabbi Klapper's guidance, the Beit Midrash program is a model for thoughtful examination of the most complex contemporary issues from a Talmudic perspective. I couldn't have been more impressed by the Fellows and Rabbi Klapper and look forward to keeping in touch."

Jeffrey Rosen
*Professor of Law, G.W. Law School
Legal Affairs Editor, The New Republic*

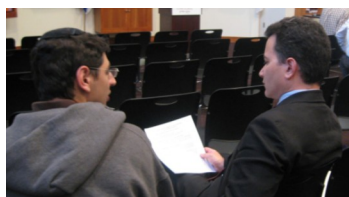
"Rabbi Aryeh Klapper [is] one of the most enlightened and thoughtful spokesmen for Modern Orthodoxy."

Marc Shapiro
*Weinberg Professor of Judaic Studies,
University of Scranton*

Guest Scholar Mark Jurkowitz at SBM



Guest Scholar Jeffrey Rosen at SBM



"[The CMTL Educators' Conference] was a rich opportunity to engage in reflection and learning. I plan to use the sources and discussion questions in my teacher-training classes."

Shani Bechhofer
*Associate Professor of Jewish Education,
Azrieli School of Jewish Education, Yeshiva University*

"The Center for Modern Torah Leadership, headed by the scholarly, erudite and compassionate Rabbi Aryeh Klapper, is the chance to build a center of Torah that will be consistent with the path we have chosen for ourselves and want to impart to our children. I write these words after Rabbi Klapper and his Beit Midrash fellows spent a Sunday morning with us and showed us a small glimpse of the promise and possibility of this Torah institution that is crucial to New England's Modern Orthodox community."

Rabbi Asher Oser
Rabbi, Congregation Beth Shalom, Providence, RI