

**YESHIVA GEDOLA LUBAVITCH
LONDON**

PROSPECTUS

3-5 Kingsley Way, London N2 0EH , Tel: 020 8731 6049

“All teachers have an excellent grasp of their subjects, are clear about course aims and objectives, delivering classes in a clear and organised way. Each day the students are well prepared and ready to engage the relevant topics”

FROM THE B.A.C. ACCREDITATION REPORT

DECEMBER 2009

History

The Yeshiva Gedola Lubavitch, London (Lubavitch Talmudic Academy) is part of an international group of Yeshivas that had their origins in Russia in the late 19th Century.

The first such Yeshiva was founded in the town of Lubavitch in 1897 by Rabbi Sholom Ber Schneersohn, the fifth Rebbe of the Lubavitch dynasty, whose ethos is predicated on the cardinal Torah principle of “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Inaugurating the Yeshiva, Rabbi Schneersohn said that he wanted a Yeshiva where the time-honoured traditional texts were studied combined with the study of Chabad philosophy and esoteric disciplines, so that the graduates would be distinguished “both in the study halls and in the market place.” They would achieve not only academic excellence but a refinement of their personal development, so that wherever they went, they would illuminate their environment with deeds of goodness and kindness, serving as a good influence to others.

Due to religious persecution in the early 20th century, the location of this Yeshiva moved, first to Riga and then to Poland.

In 1940, the Lubavitch headquarters relocated to New York, USA, where under successive leaderships over the next 50 years, particularly under that of Rabbi Menachem M Schneerson, the seventh Rebbe of the dynasty, it grew until it has become the largest international educational establishment, with kindergartens, schools, seminaries and Yeshivos throughout the USA and on every continent in the world. Its publishing branch produces religious books in many languages. Its centres worldwide, catering for the complete spectrum of Jewish men, women and children regardless of their affiliation or background, have achieved an unrivalled reputation for providing

formal and informal education,

and care and concern, both spiritually and materially, for the communities they serve. There are 5,000 Lubavitch emissaries across the globe.

In 1978, as a mark of honour, by a Joint Resolution of the US Senate and Congress and approved by President Jimmy Carter, Rabbi Menachem M Schneerson's birth date was proclaimed as "Education Day USA." Again, in 1989, a similar Resolution was approved by President George Bush, nominating the Rebbe's birth date as Education Day 1989 and 1990 in recognition of "his promotion of education that embraces moral and ethical values and emphasises their importance."

In 1995, the Rebbe was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, an honour bestowed to only 100 Americans, for "outstanding and lasting contributions towards improvements in world education, morality and acts of charity."

It was under Rabbi Schneerson's patronage and guidance that the Lubavitch Foundation of Great Britain (a registered charity) was founded at the end of the first half of the 20th century.

It has since grown into a national organisation covering the whole of the United Kingdom with, amongst its other centres, a school system for boys and girls from kindergarten to senior school.

October 1982 saw the opening of the Yeshiva Gedola Lubavitch, London, an autonomous division of the Lubavitch Foundation and part of the international Lubavitch Yeshivos network.

In the thirty years since its inauguration, the Yeshiva has achieved a reputation for both academic excellence and refinement of character that attracts applications from students both at home and abroad.

Location

The campus is set in beautiful surroundings in the prestigious Hampstead Garden Suburb of London. Backing on to one of the many parks and playing fields in the area, it provides a perfect setting for recreation and sports.

All the necessary shops and amenities are available nearby and the Yeshiva is served by good public transport services to Golders Green and East Finchley underground train services. It is approximately 1 hour from Heathrow Airport and about 45 minutes from central London.

Facilities

The Yeshiva is a residential academy catering for boys between the ages 16 and 23. The campus comprises a synagogue, lecture and study halls, a library as well as full dining and dormitory facilities. There is a newly designed mikvah, changing room and showers.

The library of the Yeshiva boasts an enormous range of works on both general and very specialised subjects in a variety of languages. These facilities are constantly reviewed to ensure that they remain up to date. In addition, the study and lecture halls are well supplied with the basic reference texts.

The main study areas of the Yeshiva are bright, airy and well heated. The main study hall is air-conditioned. Smoking is prohibited at all times.

Student Activity

The student body is enriched by the presence of a group of senior students, sent each year from the Central Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva in New York, to assist the other students in their studies and in Yeshiva- sponsored activities.

An intrinsic part of all Lubavitch Yeshivos is their Outreach Programmes. Time is allocated each week, and on Festivals and special occasions during the year, for students to perform acts of goodness and kindness and to share their Jewish learning and the performance of Jewish ritual with others less knowledgeable. They visit the sick and infirm in their homes and in hospital as well as at residential homes. They also meet the wider Jewish community in their businesses or workplaces to offer instruction and encouragement in their practice of Judaism, supplying them with items used for religious ritual and with literature. The students are well received and, in turn, gain from the experience.

In consonance with the ethos of Lubavitch, most of the students devote a large part of their summer holiday to assisting voluntarily as counsellors, group leaders and study and games instructors at summer residential and day camps in the UK and abroad. Others visit small Jewish communities, many of whom otherwise have little or no access to Jewish learning and practice.

On joyous Festivals, students visit local synagogues to participate in the Services and enthuse their members. From time to time, students publish a collection of their own original comments on, and insights into, the text they have been studying.

Sports facilities are readily available at the nearby park and students swim regularly at the main Lubavitch Centre in Stamford Hill.

Student Welfare

The welfare of our students is of primary importance to us.

In the event of sickness, a medical practice is a short walk away from the campus. The Dormitory Counsellors are responsible for the care of any student who is confined to bed. A member of the staff has First Aid training. If needed, Hatzolah—a recognised Jewish Paramedical and First Aid Organisation—can be at the Yeshiva within 3 minutes.

Emotional or personal problems and concerns are primarily the domain of the Mashpi'im—the religious and personal mentors who are a special feature of all Lubavitch Yeshivas. These highly qualified role models are teachers of Chassidic philosophy and interact with the students in honing their character traits and realising their talents and potential. The Dean and Mashpi'im are additionally available to students for advice on where to continue their studies, taking into account social and family pressures as well as the level of attainment of the student during his studies at the Yeshiva.

Students are regularly invited to the homes of the Dean and teaching staff and the local Jewish laity.

We encourage students to maintain regular communication with their parents and family.

Our Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Fire Risk Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure the safety of both the students and staff. (Copies of all policies, including the Complaints Policy, are readily available to students from the Yeshiva office, and the names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and his Deputy are prominently displayed around the building.)

Security

High security is maintained at all times. All doors and ground level windows are secured during the hours of darkness, and the windows themselves are shatter-proof. The Dorm Counsellors have keys and are able to access the office telephones in case of emergency.

As we have students under 18, we follow all the safer recruitment procedures and all our staff undergo enhanced DBS checks. There is a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually before the start of the academic year. All the staff have received Prevent training to protect against all forms of radicalisation.

Study Programme

The Yeshiva Gedola Lubavitch of London teaches a curriculum which is designed to prepare students for degree and higher degree studies at the Lubavitch colleges to which they will go afterwards. The degree programmes of both the Tomchei Temimim Central Lubavitch Yeshiva in New York and the Rabbinical College of America Yeshiva in Morristown, New Jersey offer up to 90 credits for courses taken at our Yeshiva (see table overleaf for details). It is important to note that these credits are offered for each year of study, irrespective of whether a student repeats a level/year of study. This allows the Yeshiva much greater flexibility in ensuring that a student receives tuition at a level that is suited to his capabilities.

All Students studying in YGL on a Visa are required to join the ATHE (Award Training and Higher Education) programme in Talmudic Studies and will receive a diploma at the end of each school year, accredited by ATHE.

1st year - Subsidiary Diploma in Talmudic Studies (57 credits)

2nd year - Diploma in Talmudic Studies (57 credits)

3rd year - Extended Diploma in Talmudic Studies (57 credits)

Programmes are also accredited by AARTS (Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools). The latter is further accredited by the New Jersey Department of Education and accepts our course credits towards their Bachelor of Religious Studies degree.

Three levels of pre-degree qualification are offered by AARTS :

QUALIFICATION	YEAR OF STUDY	CORE UNITS
Diploma in Rabbinic Studies (30 credits)	1st	Introduction to Talmudic Methodology First steps to Talmudic Analysis (Iyun Study) Introduction to Jewish Law Introduction to Chassidic Philosophy Introduction to Biblical Analysis Basic Talmudic Exploration (Girsa Study)
Certificate in Rabbinic Studies (30 credits)	2nd	Talmudic Methodology II In-Depth Talmudic Analysis II (Iyun) In –Depth Jewish Law Further journeys in Chassidic Thought Journeys through the Talmud (Girsa)
Higher Certificate in Rabbinic Studies (30 credits)	3rd	Advanced Talmudic Analysis (Iyun) Jewish Law III Advanced Chassidic Thought Journey through the Talmud II (Girsa)

Regardless of age or level, in any one year, the entire student body of the Yeshiva studies the same tractate of the Talmud simultaneously. (In Lubavitch Yeshivas the same tractate in any year is studied by all the Yeshivas in the network.) The only difference between the studies of those just commencing and those more advanced in learning is the depth and intensity of their

examination and analysis of these ancient texts. This enables more advanced students to offer help and advice to their junior colleagues.

Upon entering Yeshiva, the student's efforts are aimed at understanding and resolving the philosophical and logical disputes that have impacted on codifying Jewish law. This understanding is assisted by the commentaries that have been made on the texts over the millennia by renowned giants in Torah learning. However, it is then still necessary to sift through these commentaries and receive careful guidance in comprehending them. The first year Diploma Course is designed to provide students with basic competence in these skills. Subsequent years, for the students of an intermediate Yeshiva such as ours, build on the previous one in facilitating learning how to learn at an ever deeper and more subtle level as well as stimulating a desire to do so.

Nevertheless, in terms of technical comprehension, most of our students are able to hold their own with older students after a full three year's study here.

Talmudic study is undertaken both in depth (iyun) to probe and analyse Talmudic concepts in detail and also with an eye to gaining a breadth of

understanding (girsas). Both are considered crucial to a rounded scholarly development.

In addition to their Talmudic studies, our students study the philosophical and ethical texts of the Chassidic Rebbes together with their homiletical exegesis on the Torah, the whole of Maimonides' Mishne Torah, (codification of Jewish Law), The Code of Jewish Law as expounded later by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Jewish ethics, moral philosophy and contemporary insights into Jewish thought and practice.

As can be seen from the table on the previous page, the student body is divided into three classes, each following the same syllabus at different levels. A unique feature of the Yeshiva is that students are split into classes according to ability. This may mean that a student repeats a year if the faculty agree with the student that that is in his best interest.

Furthermore, there are two tracks within each class for the study of Talmud, both the breadth and the depth sessions

These innovative features ensure that every student is taught at a standard that is suitable for him as an individual, as opposed to other Yeshivos where a student moves automatically through the classes although he may not be keeping up to the standard of the class.

The traditional mode of study at Yeshivas is followed. There are regular lectures on the topics being studied but for much of the day the students learn in pairs, gaining further insights into the subject and preparing for the next lecture.

During these study periods, one or more of the teaching staff is at hand to answer questions and further elucidate the subject matter. Because students come to the lectures armed with the fruits of their own

research, lively and even passionate debate with the lecturer will often dominate these sessions, with students challenging his understanding of a passage or that of a peer. These lectures are therefore really more accurately described as seminars.

The languages of the Talmud are Hebrew and Aramaic. The students learn these as part of their studies. Lectures are in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Students are usually fluent in these languages by the end of their courses

It is important to note that a student can still receive his credits even if he repeats a year, as long as he has displayed effort, application and progress during that year and as long as he qualifies under accreditation guidelines.

Upon completion of their course of study at the Yeshiva, students continue their studies at one of the many Lubavitch Yeshivas which have advanced studies leading to Rabbinical ordination; some go on to do postgraduate studies before accepting a position.

It is with great pride that we note that former students of the Yeshiva now hold posts as spiritual leaders of prestigious communities in London, the provinces and abroad. Others are Rabbis, teachers and Lubavitch emissaries at centres throughout the world.

Teaching Faculty

The teaching staff consists of full-time and part-time lecturers and tutors. All the teaching staff have Rabbinical Ordination, a considerable period of post-qualification study, a high standard of knowledge of their subjects and broad experience in the field of education.

They are under the leadership of the Dean, Rabbi G Lieberman, a renowned Torah scholar and local Rabbi of Chabad Golders Green community.

Rabbi Lieberman has recently taken over this role from Rabbi Y. M. Hertz, a world-renowned Talmudic scholar and Rabbi, and a scion of the Lubavitch Yeshiva network, and the founder of Kingsley Way Yeshiva.

Rabbi Gordon, the vice-Dean, has been with the Yeshiva since its founding, and has worked tirelessly under Rabbi Hertz's guidance to advance and enhance the principles of the Yeshiva.

All the teaching staff and the Mashpi'im (who carry out pastoral care) have been at the Yeshiva for more than ten years (except for Rabbi G Hertz).

The staff are always available to students for guidance in personal and academic matters, and meet regularly with them, both individually and collectively.

An important part of the students' calendar is the frequent social "get-togethers" between them and the Dean and the Mashpi'im. There, philosophical and ethical concepts are presented in an informal setting with exhortations to further improve character traits and service to others. Music is an intrinsic component of these occasions; old Chassidic songs, particularly melodies without words, are taught and sung. "Melody is the pen of the soul," is a classic Chassidic adage.

Since the Yeshiva is relatively small (30-40 students), the classes are not divided by age, rather by level. This system allows each student to grow from his personal academic level and understanding. Students are assigned a class at beginning of the year, and can change class if they feel they can gain more from being in a different class. Additionally, the senior students learn informally with the younger students, to assist and motivate them.

There is an obvious learning advantage to this system (as we have seen since it was changed a few years ago).

Eminent Rabbis, Talmudic scholars and educationalists, including the Chief Rabbis of Israel, Emeritus Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, occasionally visit the Yeshiva to lecture there and meet the students informally. Alumni, who now hold prestigious appointments in the community, also visit to teach communication and other practical skills.

Assessment

The students are regularly assessed through written and oral examinations, and the results are entered into the Yeshiva's tracking system.

Periodically during the year and at the end of each year, the students are examined orally by visiting eminent Rabbis of the outside community. The results have always elicited great praise for the students' achievements.

Whilst academic excellence is sought, moral and ethical behaviour and refined character traits are of paramount importance in the Yeshiva's assessment of overall success.

Overseas Students

Many of the student body are from abroad, attracted by the reputation that the Yeshiva has attained. The majority of the students are usually from the United States, South Africa, Australia, Canada, Europe and Israel.

Visas

The Yeshiva has been granted a Highly Trusted Sponsorship licence by the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA). This enables them to accept students from outside the European Union and provide them with the necessary documents to apply for visas for up to three years of study.

The UKBA recommended after inspection that our courses be nominated at Further Education.

Fees

Whilst the Yeshiva has to maintain economic viability, no potential student is refused admission through an inability to pay fees. This is in accordance with established Torah principles that no one should be denied the opportunity to further their education for financial reasons.

Parents are asked to contribute towards their son's maintenance if they are able to do so. A scale of full fees is available upon request.

Scholarships for places are available through the generosity of Jewish communities, individuals and charitable trusts.

Applications

Applications are welcomed from students interested in pursuing Jewish learning and orthodox practice, regardless of their affiliation and previous Jewish educational background. Each applicant is considered on the basis of his general character, reputation at his previous school or college as well as his academic ability. No applicant should be discouraged from applying because of personal disability or circumstances. The ethos of the Yeshiva is that these should be no deterrent from Jewish learning.

Applicants should contact the Yeshiva for the necessary application forms which, when completed, must be accompanied by references from previous schools or colleges.