

# Maplewood Rabbi Receives Semicha Via Skype

By Sharon Mark Cohen

Twenty-two year old Yosef (Yossi) Bogomilsky always knew he would be a rabbi. Yet, even coming from a long line of Chasidic rabbis, he never could have guessed where and how he would attain that goal. Nor could he have imagined how well the world would prepare him for this role.

When Rabbi Yossi received semicha, he was across the globe in South Africa. In order to join the ranks of his ancestors, the exam he took was completed via Skype, with Rabbi David Shocher, president of the Rabbinical Council of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, stationed by his computer in Toronto.

Once Rabbi Yossi was officially ordained as a rabbi and back in his hometown of Maplewood, New Jersey, DRabbi Seth Antles, PH.D., immediate past president of The Maplewood Jewish Center-Congregation Beth Ephraim, where Yossi's father, Rabbi Sho-

lom Bogomilsky, is the spiritual leader, suggested he immediately put his new title to work by teaching a course. Perhaps inspired by the recent enlistment of his child as an IDF lone soldier, Antles, along with Rabbi Yossi, decided that to mark Israel's 50th anniversary the course would focus on the Six Day War.

The four-week interactive course began on January 11 and will run through February 1. The classes meet Thursdays at 8:15 p.m. at 120 Parker Avenue in Maplewood.

At the first session, a film clip showing life in Israel with the war rapidly approaching left the attendees with a strong taste of the tension that had engulfed Israel prior to the Six Day War and anxious to learn more about the unexpected and swift victory by the outnumbered IDF.

With an effervescent love for Israel, Rabbi Yossi taught passionately about the preemptive strike in June of 1967, and how that worked to protect the land. He

I especially connect with Rav Natanel Lebowitz.

What is one of your favorite classes at Lev HaTorah?

My favorite class in Lev is Rabbi Machlis's class on the parshat hashavua. The man is a living, breathing definition of chesed who has touched so many lives. Just being in his presence for an hour a day is such a privilege that I so very much appreciate.

What are you most looking forward to for the rest of the year?

I am most looking forward to continue to build relationships with rebbim and other students.



Rabbi Yossi Bogomilsky (in white shirt) with his class. (CREDIT: FRANKIE BOGOMILSKY)

related in what way "we as Jews look at it and how we as Jews go about conducting ourselves at war", particularly the Six Day War, which, Rabbi Yossi emphasized, "was a miracle."

Amid glowing reviews of the new rabbi's ability to inspire and energize, one participant said, "He encouraged the class to think about all the arguments in support of and against their views on Israel. This led to many debates among the participants and some conclusions never considered before. The participants learned that practically every argument has a counter argument."

Fluent in several languages, having studied in various yeshivas in France, Canada and New York, Rabbi Yossi's experiences directing many religious camp groups ultimately led him to Sea Point, Cape Town, South Africa. Last September, he headed across the world to do communal service as he worked at the religious camp run by his aunt and uncle while continuing and completing his rabbinical studies.

By incorporating the learning he has

done in yeshiva, Rabbi Yossi has been able to work with and educate people in all age groups. He noted the things we, as American Jews, take for granted and discussed teaching about them at a child's day camp. "For many, it is the first time they learn about making brachas before we eat and davening with a yarmulke," he said.

Likewise, in his work with adults, Rabbi Yossi brings his astute depth of knowledge ready to listen, learn and eagerly participate. The community looks forward to watching the newest Rabbi Bogomilsky soar. For further information, visit The Maplewood Jewish Center at [www.maplewoodjewishcenter.org](http://www.maplewoodjewishcenter.org) or call 973-762-5722.

Sharon Mark Cohen, MPH, a seasoned genealogist and journalist, is a contributing writer at the [Jewish Link](http://www.jewishlink.com). She is looking forward to the publication of a book she wrote on her family's history.

**Elie Kern Is Learning Lots at Lev HaTorah**

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beim helped me personalize and adjust my schedule to help gradually ease into the learning, and now I feel very comfortable.

Where is your favorite place to go for weekends/Shabbat so far?

My favorite place to go is to my sister in Tel Aviv because I love the beach and it's always so nice to be with my family.

Who is a teacher at Lev HaTorah whom you connect to especially well?