Nitzotzot at Israeli Knesset & Partners with Education Ministry

Probing the medical and halakhic approach to distinguishing between life and death, parliamentarians and scientists joined BIU’s flagship Torah & Science forum in examining topics that may help determine when organ donations are permissible. The special Nitzotzot session (its 40th) held at the Knesset, explored novel definitions of human life which focus on the power of expression and consciousness. Open to the public, the event was attended by more than 300, including scores of students from religious and secular high schools. The audience was fascinated by lectures given by Nobel laureate Prof. Israel Aumann, Israel Prize winner Rabbi Prof. Avraham Steinberg of the Shaare Zedek Medical Center, Nitzotzot founder Rabbi Shabtai Rappoport, head of the Ludwig & Erica Jesselson Institute Beit Midrash, and others. MK Shimon Ohayon, former administrative director of BIU’s School of Education, initiated the event.

Partnering with the Israeli Ministry of Education, Nitzotzot co-sponsored its first annual conference on Gemara study, which drew some 70 teachers from the National Religious School system. Held at the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies, the conference generated much enthusiasm during the four sessions which interfaced teaching of the tractate Sanhedrin with cutting-edge academic research. BIU experts addressing the forum included Prof. Eli Vakil (psychology, brain research) who spoke on memory deviations, Dr. Moshe Hellinger (political studies) who addressed the separation of religion and state, and Dr. Avinoam Dar (psychology) who explored fear and fantasy.

Using Gold Nano Particles to Track Cancer Cells

A research team headed by Dr. Dror Fixler of the School of Engineering and the Bar-Ilan Institute for Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials (BINA) has devised a non-invasive technique for pinpointing cancer cells hidden among healthy tissue without radiation. Incorporating nanometer-sized gold particles, the novel optical system has enabled simple and quick identification of cancer of the head, neck and pharynx in animal models, and is now undergoing pre-clinical feasibility tests. The new technology was showcased at the recent Israel Innovation Conference (MIXiii) in Tel Aviv.

Physics Prof. Invited to Address CERN Conference

BIU Prof. Nathan Aviezer was a plenary speaker at an international conference sponsored by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva on the theological implications of the Big Bang. The author of 140 scientific articles on solid state physics, Aviezer has recently published his third “Torah and Madah” book, entitled Modern Science and Ancient Faith. The book underlines how modern science has become an important tool for understanding many biblical passages as well as imparting new insights and deeper meaning into our ancient faith.

Model of Mathematics

Dr. Nathan Keller, a BIU senior math lecturer, is recipient of the Krill Prize for Excellence in Scientific Research for his studies in combinatorics, a branch of mathematics which focuses on combinations of objects belonging to a finite set. Keller, who also has expertise in cryptography, holds a grant from the Israel Science Foundation and an Alon Fellowship from the Council for Higher Education in Israel. This fellowship (Israel’s “Fulbright”) is an award of excellence to the finest candidates being absorbed into Israeli academia.

BIU Sends Israel's Only Team to RoboCup 2014 in Brazil

The BIU team – the only one from Israel – poses with its soccer-playing robots before heading for the international tournament in Brazil, which convenes thousands of university students from dozens of countries. Headed by Prof. Eli Kolberg and comprising students from the School of Engineering, the team won 4th place at the last tournament in Mexico.
BIU’s 1st Medical Grads Begin Internships

Another milestone has been reached at BIU’s School of Medicine in the Galilee with the graduation of its first class of physicians. The students, who have completed the School’s three-year clinical program following three years of pre-med studies abroad, are now starting their one-year hospital internships. Next year, after this vital stage in their training, an official graduation ceremony will be held. Meanwhile BSc grads enrolled in the School’s four-year program are pursuing clinical work in hospitals in the north, including two in Nazareth.

Cornerstone for Hospital Research Labs in Galilee

A cornerstone ceremony for four research labs was held at the Baruch Padeh Medical Center in Poriya. Hospital director Dr. Erez Onn noted that “integrating research will enable us to strengthen our centers of excellence and to convince researchers from all fields to join us here.” He said that “Bar-Ilan University and its School of Medicine are partners in crystallizing this dream.” BIU Medical School dean Prof. Ran Tur-Kaspa related that 600 students will be studying at the School in Fall 2014 and that these research facilities will serve doctors, researchers and students.

140 Med Students Volunteer in 46 Organizations in North

This past year, 140 students volunteered in 46 organizations as part of the Medical School’s Community Outreach Course, which is headed by Prof. Mary Rudolf. The final session was held in the presence of Dr. Peter Gilbey, director of the BIU Medical Mentorship Program, and Safed Mayor Ilan Shochat. Organization reps enthusiastically praised the volunteers: “This is the new Zionism – the students are fulfilling our dreams.” Within the course framework, BIU medical students also ran health education workshops in schools in order to raise awareness of juvenile diabetes, skin cancer, dehydration and other issues.

Training Hospital MDs as Effective Lecturers

Nineteen doctors (including department directors) who run the School’s clinical program in affiliate hospitals are gaining valuable training in a unique BIU faculty development initiative. The monthly workshops enhance the ability of the MDs to deliver and manage clinical teaching, with an emphasis on fostering innovation in medical education in the Galilee. Says one veteran doctor: “A medical education course cannot be taken for granted…It has facilitated significant tools to empower and even modify the way in which I teach my students.” Prof. Anthony Luder, vice dean for the 4-year track, and Prof. Shmuel Reis, director of faculty development, oversee the course.

Microbiologist Receives Award of Excellence

New returning faculty member, Dr. Omry Koren (PhD: Tel Aviv U; postdoc: Cornell), has been awarded an Alon Fellowship for outstanding young faculty by the Israeli Council for Higher Education. Dr. Koren, who studies the role of bacteria in the digestive system of healthy and diseased individuals, has published more than 25 articles in prestigious scientific journals and has taken part in the Human Microbiome Project of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Teddy Bear Hospital

Over 500 children aged 3-6 brought their stuffed animals in for treatment at the Teddy Bear Hospital run by the Medical School in order to minimize fear of hospitals and medical treatment.

Clowning Around in Ramat Gan

Grads of BIU’s first medical clown course offered on the Ramat Gan campus by the Department of In-Service Training pose with instructor Jeff Gordon (front left). Eleven “students” – including a lawyer, manager and artist – attended the 15 weekly sessions on theatre, drama therapy, and positive psychology while honing their abilities to bring laughter and joy to hospital patients, the elderly, kids with special needs and others.
First Jewish Congress Draws Crowds to BIU

Hundreds flocked to campus to gain fresh insights into Biblical and Talmudic texts, Hassidic life, Jewish thought and history, and Hebrew lit, at a five-day conference organized by the BIU Faculty of Jewish Studies. Topics ranged from the Qumran Scrolls to Judeo-Christian Polemics to Kabbalah. Supreme Court judges, Knesset members and other notables figured in panel discussions on Jewish and democratic law, as well as Jewish identity.

Leading Israeli singers meshed Jewish soul music with inspiring narrative. Initiated and chaired by Jewish Studies Faculty Dean Prof. Elie Assis (former Schupf Fellow), the Jewish Congress was organized by Dr. Nava Cohen of the Zalman Shamir Bible Department, and sponsored by the British Friends of BIU, in conjunction with the Givat Shmuel Municipality.

Scholars Gather at International Bible Conferences

Noted Bible scholars from Europe, the US and Israel convened at two international conferences organized by the Zalman Shamir Bible Department. A Literary Creation: Literary Approaches to the Book of Genesis, which honored Dr. h.c. Joseph Frohlich-West of Australia, examined the flood narrative, women of Genesis, descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as literary methodology and motifs (e.g. creative speech). A second conference focused on the Biblical story, with discussion of scholarly parallels, such as Samson and Hercules, who both possessed unusual physical strength, but whose stories differ.

Books by BIU Profes.

Debut in Taiwan and Saudi Arabia

The new Chinese translation of Prof. Shmuel Feiner’s book, The Biography of Moses Mendelssohn, has received a warm reception in Taiwan. Prof. Feiner, of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History, was invited to Taiwan for an official ceremony, in the presence of Israel’s Consul to Taipei. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and the New Strategic Landscape by Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum, senior researcher at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, has created waves in Saudi Arabia. The publication of an Arabic translation in the kingdom has prompted claims from media outlets that the move is in violation of Saudi Arabia’s official position which opposes any type of normalization with Israel. The work explores relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, focusing on issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

BIU Prof. Receives Literary Prize from Tel Aviv Municipality

Prof. Aaron Demsky was awarded the 2014 Bialik Prize for Jewish Thought in recognition for his book Literary in Ancient Israel which “gives in-depth expression to four decades of research into relations between Israel and the ancient world, and provides a new understanding of the formation of Israel as the People of the Book.” For the past 25 years, Prof. Demsky, of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History has established a new interdisciplinary research field, Jewish Onomastics (the study of the origin, history and use of proper names). In 1991, he founded the Project for the Study of Jewish Names at BIU.
Chief Rabbi Makes 1st Official Visit to BIU

Israeli Chief Rabbi David Lau addresses students in the Midrasha of the Jesselson Institute for Higher Torah Studies during his first official visit to the Bar-Ilan University campus, which also included a tour of state-of-the-art nano, brain and science facilities.

BIU Model UN Team Wins Top Prizes

Five BIU students show off their awards from the international Model UN competition in Barcelona, Spain. Pictured Rachel (Ro) Yeger, Josh Weixelbaum, Keren Sherrington, Chaim Seligman and Jenny Havemann. Shortly after their return to Israel, the Bar-Ilan Model UN Society hosted BarMUN 2014, an annual Model UN conference for all of Israel’s universities.

Rocking with Stars Under the Stars

BIU students celebrate Yom HaStudent festivities on campus with Shlomo Artzi and other Israeli folk rock icons.

2014 BIU-YU Summer Internship Program

Taking time out from their daily lab research in chemistry, life sciences, engineering, brain studies, and other fields, 37 BIU-YU Summer Interns tour the Teva pharmaceutical production plant. The program includes half-day trips to Israeli high-tech facilities and weekly group lunches with BIU experts in diverse fields. It is directed by Dr. Ari Zivotofsky, head of the Ocular Motor and Visual Perception Lab, and supported by donors from the United States. While most of the interns are from Yeshiva University, the group also includes students from Cornell, Cooper Union, Queens College, UCLA, and the University of Toronto.

BIU Community on the Run

Some 100 fast-paced BIU students, alumni, lecturers and staff race through campus and neighboring areas in a marathon co-sponsored by the University with the Givat Shmuel Municipality.

Fun & Games on Campus for Kids from the South

With clowns, balloons, drums, and games, BIU’s Student Union brought smiles to the faces of youngsters from Israel’s south who left their shelters to enjoy a day on BIU’s sprawling grounds. During Operation Protective Edge, the psychology clinic and student counselling service offered a stress-management workshop for parents of IDF combat veterans in Gaza. Students, faculty and staff organized prayer services for the safety of IDF soldiers and residents in areas hard hit by rockets, and amassed care packages for soldiers on the front. A student delegation also ran activities for youth, and visited families and the elderly in the south.
“Color Us Excellent” was the theme of the 59th Meeting of the Board of Trustees, which highlighted BIU achievements in academia, research and outreach. The BIU President, Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, outlined his strategic vision for the University. A number of key events were held: the Ambassadors’ Forum featuring Michael Oren, former Israel Ambassador to the United States; a “Celebration of Excellence” showcasing outstanding alumni of BIU’s successful Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence program and the Mozes S. Schupf Fellowship along with the declaration of a new scholarship initiative; a moving dedication of the beautiful Samuel and Brenda Gewurz Ashrei Ha’isha Garden established in memory of the late BIU Prof. Dafna Izraeli; insightful lectures by talented faculty members and eminent BIU honorary doctors; and of course, the striking honorary doctorate commencement ceremony paying tribute to the inspirational contributions of ten worthy recipients, which ended on a high note with Israeli actor Chaim Topol’s gracious response on behalf of his fellow honorary doctors.

Celebrating excellence, outstanding alumni of the Mozes S. Schupf Fellowship Program and the Monique C. and Mordecai D. Katz Graduate Fellowship Program pay tribute to the founders (center, seated), who are flanked by former BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh; Motty Mishan, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the President; and BIU “first couple,” Rabbi Prof. Daniel and Shimona Hershkowitz.

Pianist Anat Fort, a Doctoral Fellow of Excellence in our Department of Music who studies composition and teaches improvisation, masterfully provides a stirring musical interlude at the “Celebration of Excellence” ceremony.

The family of the late Prof. Dafna Izraeli (Gewurz), founder of the BIU gender studies program, prepares to cut the ribbon at the dedication of the Samuel and Brenda Gewurz Ashrei Ha’isha Garden established in her memory.

Dr. Michael B. Oren, former Israel Ambassador to the United States, delivers keynote address to BIU’s Board of Trustees and Ambassadors’ Forum.
2014 Board of Trustees Convene

Dr. Tova Ganzel, Director of the Midrasha of the Ludwig & Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies (and former Doctoral Fellow of Excellence), speaks on “Revolution or Evolution: Women in Halakhic Leadership Roles” at a “Lunch and Learn” session

Nobel Prize Laureate and 2014 BIU honorary doctorate recipient Prof. Martin Karplus, Harvard’s Theodore William Richards Professor of Chemistry Emeritus, lectures to students and faculty prior to the convocation ceremony

Rabbi Prof. Moshe David Tendler, 2014 honorary doctorate recipient, prepares to lecture on his expertise – bioethics – at the Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies

A pre-lecture pose: Nobel Prize Laureates and 2014 BIU honorary doctorate recipients, Profs. Michael Levitt, of Stanford University, and Arieh Warshel, of the University of Southern California (USC)

The BIU President, Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, addresses the audience at the honorary doctorate ceremony in the Dahan Family Unity Park

Responding on behalf of his fellow recipients, Dr. Chaim Topol (aka “Tevye of Fiddler of the Roof”) ends with a moving rendition of “If I Were a Rich Man” and draws a thunder of applause

Bar-Ilan University is gearing up for its milestone year! Stay tuned! The next Board of Trustees meetings will celebrate BIU’s 60th anniversary!

Save the Date:
2015 Board of Trustees Meetings
May 18-20, 2015