

# Simchat Torah 5772

## Our Bridegrooms of the Law



### Chatan Torah

## Rabbi Dov Kaplan



I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation of the warm welcome we have received from many members of HGSS before even having arrived. Being granted the honour of Chatan Torah has just strengthened the feeling.

I was born in New York to a family who had always dreamed about moving to Israel. My parents finally made the fateful decision to move the family to Israel when I was eleven years of age. I am truly grateful to them for so much and to my in-laws who made aliya from London a few years later. I am especially thankful to them for this allowed me to meet Freda a few years later in Israel.

After matriculating I enrolled in the Yeshivat Hakotel Hesder program which combined advanced Torah studies with service in the Israel Defence Force. In the summer of 1982, toward the end of the 5 year program, my tank unit was activated and was involved in some of the heavy fighting in Lebanon. Afterward, I decided to take some time off and teach Jewish children in South Africa. During that time I decided that the best way for me to serve my People was to return to Yeshivat Hakotel and complete my studies for rabbinic ordination (smicha).

After returning to Israel and my studies, I met Freda who after completing her military service was studying social work and Judaic studies at the Orot College for women. Having both been born abroad, we felt that a major part of who we are was a result of values we acquired abroad. We therefore decided to contribute to a Jewish community in the Diaspora.

We travelled to Cali, Columbia where we spent nearly 5 years serving the Jewish community. Before leaving Israel, we prepared ourselves extensively amongst other things by taking Spanish lessons. However, nothing could have adequately trained us for what was to come. We learned so much more by working together in the field, endeavoring to inspire young and old alike.

We returned to Israel in 1993 and during the last 14 years have been serving the residents of beautiful Caesarea. Nearly each day was a new challenge trying to demonstrate to the majority of the "secular" residents that Jewish Tradition can make an important improvement in the quality of their lives.

I am greatly looking forward to serving such an important community as Norrice Lea. From our years of experience we have learned that a truly meritorious kehila is one where members are actively involved with acts of chessed and learning the wisdom of the Torah. The yard stick is whether they are a source for kiddush Hashem, for glorifying God's name.

I am honored to be paired with Chazan Avromi as Chatan Bereshit. Already I've grown to know him as a truly warm and caring person whose character traits as well as his beautiful voice are a true embodiment of the beauty of our tradition •

### Chatan Bereshit

## Chazan Avromi Freilich



Rochelle and I are so delighted that we have been chosen for this signal honour. It is even more special that I have been paired with our very new Rabbi whom I so look forward to working together with and to bring this community to even greater heights.

The past two decades have seen tremendous progress in so many different areas; from religious through social.

On first arrival as a newly appointed chazan, I wrongly assumed that my duties would be limited to leading shul services on Shabbat and Yom Tov. To my surprise and delight it has turned out to be far more involving than I would have ever imagined.

We were both so fortunate all those years ago to have had as our pastoral mentors, Rabbi and Mrs Jackson from whom we learned so much about caring for a community. It has also been so nice working with Rabbi Livingstone.

Through the years we have grown to know so many of you through becoming almost a part of your family life celebrating your happy times and your sad times together.

Aside from shul life I continue to practice speech and language therapy working with children with communication disorders. Being a believer in personal growth I have recently embarked on a course leading to becoming a qualified sofer (scribe). I feel this accomplishment goes hand in hand with being a shliach tzibbur.

Rochelle in her own right is beloved in the community. She continues to deliver her weekly parsha shiur in addition to coaching young brides in halacha and Jewish family life. Rochelle's warm and caring personality has endeared her to so many in the community to seek and obtain her advice on personal and family concerns.

Lastly but most importantly we are blessed with children who make us proud to be their parents and hope that they too have gained by growing up in the communal atmosphere created by us.

We are so excited to be celebrating Dovi's Bar Mitzva in January and ask you our dearest friends to feel part of our family as we celebrate together.

Once again thank you for such a wonderful honour and wishing you all Ktiva V'chatima Tova and a happy and healthy year ahead •