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Kollel hosts Torah seminar

LEISAH NAMM
 Assistant Editor
[E-MAIL](#)

More than 150 people gathered for a weekend of Torah learning June 1-3 at the Crown Plaza Hotel & Resort in Phoenix.

The seminar by the Gateways Organization of Monsey, N.Y., hosted by The Phoenix Community Kollel, brought lecturers from Monsey, Memphis, Tenn., and New Jersey to the Valley to speak about such topics as "Shabbat and Modern Man," "How to Refute a Christian Missionary," "Science & Torah," and "The Oral Law."

"There's so much we don't know about our own culture," said Zakah Goldman, one of the participants. "There's so much beauty here and this was an affirmation."

Roberta Arnold, who attends Young Israel of Phoenix and Chabad of Phoenix, said the seminar was more academic than she had expected. "(There was) a lot of practical, realistic, scientific information," she said, and it was presented "with a lot of humor and humanness."

The Gateways Organization, founded and directed by Rabbi Mordechai Suchard of Monsey, holds seminars and classes at different locations across the country.

"The seminar is something that I would hope and encourage every person who is Jewish to explore," said Rabbi Zvi Holland of The Phoenix Community Kollel. "It's all sources - there's no smoke, there's no mirrors. It's not a sales pitch. It's an opportunity for Jewish people to learn about Torah and learn about the Torah from a contemporary, scientific perspective."

Visiting speakers included Suchard, Rabbi Yehudah Silver of Memphis, father of Rabbi Chaim Silver of Young Israel of Phoenix; Rabbi Mordechai Becher of Passaic, N.J.; Rabbi Jonathan Rietti of Monsey; and Chaya Reich of Monsey, who held an impromptu session at midnight about relationships, at the request of several women participants.

Dalia Yenen, a participant, admired the energy of the lecturers. "You can see it comes from their heart," she said. She described the weekend as "very alive" and the lectures "informative and fun," with each lecture allowing time for questions and discussions.

"It was inspirational and it was reaffirming," said Morris Friedman, a member of Young Israel who has also attended classes at the kollel.

TORAH STUDY

Portion cryptic about
Israelites' desert sins

Adds Holland, "Jewish continuity demands that every Jew look carefully at the Torah and see what it means to them and ultimately what it means for them to be a Jew."

Visit the Web site, www.gatewaysonline.com.



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