

PROPOSED KOLLEL IN GREATER PITTSBURGH

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I. DEFINITION OF KOLLEL

A. Kollel (pl. Kollelim) is an institute for advanced study and research into Jewish Law, Ethics, Theology and Culture.

Outstanding young scholars are granted fellowships to continue their research under the leadership and guidance of recognized authorities in these fields. It is a true community of scholars reinforcing each others work (the original definition of College).

The advanced Institute in Princeton is a modern secular version.

II. HISTORY OF KOLLEL

The history of Kollel goes back to Talmudic times. In more modern times there were Kollelim under Rabbi Yisreel of Salant and under the supreme Halachic (Jewish Law) authority of his generation Rabbi Issac Elchanan (of Kovno).

In America the first two Kollelim were in Lakewood, New Jersey under Rabbi A. Kotler and in Monsey, N.Y. under Rabbi R. Grozovsky.

The rule in Eastern Europe was for any sizable town to have a Kollel, firstly for the honor and merit it brings to the community and secondly for the many services that it renders.

III. PRESENT STATUS OF KOLLELIM

In the past few years almost every major Yeshiva in America and Israel has a Kellel division. Additionally, more and more American-Jewish communities have recognized the need for a Kollel. There are now active Kollelim in Los Angeles, California; Detroit, Michigan; Toronto, Canada; Mexico City, four in Monsey, New York and Stamford, Connecticut.

Others are in the planning and implementation stage. For example: Deal, New Jersey and, last but not least, Greater Pittsburgh, Pa. In fact, this Kollel in Greater Pittsburgh will be the first in the state of Pennsylvania.

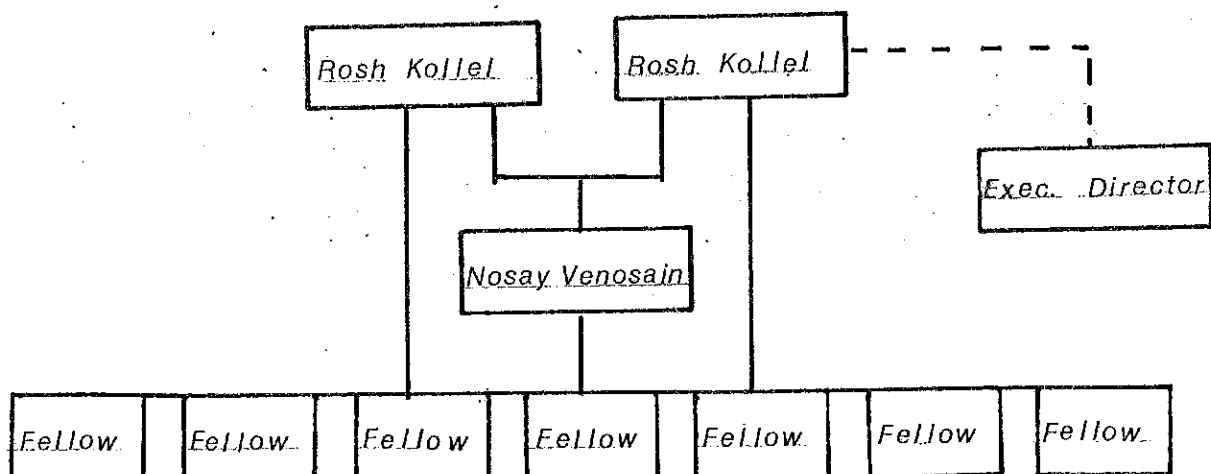
IV. ORGANIZATION

A. Administrative

A Kollel usually has one or two Scholar - Administrator leaders called Rosh (pl. Roshei) Hakollel (literally heads of the Kollel). Their function is both to administer the Kollel and to provide scholarly leadership and guidance to the fellows.

There is some degree of variability in the division of duties. In some, one individual is primarily responsible for internal scholarly leadership and the other primarily administrative, while in some the two Roshei Hakollel share these duties equally with the assistance of an executive director. A senior fellow is appointed with the title "Nosay Venosain". The function of this position is to provide assistance to the researchers and to assume responsibility in the temporary absence of the Roshei Hakollel.

There are usually 8 to 12 fellows, who are already qualified Rabbis, appointed.



There is a lay board of directors which acts as a governing body.

B. Daily Organization

The daily activities of the researchers are organized into study periods where the scholars engage in study and research into the above mentioned topics.

These time periods typically vary from Kollel to Kellel. A representative schedule would be:

7:30 A.M.	Morning prayers
8:15 - 8:45 A.M.	Applied Jewish Law (Halacha Lemaaseh)
8:45 - 9:15 A.M.	Breakfast
9:15 - 12:45 P.M.	Intensive Study Period
12:45 - 1:15 P.M.	Ethics
1:15 - 2:15 P.M.	Lunch
2:15 - 6:00 P.M.	Intensive Study Period
6:00 - 8:00 P.M.	Supper
8:00 - 9:45 P.M.	Study Period (with members of community)
9:45 - 10:00 P.M.	Evening prayers

The study and research is conducted in an atmosphere of active cooperation and participation. Each scholar is required to deliver a colloquium address on his original research to the entire scholarly community approximately once every six weeks. From time to time there will be publication of some of this research, on both a popular and scholarly level.

V. WHY A KOLLEL?

The needs and uses for Kollel are numerous. The following will enumerate some of these.

A. Perpetuation of Jewish Identity and People

The American Jewish community is facing a crisis of continued existence. The number of Jews lost through intermarriage and various missionary sects is alarming. The main contributing factor to this loss is complete ignorance of their Jewish Heritage. The ethnic and cultural survival of the American Jew is dependent upon retention of his uniquely Jewish morals, ideals, ethics and culture. These precepts can only be identified and clarified through in-depth research and scholarship. It is the task of the Kollel staff to study the literature of the past three thousand years in conjunction with the unbroken oral tradition in order to attain the greatest possible understanding of this Heritage. The knowledge is then transmitted so that all Jews can advance together in their understanding and knowledge of modern living Judaism. It is the responsibility of the Kollel staff to continually adjust their actions in the light of their knowledge, not merely for their own advancement, but so as to serve as living examples - role models - of moral, ethical, thinking educated modern Jews, in today's environment.

B. Standard of Excellence in Scholarship and Research

The culture of various societies is a legitimate course of study in colleges and universities. No less important is the study of the Jewish Heritage, a Heritage which has the longest uninterrupted history of any living creed. Not everyone is capable of becoming a researcher on the staff of a college or university. Torah scholarship and research is even more demanding than secular. The volume of

knowledge is so vast, and the depth of understanding required so difficult that one must be dedicated to spend extremely long hours for many years before one can be considered expert.

The fellows of the Kollel are committed to this goal. They have already attained a measure of expertise in their field and expect to continue study and research at this same level of diligence. New insights into Jewish Heritage are continually being developed and much of that which was destroyed by Stalin and Hitler is being recovered.

The existence of a high level research institute sets an example for existing elementary and high schools. The Kollel stands as a living standard of excellence through which it encourages others to maintain and elevate their standards.

C. Partnership

It is incumbent upon every Jew to develop his knowledge and understanding of Judaism to his fullest capabilities. For those not inclined towards scholarship, the Torah offers a partial alternative. While part of one's time must always be devoted to study, one may opt to form a partnership with a scholar or institution of scholars. In this partnership, one partner supports the other enabling him to continue his studies and in turn receives a share of the scholarship and merit.

In a very real sense the Kollel scholars serve as representatives of the community.

D. Center for Continuing Education

Every Jew is required to set aside some of his time for continuing Torah study. This necessity for expanded knowledge and continued growth is especially felt by our Yeshiva educated young men.

However, without a center of high level scholarship and full time study available to associate with, this pursuit can be difficult. By continued interaction with the staff of the Kollel one sharpens one's skills and revitalizes one's enthusiasm for study. For this reason many highly educated young families will not move to any community that does not offer them the opportunity to interact with a group of scholars.

The existence of a Kollel, within this community would tend to attract such families to the greater Pittsburgh area, besides enabling present residents to participate with the Kollel in building a true community of scholars.

E. Consultant to Jewish Organizations

The Kollel together with its research library is in an excellent position to serve as a resource center for various Jewish social and educational organizations. For example, Jewish sources and opinions on issues such as population control, abortion and genetic counselling, can be researched by the Kollel and supplied to interested organizations and parties. This knowledge can aid these organizations in determining their goals and policies.

VI. IN PITTSBURGH

The community of Greater Pittsburgh with the active encouragement and participation of Rabbinic and lay leaders has seen the need and advantage of having a Kollel. It has invited the Lakewood Yeshiva and Rabbi Dov Lesser of Torah Umesorah to act as a search committee for candidates for the position of Rosh Kollel. After studying the credentials of many candidates two individuals

were chosen. These two individuals have recruited (as of now) eight scholars.

The two Roshei Hakollel are Rabbis Shaul Kagan and Avraham Pessin.

The following are brief resume of their credentials:

Rabbi Kagan

Education: Undergraduate study at:
Beth Medrash Govoah, Lakewood, N.J. 1953-1955
1959-1964
Beth Hatalmud, Brooklyn, New York 1955-1959

Graduate study at:
Institute for Advanced Rabbinic Studies,
Sunderland, England 1964-1966
Beth Medrash Govoah, Lakewood, N.J. 1966-1977

Degrees: Ordination (Simicha Yoreh-Yoreh, Yadin-Yadin)
from Rabbis F. Epstein and S.D. Warchavechick
(Deans Rabbi Jacob Joseph School)
Rabbi S. Kotler (Dean Beth Medrash Govoah)

Experience: Professor of Talmud, Head Dept. of Philosophy and Ethics
Beth Medrash Govoah, Lakewood, New Jersey
Curator of rare books and manuscripts - Library of
Beth Medrash Govoah, Lakewood, New Jersey
Dean, Summer Yeshiva Project - Mexico City, Mexico 1974

Rabbi Pessin

Education: Mirrer Yeshiva Central Institute, Bklyn, NY 1954-1959
Kollel of Mirrer Yeshiva Central Institute 1960-1962
Kollel Letorah V'Horach of Rabbi M. Feinstein 1962-1965
Apprenticeship for Halacha (Jewish Law)
Rabbi M. Pinsky of First Cong. Anshe
Sfard of Boro Park 1960-1967

Degrees: Yoreh-Yoreh, Yadin-Yadin (ordination qualifying
the recipient to decide all matters of Jewish
law and ethics and to act as a judge on a Rabbinic
court) Rabbi M. Pinsky
Mirrer Yeshiva Central Institute
Rabbi M. Feinstein

B.S. (Magna Cum Laude) Brooklyn College S.G.S. 1959
M.S. in Mathematics, Rutgers University
A.B.D. in Mathematics, Rutgers University

Experience: Instructor of Talmud, Mirrer Yeshiva 1960-1967

Director of Daf Hayomi, Minyan Kollel Rabbi Beer Shmuel of Boro Park	1968-1972
Director of Chevra Shas, Monsey, NY and Highland Park, N.J.	1973-
Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Rider College, Trenton, N.J.	1969-1976
Consultant to Inductive Inference Inc. N.Y., N.Y.	1970-1972

VII. GOALS

- A. To provide an institute of advanced study for the greater Pittsburgh area
- B. To produce first rate research and researchers
- C. To provide role models as scholars and moral leaders
- D. To render service to the community in the form of
 - 1. Adult education lectures on various levels
 - 2. Liasion with college youth
 - 3. Youth groups
 - 4. To provide a research library
 - 5. To spread the living vibrancy and enthusiasm for Jewish morals, ideals and law that result from intensive research and living
 - 6. To expand to include an undergraduate department of post high-school students.

VIII. FUNDING

A. Budget

The budget is basically fixed for the costs are mainly in salaries and are under administrative control.

Salaries of the Roshei Hakollel, Secretary

Fellowships for 8-12 scholars

Heating, electricity, office expenses

Library acquisitions

B. First year "starting up" costs:

Moving

Renovation of Study Hall

Telephone

Transportation

C. Sources of Income

Community support

Government grants