

# The Vision Takes Roots: A Girl's High School For Sha'arei Zion

BY SHABSIE SAPHIRSTEIN / 09 DECEMBER 2020

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Yeshiva Sha'arei Zion has established itself as a destination for Bukharian parents seeking to provide a premier Jewish educational experience for their children. The boys and girls elementary school have been at the forefront of educating our Queens community as has the boys' high school, Yeshiva Tiferet Tzion. The girls' high school has attracted interest from a broad spectrum of yeshiva day schools in the region. The plan for the high school is to primarily serve the Sephardic Bukharian contingent, but the administration is open to interview talmidot from outer communities and of varied Sephardic vernaculars.

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The girls who have taken interest in the programming have quickly learned that the curriculum will cover a breadth of Sephardic oriented programming, following the values of the community and maintaining the rich Sephardic Jewish history at its core. Throughout the year, girls can expect to be visited by Sephardic rabbinic personalities who will supplement these principles.

Mrs. Rina Zerykier, the menahelet, hopes the talmidot will comfortably fall into the sense of having a family at the high school. "A student should never fear walking into a principal's office," explained Zerykier. "It is my hope that the girls will look forward to our conversations as we connect throughout the high school process. The environment will allow for the girls to connect and grow into empowered young women."

For many, the high school experience is quite trying as students are kept on their toes always busy with complete schedules. Sometimes a child may experience moments of distress and need a morale boost. At YSZ girl's high school, the underlying mission strives to ensure that every student feels safe and that they belong. A core aspect of education is to make sure that every challenge faced is met with trusting and dedicated staff. The battles of teenagers are simply notches on the path of life. A struggle should never be looked upon as a reason to be scared or receive punishment. At YSZ, the girls will be encouraged to turn to their mentors with their questions and they will in turn be met with receptiveness and warmth.

The ongoing pandemic has taken a toll on life in America and the Sha'are Zion community was not spared of these obstacles. Anyone entering high school will have been through two school years of unprecedented changes, unparalleled by anyone in the last century. From online schooling to uneasy lockdowns, the emotional stress of COVID will remain. In Sha'arei Zion's high school, there will be much more than just basic academics. The socio-emotional wellbeing of each student is foremost. Mrs. Zerykier explains, "We have each walked away from 2020 with valuable lessons and a strong sense of resiliency. There is no cure-all measure to erase the past. Our responsibility at Sha'arei Zion is to show each student that Hashem is always with us as we pass through the experiences of life."

Every individual should draw on their own feelings of the past year and grow stronger from each occurrence as they draw on the memories they foster and push forward. We can rise above life's challenges. "When life gets narrowed down to the most essential part," said Zerykier, "it forces us to rethink and reexamine our value system."

To learn more about the YSZ Girls High School visit <https://www.yszqueens.org/forms-hs>.

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