

Dormitory for Mesivta - is it right for your son?

On the minds of many parents when it comes to choosing a yeshiva for Mesivta or Yeshiva Gedolah, is the question; what setting will bring out the best in my child, will he grow more from the independence that comes from being in a dormitory or will he gain more by the benefits that come from the close relationship with family and being close to home.

The answer is obviously a personal one and will differ from student to student and family to family, it is multifactorial, family/home dynamics, the student's maturity, social-emotional needs, etc. We need to weigh the advantages and the disadvantages and look for the greater benefit חנוך לנער עך פי דרכו.

Like all things in life we can find guidance and insight for this in the Torah and specifically in some of the rebbe's writings, we will not attempt to answer the question for you, as much as giving some pointers to help with the thought process and decision making.

The Chazal say הוי גולה למקום תורה, this highlights that a person will sometimes experience the greatest opportunity for growth by leaving the comforts of his home, yet this obviously needs to be a choice and not something that is compelled as we are taught חפץ שלבו חפץ חפץ when a person feels repressed it does not allow him to be in the optimal state for growth.

Rabbi Ezra Schochet, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Ohr Elchonon Chabad - Los Angeles, once wrote to the Rebbe that we wanted to make it compulsory that all students of the Yeshiva reside in the dormitory, Rabbi Schochet saw the homes that -in the early years of YOEC- were far from compatible with the standards of Yeshiva, he reasoned that returning home at night, would result in much of his investment in their Yiddishkeit -throughout the day- being challenged and perhaps even lost? Rabbi Schochet enumerated 5 (conceivable) benefits to making dormitory a pre-requisite for acceptance to Yeshiva, primarily based on the Chazal that we are obligated not just to teach Torah but to safeguard the Torah עשו סייג לתורה.

The Rebbes discouraged him from doing so, firstly because the rebbe feared that this would discourage and prevent more students from joining the Yeshiva, the Rebbe writing to Rabbi Schochet that we are first commanded והעמידו תלמידים הרבה,

but then the rebbes added something that at the time shocked Rabbi Schochet to his core: ועדיין צריך - the Rebbe's was questioning the very premise that a dormitory should be perceived as a default safeguard!

The simple understanding of this answer is that residing in the dormitory can propel tremendous growth giving a bochur the 24-hour Chassidische Ruach of Yeshiva, the out of Seder Chavrusos, and more time for bonding and arranging with the Yeshiva Shluchim and so on, yet at the same time dormitory is not without its risks and drawbacks, and sometimes the more meaningful and lasting growth will come from the sustained connection with parents and nurturing home.

In Oholei Torah we strive to offer the best options and make both choices a real possibility:

- A. All Bochurim benefit from the fully immersive experience of being in Yeshiva from Chassidus in the morning till after night seder, enjoying the full day of learning together with meals and breaks at the Mesivta, yet maintain the opportunity to connect with their family at night and on Shabbosim.
- B. Bochurim can apply to be in the new dormitory which is located right across the Yeshiva, giving the Bochurim the ability to live and prosper in Yeshiva 24/7! With proper supervision and care.

For Shabbos, the local Talmidim residing at home will continue to have seder at the 667 campus, and the Bochurim in the dormitory will have a full out-of-town feeling of Shabbos in Yeshiva with the seder and meals together with the Shluchiim and the hanholo that will live on sight.

To maintain a high standard of Chasidishkeit the dorm will be available exclusively to Bochurim that are a דוגמא חיה in their יראת שמים and חסידישקייט.

Many parents have reached out to us to enroll their sons in the dormitory and we will be accepting those that are **meet the strong criteria** on a first come first serve basis.

We hope this letter was helpful in making your decision, and please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns <https://www.oholeitorah.com/mesivta/#getintouch>

The Mesivta Hanholo