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בס"ד

December 11, 2017
כ"ג כסלו תשע"ח

To the entire Darché Noam Family,

It is my honor to wish Shapell's/Darché Noam a hearty mazel tov on your fortieth anniversary. My relationship to Darché Noam goes back 22 years, when I first had the opportunity to teach at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya. In the early 2000's, I had the privilege of teaching again at MRC as well as joining the Shapell's faculty. It is not an exaggeration to say that my years at Shapell's and Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya were the most formative years of my life. Rav Hirshfeld, Rav Karlinsky and Rav Shurin provided me with the unique opportunity to teach, and to grow personally, from my daily interactions with the amazing staff and students of Shapell's/Darché Noam.

In honor of the 40th anniversary, I would like to offer a few words of appreciation for Rav Hirshfeld as he moves into the role of Rosh Yeshiva Emeritus. Though my connection to Rav Hirshfeld was as a member of his teaching staff, I was undoubtedly a *talmid* of his during those seven years; as I was preoccupied with my own teaching duties each day, I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to attend his daily shiur. That said, he was my Rebbe on two levels: I felt comfortable approaching Rav Hirshfeld with a range of personal questions, including *chinuch* and childrearing. During those talks, Rav Hirshfeld was no doubt drawing on the vast experience both he and his Rebbetzin, Chavi, garnered over the years raising their own children; secondly, Rav Hirshfeld provided me with invaluable advice on issues that regularly came up in my role at the Yeshiva.

What stands out for me was Rav Hirshfeld's classic response to questions; he would never give me an instant answer, but instead would close his eyes and think deeply before speaking. With this thoughtful, intentional approach, I learned that my issue was being evaluated on its own merits and was being given its own special consideration. Over the past decade, in my role in Jewish education and outreach and in my role as a communal Rav in the Diaspora, I have made a conscious effort to follow Rav Hirshfeld's example. In that sense, I consider myself still in my "formative years," forever learning from Rabbi Hirshfeld and the Shapell's/Darché Noam family.

Ron-Ami Meyers
Rabbi Ron-Ami Meyers