

SHAVUOT @ NER

**Don't miss our inspiring programme:
NER YISRAEL is delighted to welcome
internationally renowned educator
RABBI YITZCHAK BREITOWITZ**

If you have not yet experienced a shiur (class) with Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz on halacha (Torah law), you need to do so at the first opportunity. Never did anyone convey Torah with such unassuming brilliance, sighting one authority after the next, while enlivening his presentation with midrash and personal anecdotes that, taken altogether, make you feel that you can be a complete Jew and breathe freely at the same time.

Rabbi Breitowitz' rumpled appearance belies an orderly, steel trap mind. In fact, his somewhat ragged look adds to his aura because you can tell that everything in his life is secondary to Torah. Why would Rabbi Breitowitz waste time shopping for another suit when he could be learning Torah? Moreover, it is abundantly clear that he is spending every waking moment learning Torah for the sole purpose of sharing it with others. In short, his dilapidated suit is evidence of his love for you.

When Rabbi Breitowitz speaks, you understand what the midrash says about the light that God created on the first day. The light we experience in our daily lives is given off by the sun, moon, and stars, heavenly bodies that were hung in the heavens on the fourth day. The light created on the first day, on the other hand, was hidden away for the righteous and is of a completely different quality than the light emitted by sun, moon, and stars. The light that radiates from Rabbi Breitowitz is the same light God created on the first day.

Rabbi Breitowitz, technically speaking, is a charedi or so-called ultra-orthodox Jew. He prays and teaches every day at a charedi yeshiva. Yet I have never met a rabbi of any classification, whether ultra-orthodox, chasidic, national religious, conservative, or reform, who was less ideological and more all-embracing than Rabbi Breitowitz.

Rabbi Breitowitz has no agenda. He is not selling anything. He is not trying to prove anything. He is eminently approachable. Like all great people, he has the common touch.

To put it in simple terms, when you speak to Rabbi Breitowitz, you just know that he is on your side and, while he would never compromise his own level of observance, gladly embraces you as a fellow Jew, regardless of what your own level of observance happens to be.

I wish Rabbi Breitowitz would give a class on what it means to be a rabbi. In order to receive smicha (ordination), every rabbinical student would be required to take that class. Then again, it would probably be sufficient rabbinical training to participate in one of his public classes in halacha.

In order to truly appreciate Rabbi Breitowitz, ask him a question. Great rabbis shine brightest by the manner in which they answer questions. They take the question, no matter how basic it may be, and give it royal, yet loving, treatment, elevating the questioner in the process.

Being a rabbi, after all, begins and ends with limitless love for every Jew, the kind of love you will experience when you sit and learn halacha with Rabbi Breitowitz.