

For the Safe Keeping of Bat Ayin



Thirteen year old Shlomo Nativ was a sweet kid with a freckled face and a ready smile. He helped care for his family's sheep, goats and chickens and was the eighth child in a family of nine. On Thursday afternoon, April 2, 2009, on the eve of the holiday of Passover, he was playing near the community office building in his home town of Bat Ayin with his friend Yair Gamliel. A terrorist approached them, wielding an axe. Shlomo was brutally butchered to death and Yair suffered a fractured skull.

Just two years before that, on February 25, 2007, a week before the festival of Purim, Erez Levanon, the 42 year old father of three from Bat Ayin, was deep in prayers in the hills near his home, when two terrorists jumped him from behind, slashed his throat and stabbed him repeatedly to death.

The reality of the security situation at the Bat Ayin Yeshiva is that ever since the murder in April, the residents have had to take on the expense of a security guard in addition to the rotation of guard duty done by the Yeshiva students and staff. This, of course, is an unbudgeted, unexpected and heavy ongoing expense for a small community such as theirs, during already difficult economical times. But safety is not a luxury. Security measures bring peace of mind.

Bat Ayin, in Hebrew literally meaning "the pupil of the eye," is an expression found in mystical sources referring to the Jewish people,

the Land of Israel and the holy Sabbath. The community of Bat Ayin is a unique blend of very spiritual families, who embrace a holistic, natural way of life, while settling their homeland in the majestic hills surrounding Jerusalem.

Jewish pioneers originally settled the Etzion bloc, southeast of Jerusalem in the 1940s. The Jordanian Army destroyed the four settlements of the original bloc during Israel's War of Independence. Since its liberation in the Six-Day War of 1967, the entire Gush Etzion region has become vital to the security of Israel, protecting the southern approaches to Jerusalem.

The Bat Ayin Yeshiva (Institute for Advanced Jewish studies) is located on a hilltop with an unblocked view of the plains of Israel all the way to the Mediterranean. The Bat Ayin Yeshiva was established in 1996 with the vision to foster and develop synergy between ancient Jewish tradition and modern society, and to enable unaffiliated, lost Jewish youth to return to their roots. The institute for post high school and university-age students offers a special atmosphere conducive to exploring what it means to be a Jew in the modern world, and helping students find a new framework of learning and growth. The Bat Ayin Yeshiva embraces the intensity of spiritual introspection, the intellectual approach of textual focus and the openness and tolerance of modern society. With a deep commitment to the Jewish people and community, and the ideals of the Zionist movement, students are encouraged to see their lives, talents and experiences as critical components of a never-ending spiritual search, and are challenged to find ways to make unique contributions to Israel, the Jewish people and humanity.

Despite the difficulties imposed by today's violent reality, this special institute for Jewish studies and spiritual growth has flourished. Students pay tuition at whatever level they can

afford, but most are only able to pay very little or nothing. No student is ever rejected for financial reasons. Bat Ayin, in turn, functions in the most simple and utilitarian environment, but have difficulty covering the basic costs of running the yeshiva. And now the added security costs have Bat Ayin turning to CFOIC Heartland for help.

The residents of the neighborhood and Yeshiva of Bat Ayin live simply and modestly, but the safety of the community is not where Bat Ayin can cut corners. Show your support for the brave pioneers who are settling G-d's land and studying His word.

Security guard @ \$690/month	\$8,280
Tuition support	5,000
TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED:	\$13,280

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