



Lichvod the Netanel family and the "Mechinat Eli" family,

It is an honor to be able to contribute to this special journal in memory of Yoni Netanel, hy"d. Earlier this week, thanks to the efforts of Lior Shtul, Rabbi Moshe Hauer, Rabbi Mordechai Feuerstein, and I had the special opportunity to meet Rav Amos Netanel, shlita. We had heard about the tragic story of Yoni's death and we wanted to offer our condolences to the family and to learn more about the events of Yoni's death and, more importantly, about his life.

I will never forget this meeting - Baruch She'zachinu Le'kach.

Not only did we learn much about what made Yoni so special as a person, a Ben Torah, and as a soldier, but we also learned how special a father and family Yoni had!

The emunah, bitachon, and mesirus nefesh that Rav Amos exhibits is beyond words. The Netanel family is a model for commitment to tzibbur as well as for the ability to cope with even the most difficult personal challenge. It is no surprise that a family with these values had a son who also lived these values. Yoni's commitment to Torah and to his fellow soldiers was clearly a reflection of teachings he received from his parents.

I also want to take this opportunity to mention how important the Mechinah in Eli was in developing Yoni's religious personality. Rav Amos told us a few times that the mechinah was responsible for the tremendous spiritual strength that Yoni possessed. Baruch Hashem, as a result of the wonderful work of Eli, a new generation of soldiers and officers in Tzahal is being trained with the ideals of Torah and commitment to Am Yisroel.

May the memory of Yoni Netanel always be for a blessing, may the Netanel family have only nachas and simchah in the future, and may the Mechinah in Eli have continued hatzlacha.

With love and admiration,

Dovid Gottlieb
Congregation Shomrei Emunah
Baltimore, MD
USA