Chidon HaTanach: The Window to Torah
By: Amira Felsenthal

Chidon HaTanach, or the Bible Contest for Jews, is a competition that enables participants to acquire a unique set of skills. When Miriam Waghalter, Michaela Rosenberg, and Amira Felsenthal joined a Chidon HaTanach class offered at Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy, they had no idea what was in store for them. Now freshmen at YULA, the girls could tell you just how enhanced their abilities and experiences are since beginning Chidon. After completing there first year of doing Chidon and all placing in the top 25 of their division, the girls couldn’t imagine not participating again so they spoke with Rabbi Lieberman about continuing to do Chidon HaTanach while at YULA. Lets just say Rabbi Lieberman was more than happy to oblige.

The girls competed in the Hebrew High School division were their syllabus included 100 perekim from Breishit, Shoftim, Tehillim, and Yechezkel. The girls began studying in the summer and continued once starting YULA by learning with Rabbi Lieberman and learning with their Hillel Chidon teacher Morah Klein. For the first round, the girl took 3 tests that were distributed throughout the country to those in their division. After taking those 3 tests, Rabbi Lieberman sent their overall scores to Rabbi Frazer, the American Chidon HaTanach coordinator, who then decided which students met the requirements to move on to nationals. All three girls met the requirement and started preparing for nationals.

There was also a video contest this year were each school was able to submit a video about someone from the syllabus that inspires them. The girls put a lot of effort into a video about Yehuda and his journey into becoming a better person.

After a lot of intense studying, the girls hopped on a plane to attend the American National Chidon HaTanach at Manhattan Day School in New York. At the competition, the girls had to take 2 incredibly difficult tests and afterwards watched as the top 5 in each division took another test in front of everybody to decide who the ultimate winners would be.

While the judges graded the tests, Rabbi Frazer presented the top 2 videos from the video contest, one of which was the YULA girl’s video. After showing the videos there was a live vote were the whole audience could text in which video they wanted to win. The YULA girls won by over 30 points and were invited onto the stage by Rabbi Frazer to receive a plaque.

Overall, this years Chidon HaTanach was a great experience for these girls because it strengthened their ability to learn Torah independently and to love the Tanach. Miriam Waghalter said, “Chidon is the window to Torah that I was never quite able to open on my own.” The girls are looking forward to doing Chidon again next year with the support of YULA!