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Tranquility Bay

Aftermath of rescue: boy's father sues

By Michael Orbach

A Brooklyn father who sent his son to an abusive boot camp for delinquents in the Caribbean is suing a Far Rockaway couple and 30 others for \$411 million, claiming they destroyed his reputation. The lawsuit has the blessing of Rav Aharon Schechter, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Chaim Berlin in Brooklyn, according to a lawyer for the main defendant.

Michael Hersh made national headlines in 2008 when it was discovered that he had his 16-year-old son, Isaac, taken from his home in the middle of the night and shipped to Tranquility Bay, a privately owned correctional institution in Jamaica. Former students were suing the institution at the time, claiming physical and mental abuse. Months later, Isaac got word of his forced captivity to a friend. Friends and family members launched an effort to pressure his parents to have him released. In March of 2008, after nine months in Tranquility Bay, Isaac was freed when several community members, including Dr. David Pelcovitz, chartered a plane and rescued him.

Isaac was "in constant scare mode," recalled Tzvi Gluck, an investment banker from Queens who led the effort. "I've seen kids who have come out of reform school and how they act," Gluck told The Jewish Star. "[Isaac] was in constant fear."

After Isaac returned, his father was forced out of his position as chief executive of Hatzalah Volunteer Ambulance Corps, the central organization of neighborhood Hatzalah squads in New York City and Nassau County, and owner of the Hatzalah name.

The main defendants in the suit are Michael Hersh's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Rebecca Cohen and her husband Raphael Cohen, both of Far Rockaway. The lawsuit accuses them of masterminding an international "perni-

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Photo by Judah S. Harris

Mourners remember the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel at his shloshin in Kew Gardens Hills.

Remembering Rabbi Eliyahu

In a blue turban and ceremonial robe, Harav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l was familiar as Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi from 1983 to 1993. He was remembered in Kew Gardens Hills last Tuesday.

By Judah S. Harris

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l was 81 when he died in early June following a year of illness. Participants at his shloshim in Kew Gardens Hills gained a better appreciation for the man best known as Chief Sephardic Rabbi of the State of Israel. His accomplishments extended beyond his most public role, stressed the host, Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, founder and spiritual leader of Midrash Ben Ish Hai.

"People don't realize his greatness. People know he was a chacham (wise man)..." Rabbi Menashe began. "He was humble; he made you feel as if you were his equal." Despite his stature, his accomplishment in learning and his mastery of mystical texts, Rabbi Eliyahu was accessible to everyone, Rabbi Menashe said. He

loved all Jews and was sought out by all segments of society.

Those who knew him personally, such as Rabbi Menashe and Rabbi Eliyahu Ben-Chaim, a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University, attested to his character.

Others testimonials were in a 40-minute film created for the shloshim that was also shown at the Binyanei Hauma auditorium in Jerusalem. The Queens program was held at Midrash Ben Ish Hai's new Beit Knesset and Beit Midrash.

From profound moments to small details, lessons can be transmitted from the entire span of a righteous person's life. Rabbi Eliyahu loved Yerushalmi kugel, said one commentator on the film, citing a fact that might imply more trivia than Torah, and although he could have eaten more

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Shabbat Candlelighting: 8:06 p.m. Shabbat ends 9:12 p.m. 72 minute zman 9:26 p.m. Torah Reading Parshat Devarim Zman Kriat Shma 8:27 (Magen Avrohom) and 9:19 (GRA & Ba'al Tanya)

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Aftermath of rescue: boy's father sues

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cious and malicious campaign of harassment" against the Hersh parents. This was done, the suit claims, for Rebecca to "feed her own deranged view of life and intense jealousy of her sister, Plaintiff Miriam Hersh."

"Cohen had for years despised Plaintiffs for no logical reason and had been during this time surreptitiously spreading falsehoods, gossip, and defamatory statements about Plaintiffs," the lawsuit states.

Other named defendants include Tzvi Gluck, several families that housed Isaac and his twin brother Shlomo, and the administrators of a Facebook group that sought to have Isaac freed from Tranquility Bay. The suit also lists the anonymous bloggers behind the Vos Iz Neias news aggregation website, Shmarya Rosenberg of the blog Failed Messiah, and 20 John Does. Lawyers representing Hersh have subpoenaed Dr. David Pelcovitz, Rabbi Avrohom Halpern of Yeshiva Sh'or Yoshuv, and companies like Microsoft, Google, AOL, and the social networking sites Facebook and MySpace, where some of the alleged defamation took place.

Stuart Kagen, the lawyer for the Cohens, said that when the lawsuit was initially filed in June, a judge who is Orthodox asked why Hersh brought the case to secular court. Hersh replied that he had sought permission from Chaim Berlin's Rabbi Schechter.

"Michael Hersh told him that he had permission from Rav Shechter because the damages had been such that he couldn't get restitution from the beis din," Kagen explained.

Reached at Camp Morris where he is spending the summer, Rabbi Schechter hung up on a reporter.

"Maybe, you've got something better to do?" he asked.

The lawsuit maintains that the Hershes are the "loving parents of eight children" and asserts that repeated accusations of child abuse that began in 2002 when the family moved to Israel were "completely false."

'Quite traumatized'

The lawsuit portrays the Hershes as loving parents who struggled with two very difficult children that required special needs and care. Affidavits submitted by the Cohens and their lawyer claim that the opposite is true: that Michael Hersh is a raging, abusive father and Miriam Hersh his willing accomplice, whose actions have caused serious damage to their children's lives.

The lawsuit maintains that Rebecca Cohen's "pathological hatred" of Michael and Miriam Hersh began with the couple's marriage 21 years ago. In an early version of the complaint that reads like a thriller and was thrown out of court, lawyers for Hersh claimed that Rebecca Cohen "harbored an unhealthy obsession with Mrs. Hersh, and focused upon her an almost pathological jealousy and hatred as well as an effort to control her life." The complaint also sought to portray the Cohens in an unflattering light, describing the time Raphael Cohen spent in kollel in Lakewood as a period of "prolonged unemployment."

The lawsuit claims that Isaac and Shlomo were born with severe developmental issues. When the Hersh family moved to Israel in 2002, the family was unable to find a school for the two children and instead home-schooled them and paid a neighbor to tutor them. The neighbor, Aryeh Larry Wolbe, who

is also named in the suit, received calls from Rebecca Cohen informing him that the Hershes were severely abusive.

A signed affidavit from Wolbe that was used in family court offers a drastically different take. Wolbe says that a local rabbi approached him to help with the boys, who were 12 at the time, and had been "roaming the streets of Jerusalem and out of school for the past nine months." During daily tutoring sessions he found both boys to be "energetic, healthy, capable and sociable children with no development issues as their father has claimed." However the more time he spent with them, the more concerned he became about their wellbeing. In one instance, Wolbe recalled receiving a "call from them stating in a hushed tone that they had been locked in their room for the past 24 hours with no food and drink, and asked me to bring over some food."

As the tutoring sessions continued, Wolbe found the boys to be suddenly medicated.

"They would show up at my house and collapse as if they were zombies," Wolbe wrote. "When I asked what medications they had taken they stated that their father always ripped of the labels of their medication so they did not know what they were taking."

Wolbe claimed to receive frequent calls from psychologists to whom Hersh took the boys. Every time a psy-

chologist began to question Michael Hersh, he switched to a new therapist, Wolbe said.

The twins were eventually separated, Shlomo to a school in Israel and Isaac to a school in Toronto. The lawsuit alleges that Rebecca Cohen called both schools to inform them, falsely, that Hersh was abusive, that he "had been severely beating the twin boys, locking them in rooms for long periods without food or water, and drugging them without a prescription so as to control them."

As a result of that claim, Israeli social services launched a six-month investigation of the family. During that time Miriam Hersh was diagnosed with lymphoma, the lawsuit said, and the family moved back to the United States in order for her to receive treatment. Shlomo was left in school in Israel. The criminal investigation was closed, according to the lawsuit, since "the allegations were obviously false and without any basis whatsoever."

However, a letter from a psychologist in the Israeli school the twins attended, Michel Allon, paints a radically different picture.

"The proper authorities began an investigation of the family and before the case could be heard in court, the family fled Israel and moved back to the United States," Allon wrote in a letter to the family court in Brooklyn. "When the family left Israel, they left Shlomo here... Leaving Shlomo here was done as a punishment for having revealed the abuse in the family."

Twin Shlomo also affected

After a week of vacation, according to the letter, Shlomo told the psychologist that, "his father often gave him and his brother medication to calm them down. The medication was not prescribed by a doctor and he did not know what the medication was, since the bottle had the label removed."

In his affidavit to the court Shlomo Hersh writes that his parents "abandoned and permanently neglected me for over five years." He writes that his father forcibly sedated him

and that when the twins would question their father's authority they would be "severely punished by being locked in our rooms for 12-24 hours without any food."

"My father stated that we did not deserve beds," he wrote.

Shlomo dropped charges against his parents in Israel because his mother pressured him and revealed to him for the first time that she had cancer.

Another defendant, Rachel Rosengarten, accused of being "in concert with Cohen" "to embarrass, harass, and intimidate" the Hershes, said she watched Michael Hersh force-feed medicine to Isaac to sedate him. She noticed that the boys had "unusual swellings of their face" and maintains that the only time the parents showed concern was to see "what color shirt Isaac should wear over the holiday."

Tranquility Bay

According to the lawsuit, both boys acted out in New York and were placed in mental hospitals for several months. Eventually they were released and sent to foster families in Texas; Isaac and Aryeh Larry Wolbe who had relocated to Houston; Shlomo to Ariel Fishman, also a defendant in the suit, in Austin.

When Michael Hersh brought Isaac to Houston he "was not interested in ... discussing the situation," Wolbe claimed. When he asked Hersh for his phone number to contact him in case of emergency, Hersh refused, he wrote, adding that the father "was unwilling to cover any of the financial expenses, such as tuition costs or doctor fees for Isaac."

According to Wolbe, Isaac "progressed extremely well in Texas, both academically and socially."

When personal matters made him unable to care for Isaac any longer, Wolbe offered to make other arrangements for him in Texas, he said. The lawsuit disputes that and claims that Wolbe demanded the Hersh parents take back their son. Isaac returned to New York where the lawsuit states that he "terrorized" his siblings, forcing the Hershes to make a drastic decision.

Wolbe's affidavit, again, tells a different story. During the summer, Isaac called Wolbe to let him know that he had gone to Hershey Park with his mother and Wolbe warned him not to spend the night in his father's house since he said it wasn't safe. Isaac didn't listen.

"That night, in the middle of the night, Isaac was abducted and taken to Tranquility Bay," he wrote.

Save Isaac

In both versions of their complaint, the Hersh family defends the decision to send Isaac to Tranquility Bay and said it was made in consultation with Rav Aharon Schechter.

According to Steven Mostovsky, the Hershes attorney during that time, "Rav Aharon knew this place wasn't kosher, that there was no Judaism there, and the feeling was that he needed a place like this or he wasn't necessarily going to get through life — and it was pikuach nefesh."

The early draft of the complaint claims that Isaac "was progressing in Tranquility Bay... that clearly indicated that Tranquility Bay was helping him overcome some of his problems." The complaint says that when Isaac requested a Siddur his parents shipped it to him along with several care packages.

"When [Isaac] eventually started to ask for kosher food, the Hershes immediately contacted the Tranquility Bay Administration and obtained the school's permission to send, and began to send to him, special, self-heating kosher meals at a cost of thousands

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Remembering Rabbi Eliyahu zt"l

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when served what was for him a true delicacy, he sufficed with a very small amount, sharing the remainders, the shiraim, with those around him. The moral: Some people think righteous people do not have temptations; and do not experience desire. Tzaddikim always have temptations, but have the inner strength to resist them. Rabbi Eliyahu exercised the greatest of care in all areas of eating. "He only ate his wife's cooking," said Rabbi Menashe. "So when he traveled, only bread and water." From the age of bar mitzvah, Rabbi Eliyahu avoided beef, and he only ate chicken that had been slaughtered for him or that he shechted personally.

He was similarly strict regarding drinking wine. Even yayin mevushal, pasteurized or cooked wine, would not be acceptable to him if the bottle had been previously opened. Although at times Rabbi Eliyahu adopted a more stringent halachic stance for himself than he expected of others, he did not seclude himself and during his lifetime reached out to all the segments of the community.

Rabbi Eliyahu accorded great honor to others. "He interacted with people as if they were friends," said Rabbi Ben-Chaim.

"A first grader or the prime minister — the same honor," proclaimed a teacher in the video, whose students had received visits from Rav Eliyahu multiple times. He continu-

ously stressed how to treat fellow Jews and illustrating by his personal example. He visited secular kibbutzim and in at least one instance told residents that he was "jealous of them" about one thing. They were surprised but he explained that he was jealous that they "knew that they didn't know." Many people, even the religious, remain unaware of gaps in their understanding, he said, but whose absence goes unnoticed. Secular individuals could respect Rabbi Eliyahu because he respected them. Four men accessorized with earrings, dressed in an irreligious fashion once asked for a blessing. Rabbi Eliyahu graciously provided one before getting into his car to leave. However, moments later he emerged from the car and began to dance with the men, asking them to also join him in reciting the Hebrew words of the song taken from prayer.

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu was born in Israel to a family of means that originated in Baghdad. His father, Rabbi Salman Eliyahu, learned from the great scholars of his time. The family immigrated to Israel; Rav Mordechai was born in 1929 in the Old City. He studied intensively with his father who passed away when the boy was only 11. He "was taken under the wing of some great luminaries," whom Rabbi Menashe listed: Rabbi Yitzchok Nissim, the Chazon Ish, and Rabbi Ezra Attiah, the Syrian-born rabbi who

served as Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef until his death in 1970. Rabbi Eliyahu studied at the Porat Yosef yeshiva, as did Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, although their halachic rulings differed in a number of areas, and each maintained alternate approaches to Sephardic practices and customs, and how to best retain them.

In 1959, Rabbi Eliyahu became the youngest dayan to be appointed in the State of Israel. He was a Religious Zionist, outspoken about the disengagement from Gaza, and cared deeply about the loss of life at the hands of Israel's enemies.

In 2008, Rabbi Eliyahu responded strangely when invited to a Torah dedication at the Ohr Somayach yeshiva, Rabbi Menashe related. He started crying and said, "I hope it will snow that evening." He called for organized prayers at the Kotel and lots of Merkaz HaRav yeshiva students came. The program was dragged out, and when a bus of students from that yeshiva finally left, it got stuck at a police checkpoint. This was a Thursday evening, the same night as the terrorist infiltration of the Yeshiva's library, which resulted in the murders of eight students.

"Some say he had Ruach HaKodesh," said Rabbi Menashe. There are other narratives told: wondrous stories of healing and of rainfall that fell in an unusual manner to fill a parched mikvah. Rabbi Eliyahu is known to have studied Kabbalah, as did his father.

Rabbi Eliyahu made little mention of it. "He dealt with it quietly, and only once in a while would he give out any hints," Rav Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, who succeeded Rabbi Eliyahu as Chief Sephardic Rabbi in 1993, told Arutz-Sheva last month.

Rabbi Eliyahu was renowned for his scholarship. "His seforim are written in such a beautiful, lucid style — Halacha, Taharat HaMishpacha..." said Rabbi Menashe, who received semicha from Rabbi Eliyahu. Rabbi Eliyahu wrote on the halachot of the holidays, edited annotated siddurim, and published halachic works, including his own responsa.

Rabbi Eliyahu loved Halacha as well as his fellow man. A primary lesson from his life, said Rabbi Menashe, is to "learn to love each other." Societal-problems infect Jewish life today in Israel, America and elsewhere. The Second Temple was destroyed for similar reasons and "the Third Beit Hamikdash is not here," concluded Rabbi Menashe. "So, we're still guilty of it."

100,000 gathered last month for Rabbi Eliyahu's nighttime funeral held at his synagogue and outside on Reines Street in Jerusalem's Kiryat Moshe neighborhood.

Judah S. Harris is a photographer, filmmaker, speaker and writer. His email newsletter circulates to thousands of readers (sign up at www.judahsharris.com/visit). Midrash Ben Ish Hai runs Torah educational programs for adults and maintains a rich website of materials (www.midrash.org).

Aftermath of rescue: boy's father sues

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of dollars per day," the suit states.

A letter Isaac sent from Tranquility Bay in October seemed to tell a different story.

"You can't tell anyone that you heard from me or else I get in huge trouble," Isaac wrote to Rabbi Wolbe in November. "I'm sorry for all the stress and everything I caused y'all. I'm in some hell hole in Jamaica."

Joshua Ambush, an attorney who sued the Hershes to force them to release Isaac from Tranquility Bay and who is now named in the lawsuit, called sending Isaac to Tranquility Bay "abuse by proxy."

"Schools like Tranquility Bay intend to break kids down to rebuild them," he told The Jewish Star in April 2008. "The abuse and treatment is not conducted as a means to discipline, it becomes the end. It's abuse for its own sake."

After Wolbe received a call from a former Tranquility Bay student alerting him to Isaac's whereabouts, an international effort began to put pressure on Michael Hersh to free his son.

According to the lawsuit, defendants set up websites that encouraged people to confront Hersh and displayed images and testimonies about Tranquility Bay, where treatments allegedly included physical abuse and forcing children to lie on concrete floors for days. The defendants, according to the lawsuit, "set up MySpace and Facebook groups and public pages on the internet, urging hundreds of teenagers across the country to picket and protest in front of the Hersh home."

Raphael Cohen unsuccessfully sought to contact Rav Schechter about allowing Isaac to return home, then reached out to Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America, where Rabbi Schechter sits on the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah.

"We could not get involved," Rabbi Zwiebel told The Jewish Star about the incident. "It was a matter of internal dispute between members of the community with different

rabbonim supporting different sides. Whether individual members were contacted, that's a different story. The Moetzes never thought to consider it."

According to the lawsuit, emails were sent to members of Hatzalah, where Michael Hersh was CEO, and the websites implied that "Mr. Hersh was a Nazi and child abuser." Several New York-area newspapers picked up the allegations.

At the same time, Isaac's maternal grandparents filed a custody motion against the Hershes. "The defendants are extremely unstable," Rosa Deborah Greher and Elliot Alvin Greher wrote in a petition to a Brooklyn Supreme Court judge.

In an attempt to free his grandson, Sholom Hersh, Michael's father, sent a letter to an activist begging for help. "My son and his wife abandoned and abused their twin boys," he wrote. "They say that they would rather sacrifice the two boys for the sake of saving the other six children from having a bad influence on them."

While progress stalled on freeing Isaac, Gluck, Pelcovitz and two other men flew to Jamaica. Eventually, Michael Hersh, directed by Rabbi Schechter, requested that the facility turn Isaac over to their custody. On the return flight, Gluck told the Star in 2008, "he told us of instances where he was tied up hands and legs [and] forced to lie on a mat upwards of 26 hours."

The resulting controversy cost Michael and Miriam Hersh their jobs, for which they blame the defendants. According to the lawsuit, Hersh also lost money from pending patents after companies refused to do business with him on account of the allegations. The suit also seeks \$100 million in emotional damages.

In the court battle that followed, custody was awarded to Raphael Cohen and his wife. Rabbi Schechter submitted a letter supporting the Hershes.

"They are very special parents." Rabbi Shechter wrote. "I have heard of the on-

slaught of terrible accusations that have been made against them and the great measures that have been taken to publicize them... I stand in awe of the immense power of motzi shem ra (slander) and midot ra (bad actions) that the Satan is capable of."

Campaign of Intimidation

The Cohens have been sued by the Hershes three times. The first occurred right after the events in Israel, when an Israeli lawyer demanded \$500,000 as a settlement for the Hershes. In October of 2007 Mostovsky sued them for slander.

Rabbi Daniel Eidensohn, who writes the popular Daas Torah blog, has been subpoenaed. In a blog post, he wondered why Hersh was "causing a chilul Hashem yet again" and stated, "He doesn't want to let the past go but insists on continuing his quest for revenge."

In this case though, the tactic backfired. "The subpoena is apparently a fishing expedition," Eidensohn told The Jewish Star. "I originally had a single comment two years ago. Since the subpoena I have added several more."

The blogger Luke Ford, who chronicled the Hersh saga, also received letters from a firm representing Michael Hersh, requesting he take down web pages that the firm alleged, "injures our client, his family and his business dealing." Ford seemed unfazed by the letter and responded with a blog post called, "Michael Hersh chooses fools for attorneys."

The Yeshiva College student newspaper, The Commentator, also received letters from the firm demanding that articles written about the Hershes be taken down.

The Internet free speech group Electronic Frontier Foundation has filed a motion to quash subpoenas against Google, Yahoo, and blogs including Daas Torah and Unorthodox Jew.

"The First Amendment of the United States of America protects people's freedom of speech," explained Ron Lazebnik, su-

pervising attorney at Lincoln Square Legal Services Inc., the group's legal arm, and a clinical associate professor at Fordham Law School. "The way courts interpreted that is you have to actually point to specific parts of speech that is in some way either defamatory or meet a different kind of claim against the person who wrote it, before you're allowed to request the identity of that person be revealed."

A similar local case in 2007 was thrown out of court. A lawsuit brought by then-Lawrence School Board member Pamela Greenbaum intended to unmask the writer of the Orthomom blog was dismissed.

Several affidavits indicate Hersh sought to intimidate other families with the police. When Joshua Hersh, Michael brother, protested about Isaac's incarceration in 2008, Michael Hersh drove to Connecticut at three o'clock in the morning to file charges against him with a local department. The charges were later dropped. Wolbe related a similar story in his affidavit. A detective with the NYPD called Rebecca Cohen after Michael Hersh reported that she had stolen her sister's social security number.

During his deposition, Rabbi Avrohom Halpern refused to disclose the names of other people involved in the rescue attempt, according to the Cohens' lawyer, Stuart Kagen.

"He said under oath that he believed they [the Hershes] would sue those people or would subpoena them and he didn't want to make those people victims of Mr. Hersh, the way other people are," Kagen explained.

Hersh is currently unemployed and being sued by his former attorney, Steven Mostovsky, for \$40,000 in unpaid legal fees. Isaac currently works in retail in Manhattan. Shlomo is a member of an elite IDF unit. Neither twin is believed to be in contact with either parent.

One defendant, who requested to not be named, lamented, "Raphael and Rivkah — the caring aunt and uncle who gave their lives and took their children in with open arms," are being sued. "Aryeh Wolbe, when Isaac lived with him in Texas, the parents had no contact with their son, and Tzvi Gluck, who just got involved to save a child's life. They're suing the people who care about their sons."

Leket Israel 'Migrant workers' needed

By Mayer Fertig

It has the makings of a great trip. Go to Israel, be a farmhand. No kidding: 47,000 people have volunteered for two or three hours at a shot, gleaning in fields, mostly near Rechovot, to help Leket Israel, Israel's national food bank, rescue perfectly good produce that otherwise would rot on the ground.

Other volunteers and paid employees fan out, night and day, to rescue leftovers from catering facilities, restaurants and food courts. The food is distributed to more than a million and a half hungry people in Israel — including three quarters of a million children.

"It hit me when I started to get the sense from the press that it was not just the usual suspects" who were worried about their next meal, said Joseph Gitler, the founder and chairman of Leket Israel.

"I think if you spoke to your readers, they would have the sense that every poor person in Israel is from the ultra-orthodox community," he said. But as the economic troubles in the United States have spread deprivation to all parts of the Jewish community, Israel has had a similar experience.

"Coming from a Modern Orthodox background, living in my little bubble in Ra'anana, it was incomprehensible to me, especially because Israel has made such incredible economic gains in the last 20 years," Gitler said. "For better or for worse, Israel has become more capitalistic, and with that has come Western-style poverty."

Gitler, 35, worked as an attorney before he and his family made Aliyah 10 years ago; he worked in a family business before founding the organization that now also makes a million sandwiches a year for hungry children, and helps hundreds of small organizations through a food cooperative that buys food at wholesale prices.

Leket Israel has a \$4.4 million dollar year budget. Factoring in the food it rescues, overhead is an ultra-low one percent; without that food factored in the overhead is still just 10 percent of the annual budget, Gitler said.

When health reports in Israel noted that many Ethiopian immigrants were beginning to develop diabetes, a new project was born.

"It seems so silly. But they come to Israel and certain kinds of food are cheap, just like in the United States," he explained. Now, a Leket Israel nutritionist runs food seminars for immigrants like the Ethiopians and "she takes them to supermarkets and says, 'What's your food budget a month? You can't afford this and that — either from a calorie standpoint or financially.'"

The difference in legal climate between the United States and Israel makes food rescue a major enterprise in Israel.

"In the United States you are talking about billions of good meals that are going to waste because people are concerned about liability," Gitler said. "In Israel the catering and the restaurant community essentially said, 'There's a problem, there's need, come today. Come yesterday.' No one ever says to me, 'What kind of tax deduction can I get?'" or overly worries about being sued.

For more information go to the American Friends of Leket Israel website at leket.org, or e-mail info@leket.org.

Fish story

A good catch for Masbia

By Daniella Adler

The high cost of fish, a staple item during the Nine Days, when meat is customarily not eaten, could be enough to shut down a kosher soup kitchen on a tight budget. But the Masbia network — restaurants where the house always picks up the tab — is open for business thanks to a large donation by the Dagim Fish Company.

Dagim's Samuel Stefansky donated 2,500 portions, a \$9,000 value, to the struggling soup kitchen, allowing it to continue oper-

ating, and continuing a tradition he began three years ago.

Masbia's founder and director, Alexander Rapaport, said the increased cost of serving fish instead of meat could have forced the soup kitchen to close until after Tisha B'Av. Potentially, the hundreds of people who depend on Masbia five days a week would have been left without food.

Three years ago, when Rapaport began planning to open a kosher soup kitchen, he contacted Stefansky for support. "You got me in a good mood today. I'll do it," Stefansky

replied.

A few hours later Stefansky suffered a heart attack. Before losing consciousness he told his brothers, who work with him at Dagim, about the donation, and "told them to get the fish." They fulfilled the pledge, Rapaport said.

Masbia has quadrupled in size since then and Stefansky donates each year. This year, with three new locations and an increase from 150 to 500 meals per day, Dagim's gift for the Nine Days is even larger. It includes side dishes like knishes and fish sticks for children.

Masbia survives day to day and most of its support comes from private donations. To gather support, they send letters, write press releases, and, as Rapaport said, "people come and help us." But Stefansky, Rapaport said, stood apart, for he "really made a donation with a whole heart."

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July 18

Tanach Tour at the Met

TOUR GUIDE RABBI YEHUDA LANDY will lead a Tanach and Jewish history tour at the Metropolitan Museum of Art this Sunday, July 18th at 2:30 p.m. (Google for background: Tanach Tour Jewish Star). The tour will cover sections of the Greco-Roman galleries pertaining to the Three Weeks, as well as the Ancient Near East. For more information e-mail nzion@smile.net.il or call U.S. cell phone 312-919-2175.

July 19

Long Island Friends Experience

THE JCC OF THE GREATER FIVE TOWNS invites you to accompany the LIFE program (Long Island Friends Experience) at the Long Island Ducks Game on July 19th. LIFE is a socialization program for adults with physical, neurological and emotional needs. The group meets 3 times a month and enjoys a wide arrange of fun and diverse social activities. For more information on the LIFE program, please call Gayle Fremed at (516) 569-6733 x211.

July 20

Tisha B'Av at the Isaiah Peace Wall

THE AMCHA COALITION FOR JEWISH CONCERNS will be holding their 33rd annual public Tisha B'Av service at 2 p.m. at the Isaiah Peace Wall across from the United Nations at First Avenue and 43rd Street in Manhattan.

The service and Torah reading will be led by Rabbi Avi Weiss, the national president of Amcha and the spiritual leader of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. Participants are asked to bring their own siddurim. For more information call 212-663-5784 or email Tishabav@aol.com.

July 27

Non-profit summit

THE FUTURE OF JEWISH NONPROFIT SUMMIT gathers handpicked professionals, volunteers and lay leaders to candidly interact in a laid back setting to unlock the full value of moving this vital industry forward. Some of the most respected nonprofit professionals, social media experts, marketers and online fundraisers are coming together to share their best practices, ideas and case studies. NYU Wasserman Center for Career Development, 133 E. 13th Street, 2nd Floor, New York. Visit <http://fojnp.com> for complete details. Use registration code jewishstar for 15% off.

August 1

Torah tour of the Bronx

JOIN RABBI NATAN SLIFKIN, the world-famous "Zoo Rabbi," author of The Challenge of Creation, Sacred Monsters, and Nature's Song, as he gives a tour of the Bronx zoo.

The Torah Tour of the Bronx Zoo is for adults and older children and begins at 10am - 1pm. Price: Adults \$20, Children \$15, Price does not include zoo admission. For registration (required) email: zoorabbi@zootorah.com Limited number of spaces available.

ON THE Calendar

Submit your shul or organization's events or shiurim to jscalendar@thejewishstar.com.
Deadline is Wednesday of the week prior to publication.



Photo by Yizchak Russek/ Kuvien Images

Over 10,000 gathered in Jerusalem in a rally to support Gilad Shalit, the captured IDF soldier.

August 3

Night on the beach with Kulanu

KULANU YOUNG LEADERSHIP DIVISION will be holding "A Night on the Beach" at the Allegria Hotel, located at 80 West Broadway in Long Beach at 7 p.m. There will be a live band, raffles, and gourmet restaurant samplings. Cost is \$100 per couple and \$50 per single. To RSVP email youngleadership@kulanukids.org or call 516-569-3083 ext. 102.

August 4

Speaking about Spielberg

THE FRIEDBERG JCC, located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside, will be hosting "Hollywood's Peter Pan: the Cinema of Steven Spielberg." Film Historian Philip Harwood will present an overview of the films of Spielberg will include Raiders of the Lost Arc, E.T., Schindler's List, and Jurassic Park. The event begins at 7:30. Cost is \$5 for members and \$6 for non-members. Light refreshments will be served.

August 13

Camp Chaverim

THE FRIEDBERG JCC, located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside, will be holding Camp Chaverim, a summer camp experience focusing on socialization and life skills building for children between 10-13 with special needs. For more information call the JCC at 516-766-4341 or go online at www.friedbergjcc.org.

August 17-22

5th Annual National Jewish Retreat

A DELEGATION FROM THE FIVE TOWNS is preparing to join the learning getaway of a lifetime, the 5th Annual National Jewish Retreat. For five days, 30 world-renowned Jewish lecturers will present over 150 sessions on an array areas of relevant and contemporary Jewish topics.

Some of the presenters in this year's retreat include the foremost historian on American Jewish History, Prof. Jonathan Sarna; author of the bestselling book *Toward A Meaningful Life*, Rabbi Simon Jacobson; former governor and U.S. senator Mr. George Allen; director of Policy and Government Affairs at AIPAC, Mr. Bradley Gordon; former commanding officer of the Special Forces Unit of the IDF Dr. Gill Heart; author of *Doesn't*

Anyone Blush Anymore? Rabbi Manis Friedman; prominent Washington D.C. attorney, Mr. Nat Lewin; famed Nazi hunter, Mr. Eli Rosenbaum; Dean of Rabbi Issac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Rabbi Yona Reiss; noted professor, author, and lecturer, Rabbi Dr. J Immanuel Schochet; Mrs. Rivka Slonim; Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan; Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky; Dr. Erica Brown; Rabbi Moshe Bryski; Mrs. Molly Resnik; Rabbi Berel Bell; Mrs. Shimona Tzukernik; Rabbi Nissan Mangel and many other notable figures in the Jewish community.

For more information and to register for the retreat, you are welcome to visit Jretreat.com or call 1-877-jretreat (573-8732).

August 29

Family fun and Long Beach sun

THE BACH'S 2ND ANNUAL SUMMER CARNIVAL will offer amusement park rides, entertainment, games, local artists & vendors, a shofar factory and glatt kosher food. Free admission. Special guests: Children from Ohel's orphan children's Home to help make their summer fun and special. Sponsorships available. 2 East Broadway, Long Beach NY 11561. For more information visit www.BachYouth.com or call 516-897-2473.

Membership drive

THE SUBURBAN PARK JEWISH CENTER, located at 400 Old Westbury in East Meadow, is conducting a membership drive. The Jewish Center has the lowest membership dues in the area and membership includes free Hebrew School tuition and free High Holy Days tickets. There is no building fund and special discounts are offered to new members. For more information, call the synagogue at 516-796-8833.

Shiurim

Monday

SHIUR IN HALACHA followed by a Parsha shiur given by Rabbi Yaakov Feitman beginning at 9:00 PM at Kehillas Bais Yehuda Tzvi, 395 Oakland Ave., Cedarhurst.

Tuesday

SHIUR IN MAHARAL on the Chumash by Rabbi Eytan Feiner from 8:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at Congregation Kneseth Israel, 728 Empire Ave., Far Rockaway.

PARSHA SHIUR by Rabbi Mordechai Sitorsky at 9:00 p.m. at Kehillas Bais Yehuda Tzvi, 395 Oakland Ave., Cedarhurst.

Thursday

VIDEO SIMULCASTS OF WEEKLY SHIURIM by Rabbi Eli Mansour and Rabbi Yissocher Frand at Kehillas Bais Yehuda Tzvi, 395 Oakland Ave., Cedarhurst. Rabbi Mansour at 7:45 p.m., Rabbi Frand at 9:00 p.m. Weekly chaburot: 10:15 p.m., Ta'amei HaMitzvos: 11:00 p.m., Ma'ariv: 11:15. Chulent served.

Daily

MEN'S TORAH STUDY KOLLEL PROGRAM with Rabbi Don Well, from 10-12 every morning at Congregation Bais Medrash of Cedarhurst, 504 West Broadway, corner Bayview Ave in Cedarhurst.

Getting even

Work won't set you free. Perhaps dancing?

By Michael Orbach

A family of Jews stands motionless before the gates of Auschwitz, below the newly replaced sign that reads "Arbeit Macht Frei," work will set you free. Near the center of the group an old man wears a white t-shirt that says "Survivor." And then, to the strains of the cheesy pop song "I Will Survive," the five begin to dance. As the video continues, the settings alternate: the black and white arch of Terezin concentration camp, the stairs that lead to Dachau, the Lodze ghetto, the railway tracks to Auschwitz, and finally the Maisel Synagogue, where Adolph Hitler planned to place his museum of the Jews.

But as the backdrops change, the five jerk their limbs like marionettes as bemused on-lookers walk by.

Titled, "I Will Survive: Dancing Auschwitz," the video is the latest and perhaps unlikeliest hit on YouTube, the video sharing web site. It is the work of a Jewish conceptual artist, Jane Korman of Australia, who created the video as part of an art installation after a family trip through Poland and Germany last summer.

"I really wanted to approach the Holocaust and the memory of it in a different way," said Korman, who is now visiting Israel. "I wanted to keep it alive and I didn't know how it could be done. What I picked up from non-Jewish people was they're tired of hearing the word Holocaust. Also, for the third-generation [of Jews] sometimes they think we're far removed [from the Holocaust]. I wanted to create an artwork that keeps this historically traumatic memory alive."

The dance concept, she says, was also inspired by a music video for the musician Fatboy Slim that features an impromptu dance troupe at a movie theatre.

Korman's parents, Adalak, 90, and Marysia, 86, Kohn met after both survived Auschwitz. She received a mixed reaction when she approached them with her idea.

Korman's mother refused to accompany the family. "She still felt betrayed," Korman explained.

But her father was more than agreeable. "[When] I approached my father about the idea and I explained, 'You are alive today, you went through so much. You have grandchildren that are accompanying you to the places of your past.' He got it in an instant. He just danced. He's even dancing more vibrantly than we are."

The video was shot during a visit to Germany and Poland in June and July of 2009.



The family danced quickly so as not to offend other visitors. As for the dancing, Korman is happy it wasn't too professional.

"I didn't want it to be smooth choreography," she said. "I'm happy it was awkward at times. It symbolizes the difficulty. As Jews, we're always trying to survive and just continue and there's always something. We're trying very hard in spite of it all — life [is] difficult."

The video and the art installation have generated their share of controversy in her hometown of Melbourne, though Korman said she received mostly positive feedback. Even her mother, who refused to accompany them, was enthusiastic about the final version.

"We came from the ashes, now we dance," Korman's mother told her.

Korman's son, Gil, who dances in the video with his grandfather, two sisters and his mother, defended the project.

"The fact that we are dancing doesn't disrespect what took place 65 years ago," he maintained. "The dance is a tribute to the tenacity of human spirit."

The video was posted in January, but received scant attention until several weeks ago when it was picked up by a neo-Nazi website. Since then, the video has received over 160,000 views. The irony is not lost on Korman. "It's taken on a life of its own," she



Photos courtesy of Jane Korman

Artist Jane Korman took a trip with her children and her father, a Holocaust survivor, to several Holocaust sites in Germany and Poland. The video she created, featuring the family dancing at the sites to "I Will Survive," has become a sensation on the video site YouTube.



said.

Two subsequent versions of "Dancing Auschwitz" are much less viewed. The second in the series is a home recording featuring Korman, her parents and several other Holocaust survivors dancing in a forest in Melbourne to the tune of Leonard Cohen's "Dance Me to the End of Love."

That dancing, a group of middle-aged men and woman doing the hora, was unplanned, Korman said.

"That was my parents attitude towards life, they were always dancing," said Korman.

The final video in the series replays various conversations between family members during the trip. In one segment, Adalak Kohn, Korman's father, stands in a cattle car. With

his face to the barred window, he reenacts what his trip to Auschwitz was like. "Can you tell me where we are?" Kohn asks in Polish and then translates it to English.

"You are not far from Auschwitz?" he answers himself and then asks for some water in Polish and English, as he did some sixty five years ago. Then he begins to laugh. Later in the video his granddaughter asks why is smiling.

"How many people can come here? One percent?" Kohn answers with another question, then answers himself: "Not even one percent. Half a percent? I don't think even half a percent. All were killed... I think every day about them. A hundred people were in our family and they all perished in Lodze. But here, I am very happy."

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Parshat Devarim

Mourning is not knowing

Like most of us who are up to date on local news, I don't think Jewish scholarship in women is something we need to mourn for on Tisha B'Av. I think the more Jewish knowledge that is out there — the more that can be shared with those who will hear, the more that can be taught to our children — is a good thing.

But where I feel we need to mourn on Tisha B'Av comes from a reference in chapter two of Devarim 2:16-17. "And it was after the entire generation of soldiers died from amongst the people... And then G-d spoke to me saying..."

Rashi suggests that since the word used to convey G-d's love is "Vayomer" (and He said) instead of "Vayedaber" (and He spoke), this means G-d's conversations with Moshe since that time were more one-sided, that Moshe did not "converse" with G-d in the face-to-face manner he had enjoyed previously until the first generation died out completely. This teaches us that



Rabbi Avi Billet

the prophets only come to help out Israel when Israel is worthy.

Over the last few years, I have heard a number of well-known rabbis speak of what they felt was the biggest threat to Judaism today: the failure of Jewish education. As much learning as there is, as much as we personally learn, and as much as we support learning, we are still not conveying to our children why we care and why they should care.

Many schools do a fine job of educating our youth. But the reality is that every school fails miserably. When Jewish children leave a yeshiva elementary school, and certainly high school, not knowing: how to read Hebrew, how to translate basic Chumash, the overall story line and narrative of the Torah, some of the works of the Neviim (prophets) and Ketuvim (writings), how to read or use basic (non-Artscroll) tools to work through a piece of gemara, basic Jewish history and other basic knowledge (who came first, Moses Maimonides or Moses Feinstein), why Judaism is important, why our ancestors died for the Torah, the struggle of faith, the challenges we face in our lives, then we have what to mourn.

Why do kids rebel? Why do kids reject? Why do we assume they will only come around when they get to Israel and become inspired?

Because it doesn't mean enough to us, or we don't know how to properly convey why it is meaningful. We can't express in words why we keep Shabbos, why we spend more money on kosher food, or why we spend so so, so much money to make sure our kids get the Jewish education that fails them. And why we don't back up what they are taught in school with similar values and education at home. And that's because we fail them.

G-d didn't talk to Moshe in a loving way for 38 years because the people were not deserving. The generation Moshe led was going to die. They spent 38 years waiting for their end to come. And during that time, G-d did not have a loving word to say to them through Moshe.

When we wonder why it sometimes feels as if G-d doesn't speak to us, it is because as good as we think we are, we are still not doing enough to transmit all we stand for to the next generation. Is it our place to live out our lives waiting to die so the next generation can go to the Promised Land? If G-d did not declare we have nothing to live for except for our time to finish up so we can pass a baton, we have no right to give up on ourselves or our children.

I encounter too many adults who go through the motions of an observant life and I wonder why they bother. They don't seem to care about davening, learning, lashon hara, laws against gambling, lewd behavior, and modesty in behavior and dress. Until we are successful at cleaning up our own house and setting goals for ourselves that correspond to the lifestyle we seem to want to model for our children (as indicated by the places we send them to be educated), the question over what new things we mourn for on Tisha B'Av remains an open book.

Every man and every woman needs to first come to grips with the statement of Ben Zoma in the beginning of the fourth chapter of Avot. "Who is rich? The one who is happy with one's portion." I will never be a kohen or a levi. I will never be a king. I will never be a mother. I will never know what it means to be loved by a husband. A woman will have a different list of what she will never be.

I am content with my lot and try to make the most of the things I can be and the opportunities I have to reach out to other people. And heaven knows, I have a long way to go in becoming the best I can be.

When we can teach ourselves and our children that our lives are meant to be more theocentric than egocentric; when we inspire and find people to inspire us, perhaps G-d will speak to us again.

Until then, the mourning comes.

As much as we learn, as much as we support learning, we are still not conveying to our children why we care and why they should care.

Send letters to the editor to letters@thejewishstar.com

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The Kosher Bookworm

Tales Out Of Jerusalem: Seven Gates To The City

Every week now for the past half year there seems to be no letup in the growing quarrels between the diverse groups within the Orthodox Jewish spectrum and non-Orthodox Jews.

These seemingly petty disputes, over time, have evolved from rhetorical battles to physical ones, and have served to sully our image and create widespread desecration of our faith. Furthermore, the lack of a responsible reaction by those who should know better has served to bring shame and disgrace upon us all.

In the books I was reading prior to my trip to Jerusalem this month I came across a recently published volume by one of our faith's leading interpreters, Rabbi Dr. Emanuel Feldman.



Alan Jay Gerber

Titled, "Tales Out Of Jerusalem" [Feldheim, 2010] this book contains a series of short essays dealing with the vast gamut of issues facing us in the world today. Organized into seven sections, Rabbi Feldman seeks to give the reader a sane, rational and responsible opinion on issues most others fear to tackle, and he does so with both charm, wit, and firmness in tone.

While tied to Jerusalem, the book deals with issues that transcend both the geographic as well as spiritual confines of the holy city. One example is an essay originally composed on January 26, 2005 and deemed contemporary

enough for the rabbi to include in this volume. It is to this essay that I wish to center my review for its content both speaks to the issues of today and represents all the eloquence to be found in this brilliant anthology.

"Ready to be Orthodox but no place to go" reads like a heartfelt plea for sanity in the ongoing disputes between the Modern Orthodox community and the Charedi community.

Rabbi Feldman gives candid observations of both the faults and strengths to be found within these diverse groups.

Each is given their due as to the sincerity of their motive and purpose. The group's devotion to faith is not questioned, rather he questions their actions and the sincerity of those actions.

Rabbi Feldman's frankness is refreshing. Consider the following observation: "I fully appreciate the sacrifice that full-time kollel learning involves: many luxuries and comforts are happily surrendered in order to maintain such dedication. But within their world, is there also room for genuinely pious and learning people who also work, earn livelihoods, and have university degrees?"

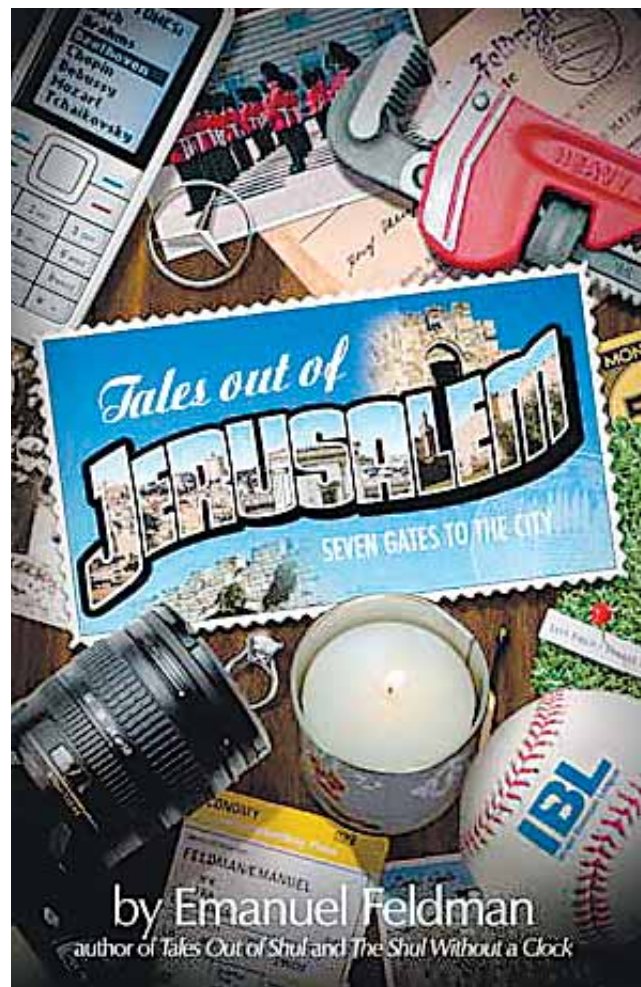
However, Rabbi Feldman also gives the following as a retort to those who seek to bash the kollel mindset. "They [the chareidim] have a charismatic leadership, a consistent ideology, they are intensely Jewish, they sacrifice," Rabbi Feldman writes. "There is a purpose in their lives, spiritual strength, sanctity, self-assurance — and these have attracted many Jews under their umbrella."

These observations, while not the final answer to the communal disputes that have bedeviled us of late, do indeed help to frame a sane and dispassionate discourse among us for the establishment of peace and tranquility as well as mutual respect among the diverse groups within our faith.

Absent from Rabbi Feldman's observations and words of advice are personal attacks, demeaning characterizations and divisive images that further help to inflame an already incendiary situation.

It behooves us at this time of year to take Rabbi Feldman's wise words to heart and to learn from them that there is balance to communal diversity, that disagreement in terms of theology and intensity of practice should not invite heresy hunting.

Sinat Yisrael should have no place in public parlance and that the Ahavat Yisrael learned from the pages of Rabbi Emanuel Feldman should be reflected on the streets of Emanuel, Israel, as well as other venues, wherever Jews live.



The Five Towns Welcome



Richard Grazi, MD

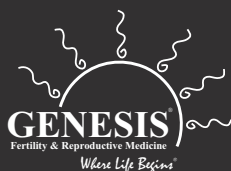


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The meaning Q & A with Rabbi Dr.

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb is Executive Vice President Emeritus of the Orthodox Union. He recently translated the Kinot for the Koren Kinot Mesorat Harav, a new translation and commentary on the Tisha B'Av services based on the work of Harav Joseph B. Soloveitchik. On Tisha B'Av (Tuesday, July 20) he will host his annual Kinot webcast on the Orthodox Union website (www.ou.org) live from the Young Israel of Woodmere.

Michael Orbach: What was the hardest part of translating the Kinot?

Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb: In general, all translations are a difficult process: It's difficult to capture any author's meaning, the various levels of his meaning, the culture he's writing for and the audiences he's addressing. The Kinot are meant to have both intellectual meaning and an emotional impact. They're designed to make a person feel grief, mourning, horror and calamity. To convey that in another language is certainly the big challenge.

MO: What was the impetus for the new translation of the Kinot?

RW: We wanted a brand new translation that would convey the emotional impact. From the time I agreed to do [the transla-

tion], I did not consult any of the English translations available, I only used traditional Hebrew sources. I used the Mossad HaRav Kook, the Daniel Goldschmidt edition, which is the most authoritative version until ours. I also consulted some other Hebrew editions and I used a Yiddish translation, called the Evra Teich edition that I found it an old bookstore in Jerusalem.

MO: Did you try to capture the rhythm of the Kinot?

RW: A few of the people that reviewed it have noticed that I tried very hard to keep the rhythm. I read every line or every phrase aloud to catch the rhythm, tempo and the meter. Sometimes I succeeded and sometimes I failed. The rhythm is an exceedingly important part of Kinot. The [Kinot] have a certain rhythm which makes them very different from liturgy like Selichot. The rhythm of Kinot is one that tries to subconsciously shock the person — an image or phrase that will make them feel the impact of the Churban [the destruction of the Temple].

MO: Which Kina was the hardest to translate?

RW: Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi's "Tziyon Halo Tishali." Rabbi Levi, unlike the other authors,



Photo courtesy Conference of Presidents

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu being presented with the OU-Koren Kinot by Malolm Hoenlein of the Conference of Presidents (left).

is primarily a poet. He wrote volumes of poetry and he's considered to be the greatest post-biblical Jewish poet. He lived in the golden age of Spain; the poetry is so beautiful that to capture it is especially difficult. He writes in the Sephard style and that presents a special challenge [as well], since all the other Kinot are in the Ashkenaz style. Poets are influenced by their culture, including their secular culture. Ashkenaz [poets] are influenced by German poetry and Sephard [poets] are influenced by Spanish and Arabic poetry.

MO: Which Kina is the most meaningful for you?

RW: The most meaningful Kina to me is number 20 in our edition. It's the Kina where we ask G-d: How could you do this to us? Where were you? It begins "Hataa Elohi," "Incline your Ear My G-d." Kina means a lament; this also has that theme, but it's a prayer and it's a strong prayer, almost a demanding prayer. It's, "Okay G-d, we've had enough, now it's time for You to listen to us." It's very simplified, but it has a special meaning.

MO: Can you give us a brief history of the Kinot?

RW: There are different traditions in the Kinot. What we're referring to is the Ashkenaz version, Sephardim have a completely different version of Kinot. The Kinot were written over many centuries, and over time more and more Kinot were included, until the 18th century when it started to take the form it has now. Any one of the authors, and there are probably a dozen different authors of the Kinot we use, wrote numerous poems expressing their feelings of the Churban or other major catastrophes in Jewish history.

We include more of Eliezer Hakalir's poems than many others and it's a mystery just when he lived. According to some opinions he actually lived in the times of the Tannaim and was Eliezer, the son of Shimon Bar Yochai. That takes you back a hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple. The more scholarly opinion is that he probably lived in the time of the 8th century. It seems pretty clear from the content analysis of his poems that he lived in Eretz Yisroel. Little is known about his life but he produced a massive amount of poems on a variety of topics. About 15 of his poems were incorporated into our Kinot. He focuses entirely on the theme of the destruction of the First and Second Temple. There are other Kinot on that theme [but] with a different spin, like comparing the destruction of Jerusalem to the Exodus from Mitzrayim. [Other Kinot]

focus on a subsequent tragedy, like the First Crusade in 1096 and the Second Crusade that occurred in the 12th century.

There is a very famous Kina that deals with a still later historical event: the burning of the Talmud in the late 13th century. There are a number of poems that begin with Tzion and deal with the whole aspect of the loss of Zion and the return — they are all laments with some anticipation and hope. What is missing is any reference to the expulsions of the Jews from Spain, which is included in the Sephardic Kinot. There's no mention of the pogroms, the most famous, The Khmelnytsky Massacre, took place in 1648-1649 in Poland and the Ukraine. The Kinot take you up to the fourteenth century, but they do not deal with the Spanish experience and anything subsequent to that [time period]. The Kinot were written long before the Holocaust and we incorporated four Kinot on the Holocaust into the Koren edition.

In my presentation on the web, I include other Kinot that deal with the Spanish Expulsion, the Dreyfus Affair, the blood libels and the more recent things like terrorism in Israel today that are not in the historical Kinot but are a very important part of Jewish history. There are Kinot written on World War One and there are Kinot on the expulsion of the Jews from the Old City in 1948 and there is a Kina on the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif.

MO: What exactly defines a Kina? Would Chaim Bialik's "In the City of Slaughter" be considered a Kinat?

RW: It's a good point. Some of the authors of the Kinot are gedolai yisroel — Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, the Maharam of Rutenberg — who are in the top 20 gedolei yisroel of the medieval times, but some of the authors we know nothing about. They may not have been great sages or rabbis and may just been poets. Any number of people who are not great rabbis or very observant wrote poems, Chaim Nachman Bialik is one, Uri Tzvi Greenberg is another. They all qualify as Kinot and they're important to read because they put us in touch with the historical memory. On Tisha B'av we're reading the Kinot in a shul so we try as much as possible to select Kinot written from a religious perspective. The poem by Bialik is controversial since it is a lament, but it is provocative since it questions G-d and it criticizes, or can be read to criticize, the passivity of the victims of the pogrom.

In our edition we include four kinot on the Holocaust. One was written by the Bobover Rebbe; another by Rabbi Schwab. The third Kina was written by Rabbi Abraham Rosen-



Photo courtesy Orthodox Union

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

of the Kinot

Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

feld. The fourth Kina is written by a poet, Yehuda Leib Bialer, a traditional Jew and a survivor of the Holocaust. He wrote several poems of the Holocaust that can be seen as Kinot. His Kina [in the edition] is modeled after the very last Kina, "Aleï Tzion;" whereas, that Kina mourns the destruction of the Temple, Bialer mourns the destruction of European Jewry. There are a lot of Kinot but we try to focus on those that write from a rabbinic-religious perspective or at least from a traditional perspective.

MO: The new edition of the Kinot features commentary by Rav Joseph Soleveitchik, how would you describe his commentary? Would you say there is a unifying theme?

RW: As it's commonly known, the Rav would teach Kinot all day, every day, on Tisha B'av for 30 years and we have transcriptions of all of them. Sam Posner did an unbelievable job of distilling them and now they're published as commentary on almost every verse of the Kinot. Did he have a unifying theme? His unifying theme was the experience, you might say, of what galut [exile] means to a contemporary Jew. He was

able to express that because he was in touch with the traditional interpretations of galut, and in touch with contemporary Jewish traditions and many aspects of Jewish history, including the Holocaust and the State of Israel. That is what makes his commentary come especially alive. The Rav gives you a sense of the historical perspective and he relates it, time and time again, to the experience of his audiences and today's audiences.

MO: What is your favorite of the Rav's interpretations?

RW: In one of the Kinot about the Crusades, the Rav points out that one of the tragedies of the Crusades, beside the murder and eradication of whole communities of Jews, was the amount of Torah lost. The Crusades took place in the times of the Baalei Tosefos and the great Rishonim — hundreds of whom were killed in the Crusades. Rabbenu Tam was not killed, but he was severely wounded by the Crusades. I wonder if that affected his capacity to learn and teach. The tragedy of the Crusades was [also] the various Torah projects in draft form that were lost to us and the hundreds of victims who were outstanding rishonim.

The Kinot have a certain rhythm that tries to subconsciously shock the person — make them feel the impact of the Churban.



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Opinion

Editorial

Welcome announcement

It would be presumptuous of us to assume that the Eida Charedis in Yerushalayim takes any step in reaction to public opinion; more presumptuous still to imagine the rabonim who comprise that ruling body of the Charedi community in Israel care less about opinions here in New York, but anyone who has felt even a twinge of aggravation over increasingly violent street protests in Israel concerning chilul Shabbos, grave desecration, real or imagined, or anything else, can feel good about a public announcement today that has been a long time coming. It is perhaps perfectly timed before Tisha B'Av to relieve hard feelings between groups of Jews who have the Torah in common and, seemingly, little else.

As reported Wednesday on the news site TheYeshivaWorld.com, the Eida Charedis, led by HaGaon Rav Yitzchok Tuvia Weiss, shlita, released a forceful Kol Koreh, a public announcement, concerning the hafganos, local parlance for the street demonstrations that in the view of many, many Jews have caused widespread chilul Hashem seen around the world.

That community's leaders now forbid children and unmarried students from taking part in demonstrations. Restless young people have been a primary source of manpower for the unrest and much of the violence has been blamed on young people somehow out of control. Now, in a community that places primary importance on obedience to rabbinic authority, they are forbidden from becoming involved.

"The Kol Koreh also warns against any acts of violence, such as stone throwing

— because it can cause serious injury, and warns against making fires" the report said.

Late is usually better than never and so it is in this case. It will certainly be interesting to see what happens, but critics, including this editorial page, can no longer complain that nothing forceful has been said about the ongoing, disgraceful violence. We greatly welcome this crucial development.

Perfectly timed before Tisha B'Av to relieve hard feelings between Jews who have the Torah in common, and, seemingly, little else.

In a similar spirit of aha-vas chinam — brotherly love — before Tisha B'Av, when we remember too well the consequences of bad feelings between Jews, this week's issue of The Jewish Star spotlights the late Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Harav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l, who was remembered in Queens last week at a Shloshim, the 30-day anniversary of his death.

Also this week, in the issue before Tisha B'Av, David Seidemann examines the importance of caring for others in an essay called Goodbye to the Arch of Titus, Alan Jay Gerber's Bookworm is in a similar vein, and we bring to you an in-depth conversation about Kinot for Tisha B'Av from a foremost authority on the subject, Rabbi Zvi Hersh Weinreb, who will again reprise his role as host of a live webcast from the Young Israel of Woodmere.

Perhaps most powerfully, Rabbi Avi Billet offers a contemporary reason to mourn on Tisha B'Av — more of a call to attention, really, but one we highly recommend, particularly to parents of young children.

Have an easy and meaningful fast.

Letters to the editor

Three lessons from witness tampering

To the Editor:

Your cover story about the indictment of a 31-year-old man in Lakewood for witness tampering ("Witness tampering charged in abuse case"; July 9, 2010) was a great service to the community for at least three reasons.

First, many still feel the "community" can handle child abuse cases better than the authorities. Yet, at the recent Agudah convention I attended, we were instructed to contact the police if there is a suspicion of child abuse.

Second, some people may think they have the right to free speech to espouse and encourage that matters like child abuse should be handled through beis din, but they could find themselves in violation of the secular law. In a New Jersey case called State v. Crescenzi, an appeals court rejected such a constitutional challenge of free speech noting "when the public interest in discovering the truth in official proceedings is balanced against a party's right to speak, that party's right is minuscule." A "beis din only" defense to prevent chillul HaShem will not go too far before any jury hearing a child abuse, witness tampering trial.

Finally, it astounds me that people willingly and openly talk to the police without the advice of counsel. The government's proof in the case would have been substantially harder without the young man talking so freely. Unless you call the police, they do not come to your house just to shmooze or have coffee. Be smart; call a lawyer before you talk too much.

Alexander (Abba Shmuel) Novak
Cedarhurst

Accused not from Beis Medrash Govoha

To the Editor:

The individual charged with intimidation is not a faculty or staff member, employee, nor representative of Beth Medrash Govoha (Witness tampering charged in abuse case; July 9, 2010). We consider intimidation in any form or format to be entirely wrong and improper.

Rabbi Aaron Kotler
Lakewood, NJ

The writer is chief executive officer of Beth Medrash Govoha.

Boss George, the college advisor

To the Editor:

George Steinbrenner died Tuesday, a larger than life figure to New

Yorkers for nearly four decades. I never met Steinbrenner in person, but our lives intersected briefly on one spring day in 1990 when he and I spoke on the phone twice for about 15 minutes. Actually, I spoke for approximately one minute and Steinbrenner spoke for 14.

When these conversations took place Steinbrenner was not the beloved figure eulogized this week. Frankly, I don't know what possessed me to call him or to think that he would take my call. My son Benjie, who was soon to graduate yeshiva high school, had just recently been accepted by Williams College, Steinbrenner's alma mater. When our family visited Williamstown, Massachusetts, it was instantly apparent that the Williams College environment was markedly different from the yeshiva world to which Benjie was accustomed, and would pose many interesting challenges. As our campus tour continued and we walked on the Steinbrenner Athletic Fields I decided I would call Mr. Steinbrenner when we returned to New York.

The next day I called the Yankee offices. I identified myself as a New York attorney calling to discuss Williams College. George Steinbrenner picked up the phone instantly. When he heard my question re the suitability of Williams for a yeshiva kid from Long Island he told me about his Jewish pal from the track team, about the new Jewish Center under construction on campus; he wouldn't let me off the phone. Unbelievably to me, he even offered to call my son to speak with him directly. So, when the housekeeper answered the phone at my cousin's Manhattan apartment during dinner and told my son that the call was for him, some Mr. Steinbrenner, everyone thought it was a practical joke being played by one of Benjie's friends. When he heard that voice say, "Hello, Ben, its George Steinbrenner," he knew it was no practical joke.

Several days later Benjie received a personal letter from George Steinbrenner on Yankee stationery congratulating him on his admission to Williams College and advising him that his son, Hal Steinbrenner, a Williams senior, would look him up in September.

So Tuesday, as TV commentators, players and celebrities recounted many tales of Steinbrenner, I couldn't help but reminisce about the day 20 years ago when George Steinbrenner, unbeknownst to anyone, took the time and made the effort to assist our family with its college decisions. Benjie never spent a day at Williams College, but we saw another side of George Steinbrenner not visible to the public (especially back then) and we will never forget the interest he showed in a yeshiva kid from Long Island and his future.

Lester Henner
Lawrence

THE JEWISH STAR

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Diplomatic Morse code

The travel plans of world leaders are diplomatic Morse code. When the leader of one country pays an official visit to another country, they are more often than not telegraphing their vision and their priorities.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is no exception to this rule.

Ahmadinejad's travel schedule provides particular insight into his objectives — and the primary objective of Iran's president is scoring points by countering the influence of the Western world in general and the United States in particular.

Ahmadinejad is out to garner rhetorical and political victories around the world. Ahmadinejad's visits are propelled by his desire to entice leaders and to excite their masses and his own.

Recently, Ahmadinejad visited Nigeria. There were two reasons for his visit. The first is that Nigeria assumed the rotating chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council. Ahmadinejad went to Nigeria to forge a strong bond between Nigerian leadership and himself, between the people of Nigeria and the people and Iran. The Iranian envisions the bond between Iran and Nigeria to be a counter balance to the influence exerted by the Western world.

The second reason for this visit was because Nigeria was the site of the D-8 Conference. The D-8 is an organization composed of the eight largest developing Muslim countries. The D stands for "developing" and the countries are Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey and Iran. These countries represent nearly one billion people. This organization fits perfectly into the vision Ahmadinejad has crafted for Iran.

The D-8 gives preferential treatment to its members in developing trade and commerce deals. Between the years 2006 and 2010 trade between D-8 members increased from \$35 billion to \$68 billion. That trade accounts for 3.3% of the world's trade. Over the next few years the D-8 hopes to bring that number as high as 15%

If these eight Muslim countries and their organization continue to harness their power we will see a significant shift in the sands of the world market and Iran will be closer to fulfilling its vision of unseating Western and US influence and power.

Iran's Foreign Ministry has just announced that Ahmadinejad will head a delegation of 70 people traveling to Lebanon. Different location, similar motivation.

Lebanon, like Nigeria, sits on the UN Security Council. In the last vote on adopting new sanctions against Iran, Lebanon chose to abstain. The Lebanese representative had asked for a delay of the vote to get instructions from his government in Beirut. In the absence of a delay, which was simply a tactical move, Lebanon abstained.

By abstaining Lebanon firmly sealed the relationship between Iran and Lebanon which, until that point, had been explosive and marked by decades of distrust. Iran has always wanted to unseat the Lebanese gov-

ernment and insert their own Shiite puppets, a.k.a. Hezbollah. The insurrection, religious discord and political unrest that have plagued Lebanon for decades are, in no small part, due to Iran's desire to affect regime change.

The upcoming Presidential trip and a recent meeting between Nabih Berri, the Lebanese Speaker of the Parliament and Aladdin Boroujerdi, the Chairman of Iran's National Security and Foreign Policy committee, are

sure signs of a serious alliance between the two Muslim nations.

The wrestling match between Iran and the U.S. continues. Right now, Iran is winning. Lebanon, a country that had been leaning against Iran and toward the West has been swayed to the other side. The D-8 is gaining momentum and momentum is power. Iran is securing the support of pivotal Arab/Muslim countries. Ahmadinejad knows how to charm

Arab leadership and he knows how to woo the Muslim population.

Dot, dot dot, dash dash dash, dot dot dot. That's Morse code for SOS. The United States and the Western world are in danger.

Micah D. Halpern is a columnist and a social and political commentator. Read his latest book THUGS. He maintains The Micah Report at www.micahhalpern.com.

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Opinion

Goodbye to the Arch of Titus

One plus one plus one does not always equal three. I love my children, you see, love the concept of summer camp, and love to visit with my children. But I detest visiting day. Driving from camp to camp, then to activities, then to lunch, onto supper and then back to two different camps is more than I can handle.

Visiting Day did not begin well last Sunday. As I was driving on Route 17 on the way up to the mountains a tattoo-covered creature sporting a bandanna decided that I was driving too slowly. First he tailgated me. Then he passed me on the right and while cutting back in front of me hurled a bottle of water in the direction of my windshield. Fortunately, it missed, and I continued on what seemed to be my 40-year journey in the Catskill desert.

I couldn't erase that episode from my mind for a good hour or so. The thought of what might have occurred had the bottle hit my windshield was frightening. I was saddened at how selfish and self-centered humans or reasonable facsimiles thereof could be. I couldn't believe that someone, who was obviously in need of anger management training, would risk injury to himself and to others simply because he couldn't speed down 17 at his desired rate.

I was hoping that sometime during the day my faith in humanity would be restored.

It did not occur at my first stop, the camp attended by my 12-year-old daughter. My daughter's counselor, junior counselor, assistant counselor, assistant to the junior counselor, and the junior assistant to the assistant junior counselor, immediately greeted me. In unison they told me how wonderful my "granddaughter" is. I politely explained to them that it is my daughter whom they have the pleasure of spending the summer with, and not my granddaughter.

Fearful that their tips were in jeopardy, the cadre of counselors apologized for the unintended snub and assured me that if indeed I were a grandfather, I would be a very young looking one at that.

My wife and I and our daughter embarked for camp number two in our minivan, which at that point looked like a garbage can on wheels. Within minutes of arrival my faith in what we as parents, our schools and our camps, are teaching our children was immediately restored. By the looks of it, our two youngest children, attending sleep-away camp for the first time, adjusted to the separation better than I. They ran to us, jumped in our arms, smothered my wife and me

with hugs and kisses, and showed us to their bunks.

Before introducing us to their counselors, they took pride in how tidy their cubbies were and showed us where they hid their nosh. As we were about to depart the grounds, my nine-year-old whispered in my year, "Daddy, there is a girl here from Illinois. Her parents couldn't come in for visiting day. Her grandparents live in Monsey and were supposed to come to spend the day with her, and she just found out that they couldn't come. She has nobody to spend the day with; can I invite her to come with us?"

"Of course," I answered. The smiles on my daughter's face and on her friend's face were secondary only to the smile in my heart as I realized that somewhere along the way, in teaching our children, we had done something right.

We made the appropriate arrangements with the camp administration and took this little girl with us wherever we went. She swam with us, ate with us and, in true visiting day tradition, shopped with us.

And that's how we entered the nine days, the period of national mourning for the Jewish people, when our temples were destroyed because, perhaps, we were bottle throwers and tantrum throwers, as opposed to "embracers of other people's children."

The Roman leader Vespasian and his son and successor Titus laid siege to Jerusalem in or about 70 CE. Titus's successor Flavius Silva finished off the conquest of the Holy Land approximately two years later at Masada. It was there that a thousand men, women and children decided to die as Jews, rather than live as Romans.

Our challenge is a lot more difficult. Our challenge is not to die as Jews, but to live as Jews. Titus's arch in Rome with those painful words "Judea Capta" speaks only of the physical structures that comprise Jerusalem. We have not rebuilt those structures and therefore Titus's words, painful though they are to read, are nevertheless still true.

But neither Titus nor Nebuchadnezzar before him, or Hitler after him, or our modern-day enemies, has ever succeeded in capturing the Jewish spirit. And so while Judah might have been captured and destroyed, the Jew himself was not. I found uplifting the simple words of a nine-year-old: "Daddy, can she come with us; she is all alone," as a harbinger, hopefully, for the rebuilding of our nation, our people and our structures.

Those simple words, "She is all alone; can she come with us," bespeak the care, concern and sensitivity that Titus and his ilk will never conquer.

A few more moments like that and perhaps the Arch of Titus will go the way the Berlin Wall.

David Seidemann is a partner with the law firm of Seidemann & Mermelstein. He can be reached at (718) 692-1013 and at ds@lawofficesm.com

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH



David Seidemann

Afraid their tips were in jeopardy, the counselors apologized and assured me that I would be a very young looking grandfather.

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Precious Princess

By Aviva Rizel

Columnist's Note: This letter was sent with the writer's parental permission.

Dear Aviva,

I am 8 years old. My first problem is that I want to be famous and I'm not. My second problem is that all my friends' mom and dads let them do all sorts of stuff, but my mommy and daddy don't. Like, watch certain shows, go outside by themselves, read certain stuff and let them do stuff by themselves. Most of my friends have their own room too. I don't.

I told my mom and dad that I want to do stuff like my friends, too, but they don't understand me. So then I just sit and think of a better way to explain it to them, but nothing comes into my mind.

They try to understand me, but then they end up doing the stuff that I don't really care about so much. Like, they sometimes want me to babysit my brother for 10 minutes while they're in the house. Or they would tell me to stay inside by myself for three minutes while they talk to a neighbor. They're trying to help me but I don't want to do those things. Well, I guess I could do that stuff, but there's other stuff that I want to do more.

Could you help me get them do the other stuff that I really want to do?

-Princess

Dear Princess,

Wow, these sound like very big problems that we need to talk about. I'm going to try my hardest to help you out, Princess.

Let's first talk about the problem you have with your parents.

You sound very smart. You know what you want and that's great! Now let's try to find a way for your parents to be able to give you what you want.

It sounds like your parents are really cool because they're trying to understand you and let you do very big things. Most kids don't start babysitting until they're much, much older. You sound like a very good babysitter whom your parents trust. But the problem is that you want to do other big-kid things that they're not letting you do.

You're doing the right thing by talking to your parents and telling them what you want. Instead of telling them everything that you want, think of just one thing that you want. This one thing has to be something that you think they might allow. Maybe there is a book that you really want to read and your parents don't let. Ask them respectfully and politely if they could read the book themselves and

My problem is that my friends' moms and dads let them do all sorts of stuff but my mommy and daddy don't... They don't understand me.

then decide if it is appropriate.

Remember, your parents are not making up rules just to make you sad. There is a reason that they don't let you do everything. If your parents check out a book and still say that it's not okay, then ask them to tell you which book they would allow. There are tons of cool books out there.

Oh! I just thought of the best idea! Maybe one of your parents can take you and a bunch of your friends out for pizza or ice cream. Wouldn't it be cool if your parent stood away from you guys in the store and let you guys order for yourself and sit at your own table?

Ask your parents if they would be okay with that. They might think it's a good idea, or they might think that it's a bad idea. If they think that it's a bad idea, you might feel very disappointed. After you are feeling better, you should really talk to them. Tell them that you feel like you are ready to start doing more things by yourself. (The word for "doing things by yourself" is "independent" — in-da-pen-dent.) Ask them to help you think of something to make you a little more

independent that you would be happy with and they would be comfortable with.

Sometimes your parents might upset you when they don't let you do things. It might look like your friends are allowed to do all the fun stuff and you're not. I want you to know that your friends also aren't allowed to do everything they want. And your friends also get disappointed when their parents say no. Try to think about the things that you are allowed to do, and try to do those things more. Like, if you are allowed to call your friends on the phone, see if you can do that more often.

One more thing, Princess: Even if your parents don't let you do the things that you are asking for, I still think they are totally cool because there is something that your parents let you do that none of your friends have done. You are the only 8 year-old who has ever written to me. You are the only kid whose letter was ever published in this column. And now you've even solved your first problem all by yourself — enjoy your 15 minutes of fame!

-Aviva

Aviva Rizel has received her Master's in marriage and family therapy from Hofstra University and sees couples, families and individuals. She can be reached at avivarizel.mft@gmail.com.

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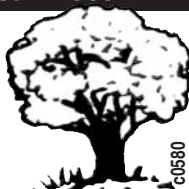
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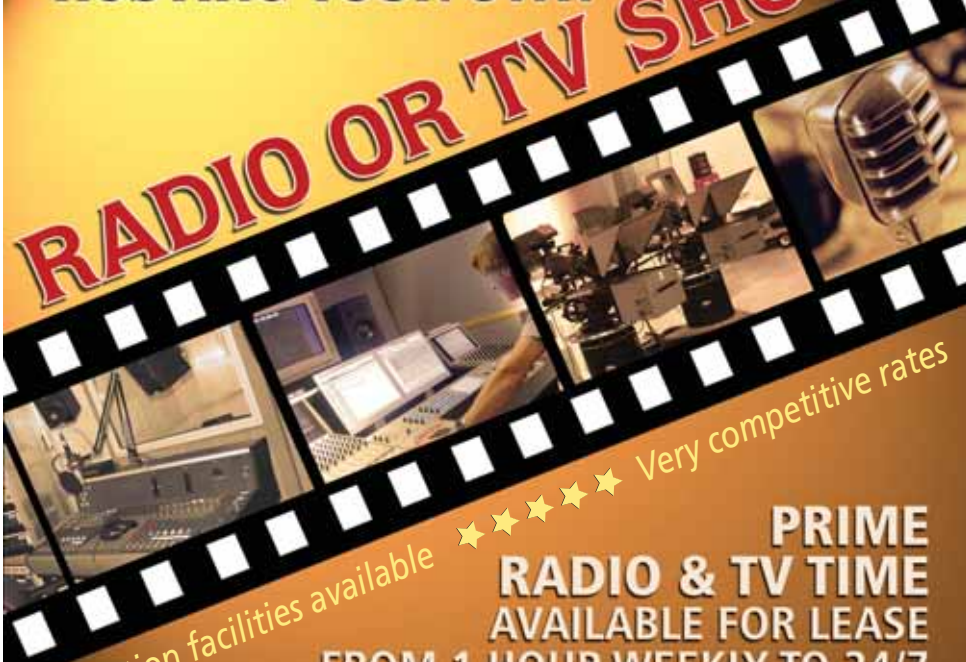


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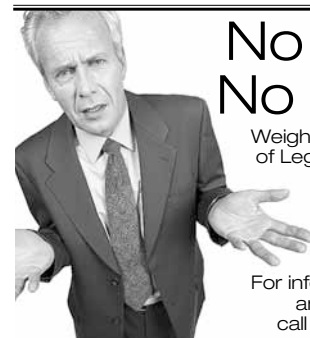
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That's life

Edited by Miriam L. Wallach

Dear That's Life,

"I get by with a little help from my friends"
— The Beatles

We all depend on our friends for different things. You want your friends to be honest with you and tell you when you look fat in a dress, to let you know when you have spinach in your teeth or to help out when you are in a pinch. Sometimes there are uncomfortable situations that need to be dealt with and while it may not be easy to discuss, you rely on your friends to be there for you, through thick and thin. And just like they mean a lot to you, you know you mean a lot to them, too.

A number of months ago, one of my dearest friends, who I will refer to here as Aviva, sent out an email to a number of her closest friends. In it she advocated for herself and reminded all of us how much she wanted to be married. And while she has become much more proactive in the last number of years in her efforts to find her bashert — attending singles events and putting her name on the lists of shadchanim in various areas — she was taking it to the next level.

Aviva asked us to forward her information to other people, to tell our dog walker about her and to discuss her at Shabbat lunch. We should tell people how wonderful she is (which is true), how full of life she is (also true), and how she is going to make someone a wonderful wife (absolutely true). I know that it is a matter of time before I dance at her wedding but until then, I did what she asked and hoped that my talking her up will bring us that much closer to putting on our dancing shoes.

While on the phone with her last week, Aviva got another call and put me on hold. A couple of minutes later, she came back on the

line and was laughing. "A friend I work with," she explained, "just called me and said, 'I found your husband.'" Wow, I thought, that's pretty wild, and I asked her to tell me what she was talking about.

Intrigued and wary, Aviva said she asked this person for clarification. Her friend from work was originally from Miami and goes back every once in a while. It seems she was watching television when she found Aviva's future spouse. "I was watching Big Brother," she said, "and there is a guy on [the show] who is a podiatrist and he's from Miami and he says he's Modern Orthodox." And after watching the episode, she decided he seemed like a really nice guy and would be perfect for Aviva. "When I go back to Miami next month," she added, "I'll find his office and make an appointment so I can check him out for you." She was not having any foot issues in particular, but she was convinced that he would be the love of Aviva's life and so she was going to check him out. Aviva appreciated her efforts and if nothing else, was very thankful that her friend was keeping her in mind.

Nothing surprises me. Years ago a cousin of mine who lives in Israel had a friend who was on an Israeli game show. A guy watching the show thought my cousin's friend was cute and he tracked her down. Once you find out what city someone lives in, chances are, you can find at least one other person whom you have in common. And that is what this guy did, and they lived happily ever after.

Who said television was useless? It may just be the most under-utilized shidduch tool ever. Move over JDate. Stranger things have happened.

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