

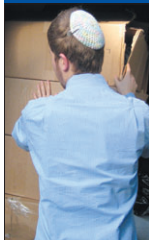
THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

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Clothing and food drive begins

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STILL A ROSH YESHIVA

Leib Tropper remains in charge

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New meaning to 'Shas at your fingertips'

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IN MY VIEW

Consoling mourners

The power of the written word

BY NAOMI STERNBERG

Baruch Dayan Ha'emes. I've made that bracha [blessing], Blessed is the True Judge, upon hearing of a death, many times before. But this time it was different. This time it was my father.

To me he was Abba, but known to thousands of other Jews as Zvi Reich z"l. Soon after shiva, life resumed at breakneck speed, with the deluge of Yomim Tovim [holidays] coming fast and furious. Now that time has permitted me an opportunity

to reflect on the experience, there are some insights that I feel are important to share.

"Although we so appreciated everyone who came and called, there is something particularly special and personal about the written word."

First, shiva is an indescribably powerful experience and a remarkable therapeutic tool. So much so that I sympathize with aveilim [mourners] who are denied the opportunity due to Yom Tov, or non-Jews who return to business as usual shortly after the loss of a loved one. The support expressed by the community, friends and people with whom I

haven't been in contact for decades was overwhelming and moving. There was a tremendous sense of warmth, compassion and truly, "Imo anochi ba'tzarah" [we share your pain].

My father is best remembered as the founding director of Camp Morasha, which he ran with my mother, she should live and be well, for 26 years. It was an innovative concept in its time, combining quality camping, a professional educational staff and Kollel, with emphasis on learning, Torah values and love of Eretz Yisroel, in a fun environment. Today this is taken for granted, but at the time it was the first camp of its kind. He was involved in klal [communal] work for years before Morasha was born, but this was his signature accomplishment, as my brother put it.

During the shiva, people whose lives were touched by their Morasha experiences came and called to share in our loss, which they felt was their loss as well. They told

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Naomi Sternberg is a social worker living in Far Rockaway with her husband and family. Questions or comments? E-mail newsroom@thejewishstar.com

Welcome to the Five Towns



Photo by Faige Yudkovsky

A Camp Simcha camper, with volunteers Penina Wolff and Hindy Ross, greeted visitors to the Chai Lifeline Friends 'N Fun Shabbaton in Lawrence last Friday. Batsheva Katz and Beth Honig hosted 30 campers and 30 counselors. Fifty air mattresses were purchased and three hospital beds rented to enable the entire group to sleep at the Katz home. The Honig family hosted all the meals. At Ronnie Lowinger's home on Motza'ei Shabbat, the campers went swimming and sung karaoke.

Police brass, D.A. discuss burglaries

BY MALKA EISENBERG

Tips and facts at Young Israel of Woodmere forum

Have a working alarm system — a loud one; don't be a hero — if someone breaks in while you're in the house, get out if you can. Major and minor crimes are down overall in Nassau County, and prosecutors do their best to avoid plea bargains. Those are some of the major points police officials and the Nassau County district attorney made at a forum at the Young Israel of Woodmere last week. It was intended to allay concerns about security after several high-profile burglaries in the Five Towns.

More than 200 people listened raptly in a meeting that stretched to two hours, punctuated by occasional laughter and applause. Rabbi Herschel Billet introduced the speakers and interjected commentary, opening with a brief dvar Torah.

"Burglary has been very much in the minds of a lot of people," said Inspector John Capece, commanding officer of the Fourth



Photo by Arthur Findlay

Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice at the Young Israel of Woodmere.

Precinct, which includes the Five Towns, East Rockaway, Oceanside, Island Park, Lido Beach, Atlantic Beach and Point Lookout. "We had a couple of high-profile cases that made media attention, occupied-dwelling burglaries — a break-in when someone is there. Those are the ones we're very concerned about."

When someone breaks into the house when you are home, said Capece, "that is the most dangerous scenario we have in Nassau County. If you can get out, get out. If they confront you, if they have a weapon, comply with what they say. The safety of the children and yourself are the most important. Run into the street, don't agitate the intruder, don't add to tension, go to a neighbor. Don't be a hero."

Capece defined burglary as breaking into a home and taking property. Robbery is a "physical force crime," he said, taking property from someone physically, with or without a weapon. If someone breaks into your garage and takes a

See POLICE BRASS, Page 11

'Pay what you want' doesn't equal zero

Shlock Rock artist conducts honor system experiment in Jewish music

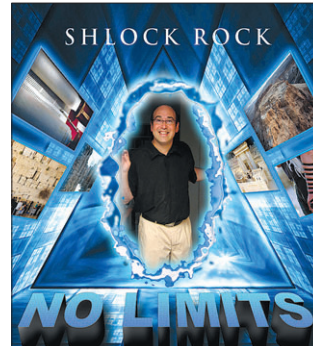
BY TOVA ROSS

Lenny Solomon didn't plan on releasing a new CD this year.

"With the economy the way it is, I knew it was not the best time to come out with a new album," explained Solomon, who founded the Jewish music group Shlock Rock 24 years ago.

But inspiration waits for no economic upturn, and last year, Solomon, a tireless producer who thrives on little sleep, wrote 12 songs in four days. Eager to share his work with Shlock Rock fans, he decided to release the album, called "No Limits," anyway — online, and at no set charge. Fans could pay whatever they wanted to download, and if they didn't want to pay, they didn't have to.

Innovation or lunacy?



"No Limits," Shlock Rock's latest album, is available online.

There are likely to be people in both camps, but Solomon is a firm believer that the pay-what-you-want plan will ultimately be a success, if not the most lucrative move of his career.

Solomon first learned of the concept in 2007, when the British band Radiohead released its seventh album, "In

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Shabbat

Candlelighting: 4:34 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends 5:38 p.m.
Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat ■ Parshat Va'era

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Dear That's Life,

There's something surreal about being able to pick up a birth certificate and a death certificate at the same office at the Town of Hempstead town hall. Reality checks are available everywhere; some come when you least expect them. The same is true about opportunities. To quote one of my favorite movies, "Great moments are born from great opportunity." And great opportunities present themselves everyday at Costco, and I don't mean just for the potential of 'buying in bulk for cheap.' I often find myself among the many who leave that warehouse with a number of things in their cart that they did not know they needed until they saw them there. I don't really need a pecan pie on a Tuesday that can serve twenty of my nearest and dearest but at \$8, who can resist? And how about those muffins? Man, those are good. But the great opportunity

that exists at Costco is the potential for a good shidduch date. If you can make it through the entire store and still like each other at the end, you can buy an engagement ring on your way out. It's like one stop shopping. And if you would prefer to get engaged with a bracelet, a set of tires or an abnormal number of Q-tips, this is the place for you. Do people still go to airports on dates? I never understood that. Where's the excitement in that? Is it in the bomb-sniffing dogs or watching the games people play when they try not to be charged extra for their overweight suitcases? I would not have done well had someone taken me to JFK on a date. Costco, at least, is practical, especially if the date isn't going well. "Listen, you're a really nice guy and it's nothing personal, but you and I know this isn't going anywhere — so do you mind if I pick up some toilet paper?" The super-confident couple

can even buy mattresses at Costco. Nothing says 'long term relationship' like a couple schlepping twin beds with a hand truck. Sheets, pillowcases and brisket — this store has it all for the Jewish family. And then, of course, Costco presents its own reality check, and I don't just mean the bill. Recently speaking to my dad who lives in Florida, he told me of his latest trip to Costco down there, which offered a very unique item for sale that I had not seen up here: caskets. No, they were not actually on display, but there was a catalogue and an order form where you could custom design the coffin of your liking. Pink satin, brass handles, choice of wood - all custom made and brought to you by the fine people at Costco. And no, you do not need to purchase these in bulk. Life and death: brought to you by Costco and the Town of Hempstead.

MLW



Photo by Bracha Katz
Margalit Graber, Chaya Wertman, and Alexandra Rubin carrying the canned goods to be transported to Lawrence High School.

Orthodox community, Lawrence schools find common ground
Winter coats and canned food are the link

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

In what could be the coldest winter to hit New York since the 1970's and after what might have been the most divisive year ever in the Lawrence School District, coats and cans are bringing the Five Towns together again.

Five Towns One Community, a new organization founded by members of the Dist. 15 school board and other community leaders, is working to conduct food and clothing drives across the Five Towns for poor families whose children attend the Lawrence Public Schools. "That first cold day parents

called and couldn't send their kids to school because they didn't have winter jackets," related Bracha Katz, the community liaison for the Lawrence schools and one of the organizers of the drive. The seeds of the organization were planted at a school board meeting held before Thanksgiving where board members spoke with community leaders, school social workers and principals. The social workers discussed some of the problems facing the current crop of students.

"65 percent of students are minorities and over 45 percent are on reduced lunch [in the school]," explained Gary Schall, the director of the Lawrence School District music program and another organizer. "We have kids who are in need of jackets and clothes in general." He said that the participants moved quickly after the board meeting to address the needs. Board members, the majority of whom are Orthodox, contacted local shuls and yeshivas. Other community leaders contacted civic organizations and churches.

"Poverty is a problem in every community," said Reverend Wilbert Pharr of the First Baptist Church of Lawrence, which is collecting food and clothing. "It's quietly kept, because one of the things is people and families have pride and they don't like this to be publicized, but wherever there is a need we have to seek it out."

Using funds left over from a successful campaign this past August to raise money for families devastated by a fire, the organization's first action was to distribute \$2,000 worth of Stop-and-Shop gift cards to 80 families identified by social workers. However, the number of families asking for the cards quickly grew.

"The problem with the gift cards we were giving out was there was so many people in need," Katz explained. "We had to really pick the most needy. We sent home forms with the clothing drive and they came back so quickly."

Clothing and food drives were started in three local yeshivas with churches pitching in to collect and donate the clothing. Students in the Lawrence High School began sorting and organizing the clothing.

The Hebrew Academy of Long Beach (HALB) elementary school collected close to 400 cans for the drive, according to Rabbi Jeremy Feder, who is supervising the effort.

"Kids were excited to bring in [cans]," Rabbi Feder told the Jewish Star. "Kids would come looking for the collectors to give it to them before they were collected."

A clothing drive in the Davis-Renov-Stahler (DRS) Yeshiva High School brought in 3,000 items of clothing, including 500 new winter coats and sweatshirts donated by the Peyser family of Lawrence, owners of the Weatherproof clothing company.

"It's not such a hard thing to do," said Natan Cohen, a senior who, with Ben Peyser, spearheaded the effort. "And it makes a huge impact on the community. It's something in my See FINDING, Page 13

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All the best,
Mayer Fertig
Mayer Fertig
Editor & Publisher



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THE JEWISH STAR

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A smart career move

Editorial

If Leib Tropper were by some chance to segue into a career as a Jewish music singer, he'd better take care not to perform material that's too "creative," or dangerously approaching a vague similarity to "goyish" music. If he does, hoo-boy, he'll be in big trouble. In some corners of the frum world, the rabbinical establishment would come down on him like a ton of bricks. Cherems [bans] and kol korays [proclamations] would be flying. They'd have no choice you understand: the Jewish people's very status as an Am Kadosh V'tahor [a holy and pure nation] would be at stake. Children, even adults, would be in desperate danger of being led astray. Rabbinical leaders, no doubt, would stand up to be counted; weighing in on a life and death issue in which silence simply would not be an option.

Similarly, he'd be smart to not go into the human hair sheitel business, or author honest biographies of great modern sages, or open a Chareidi news website in Israel. A guy could get into a lot of trouble dabbling in such spiritually dan-

gerous lines of work. If Tropper decides to leave Monsey and relocate to the Five Towns, he'd better not start a blog. As a former "doer" — someone who made things happen in the Jewish world — the last thing we would want to see is for him to become a lowly blogger — some kind of journalistic bottom feeder with nothing better to do than to point out others' misdeeds. No. A much smarter play by Tropper would be to keep doing exactly what he's doing right now. He should be a rosh yeshiva and the head of a Jewish outreach organization. Apparently, no one's going to say a word about that.

Even after being caught on tape in the worst, most compromising sort of way (see story on page 7), he's still running his yeshiva in Monsey and heading a non-profit through which flows millions of dollars — millions that were the source of his power in the world of Orthodox conversions and (who

knows?) may yet be again. If you catch some zealot's ear the wrong way with Jewish music that isn't quite Jewish enough, you run the real risk of that someone making it his business to shut you down, put you out of business and simply break you — and all by rabbinical fiat; nice and kosher. But Tropper is literally getting a free pass. Are we the only ones taking crazy pills or does anyone else find it strange that virtually not a single prominent rabbinical figure outside the leadership of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) — and they are hardly household names — has said a public word about the incredible scandal this man created? After years of instigating holier-than-thou controversies over conversions and other issues, funded by someone else's millions, Tropper was unmasked as the worst sort of hypocrite — he has denied nothing — and yet, he continues to go to the office each day and call himself a rosh yeshiva. Really, this one takes the cake.

Letters

Don't buy Facebook argument

To the Editor:
Regarding "Why I don't facebook" (Opinion; Rabbi Reuven

Spolter; Jan. 8, 2010). Wasn't this the same fellow who found no tolerance for Tier-1 secular universities on the theory that they pose too great a risk for Jewish students? He is certainly entitled to his opinion, and I am glad to see that he is consistent. I would suggest to him though, that some things are ok in moderation. In fact, some things,

like online social networks, can improve quality of life...in a meaningful, 'modest' and time efficient way. Like pizza and ice cream, moderation is appropriate. Then again, perhaps Spolter has written off those foods, like he has secular universities and facebook, because they are too tempting. Sounds rather silly, but so is his pseudo-intellectual evaluation about modesty on facebook.

In the interest of full disclosure, I should note that I am a divorce attorney, and some of my clients have engaged in 'bad' online behavior that is good for my business. Yet other clients

had done really 'bad' things on their way to yeshiva, and one fellow flirted with a married woman during shul. Should everyone then avoid yeshiva and shul?

MARIO ALEX JOSEPH
Woodmere

Thank you for Chai Lifeline Shabbaton

To the Editor:
On behalf of the children

and families of Chai Lifeline, thank you to the entire Lawrence-Cedarhurst community for opening your hearts and homes to 30 girls living with life-threatening or debilitating illness and 30 energetic, dynamic counselors this past Shabbat, January 9th. In their third Friends 'N Fun weekend, hostesses Batsheva Katz and Beth Honig provided games, activities, and entertainment that pleased each and every participant. Chai Lifeline's innovative Friends 'N Fun weekends give former and potential campers a booster shot of Camp Simcha and Camp Simcha Special

magic that reinforces self-esteem and cements all-important friendships. Community volunteers spearheaded the entire effort, granting royal treatment and extraordinary hospitality. The combination of devoted hosts and the lively Camp Simcha counselors melded together to create an environment of pure delight and support that sustains campers from summer to summer. A special thank you to the hostesses for their enthusiasm, delectable Shabbat food, and generous warmth. Thank you to the 100 women and girls from See LETTERS, Page 13

CORRECTION

In "Parking rule change on Cedarhurst street" (January 8, 2010) the parking rule change was incorrectly said to be on Carmen Avenue. It is actually Columbia Avenue. The Jewish Star regrets the error.

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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

Erase the conflict within

I would like to meet the genius that said, "Starve a cold, feed a fever," or is it the other way around? I suffered through both last week and lay in bed for days wondering whether I should stuff myself or starve myself. During one of my days in bed I availed myself of the opportunity to watch the midday news. The networks were televising the daily briefing by the White House press secretary, Robert Gibbs. Within minutes I realized I had found someone who actually says less than the president himself.

I counted 24 "I cannot comment on that," 17 "the president has already commented on that," 11 "the president will share his comments on that in the future," and nine "I can't comment on something the president said that he would not comment on." But the exchange that caused my fever to spike, or so it seemed, was when one reporter asked Mr. Gibbs if the president intended to answer questions from the press regarding a Nigerian bomber's attempt to blow up an aircraft headed for Detroit. Mr. Gibbs responded, "I answered that question yesterday when I told you that I will not answer questions about the president not answering questions."

Somebody please recommend me for



David Seidemann

that job! It seems so easy.

Thoroughly disgusted and no more informed than I was before the briefing began, I picked up the Bible and read of the encounter between Moses and the Egyptian taskmaster who was striking a Jew. I conducted my own imaginary news briefing and began to pepper Moses with questions. Why does the verse say "and he (Moses) saw an

Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brethren?" If the verse said "a Hebrew man" do we not know that this was one of the brethren of Moses? What does the phrase "of his brethren" teach us that we would not know if the verse simply concluded with the words "striking a Hebrew man?"

The next verse begins with the words "he (Moses) turned this way and that way and saw that there was no man." Which ways did Moses look; what exactly was he looking at? What or whom was Moses looking for? The verse continues "and he saw that there was no man." Why does the verse use the Hebrew word "Ish," man, which usually connotes a man of great stature? Why doesn't the verse simply say and he, Moses, saw that there was no Egyptian, that there was no other person? Who is that "Ish," that "man," that the Torah is referring to?

What permitted Moses to kill an Egyptian who was only hitting a Jewish slave? Perhaps Moses should have simply hit the Egyptian in the manner of "an eye for an eye?" Unlike Robert Gibbs, my press conference had answers.

Moses was conflicted. He was born to a Jewish mother but raised in the house of an Egyptian king. And so when he saw an Egyptian taskmaster striking a Jewish slave, Moses was momentarily startled. After all, the Egyptian taskmaster was simply following the rules of the King by hitting a Jewish slave who refused to follow the rules of the King. This slave deserved to be hit and if the taskmaster did not hit him, he, the taskmaster, would himself face royal punishment. The "Egyptian" in Moses related to that reality.

But then Moses hearkened back to his roots. This was not merely a Hebrew that was being struck. It was a "Hebrew of his brethren." His brotherhood, his roots, trumped his allegiance to the society that raised him. The verse tells us that Moses turned "this way and that way." He looked at himself; he looked at both dimensions of himself. He looked at the Egyptian in him; he looked at the Hebrew in him. "And he saw that there was no man." Moses saw that unless he took a stand, unless he decided right then and there whether the Egyptian Moses or the Hebrew Moses should rise to the occasion, then he, Moses, was no man. The Hebrew

term "Ish," man, refers to none other than Moses himself. Moses realized that if he waffled, if he straddled the line between Egyptian and Hebrew, then he was no "man."

"And he smote the Egyptian." I believe this to mean that Moses smote the Egyptian within himself. He eradicated all vestiges of the Egyptian culture and any allegiance he might've had to the Egyptian king and the Egyptian society. Moses smote the Egyptian within himself so that only the Hebrew Moses remained. Interestingly enough, the numerical value of the Hebrew letters that comprise the word "Hamitzri," meaning Egyptian, is the same as the value of the Hebrew letters that comprise the word "Moshe," meaning Moses.

Moses was comprised of two equal parts hinted to us by the fact that "Hamitzri" and "Moshe" have the same numerical value. It was only after Moses was able to rise to the challenge and recognize his true roots, his true allegiance, that he was able to advocate on his people's behalf. Which brings me back to my original point.

We, the descendents of Moses, need people of substance advocating on our behalf in statehouses across this country and in Washington DC. And I don't mean lobbyists. I mean members of the House of Representatives and members of the Senate. Major Jewish organizations and institutions such as the Orthodox Union, the National Council of Young Israel, the Rab-

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binical Council of America, the ZOA, Agudath Israel, Yeshiva University, Touro College and the like should band together and identify competent men and women across America to run for Congress.

I've seen the competition, and it ain't that great. I simply cannot believe that within our ranks there doesn't exist at least a few of the brethren that can string a few coherent sentences together and articulate positions that benefit the masses. I simply cannot believe that within our ranks there doesn't exist at least a few of the brethren that possess the oratory skills and the personality to inspire brethren and non-brethren alike.

I simply cannot believe that within our ranks there doesn't exist at least a few of our brethren that are sufficiently educated, adequately presentable and sharp enough to navigate the conflicts that sometimes arise in being both an American and a Jew.

The aforementioned Jewish organizations constantly and properly make appeals for financial support. Now it is time for us to appeal to them. Now is the time for them to search in every community, in every city, and in every state for those individuals that possess that knowledge and talent that turns boys into men, girls into women, and both genders into leaders.

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.

I'M THINKING

Radicalizing the girls

Palestinian leaders hold up female terrorists as role models

The United States is hounding Israel to make peace with the Palestinians. Israel is not adverse to the idea. The problem is that Israel has no one with whom to make peace.

Can a country engage in a peace process when there is no partner for peace?

The United States, from the president to the secretary of state to the special envoy to the Middle East, hold current Palestinian



Micah D. Halpern

leadership in good standing, even in high esteem. Israel holds them in contempt. Israel considers them to be supporters of terror.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, appointed to his position by the president, have embraced "the Shaheed," the "terrorist model" as an educational model for Palestinian children.

And they've taken it a step further. Abbas and Fayyad have reached deep into Palestinian history and are extolling women terrorists and encouraging Palestinian youth, especially girls, to view them as role models. They have even created a new word, shaheeda, the feminine for shahid, and introduced it into Arabic language and culture.

And the United States is standing silently by as Palestinian children are encouraged to aspire to become human bombs who murder innocent Israelis.

It's bad enough that current

Palestinian leadership does not have the power to deliver, even if a peace agreement is carved out. It's bad enough that current Palestinian leadership lacks the creativity and backbone to lead Palestinians to a situation where they can live side by side with Israelis in peace. It's bad enough that current Palestinian leadership does not have the strength to confront opponents to a peace deal.

Worst of all is that current Palestinian leadership is publicly and proudly lauding and applauding terrorists and memorializing them as heroes and heroines of the Palestinian people.

Wafa Idris was a Palestinian terrorist, a suicide bomber. In 2002 she wounded 150 people and killed one when she detonated her bomb outside a Jerusalem shoe store. Members of a Five Towns family, the Sokolows, were among the injured. Today, on Palestinian TV, you can

watch a music video about Wafa Idris. Today, she has a page on Facebook. Just recently, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas delivered a 45-minute long presentation proclaiming Wafa Idris to be a proud shaheeda of the Palestinian people.

Dalal Mughrabi is responsible for the most deadly terror attack ever perpetrated against Israel. In 1978 she masterminded the Coastal Road Massacre, killing 37 Israeli men, women and children and wounding another 71. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas sponsored a celebration in honor of what would have been Mughrabi's 50th birthday. There was a huge banner with her smiling face. The banner read: "Under the sponsorship of President Mahmoud Abbas, the Political and National Education Authority. A ceremony on the anniversary of the birth of the Bride of Cosmos, the Shaheeda Dalal Mughrabi."

The PA has named two high schools for girls after Mughrabi. There is a computer science center named after her. Two summer camps bear her name. A sports stadium and squares in towns and cities throughout the Palestinian Authority and Gaza carry the name of this terrorist.

Current Palestinian leaders, recipients of significant U.S. tax dollars, take pride in the deadly acts perpetrated by these woman and their terrorist, mass murderer, comrades. And the United States thinks it is wise for Israel to make peace.

Think again, United States, think again.

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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PARSHAT VA'ERA

Torah: a lease on life

How old was Moshe when he fled from Egypt in Chapter 2? Depending which Midrash you follow, he was either a teenager, 20, or 40. No matter which approach we follow, he spent at least 40 years in Midian before G-d sent him to be the deliverer, to take the Israelites out of Egypt. That's a long time to spend away, working, building a family, and preparing, through natural existence, to become the savior and deliverer of the people of Israel.

In 7:7, we are told the ages of brothers Moshe and Aharon at the time they stood before Paroh. Moshe is 80 and Aharon is 83. What is the significance? If we need to know Moshe is 80 at this time, we could certainly figure out from the end of the Torah when we are told that after forty years in the wilderness, Moshe died at age 120. A simple calculation of 120 minus 40 will bring us to 80 at the time of the Exodus.



Rabbi Avi Billet

Let us assume for a moment that specific ages are not that important, that the fact Moshe and Aharon are specifically 80 and 83, respectively, is insignificant.

Is the Torah trying to teach us something deeper, a significant lesson to be derived from two older men, taking charge of a nation at

G-d's behest, in the latter third of their lives?

Ibn Ezra points out that no other career-prophet began his prophetic career at such an advanced age. Moshe and Aharon also were unique in the kind of prophecy they revealed to the people, as all the other prophets served in a role of rebuking those who had turned from the proper path. Finally, their relationship with G-d was unique in that their prophecy was attained through a cloud, while others fell into a sort of slumber when they received G-d's revelations.

Rabbi Ovadiah Seforno focuses on their age specifically, pointing out that

despite their advanced status, they nonetheless acted as sprite youths, rushing to fulfill God's will. At the age of 80, they took the term "gevurot" — strengths — (Avot 5:21), to new definitions.

Netziv emphasizes that the Torah mentions their age in relation to when they appeared before Paroh, as opposed to in the context of when G-d appeared to them. It seems quite likely that Aharon had received the word of G-d prior to Moshe's experience, but that Moshe, at age 80, was receiving it for the first time.

One might argue that 80 in those days was like middle age now. Most people achieve the pinnacles of their careers once they hit their mid-forties and fifties. There are exceptions, those who "make it" earlier, but I would bet statistics would support this notion. One example I know to be true: along with the very few who were elected in their mid-to-upper 40's, most US Presidents were inaugurated while in their 50's.

For Moshe and Aharon, was it the

ancient middle age? Or were they, in fact, primed and seasoned to take on such a significant role in their waning years? Please do not misunderstand. They were special people, with unique character traits. At the end of his life, at age 120, Moshe is described as "his eyes not having dimmed, nor his natural powers having left him." (Devarim 34:7)

Nonetheless, I wonder.

Did Paroh view him as an "old man?" Did the Egyptians perceive him as a kooky guy, holding up a placard and prophesying the end of the world? Was he taken seriously by the man on the street?

I like to think Moshe was an older man who felt young, who viewed himself as young. Perhaps his having an infant child (if his second son was truly born around the time of his journey, as Ibn Ezra records in 4:20) would contribute to this feeling.

But even without an infant child, through the new job Moshe had, he had a new lease on life.

Had everything gone as planned,

perhaps Moshe was not meant to lead for forty years. The Children of Israel were meant to enter the Promised Land shortly after they left Egypt. Perhaps Moshe, even at his advanced age, was meant to lead the people only so far.

His new role kept him going. He could not leave his job unfinished, or at least until it was at the cusp of being completed.

For those who have reached this "golden age," I suppose the lesson to learn from Moshe is to allow personal involvement in Torah study to become a new lease on life. As long as G-d blesses you with health, and especially if you are no longer working, make the remaining years of your life into ones dedicated to Torah study.

Enroll in a study program, become a rabbi, do what it takes to make the last third of your life the ones in which you become closer to G-d than ever before in your life.

It may even be a recipe for long life, hopefully in this world, and certainly in the next.

ON THE
Calendar

For a complete listing of upcoming community events, including items that didn't make it into the print edition, go to www.thejewishstar.com.

East Meadow - Join the East Meadow Simcha Chapter of Hadassah for an enjoyable and beneficial afternoon. Howard Newman, comedian, fitness guru and Certified Personal Trainer will make working out fun for everyone. The

event takes place at the East Meadow Public Library, 1886 Front Street, on Monday, January 18, at 12:45 PM. Please call 516-481-1294 for further information.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns is beginning a New Bereavement Support Group scheduled for eight consecutive Mondays, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., starting February 1, 2010. Sessions will be held at Temple Israel in Lawrence, 140 Central Avenue, Lawrence. The fee is \$50.

Bellmore - Yiddish theater is coming to Bellmore. The Hazak Chapter of the Bellmore Jewish Center has announced that it is bringing to Bellmore The Folksbiene Theatre's Traveling Troupe for a performance of "Mama's Loshn Kugel," a Yiddish musical revue with English supertitles, on Sunday, April 18, 2010, at 3 PM. A limited number of seats are available. Tickets are on sale now - \$18 adults, \$12 children 10-16 years old. Call Ruthe at (516) 221-8570 or Bill at (516) 221-2056.

New York City - Celebrate Jewish Heritage Night with the New York Knicks. Tuesday, February 9th, Knicks vs. the Kings. Tickets are \$36 for seating in the 300 level and include a Hebrew Knicks item. Visit tinyurl.com/jcrcJHN2010 and enter promo code: JCRC. For more information contact Seth Bettan at 212.465.6516 or email seth.bettan@thegarden.com

ONGOING EVENTS

Far Rockaway - Rabbi Eytan Feiner's Machshavah Shiur in Sifrei Maharal on Chumash and Mo'adim for men and women has resumed. Tuesday evenings from 8:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at Congregation Kneseth Israel, 728 Empire Ave., Far Rockaway. For more information call (718) 327-0500 or www.whiteshul.com.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns offers "Kids Corner," a program for special needs children, on Sundays, from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. A light lunch is provided. For further information please call 516-569-6733, ext. 205.

Stony Brook - Sexual abuse and abduction prevention educational workshops. Parents for Megan's Law and The Crime Victims Center now offer age-appropriate sexual abuse and abduction prevention educational workshops for children, teens and adults. We'll come to your school or community organization. We've educated over 50,000 Long Island children and parents in public and private schools and in community organization! Call our Helpline for more information or to schedule a workshop today (631)-689-2672

Cedarhurst - The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst holds a Flexible Morning Learning Program Mon. to Thurs. from 10:30 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. There are shiurim and chavrusas in Chumash, Gemara, Halacha and Chovos Halevavos. Learners may come and go as they please. The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst is located at 504 W. Broadway (off the corner of W. Broadway and Cedarhurst Ave.) Contact Rabbi Moshe Kaufman at (718) 471-2780 moshekaufman@gmail.com.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns has scheduled a support group, "Single and Strong," for women who are divorced or separated going through tough economic times. The group meets Thursday mornings, from 10-11:00 a.m., at the JCC. Pre-registration is

required. For further information and/or to register please call 569-6733, ext. 213. This program is funded by Connect to Care, a UJA-Federation of NY initiative.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns introduces a new program, "Pizza Pals," a social skills program for children with autism, 6th to 8th grade (ages 12-14). For further information please call 569-6733.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns "Senior Choir" meets Tuesday mornings, at the JCC, from September through June, at 11 a.m., with Choir Master Zvi Klein. Songs are in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Men and women over age 60 are invited to participate. For further information and/or to arrange an audition please call the JCC at 569-6733, ext. 222. This program is funded in part by the William Petschek Fund through the UJA Federation of NY.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns is offering a social day program called "Remember When." This program is especially designed for memory enhancement and socialization. The cost includes a full range of therapeutic activities, morning beverage, dessert, and a kosher lunch. Round-trip door to door handicapped accessible transportation is available on a limited basis. Registration is limited to first come first serve basis to ensure maximum benefits to each participant. The program runs on a summer schedule and meets at Sons of Israel in Woodmere. For further information call the JCC at 569-6733.

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Accused predator still a rosh yeshiva

Leib Tropper has “passion for character development”

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

It's been several weeks since Leib Tropper's recorded voice was made public discussing an illicit physical relationship. Tropper, founder of Eternal Jewish Family (EJF), which advocates a universal conversion standard under its strict control, hasn't disputed that the voice on the recordings is his, or that he was speaking with a woman whose conversion he was facilitating. Yet he remains a rosh yeshiva in Monsey, of Yeshiva Kol Yaakov, and the head of Horizons, an outreach organization based out of the yeshiva.

Receptionists at the Yeshiva Kol Yaakov number listed on the Horizons website confirmed that the number belongs to the yeshiva. The Jewish Star made multiple attempts to reach Trop-

per, and was informed that he would be in for "seder" [scheduled Torah study] on Sunday morning. On later calls to the yeshiva, The Jewish Star was told that Tropper either was out or was unable to come to the phone.

Tropper has resigned from Eternal Jewish Family and all mention of him has been scrubbed from its website. However, he is still featured prominently on the Horizons site, which calls him, "a dynamic and inspiring figure." Offering a message some could find ironic, the website continues, "R' Tropper's passion for the importance of character development is contagious, and the centrality of menschlichkeit to Torah observance is both an attractive and authentic recurrent message."

A letter from Rabbi Reuven Feinstein in praise of Tropper is still on the

website, as well.

"I am very impressed with the dedication of the Roshei Yeshiva and the staff in general, she'yichyu," Rav Feinstein wrote. "My involvement with the yeshiva over more than 20 years allowed me to witness firsthand the special siyata d'shemaya [divine guidance] with which the yeshiva has been blessed."

Calls to Tropper at Horizons were not returned. While he is publicly said to be finished at EJF, there are clear ties between EJF and Horizons.

Receptionists at Eternal Jewish Family were instructed to not talk to reporters, and directed calls to a public relations firm that, in turn, referred inquiries to publicist Menachem Lubinsky. He referred all questions to the executive director of Horizons, David

Jacobs. Calls for Jacobs were answered by staffers at Yeshiva Kol Yaakov who redirected callers to EJF, where Jacobs' office is apparently located. He did not return phone calls.

"Tropper's at Horizons, and Horizon owns EJF. He's still at Horizons and he's still in charge of Kol Yaakov," said Shmarya Rosenberg of Failed Messiah, the blog that initially broke the story. "There's no outrage about that."

Horizons was the recipient of a \$4.8 million grant from the Lillian Jean Kaplan Educational Foundation in 2008. In 2007 the organization received \$350,00, \$2.5 million in 2006, \$612,000 in 2005, and \$154,000 in 2004. A tax filing from 2007 totaled the assets of the organization at the time at over \$7.8 million.

Of that \$7.8 million at Horizons, \$2.38 million is budgeted as an expense for "scholarships for advanced studies." Just \$1,500 is budgeted for food and meetings for the yeshiva students.

The woman featured in the Tropper



Photo courtesy of JewishIsrael

Shannon Orand during her conversion process in Israel.

tapes, Shannon Orand, underwent a full Orthodox conversion in Israel last week.

She told the Jewish Israel blog that she was vulnerable to Tropper's advances because he was footing the bill for attorneys in a custody battle with her ex-husband, who she said molested one of her children.

"I came from an idolatrous Christian background and worshipped a man instead of G-d," Orand told the blog. "And now I have a relationship with G-d that no man can take away from me."

OPINION

Conversion, RCA-style

BY RABBI MOSHE KLETENIK AND RABBI BARRY FREUNDEL

Recent allegations of impropriety on the part of the founder and head of the Eternal Jewish Family (EJF), an organization involved with potential converts to Judaism, has again focused the attention of the Jewish community on the conversion process. Rather than dwell on the failures of other organizations, the Rabbinical Council of America prefers to use this opportunity to highlight those aspects of the RCA's GPS (Geirus Policies and Standards) conversion system established in February 2008, that prevent the kinds of problems associated with EJF and other conversion programs, in the Orthodox community. We would also like to discuss some of the positive aspects of the GPS structure that serve the community beyond any concerns about inappropriate activities.

GPS was established to aid potential converts to Judaism, while at the same time diminishing thorny questions of personal status. For years, conversion had been performed in ad hoc fashion by local rabbis, but without detailed, mutually agreed upon standards and procedures. While the vast majority of conversions were handled appropriately, some were not. As a result, in recent years even those who had fulfilled the halachic requirements were finding their conversions unfairly questioned and scrutinized - not just in Israel but in many Orthodox communities to which they or their children had moved. It is significant that

because of such inconsistencies, in the early 1990's the RCA established regional conversion courts that were not organized into a formal network. That action alone, however, did not sufficiently address the problems.

To help solve this growing crisis, therefore, the RCA, in partnership with the Beth Din of America, took the next step and established the GPS network based on the following principles.

Courts and Judges

Qualifying regional courts are established, or if they already exist, are included. To ensure equal treatment, the courts follow transparent and published rules and procedures, fully disclosed to every candidate.

These procedures were formulated by the RCA, without being imposed by any outside rabbinate. Indeed in almost every respect the standards of GPS are consistent with the voluntary conversion guidelines adopted by the RCA in 1989, even as they allow for greater flexibility.

The courts function under the direction and leadership of local rabbis from across the Orthodox ideological spectrum. The judges are approved by GPS leadership. They do not have to be members of the RCA, but to avoid confusion a rabbi who serves as a GPS judge cannot do "outside" conversions. The courts meet candidates several times during the process to monitor progress and suggest additional areas of study.

GPS is a not-for-profit system. There are incidental

expenses such as tutoring, mikveh, mohel, and operating costs. None of the judges profit financially from their many hours of dedicated service.

Sponsoring Rabbis

To ensure that each convert is shepherded through the process in a personalized fashion, each candidate is introduced to the court by a sponsoring rabbi. Because he is not a judge on that case, that rabbi avoids the conflict of being an advocate who is also an objective judge. The sponsoring rabbi mentors and guides the candidate, working with the Beit Din. To be a sponsoring rabbi one does not have to be a member of the RCA.

Administration of GPS

GPS has a centralized office at the RCA, reporting to a committee representing the various regional courts. Complaints are handled jointly by the GPS administrator and the GPS committee, in consultation with the Beit Din.

A GPS website facilitates information sharing, education, and communications among the courts, candidates, and others. A confidential database of all GPS converts is maintained, ensuring that future questions will be appropriately answered.

Non-GPS Conversions

While the RCA encourages its members to use GPS, it recognizes that some may choose not to, in their role as the local rabbinic authority. Such rabbis recognize that other rabbis are similarly free to not recognize

conversions from outside GPS in their jurisdiction.

Conclusion

In less than two years approximately 300 GPS fully accepted conversions have taken place, under the supervision of scores of approved judges across North America, with hundreds more candidates in process. For a new system, GPS is working astonishingly well. There are, of course, improvements to be made in some areas, and the RCA is committed to a constant review of all aspects of the program.

We believe that GPS will continue to help establish the credentials of those who choose, of their own free will, to join the Jewish people, while avoiding problems that sometimes occur, as sadly becomes evident from time to time.

GPS does not presume to claim, as others have, that its conversions will be "universally recognized," insofar as we believe that there can be no such thing before the arrival of mashiach. Yet we do believe that our system goes a long way toward establishing widely accepted outcomes, given that GPS conversions have been accepted across the ideological spectrum of Orthodoxy.

Aside from all of the benefits to the converts themselves, GPS thus contributes to precious Jewish unity and cooperation, among rabbis, laymen, and their communities.

Rabbi Moshe Kletenik is the President of the Rabbinical Council of America. Rabbi Barry Freundel is the Chairman of the GPS Committee of the Rabbinical Council of America.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

Continued from Page One

financial problems, communication difficulties, not enough time, problems with intimacy, or in-laws.

Intimacy issues ranked high among the causes of conflict. Dr. Pelcovitz blamed sex education.

"We see over and over again in the communities, there's something missing in the job we're doing in conveying values about sexuality to our children, and somehow there isn't necessarily a language on sexuality we're teaching to couples," he explained. "Compared to other groups, Jewish adolescents say their teachers do the worst job of teaching them the sexual values that are embedded in our religion, and it shows in our marriages."

Marriage satisfaction was rated higher before the births of children and after children had left the home. According to Dr. Eliezer Schnall, a professor of Psychology at Yeshiva University who worked on the study, children cause "a long-lasting dip in marital satisfaction."

Baalei Teshuva, those who become religious later in life, face challenges in their marriages ranging from at-risk children to a lack of social networks. While the

absolute differences between baalei teshuva marriages and typical marriages were found to not be too different, "in large samples, even small differences can be statistically significant," said Dr. Pelcovitz.

Regarding wealth, Dr. Pelcovitz cited the work of Dr. Suniya Luthar of Columbia University, and what she has labeled "affluenza." In Luthar's studies, wealthier families were found to have three times the rate of alcoholism, depression, and other illnesses. Data from wealthier families in the OU survey, as compared to less affluent families, seemed to bear out Luthar's finding.

The study concluded with some basic truisms. Spend more time with your family, don't base your marriage on Hollywood stereotypes, and be very wary of internet pornography, which Dr. Pelcovitz called an "incredibly powerful force."

The data will be used to guide future OU programming. "Most people are saying, 'If I had to do it again, I'd marry the same person,'" Dr. Pelcovitz asserted, "In a world of so many failed marriages, this is what we're seeing, but we can make it a lot better."

Mansdorf wins Hero Award

Dr. Asher Mansdorf is the recipient of the Hero Award from the Nassau County district attorney's office. Mansdorf received the award for his work with the Council of Thought and Action, an organization founded by District Attorney Kathleen Rice to help ex-convicts.

Meg Reiss, the DA's chief of staff, said Mansdorf had been involved in the program since its inception two years ago. The program, which is financed through independent grants, meets twice weekly in Hempstead and provides emotional support and job training. Reiss gave two examples of

Mansdorf's work. He helped get chest x-rays for a group of people who would have otherwise been unable to afford it. He also helped an at-risk teenager find housing and a job and later paid for the teen's college tuition.

"He [Mansdorf] selflessly extended himself to people he doesn't even know, in a fundamental way, that is causing radical change in their lives and putting them in position to succeed," Reiss said.

Mansdorf declined to be interviewed about the award.

— Michael Orbach

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The Jerusalem Post Crossword Puzzle

BY DAVID BENKOF

Across

- 1 Sephardi society to help the poor
- 6 ____ Yar (site of a Holocaust massacre)
- 10 South Park animator Stone
- 14 U.S. President with many Jewish advisers
- 15 Speak lashon hara
- 16 One of the oldest continuous-
- ly inhabited cities in the world
- 17 "White Christmas" setting
- 19 Act like a wandering Jew, perhaps
- 20 Blanc Bugs Bunny voice
- 21 Puff up
- 22 Adelson's Venetian location
- 23 It means "like" at the start of a word
- 24 Enter hastily
- 26 Winter holiday with a candle lighting ceremony
- 30 Forever and a day
- 31 Home state of Congressman-turned-JTA reporter Eric Finger-
- hut
- 32 See 10-Down
- 35 Comics outburst
- 38 Peter Bogdanovich film of 1971, with "The"
- 42 Utmost degree
- 43 City of northern Utah where Jews are gentiles
- 44 Norse port
- 45 Andy Samberg's NBC show
- 46 Millionaire who once lived in a Jewish orphanage
- 49 One serving out a term
- 54 17th Greek letter
- 55 Gentle "Oy vey!"
- 56 Bridge bid, briefly
- 58 Served in the Knesset, perhaps
- 61 Shore breaker
- 62 "Casino Royale" song, with "The"
- 64 Body passageway
- 65 Suffix with differ
- 66 He spoke for Moses
- 67 Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Ted Kaufman (D-Del.)
- 68 Solicits tzedakah
- 69 Photographer Herb

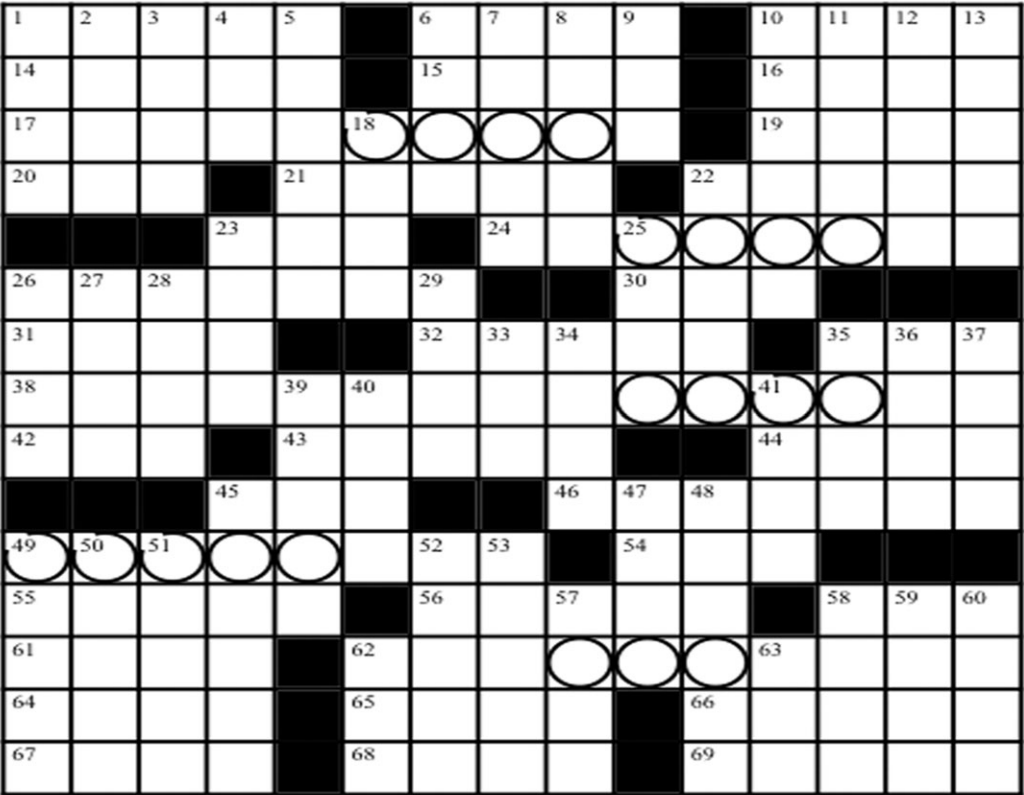
Last Week's Answers

Y	E	S	H	I	V	A		D	A	M	A	G	E	S
I	N	T	O	N	E	D		E	M	I	N	E	N	T
S	T	I	C	K	E	R		M	A	R	I	N	E	R
R	E	L		S	P	I	N	O	Z	A		E	M	U
A	B	L	E		S	A	U	C	E		I	S	I	T
E	B	E	R	T		N	P	R		A	R	I	E	S
L	E	R	N	E	R		S	A	D	N	E	S	S	
			E	N	I	D		T	A	I	L			
	M	A	S	O	N	E	D		S	T	A	I	R	S
H	A	R	T	Z		A	R	M		A	N	D	I	E
I	N	A	S		A	D	E	E	P		D	A	T	A
T	I	L		D	R	E	I	D	E	L		H	U	T
E	P	S	T	E	I	N		I	C	E	B	O	A	T
C	L	E	A	N	S	E		C	A	T	C	A	L	L
H	E	A	R	T	E	D		I	N	T	E	N	S	E

Down

- 1 He defended the Jews on economic grounds
- 2 Reed in a pit
- 3 Physical characteristic requested by a woman on JDate
- 4 Friend of Cardinal Lustiger

"FIND THE HIDDEN LETTERS"



- 5 16th-century chief rabbi of Egypt
- 6 Popular youth grp.
- 7 "Are you calling me ____?"
- 8 African language group
- 9 Solomon ____ Gabirol
- 10 With 32-Across, "I and Thou" theologian
- 11 Future oak
- 12 Tay-Sachs gene, e.g.
- 13 Speed, to Isaac Stern
- 18 Sports car, briefly
- 22 Singer-golfer Dinah
- 23 Speed unit
- 25 Prophet
- 26 Rhein port
- 27 One of the five W's
- 28 ____ HaTorah (outreach organiza-
- tion)
- 29 Multiple-choice choices
- 33 Versatile vehicle
- 34 They may be Kaisers
- 35 Mock words of understanding
- 36 St. of the Intermountain Jewish News
- 37 Tae ____ do
- 39 Obstacle to draining the swamps
- 40 Ice house (var.)
- 41 Answer to "How was the rabbi's sermon"
- 45 Passover highlights
- 47 Historian Mayer
- 48 "____, so good" (horn-blow-er's motto?)
- 49 Comedian Black
- 50 Type size
- 51 Expert
- 52 Davy Crockett hat sources
- 53 What one must do before giving out Shalach Manot
- 57 Just manages, with "out"
- 58 Arrange logically
- 59 Pirkei ____
- 60 Perfect marks
- 62 ____ Beyers Rapp, author of "The Complete Book of Jewish Weddings"
- 63 Lyric repeated over and over in Debbie Friedman's Havdalah

Answers will appear next week



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Photo courtesy of Naomi Sternberg
Zvi z"l and Chaya Reich in their daughter's apartment in Israel.

IN MY VIEW

Continued from Page One

stories — some humorous, some profound — about my father and about camp. We were not just mourning our loss but we were also celebrating his life, a life of vision and the achievement of bringing that vision to a successful and enduring fruition.

As a child I was used to looking at my father from that one dimension. It was fascinating for me to see him through the prism of other people's eyes, people who appreciated him for the multifaceted person that he was. In order to run the quality program that he did, he required knowledge and expertise in so many different areas. Hearing of this from people who worked with him and under him gave me a new appreciation for the man my father was. When I was growing up, I remember breathing a sigh of relief when my father accepted a position at Yeshiva University to teach one class a week in Group Dynamics. Then, when people would ask me what my father did during the year, I could say that he teaches at Y.U., because no one who was not involved could comprehend how running a camp of that magnitude was a full time job. At one point while my father was directing camp, the Department of Health required him to receive certification in "water management," i.e. sewage. My father had earned an MSW from the Wurzeiler School of Social Work, but we kibitzed him that now he had two MSWs — the second was a Masters in Sewage Works. My father quipped back that the latter was far more critical to running the camp.

After the shiva my mother received many cards and letters from people expressing their condolences, and often hakarat hatov [thanks]. Although we so appreciated everyone who came and called, there is something particularly special and personal about the written word. We live in an age where everything is so instantaneous that we barely have time to think. E-Mails are usually brief and impersonal, and text messaging — we won't even go there. The art of expressing our feelings with paper and ink is all but lost; but oh, so poignant! When I studied in Israel (a hundred years ago) who made phone calls? Remember aerogrammes, the lightweight, one-piece airmail stationery that folded into its own

envelope? Those were times when words were measured and therefore had measurable value.

My mother made a scrapbook of all the cards and letters that she received. It is a deep comfort to her. She can read and re-read them whenever she wants a lift. Former campers and staff members sent beautiful letters via the Morasha website (camp-morasha.com). As I read them with my mother, we laughed and we cried. It was a nechama [consolation] to us that people took the time out of their busy schedules to share stories about camp and about my father with us.

Each episode in our lives has a unique lesson. What I've learned from this aspect of mourning my father is that even after his petira [death], he continues to teach. The lesson is one of hakaras hatov [gratitude], and of concretizing emotion. My mother has been my father's loyal ezer [partner] throughout their lives. The accomplishments of his life are the result of their joint efforts. So many opened their hearts and penned their thoughts and sentiments, and gave nachas to her and our family. These letters will become precious family heirlooms, treasured for their worth.

So often, events happen in our lives that inspire us to share our thoughts in writing but life gets in the way, we procrastinate, lose the motivation and the opportunity is gone. I share this insight in order to encourage others: even if you are not a "writer," those letters and notes can give much pleasure to someone in pain, as I've seen with my mother, may she live and be well. "Devarim hayotzim min halev nichnosim el halev," "Words that come from the heart, enter the heart."

As Rabbi Mordechai Willig said at the funeral, my father was a man of few words — Emor m'at v'aseh harbeh — say little and do a lot. He kept a low profile, but the indelible impact that he left on so many lives is such a tribute to his memory. He may not have said much, but much has been said about him. It is inspirational to know and to be able to read and reread, how his legacy lives on through generations of campers and staff whose lives were enriched by Zvi Reich z"l and the Morasha experience. Yehi zichro Baruch — his memory should be a blessing.

If you have a memory or a story to share about camp or my father, please e-mail ZRMemo-ries@campmorasha.com.

I learn, iPhone, iTalmud

Portable Shas? That's one way to describe it

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

There have been a number of milestones in the history of making the Talmud more accessible to the common man: the first complete edition of the Talmud by Daniel Bomberg in the 16th century, the first Soncino English translation in

1935, the first ArtScroll edition of Makkos in 1990 and now, thanks to Apple, the Jewish people may have reached another: the iTalmud.

Released by Melbourne-based developer, Crowded Road, the iTalmud is a groundbreaking app (short for application) for the iPhone and the iPod Touch that contains all 20

books of the Talmud, which in case you're counting, comprises 5,894 folio pages. But that's just the beginning.

Each page on the iTalmud comes with hypertext links to commentaries that range from well-known Rishonim [early commentators] like Rashi and Tosofos to lesser-known Achronim [later commentators]

like the Korban HaEidah and Mishnas Eliyahu. Each page is also synced with page-by-page audio Daf Yomi lectures from popular teacher, Rabbi Dovid Grossman of Los Angeles. Sporting a navigation system that allows easy movement from tractate to page, the app

See I LEARN, Page 10

PAY WHAT YOU WANT

Continued from Page One

Rainbows," on the band's website. Fans could choose to pay what they wanted for the album. Exactly how much profit the band made is not known, but "In Rainbows" was largely considered a success. The New York Times called it "the most audacious experiment in years."

"In other words, they went straight to the fans," Solomon said.

In the nearly quarter of a century that the humor-driven Shlock Rock has been around, the band has earned itself a lot of fans. The group parodies popular secular music by substituting Jewish-themed lyrics for the often inappropriate, or otherwise negative messages in the original. Their most popular songs include "Sweet Aroma of Chalah," sung to the tune of Lynrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama," and "My Menorah," sung to the tune of Ritchie Valen's "La Bamba." "No Limits" is Shlock Rock's thirty-first album.

Intrigued by the idea of sending music to the fans directly, Solomon instituted his own version of the concept this past year.

"I had so many songs I was eager to share with the fans that I decided that putting out the songs under Radiohead's model would be a way to do it," said Solomon. "This is Shlock Rock's way of giving back to the community, which has supported us

for so long."

Halfway through the campaign, Solomon has no hard and fast numbers about the results, but he does say that, so far, people who have been downloading the album have paid an average of \$7.

"So many people said nobody would pay anything, or, if they did, pay \$1 at most. However, we've had many people contribute up to \$15 because they support our music and what we're trying to do. Those balance out the \$1 downloads," he said.

"A few of my peers in the industry have told me they think this is a great idea," continued Solomon. "Everyone is trying to deal with the decreased rate of purchasing CD's these days and finding ways to have their music survive."

The experiment will end on March 28, but Solomon said that no matter how much money is ultimately earned, he considers it a success since people who would not usually buy a Shlock Rock album could get it easily via digital download.

"It's also created a buzz in the Jewish music world," said Solomon. "A lot of people are talking about Shlock Rock and this new album."

"I'm not sure Shlock Rock will ever do this again, but generally, I do think the idea is sustainable," commented Solomon. "If the music is good and people begin listening and sharing it with their friends, eventually,



Lenny Solomon performing with Shlock Rock last year.

they will want to turn out and see the band in concert. Any vehicle that gets people to hear the songs is a good idea."

Fans of the band won't be disappointed with the group's projected output for the next 12 months. Next on the horizon for Shlock Rock is a long-awaited project called "Shabbat in Liverpool," which will be released in the summer of 2010 in honor of the band's 25th anniversary. The album is comprised of more than 25 famous Beatles tunes set to Shabbat prayers and traditional songs.

"It took five years to obtain licensing for that particular project," said Solomon, "but it promises to be the most spectacular Shlock Rock album ever released."

The band will also release twenty-five new melodic parodies next year.

"Twenty-five songs for twenty-five years," said Solomon.

Not content with just releasing audio projects, Shlock Rock also plans on filming a "Shlock Rock for Kids" DVD series as well as a host of music videos.

"Historically, bands made a living from concerts — CD sales was just icing on the cake. A hard-working band can make a living touring and performing. It's not easy, but those who truly love their work will do it," Solomon said.

Shlock Rock has toured over 250 cities across the world and performed over 2000 shows, and shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.

Questions or comments? Contact Tova Ross at newsroom@thejewishstar.com

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THE KOSHER BOOKWORM

The Maimonides Legacy

A review of some of the most recent literature on the later day Moses

Last Wednesday, January 6th was the 806th yahrtzeit of the Rambam [Maimonides]. Some scholarly literature on this most noteworthy of rabbis was recently published.

Among the most endearing elements of the Rambam's legacy is the iconoclastic nature of his theology, absent the mystical elements that are so common with other Jewish theological greats.

In a two-volume series on the Rambam's place in Jewish theological history, Rabbi Dr. Israel Drazin goes deep into the true role that Maimonides played in shedding various mystical nuances that have plagued the Jewish religious tradition.

The first book is titled, "Maimonides: The Exceptional Mind" [Gefen Publishing, 2008]. Drazin, without hesitation, deals with theological



Alan Jay Gerber

sacred cows and how Maimonides viewed them in light of his own "enlightened" wisdom.

He examines Maimonides' views on prophecy and angels, the Shekhinah's rationale, and the role of dogma in Jewish religious belief; and with similarities between Maimonides and ibn Ezra, Saadiah Gaon, ibn Caspi and Spinoza.

Drazin goes into great detail over Maimonides' take on topics such as the role of the shofar in scaring off or confusing the Satan, the true origins of the Zohar, kapparos, tashlich, kiddush levanah, and certain mystical aspects of the Pesach Seder. He also includes essays about how certain elements of Christian belief found their way into Jewish practice. This work is fully footnoted and annotated for the reader's benefit.

Dr. Drazin's second vol-

ume is titled, "Maimonides and The Biblical Prophets"[Gefen Publishing, 2009]. It looks at how Maimonides understands the prophets' mission in Jewish theology and history, did recorded miracles such as the splitting of the sea, the falling of the walls of Jerico and the sun standing still for Joshua really occur, in Maimonides' view? Hmm...

Other issues Drazin examines through the prism of the Rambam's theology include after death experiences, are there prohibitions to suicide, and



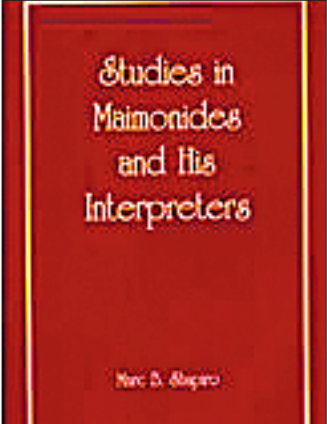
should children really be punished for their parents' sins? Dr. Drazin openly states to his readers that many of the beliefs that we have come to accept today as part of normative Jewish belief have no real and rational basis in Jewish law and theology. This goes to the heart of his writings, and make for not only interesting reading but for interesting learning, to help the average Jew clarify the true nature of our religious beliefs. And Drazin is not alone. Briefly, I bring to your attention two other recently

published books that touch upon Maimonides' true role in clarifying and de-mystifying our religious beliefs.

Dr. Marc B. Shapiro's "Studies in Maimonides and his Interpreters" [University of Scranton Press, 2008] and Dr. Menachem Kellner's "Science in the Bet Midrash: Studies in Maimonides" [Academic Studies Press, 2009] both go further in helping not only clarify the role that Maimonides plays in Jewish theological thought but to further enhance our own perspective as to what truly constitutes our religious beliefs, in a rational and clear view of those beliefs and practices.

Shapiro's 45 page essay, "Maimonidean Halakhah and Superstition," goes a long way in helping to elucidate some of the finer points in Jewish law. These might otherwise be confused with elements of false mysticism that may be of heathen origin, if not worse.

Kellner, delving even deeper into this genre of theology, looks at Maimonides'



views on science and Torah, contrasting his contradictory views in the Mishne Torah and his Guide, as well as on hot button issues such as Jewish chauvinism, the chosen people concept and universalism.

In what promises to be a really cold winter, reading these works will help you survive the cold with some good, warm to hot reading for your fireplace pleasure. Read, learn and enjoy from the intellectual font of three of the most superb Jewish scholars of our time.

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Photo by Andrew Hackmack

I LEARN, IPHONE, ITALMUD

Continued from Page Nine

also has a search function that enables users to search by keyword.

In case you're looking for a Daf Yomi shiur to attend in person, the iTalmud can take care of that too, using the iPhone's built-in GPS system to locate the nearest lecture and provide step-by-step directions (on a lark, I searched for the nearest Daf Yomi shiur in Hungary and found one given in Hebrew in Beis Medrash Adas Yeraim by a Rabbi Aryeh Goldberg).

The latest version of the app includes an English Soncino translation, featuring thousands of footnotes. And at \$20 for the standard version and \$25 for the English edition, iTalmud is cheaper than most Artscroll Gemarachs.

To quote the app's tagline, this really was "1500 years in the making."

Interestingly, Crowded Road, a strategic consulting outfit that develops web sites and applications, does not specifically design Jewish products. Prior to the iTalmud, they didn't have much experience with Jewish texts; their most popular product was the iFax application.

"We felt that the iPhone was a radically new medium that could certainly be used to enhance Jewish learning and make the experience more accessible and portable," said Adam Korbl, managing director of Crowded Road. He said that the team behind the application figured Talmud study would be a good fit for the iPhone since it has multi-touch and zoom capabilities.

iTalmud was developed over 2008 and released in December of 2009; the delay Korbl joked, because, "Apple probably needed to study the entire Talmud before granting

approval." Since most of the team behind the application is not Jewish, developers face difficulties like getting used to Hebrew reading from left to right, and the fact that each volume of the Talmud begins on the second page, he said.

Rabbi Moshe Grussgott, the associate rabbi at Ramath Orah in Morningside Heights, said he planned to download the app.

"It's unbelievable how accessible it makes Talmud to the average person," he explained. "It must be a sign that we're in the Messianic Age that the average business person or layperson can search any Talmudic idea and find it on their phone. It's part of the evolution of the phenomena of Torah knowledge becoming more accessible to the masses, which began with the institution of Daf Yomi and continued with the ArtScroll translation of the Talmud."

More plans are on the horizon for Crowded Road and the iTalmud. Korbl said the company plans to adapt the app for the Google Android operating system, to work with Droid and Nexus One phones. The company has already released iMishna and iTorah: the latter of which features the tagline "3400 years in the making."

Crowded Road maintains a popular online forum where users submit questions and suggestions that range from bug fixes to requests for different commentaries. Future plans for the iTalmud include adding Daf Yomi lecturers in different languages.

"A user recently suggested that G-d probably created the iPhone just for the iTalmud app," Korbl quipped. "Who are we to disagree with a customer?"



Photo by Arthur Findlay

Fourth Precinct commanding officer, Inspector John Capece, discussed Five Towns crime statistics.

POLICE BRASS, D.A. DISCUSS BURGLARIES

Continued from Page One

bicycle, that's larceny, he explained.

There were 154 burglaries in the Fourth Precinct in 2009, down from 197 in 2008. 47 were in the Five Towns with seven in Woodmere, 11 in Lawrence, seven in Cedarhurst, nine in Hewlett and 13 in Inwood. In eight of the 47 cases someone was home at the time. Fourth Precinct officers made 51 arrests last year; Capece called that "pretty good in nation-wide statistics."

"I don't want any burglaries to occur," the precinct commander said. "Any one is too many, but we live in the real world and we try to do whatever we can to keep the rate down."

In fact, crime in the area was down in 2009, Capece said. Nassau County tracks ten types of major crime based on a standardized model across the United States. He noted a decrease in major crimes, including murder, rape, robbery, assault and grand larceny, of 18.26 percent this past year over last year; and a decrease in minor crimes over the same period of 8.14 percent.

"We're doing everything we can to try not to plead out and we're seeing results," said Nassau District Attorney Kathleen Rice. "More violent felons are going upstate to prison than ever before. You have a right to be safe in your homes."

People convicted of certain crimes are required to provide a

Tips to protect your family and your home

POP – problem oriented policing – Officer Bob Chimienti offers these "target hardening" suggestions:

- Light up your life: keep your home well-lit in and out
- Trim hedges and bushes to eliminate hiding places
- Install "a good, loud alarm" with motion sensors
- Keep doors locked and alarm on even when you are home
- Police rely on you: if you look out the window and see something, jot it down and call 911
- In an emergency time is precious: know the addresses of neighbors' homes on the sides, across and behind your house so if help is needed responders can go directly
- Don't hire solicitors who come to your door; hire licensed contractors
- File a vacant premise report with police before you go on vacation so patrol cars will know you are away
- Stop mail and newspapers when you go away
- Very young children shouldn't go home alone
- Teach children common sense and awareness; keep eyes open and look around.
- Don't let someone in if you are concerned; call the police.
- Don't hide keys outside.
- If someone broke into your house, don't go in; call 911.
- If a streetlight is out call the precinct to report it
- If you are stopped by an unmarked car and you are not sure if it's police call 911 to send a marked car.

Important phone numbers:

- Fourth Precinct: 516-573-6400 ■ Inspector John Capece 516-573-6441
- Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Unit: 516-573-6470
- District Attorney Kathleen Rice's office: 516-571-3577
- Legislator Howard Koppel's office: 516-571-6207 (Call for information or to request additional street lighting)

DNA sample that is entered into a DNA data bank and compared against samples gathered from other serious crimes. A "hit" is a "great way to solve a crime," she said. "In cases where they are not required to give DNA they are entering into plea agreements where they have to agree

to give DNA. Felonies are often solved when they engage in some misdemeanor offense."

Questions or comments? Contact Malka Eisenberg at newsroom@thejewishstar.com

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FINDING COMMON GROUND IN DIST. 15

Continued from Page Two

power to do and I felt like I should help."

HAFTR High School donated clothing racks and managed a clothing drive among students.

Katz said she plans to involve other local schools, though mainly it's about coordinating and sorting the goods. The effort is also one viewed as healing a fracture between members of the Jewish community and the general community.

"It's overdue," said Reverend Pharr about the effort. "This is something we should have been doing a while ago. I believe and hope this will bring us all together on common ground to understand one another and really show the community that there is no separation and we can work together in unity to make a change and make our community a better one."

Shea Kastriner agreed. He is a senior at Lawrence High School who is spending his senior internship sorting through used clothing.

"Not many districts have the opportunity to work togeth-



Photo by Bracha Katz
Monika Patel and Ruth Enriquez, students at LHS, sort through donated items.

er as one," he said. "There has been feuds between Jewish kids and Jewish religion and the Lawrence public school, but I think Mr. Schall and [school board member] Dr. [Asher] Mansdorf are working hard to make the community one again."

No one person has taken credit for the effort. The principal organizers, Bracha Katz and Gary Schall, credited one another and Chris Milano of the Lawrence School District Buildings department, who picked up the clothing and canned goods from the local schools. Schall also credited board members

Asher Mansdorf and Dr. David Sussman.

"They're right behind this and the clergy we've been working with are extraordinary people. We found a common ground," Schall explained. "I see this flow from the synagogues and yeshivas in articles of clothing. It's an extraordinary gesture, the merging of public school with clergy, whether church or synagogue. The public school can become a conduit between the churches and the synagogues and we want to be that conduit. I think it's a beautiful thing."

Letters

Continued from Page Four

the community who joined the very special children of Chai Lifeline for the oneg Shabbat. Your support means everything.

RABBI SIMCHA SCHOLAR
Executive Vice President,
Chai Lifeline

Always early?
Always late?

To the Editor:
While I cannot refute Rabbi Hamburger's reason ("Expert on

German Ashkenaz customs to speak in Bayswater"; January 8, 2010) for yekeshe yidden being "early," I can state what I was taught by a "yekeshe yid." I once had a conversation with a Mr. Kohn a"h (I don't remember his first name), who lived in Washington Heights. He told me that it is a fallacy that "yekes" are early; "yekes" come in at a set time. If they are ten minutes early, they are ten minutes early to everything. If they are ten minutes late, then they are ten minutes late to everything.

YEHUDA Y. SCHEFF
Brooklyn

Seeks
German-born Brit

To the Editor:
I am working on a research project and am looking to interview someone born in Germany who left to England and grew up there, circa 1938-1940. My e-mail address is mikessler222@aol.com. My phone number is 718-471-8355.

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