

Readers Write

(Continued from Page 20)

A DEAL-BREAKER

Dear Editor,

This is a response from a *frum* medical professional to the question posed in last week's *Shidduch Forum* regarding the young man whose dilemma concerns his date's father, who is anti-vaccination.

Dear young man:

You and your parents are 100% correct in being concerned about this issue. Is this an issue that is worth terminating the *shidduch*? The answer is absolutely yes! Not vaccinating your children puts all of your future generations at risk, as well as yourselves (yes, yourself, as many vaccines are for adults), your parents, your grandparents, your nieces/nephews, and the entire community at large. There is no valid reason not to vaccinate, except in the presence of certain allergies or certain medical conditions, as per the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Infectious Disease Society of America.

The "theory" that vaccines cause autism has been disproven on numerous occasions. The entire "study" was proven to be a hoax, and Andrew Wakefield, the maverick behind this "study," lost his license to practice medicine in Britain.

There is no possible way for you to ascertain the influence that this young woman's father will have on your lives prior to marriage, especially in a situation where you may require his financial support. There is also no possible way for you to measure how disagreements with your father-in-law may affect your wife's relationship with her family and your *shalom bayis*. I understand the concern regarding letting a reasonable *shidduch* possibility go, but this is not a reasonable possibility for you. It is foolish to decline a *shidduch* based on one's high school or camp. Not liking music or not having a sense of humor is not a valid reason for declining a *shidduch*. However, something that can affect the health of your entire family and community certainly is.

Wishing everyone a healthy winter,

Dr. Robin Singer, Pharm.D.

ANTI-DOCTORS

Dear Editor,

I would like to issue a public apology.

In last week's *Shidduch Forum*, I wrote that all the *gedolim* who understand the prevalent diseases maintain that people should vaccinate. I was contacted by a few people who told me that there are some *gedolim* who advise not to vaccinate, so I would like to switch that quote to *most gedolim*.

I got a lot of phone calls from different people, and I did find some *erliche*, levelheaded people who, for specific reasons, don't vaccinate. I have no opinion about these people. Each to their own.

But another thing that I discovered this week was unfortunately shocking. There is a group out there who are not anti-vaxers. They are anti-doctors and anti-hospitals. They are extremely arrogant and believe

in *kochi v'otzein yodi*. They have figured it all out. It has nothing to do with *haskafah* or *emunah* or *halacha*. It's pure *gaava*. They use kinesiology and other alternatives. (This cult brings a non-Jewish kinesiologist from Oregon to the tri-state area to take care of issues.) I can't print the many messages that I received about one of *Klal Yisroel's* most *choshuve* and respected doctors, because I will offend all Holocaust survivors.

In this cult, it is not a question of vaccines. They know beyond any question or doubts that vaccines are bad and that anybody who gives vaccines or backs them are sadistic people. This cult has nothing to do with *Yiddishkeit*, and everyone should stay very far away from them. They believe vaccines and hospitals are a hoax, but kinesiology and other *sofeik avodah zarah* is the right way to go. *Hashem yishmeireinu*.

Tzovek Katz
Lakewood, NJ

MORE ON THE ALTNEU SHUL IN PRAGUE

Dear Editor,

I would like to expand on Rabbi Avrohom Broide's interesting article about Prague.

A legend associated with the Altneu Shul is that the name refers to the Hebrew words *al tenai*, on condition. Jews from Eretz Yisroel who first came to Prague took with them stones from the *Bais Hamikdash* and used them for the building of the *shul* on the condition that when *Moshiach* comes and they return to Eretz Yisroel for the rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash*, they will return the stones.

A legend about the *shul* is told. It relates that a Jewish woman was looking out the window of her room in Prague. Noticing on a rooftop a black cat in labor, she went and helped the cat give birth. She made a bed of straw on top of a coal bin for the cat and her kittens. The cat and her kittens disappeared several days later, but the pieces of coal on top of which she had lain had turned into gold. The woman showed them to her husband, who said that the cat was sent by Hashem, and they used the gold to build the Altneushul.

The tale continues that the woman's husband, who was a pious Jew, wanted to thank the cat. One day, the woman was again looking out the window and saw the cat in its old place. She quickly told her husband. The man ran out to get the cat, but it jumped away and disappeared into the Altneushul. The man hurried after it and suddenly saw it escape to the cellar through a hole in the floor. The man climbed through the hole, following the cat, and found himself in a long passage. He followed the cat until he saw daylight ahead. When he emerged, the people told him he was in Yerushalayim. The husband who had dreamed of dying in Yerushalayim died of joy upon learning this.

Pearl Herzog
Lakewood, NJ

ZEMAN KRIAS SHEMA

Dear Editor,

Please, everybody, remind your family and friends that due to the changing of the clock, *zeman Krias*

Shema is an hour earlier.

While this letter may seem superfluous to most people, *Klal Yisroel* is defined by our constant announcing of Hashem's Oneness by saying *Shema "tamid"* - by every *Yid*, every day. We cannot afford a single mistake.

P.S. Hisna'ari provides *chizuk* in *haskomas luboker*. Hear more on the Kav Hisoreruv Tefillah Hotline at 718.682.2922.

Chevrus Hisna'ari

STRAYED FROM THE DERECH Dear Editor,

I would like to commend you for publishing your weekly *Torahdige* publication. The way your paper dealt with the recent tragedy in Pittsburgh is the reason it is my choice for news and *haskafah* and should be for all Torah Jews.

That said, I have been bothered for some time with the content of some *frum* publications. We let them into our homes and trust them with our children's minds and souls (and our own). We would never send our children to schools where the *rabbaim* and *moros* are promoting this type of content.

I don't want to bore you with a long essay on the subject, though one could be written. My opinion is that some of them have strayed from the traditional *derech* of *haskafah*. There is a growing undertone of the wrong *haskafas*.

Here are some points for my fellow readers to think about:

1) There is a constant promotion of *taavus achilah* and *taavus mamon*. Food and money are put on a pedestal. Successful businessmen are emulated. *Simchas Yom Tov* could only be accomplished if you follow a thick glossy magazine with exotic foods to prepare.

These two *taavus* are a complete contradiction to growth in *Yiddishkeit*.

2) There is a constant mimicking of the mainstream non-Jewish media. The unfortunate Pittsburgh massacre is a prime example. There is very little *haskofus haTorah* in publications. The coverage was all a spin-off of what their writers and editors saw in the New York Times, on CNN, etc. It is one of fear and *kochi v'otzein yodi*. Could we ever feel safe in *shul*? Should we carry guns? Is anti-Semitism on the rise?

Don't we have values - *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem - that would be more uplifting and not in the realm of fear mongering? Don't we believe that "*im Hashem lo yishmor ihr shov shokad shomer*"? Does Hashem want us to have fear or to come closer to Him because of the tragedies that are befalling our people?

Gedolei Yisroel have promoted and in some cases been behind the opening of publications for the sake of their profound influence. It's time that we hold these publications accountable and demand that their content promote traditional Torah *haskafas*.

A Concerned Member
of Klal Yisroel

SEEKING GUIDANCE

Dear Editor,

Last week's discussion in *The Couch* was a real eye-opener for me,

as I also find myself torn between properly respecting my parents and protecting myself and my children from my parents. For a long time, I have been in doubt about how to deal with my complicated situation, which is similar to the one discussed. Now I see that it is my responsibility to seek guidance and advice from a competent *rov* and therapist.

The answer written by Rabbi Weinberger was especially enlightening and validating, and raised a very high level of awareness for myself and my siblings. Each of us and our children has been affected differently and therefore need our own individual advice from *rabbonim* and therapists. He also helped me understand that my parents do not intend to be mean, but are just suffering from intense pain. Thank you, Rabbi Weinberger.

Name Withheld

THE KOACH OF A KRECHTZ Dear Editor,

I was horrified when I opened the newspaper and saw the screaming headline about the Atar family tragedy in which two parents and an entire family of six children were wiped out in a horrific car accident in Israel. *Hashem yeracheim*.

First, I read about the eleven *kedoshim* who were killed at *Biddush Hashem* in Pittsburgh. *Hashem yitkom domom*. Then I was hit with this second tragedy in Eretz Yisroel. Someone in *shul* asked me, "Why are you *krechztzig*?" I answered him, "Because you're not *krechztzig*."

Rav Yissocher Frand related that the reason the *kohein gadol* has to go into the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* on *Yom Kippur* is to undo the traveler's *tefilah* that it shouldn't rain on him while he's travelling. Is he so selfish that he doesn't want it to rain for the rest of *Klal Yisroel* who need the rain? Rav Frand went on to explain that all the traveler doing is letting out an innocent *krechztzig*. *Oy, I'm getting wet from the rain*. But that *krechztzig* is so powerful that you need the *kohein gadol* to undo it on the holiest day of the year, *Yom Kippur*, and in the holiest place, the *Kodesh Hakodoshim*.

The *koach* of a *krechztzig*!

Unfortunately, *Klal Yisroel* has a lot to *krechztzig* about during these tragic days of *ikvusa d'Meshicha* and *chevlei leidas Moshiach*, as the *Chofetz Chaim* explains in *Sefer Sheim Olam, Shaar Hishchazkus (simanim 12-14)*.

Rav Shmuel Binyan z"l was once *maspid* Eliezer Shain z"l, who died as a *chossan*, and instead of gathering to walk him down to the *chupah*, we walked his *aron* at his *levayah*. Rav Shmuel said from the *novi* that there will come a time in *sof golus* when you won't be able to come up for air from one *tzarah* after another, *chali-lah*. The *Chofetz Chaim* explains that this is a good sign. Just like a woman goes through labor pains before birth, so is this a *siman* of *chevlei leidas Moshiach*.

We will *iy"H* dance together very soon with Eliezer, with the 11 *korbanos* of Pittsburgh, with the Atar family, with the Sassoon family, and with the *chossan* and *kallah* who were *niftar* tragically on the Nassau Expressway accident last *Pesach*, when *Moshiach* arrives.

Besuros tovos.

Rabbi Moshe Leib Halevy

MANDATORY OBLIGATIONS

Dear Editor,

Upon exiting my lodging in Harrisburg, PA, this past weekend, I forgot one thing. As I was about to pull out of the parking lot, I told my wife that I forgot to tip the room cleaning crew. As I walked back to the room, a crew member was bringing out our pack and play.

The return of our baby's pack and play by the crew member made me feel that a tip is mandatory, not voluntary, as it is a gesture of gratitude. Perhaps, we must take care of the mandatory obligations in our life before engaging in voluntary ones.

Steven Genack

LOFTY NESHOMAH

Dear Editor,



To the children of my fater Hersh Meilech Grossman z"l:

Your father was a truly great man in every

sense of the word. He was a *tzaddik nistar* who never took any credit for himself. He was the quintessential "*nechba el hakeilim*." Just watching him walk down 16th Avenue, coming home from his beloved *Krasna shul*, was a lesson in how an *erliche Yid* should conduct himself at all times. He was the epitome of *anavah* and *aidelkeit*. In all the years I knew him, I never heard him raise his voice once or even say a loud word. All this while raising a large family. Everything he did was done with a *ne'imus* and a *zvekheit*.

The beautiful family he raised together with your special mother is testament to the really incredibly lofty *neshomah* that he had.

Yehi zichro boruch.

Name Withheld

HASHEM'S STICK

Dear Editor,

Yaakov Astor's excellent article on the risk of the USA going increasingly "socialist" might suggest that we should expend our communal efforts on informing/combating socialism. In fact, it may be worse, as prior to the Nazis' rise to power, there was a "green" type of socialism hippy movement. The public then grows tired of loose, permissive, failing "socialism," and then fascism or other kinds of dictatorships often come next, either seized or even elected. Today's internet-addicted society will demand that all their desires be fulfilled, without having to work for it, a.k.a. socialism.

Our real concern is how we are following Hashem. Hashem can use the stick of socialism, fascism or new horrors we have never dreamed of to wake us up. These painful wake-up calls are a *chesed* so that we will not waste our lives assimilating into the prevailing culture (even while still looking *frum*).

What kind of stick will Hashem need to use to help us escape being assimilated into the internet? Maybe we can leave the internet without being hit hard first...

Rabbi W.
Yerushalayim