

Continued from page 8

observant Jews don't have pets. Some may think that it's against halacha to have a pet.

While some pets do represent a halachik problem, such as aggressive or destructive animals, many do not, so why is pet ownership so rare in the frum community?

Many reasons have been given by rabbonim to discourage pet ownership. Some point out that a Jewish home is a miniature Beis Hamikdash where the Shechina rests; animals running around such a place don't fit that ideal.

On another level, pet ownership sometimes makes a person relate to an animal as if it were a person; many in the non-Jewish world regard their pets as members of their families.

Some worry that people could get emotionally more attached to an animal than to people, since pets don't criticize, complain (unless you're very late in feeding them) and will show affection for you no matter what you look like, how much money you make, or what kind of mood you're in. They also worry that too much attachment to an animal may detract one from his attachment to Hashem. When something isn't forbidden by halacha, there are circumstances where that which is not usually ideal can, in fact, become a positive thing and be used for Hashem.

As a widower who enjoys cats and always saw them as cute examples of Hashem's handiwork, I consulted with my rabbi about getting a furball of my own. He told me it was a good idea in my situation, and so I began searching for one. I didn't have to look far, because a kind woman in my neighborhood advertised a friendly cat that had taken up residence in her backyard.

As soon as I was shown the cat, whom I and my son named Chustle (Hebrew for "cat"...I know, very original), he lifted my spirits. Without any reservation, I can say that caring for Chustle in no way has diminished my love for Hashem — in fact, it has enhanced it.

When I pet, play with, or have Chustle on my lap, eliciting his rather loud purring, and I see the effects of his distinct

personality, it reinforces the realization of the miracle of Hashem's creations.

Of course, this miracle is far more pronounced in humans. But in the day-to-day relations with other people, with all the complexities and stress of business, marriage, and social activity, we often lose sight of this. Watching and interacting with a cat or a (gentle) dog is a constant reminder of the beauty of created life.

I'm writing all this not with any expectation that kosher supermarkets will start selling pet food, or advocating in any way the over-the-top practices of dressing an animal in clothes, celebrating its birthday, or burying it in a "pet cemetery."

I write this with the hope that frum owners of pets should not think they must hide the fact from the community. As long as people make decisions with their rabbi's guidance, there's no shame in it at all.

**David Glenn**

**Dear Editor,**

Recently, when I went to pick up my little one from school, he said that *Yeshiva shel Ma'alah* (the Next World) is much greater than this world. He then said that the toys there are much better. I couldn't testify to the second part, but in regard to his first statement, my late relative Rav Avrohom Genechovsky, *zt"l*, addressed this issue.

A family once approached him after their father passed and said that their father davened *vasikin* that day and the Gemara (Berachos 9b) notes that anyone who davens *vasikin* is guaranteed to be protected from harm for the entire day.

He answered with the following parable. Let's say someone has to take a plane somewhere. It turns out that their good seat is not available but that a bit less comfortable one is. It turns out the flight gets in early. You won't find that person complaining about his uncomfortable seat because he got in early. Meeting G-d early is a great thing.

Another rav said he gets many questions similar to this. Many ask him about early deaths. He noted the Mishna in Avot (4:17), "Rabbi Yaakov used to say... one hour of bliss in the Next World is better

than the entirety of life in this world." He said that if you would take all of the time from Creation until the present, it doesn't equal a moment of the Next World. The joy there is beyond limits.

My son's comment about *Yeshiva shel Ma'alah* was on point. After all, aren't we just here to prepare properly so that we gain a valuable share there?

**Steven Genack**

**Dear Editor,**

In unprovoked attacks, Hamas indiscriminately murders, maims, assaults and kidnaps some 1,600 innocent Israeli citizens and visitors — old people, young people, men, women, children, infants, Americans, journalists, migrant workers—and when Israel defends itself against these savage brutes, President Biden accuses Israel of having gone too far and acting "over the top." He fails to acknowledge the truth that Israel, with every right to defend itself with any means at its disposal, *could* have carpet bombed Gaza; Hamas would have been destroyed in a day. Instead, because of its high moral standards, Israel goes out of its way to protect Gazan civilians, even at huge risk to its own soldiers and citizens.

Our population is about 34 times that of Israel. One wonders how the President would respond if terrorists murdered 55,000 American citizens—the proportional equivalent of Israel's 1,600 victims — in one day.

**Rabbi H. L. Berenholz, C.F.A.  
Oceanside, NY**

**Dear Editor,**

Please read this letter. I sincerely hope it will never apply to you. That's what I thought 10 years ago. I heard about anorexia, but I never thought it would happen to my child. Unfortunately, when most people realize their child is not eating, it's too late. Very little can be done now. Most people think it's a good idea when their child tries to diet. They don't realize that dieting may lead to this *gehinom*. Once the child has anorexia, it's extremely difficult to get them to eat. Even when the parents are able BS"D to feed the child back, in most cases, the danger of them dieting again and putting their life in *sakana* remains all their lives. There is a pattern formed in the brain like in case of any other addiction. Just like former alcoholics struggle all their lives, so do former anorexics (except anorexia is far more dangerous; many of them don't even live half of the normal lifespan, *chas v'shalom*).

Please don't encourage your child's dieting and always watch them careful-

ly. Being overweight might be not ideal for some people, but being anorexic is a billion times worse. The danger is far too great. When you see your child is not eating well, contact the specialists immediately. If this letter will save even one life, it's already worth it.

**A Reader**

**Dear Editor,**

I think it is critical that Americans, especially Jewish Americans who are "liberal," understand that the Biden Administration has "sold out" Israel by its latest words and actions. President Biden said that going into Rafah was "over the top," although he had previously committed to wiping out Hamas and Israeli action resulted in two hostages being saved. Meanwhile, U.S. CIA Director William Burns has been negotiating an impossible terrorists-for-hostages deal which Israel cannot accept as terms being discussed were up to 250 terrorists for each Israeli hostage and the ceasefire that would be required for this exchange would take so long that the Biden Administration is confident that Israel would not be able to resume military operations. The Biden Administration is also pressuring Israel to provide greater humanitarian aid when it is clear that approximately 70% of the aid is taken by Hamas, which leaves the Gaza population supportive of Hamas. Also, Anthony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State, said that the U.S. is against any proposal for resettlements outside of Gaza despite other countries that have offered Palestinian resettlements. The U.S. has also taken action to block the use of Indian workers to replace Gazans who pose a security threat, while also imposing sanctions against Jews in Judea-Samaria for so-called retaliation against Palestinians. Additionally, if that weren't enough, the Squad is demanding that the Leahy Law allows the U.S. to review actions by the IDF in Gaza. In essence, President Biden told Jewish leaders on Dec. 12, 2023, that he stood in opposition to Ben-Gvir's stand on Palestinian statehood and that Prime Minister Netanyahu would have to choose between his right-leaning ministers and U.S. support for Israel.

**Jan Henock  
Woodmere, NY**

### Congressional District 3 Election Results

**Tom Suozzi 54%**  
**Mazi Pilip 46%**