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But it also strengthened my resolve. Because I, too, am the future of education.

Being surrounded by peers who so easily slandered Israel made something clear to me: teaching isn't just a profession—it's a responsibility. I learned that even one voice, armed with knowledge and courage, can make a difference.

Despite being alienated at times, I stood firm. I never compromised when it came to Israel. I defended it—respectfully, factually, and passionately. I carried myself with dignity in hostile rooms—not to win arguments, but to make sure that truth had a voice.

There were moments in class when I spoke up and felt afraid. But on graduation day, when I wore that pin in front of thousands, I felt no fear—only pride and purpose.

The future of education may worry me. But as I stood on that stage, I showed the crowd—and myself—that I, too, am the future of education. And I will teach with pride, truth, and unwavering integrity.

**Sarah Meira Schlager**

**Teacher at Shulamith High School for Girls and SKA High School for Girls**

**Dear Editor,**

There are more children growing up in single parent households than in the previous generation. At least half of those children are male. Very often, due to visitation schedules or criminality, they do not see their fathers regularly. Yet they get up and show up to shul, often by themselves, every Shabbos and maybe every day.

Wouldn't it be great if every man instead of waiting in line to shake the rabbi's hand, stood in line to shake the hands

of these boys/young men. Tell them how happy you are to see them there and then add a second hand to the shake, look them in the eye and let them know they're thought of and not invisible. Benjamin Franklin said, "An ounce of prevention equals a pound of cure."

**Esther Miller**

**Executive Director**

**Aim Hire, Employment with Dignity**

**Dear Editor,**

I appreciate Mr. Sol Liss's thoughtful engagement with the Ma'alim proposal in a recent issue. The fact that a letter discussing Torah funding and communal standards has generated public debate is a sign that our community is, baruch Hashem, alive and thinking.

Allow me to respond to two of his points.

First, this initiative is not about punishing those who purchase cheesecake — boutique, Costco, or otherwise. It's about building a structured culture of gratitude. Many *gvirim* already give far beyond their obligations, and their names rightfully grace buildings and plaques. But what about the broader, often affluent middle? Ma'alim is a *voluntary framework* that simply asks: "When we indulge in extras, can we match it with kavod ha-Torah?"

To compare this to federal tax policy is clever but misses the mark. We are not Bernie Sanders. We're people who believe in *aseh lecha rav*, who bring questions to poskim, who strive to align our spending with our values. If someone can spend \$200 on a headpiece for a toddler, why not dedicate \$20 toward a yungerman's rent? That's not socialism — that's *seichel*.

Second, regarding the Torah's prohibition of *Lo Sosef*: indeed, we don't add mitzvos. But we do build commu-

nal norms. We add *chumros*. We accept *kabbalos*. We launch campaigns for daily learning, increased tznius, or shmiras halashon — not because it's *obligatory*, but because it's *aspirational*. Ma'alim is no different. It's a proposal, not a psak. And as mentioned in our original letter, we are in consultation with poskim who are helping guide it responsibly.

We're not legislating. We're inviting. Inviting from Jews to elevate their luxury with meaning — and their giving with structure.

Thank you again for the feedback. We welcome more conversation, especially the kind that ends in greater support for Torah.

**DAR**

**The Ma'alim Initiative**

**Dear Editor,**

There's been recent talk of instituting a "luxury tax" on wealthy Jews—an idea that would compel those who host lavish simchas or attend upscale Pesach programs to give 10% to charity as a kind of moral penance for enjoying the fruits of their labor. While the sentiment behind this may be well-meaning, it's also deeply misguided.

Let's be honest: the true tax being paid in our community is already being carried—quietly, consistently, and often thanklessly—by the families who are paying full tuition in our yeshivas and day schools. These are the families funding the teachers, covering the scholarships, underwriting the overhead, and keeping the lights on for everyone else. Instead of shaming success, we should be expressing profound gratitude.

If we're going to talk about a new kind of tax, let's propose one that makes sense: a gratitude tax. Every family receiving tuition assistance should write a simple letter—just once a year—thanking the donors and full-pay parents who are making their children's education possible. And yes, I mean actual thank you letters. It's not about humiliation; it's about basic acknowledgment of the economic engine that powers our institutions.

Charity should never be coerced or guilt-driven. Let's stop vilifying financial success and instead appreciate the responsibility already being shouldered.

**Chatzkel Peterovich**

**Dear Editor,**

Who cannot be moved by Shweky's lyrics, "Cry no more Yerushalayim/Shine once more Yerushalayim/We need to see you proud again/Upon the mountain of Hashem/Then we'll cry no more

Yerushalayim."

Already there's comfort in seeing the destruction of major capabilities of an enemy. In our history, comfort is built into our mourning. Rav Soloveitchik, as my uncle notes, proves this idea from halachic sources, giving it bearing on laws of mourning. Rav Kahaneman famously built a yeshiva on a grand hill after escaping from Germany, building the infrastructure for Torat Eretz Yisrael, bringing consolation from mourning. And this week's parsha ends with the laws of tithing to the Kohanim, as Korach was a misstep but not how we are defined.

Our end is in consolation and glory.

**Steven Genack**

**Dear Editor,**

There will be no lasting peace in the Middle East until there is regime change in Iran.

For decades, the Iranian regime has mastered the art of deception, misleading the world while fueling instability across the region. It arms proxies, fans the flames of conflict, and hides behind a veil of propaganda.

As the conflict escalates, Iran will undoubtedly begin showcasing images of suffering, particularly dead children, to manipulate global opinion. We've seen this tactic before. While the world initially stood behind Israel after the horrors of October 7, history shows how quickly sentiment shifts when confronted with carefully curated images designed to evoke outrage.

But make no mistake: the true architects of this tragedy sit in Tehran.

Every time the West wavers, every time it indulges false moral equivalencies, more innocent lives are lost. Weakness does not bring peace; it enables aggression.

The Iranian regime must be defeated, completely and decisively.

Only then can a new, accountable government emerge, one that respects its own people, its neighbors, and the international order.

Peace demands strength. And the time for clarity is now.

**Pedram Bral, M.D.**

**Mayor, Village of Great Neck**

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