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LETTERS

FIGHTING THE BATTLE AGAINST CREMATION

Preparing before it's too late

In reference to "Jewish News," Issue 245

Dear Editor:

The article covering one man's determination to help Martin Mendelsohn merit a Jewish burial is fought every day in America. There are an estimated 50 Jews who are cremated every single day in America.

If you know Jews who are just beginning their Jewish journey, implore them to write out their burial wishes and give you a copy. If you work in a nursing home, hospice or hospital, get written burial instructions from your patients.

Make sure that all these Jews pre-plan their final wishes with written burial instructions and give a copy to a trusted friend or rabbi who they are absolutely positive will follow Jewish burial with no embalming, and burial in the ground. Better yet, they should pre-pay for a plot and make all the arrangements before there is a crisis.

Cremation is a crisis that can touch any of us. I speak to people on a regular basis who are fighting their family members to choose burial for departed loved ones. Sometimes we are able to change people's minds but often it's just too late. Therefore I encourage all readers to use a website I helped create as a resource: The National

Association of Chevra Kadisha (www.peacefulreturn.org) has the mission to educate on the importance of choosing burial over cremation. It has articles and videos explaining why we choose burial and not cremation.

We need everyone's help to fight this battle. Talk to your less-affiliated friends before it's a crisis.

Robin Davina Meyerson
Robin@peacefulreturn.org
602-469-1606

A SHIDDUCH AND A SHONDA

Middah k'neged middah...

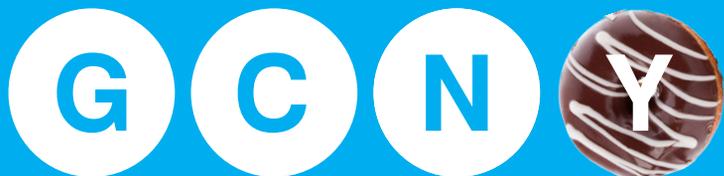
In reference to "The Human Experience," Issue 244

Dear Editor:

My husband and I found the recent "Human Experience" article to be very thought- and emotion-provoking. After much discussion, this is what we concluded:

If Zeidy Zelig knew how the *chasan's* great-grandmother spoke about his parents, he probably would have opposed the *shidduch*. And I wouldn't blame him.

Some people view others with problems and ask themselves what they can do to help. *Baruch Hashem*, in our generation, many people have done that. We have organizations that help families struggling with many



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LETTERS

different *nisyonos*.

Some people (the minority, I'm sure) look at people with struggles and feel a head taller because they are in "better" shape.

B.K.
Lakewood, NJ

CARING FOR PAENTS There are different kinds of kids

In reference to "The Human Experience,"
Issue 243

Dear Editor:

Your "Human Experience" story about the couple who made *aliyah* and then realized that, as they aged, it wasn't fair for their one child who lived in Eretz Yisrael to be burdened by their care was sad, but I believe the problem lies elsewhere.

As many of my peers are of the age where we take care of elderly parents, I have noticed an interesting pattern. There is usually one child who takes the brunt of the care. Sometimes it's because that particular child is more sensitive to the parent or is just a kind and giving person, and so they are the ones to do most everything. Sometimes it's circumstances, because they are in close proximity with the parents. And sometimes it's because the child is an only child or, as in the case of this family, the rest of the children do not live close by. But what I have noticed is that

not all of these caretakers are the same.

Some do it lovingly and feel privileged to take care of their parents and are not looking to give that *mitzvah* to anyone, while others do it with a lot of resentment. They complain all the time that they are put upon.

This daughter does not sound like someone who is very much there for the parents. It's clear that the parents hesitate to call upon this child. And that makes me believe that therein lies the problem. It's not the quantity, it's the quality. And it seems to me that the quality is what's missing here.

Further, this man makes no mention of the grandchildren. This daughter's children should be part of the team helping to care for the grandparents. I suspect their mother's attitude has infected them and they are shirking their responsibilities.

Caretaker and loving it in Flatbush,

Debby Klein

KOSHER FOOD AND DANGER

Mashgichim and hashgachah pratis

In reference to Kosher Issue, Issue 242

Dear Editor:

Your kosher issue was stupendous. Every article was terrific and the layout and beautiful ads were eye-candy. My wife has put

that issue away as well as last year's issue.

At first, when I read about the dangerous places *mashgichim* go to in order for us to have some kosher food that we can survive without, I was indignant. Why, oh, why are we putting ourselves in danger? Don't we live with enough danger? Why are we looking for more trouble?

Then I read your articles describing how *mashgichim* have been instrumental in bringing back lost Jews to *Yiddishkeit*, and I am confused. Is Hashem orchestrating that the food products that need kosher certifications be in far-flung places so that those lost Jews can be brought back? Of course we don't know the *Ribbono Shel Olam's cheshbonos*.

What we can learn from these articles is that a *Yid* always has an opportunity to go beyond, that wherever we find ourselves—regardless of the lack of Jews—we never know if an opportunity is not waiting to save one *neshamah*. As we know, every *neshamah* is a world and can represent future generations.

May Hashem keep our *mashgichim* safe from harm.

Yehuda Epstein
New York

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LETTERS

WHAT GOES AROUND

Shidduchim and shame

In reference to “The Human Experience,”
Issue 244

Dear Editor:

So the father doesn't want his son to do a *shidduch* with a family he remembers from three generations back. Here's the irony: His son's children will do exactly the same thing to him. When we married off our first son, my mother-in-law was beside herself. She remembered the family from “*inderheim*.” Seems they were not people with whom her family associated. She gave us all the “gossip” of how her little town in Poland viewed the family of the grandmother of our potential *kallah*.

We pooh-poohed her and did the *shidduch*. After all, our *mechutanim* were respected and successful people. Twenty-five years later, our daughter told us of a *shidduch redt* for her daughter. I was floored. How in the world could she even consider it? Didn't she know that the mother of this girl was the nebbly one of the class? I was mortified.

My daughter totally didn't get it. The father is a *talmid chacham*, his son is one too, with great *middos*, etc. She didn't get it.

Guess what? We didn't get it when our parents raised a fuss. And her daughter won't get it when she will raise a fuss. And that's good! We don't need more fuel for the fire of our *shidduch* crisis.

Name withheld (for obvious reasons)

ADDICTION AND DESTRUCTION

It's not just the first one

In reference to “The Orthodox Couple Who Fought Big Tobacco,” Issue 244

Dear Editor:

Thanks for a fantastic magazine.

Your article on the Rosenblatts' fight against Big Tobacco was fascinating. My brother-in-law passed away from lung cancer. He tried desperately to stop smoking but could not. In light of studies about addiction and the inherent difficulties—possibly gene-related—of breaking an addiction, it's more than just a bad habit. I would venture to say that these companies are culpable. And the argument that a person “decided” to smoke is weak.

True, my brother-in-law always said it was the first cigarette that did him in and decried the allowance of cigarettes in *yeshivah*, but after that? How much control did he really have? The documents coming out of discovery—I have since read even more about this case—showed that the companies knew how addictive cigarettes were. They relied upon that addiction to sell billions of cigarettes. They did not rely on that first-time smoke. They even made sure that the levels of nicotine per cigarette were of the amount that would be addictive.

Baruch Hashem, the level of smoking in our communities has fallen. But even the loss of one father, husband or son is one too many.

Nachum Gold

SHEIMOS NOTICE: A photo on page 136 in last week's magazine contained *sheimos*. Please treat accordingly.

THE RESCUERS AND THOSE WHO DID NOT

Why the Philippines beats the US

In reference to “It's Too Hot, It's Too Cold,”
Issue 245

Dear Editor:

I wanted to let you know that I have appreciated the recent articles by Dr. Rafael Medoff about how some little-known proposals to save some of the beleaguered Jews of Europe, seeking sanctuary anywhere, were discussed and basically discarded for political and anti-Semitic reasons by various countries, including the United States.

The recent article about the Philippines' offer to accept a reasonable number of Jewish refugees, prior to the Japanese occupation, was certainly news to me. It is a story that should be told. A similar story took place in the Dominican Republic, which also agreed to settle a small number of Jewish refugees before Germany slammed the door.

On the other hand, we have the anti-Semitic cynicism of the Roosevelt White House using any means available, including sending Jews back to Germany, to avoid taking in refugees. It is to the eternal shame of this country that so many European Jews died due to America's intentional inaction.

Tzadok S. Piro
New Jersey

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