

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A few months ago, I hung up signs around our Beis Medrash indicating that the downstairs women's section be reserved for women, and that men refrain from davening there. I had several halachic reasons for hanging the signs. A recent incident illustrates how ignoring this policy can have implications beyond what we might think at first glance.

A few weeks ago, some women came by the Shul to daven Maariv. They walked in to find the women's section already taken by numerous men. Lacking the comfort level to ask the men to leave, they simply davened outside in the hall, feeling distinctly unwelcome in our Shul.

As we enter Elul, the month of introspection which precedes the High Holidays, we must ask ourselves: What kind of Shul do we want the Bialystoker to be? I would hope that we would answer that the Shul should maintain and build upon its deserved reputation as a warm institution, one which allows everyone who walks through its doors to feel welcome. We do not strive to be a mere social club—we project ourselves as a place of serious davening and learning—but we hope to accomplish this in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance.

An atmosphere of warmth and acceptance manifests itself in many ways. It means tolerance in the way we speak to each other, even when we disagree. It means greeting strangers when they visit the Shul and offering them a seat at the Kiddush. It means maintaining a certain decorum and dignity when attending a culinary function in the Shul. (Since we are not starving refugees from a Third World country, we need not act as if we are when coming to a Kiddush.) And yes, it means that the women's section in Shul should be reserved for women.

Women constitute approximately half of our constituency, and they are entitled to come to Shul and daven, whenever they want, without having to displace anyone in the process. This is not simply an expression of respect for the religious lives of women using the Shul. It is an important display of our own core values. We owe it to ourselves to create a Shul atmosphere of acceptance at all times.

I know that an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance is the true face of the Bialystoker. This was brought home to me poignantly when recently visiting the Shiva house of a dear member and daily davener in our Shul who lives outside of the Lower East Side. Clearly moved, he told me over and over of the vast numbers of our members who called or visited his suburban home during the Shiva period. Some, he told me, even took car services to and fro. He was deeply touched by the degree to which he, a non-Lower East Sider, had been accepted into our Bialystoker family.

Elul allows us the opportunities to reconnect with our true selves. We sometimes forget that we each have within us the potential for greatness. Let us utilize this period to allow our latent warmth and acceptance to rise to the surface.

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MAZEL TOVS

Births

- Mazel tov to Joey & Alyssa Gilbert on the birth of a daughter, Sophia Belle.
- Mazel tov to Yaakov & Tova Laska on the birth of a daughter, Esther Rochel. Mazel Tov to the grandparents, Yosef & Nechi Seidenberg, and to the great grandmother, Rosalie Seidenberg.
- Mazel tov to Bessie Mayefsky on the birth of a grandson, Shlomo, a son to Yehudis & Aryeh Victor.
- Mazel tov to Yehuda & Mindy Zachter on the birth of a son. Mazel tov to the grandparents Rivky Krasner and Mel & Phyllis Zachter.

Bar Mitzvahs

- Mazel tov to Morris & Beth Fajtelewicz on the bar mitzvah of their son Avi.
- Mazel tov to Paul & Helene on the bar mitzvah of their grandson, Jason, son of Barry & Sharon Greenfield.
- Mazel tov to Nachum & Staci Segal on the bar mitzvah of their son Binyamin. Mazel tov to the grandparents, Izzy & Gail Weintraub and Zev & Esther Segal.

More Mazel Tavs

- Mazel tov to Mindy Zachter on passing her nursing boards, mazel tov to her husband, Yehudah, and to the Krasner & Zachter families.

Please Note: These were events that were called into or emailed to the office, and we regret any omissions. If you would like your simcha to be added in the next issue, please let us know.

SPONSORSHIPS

Shabbos Parshas Pinchas, July 24

Shalosh Seudos: Sponsored by Allen Siegal in honor of Rabbi Romm

Shabbos Parshas Matos, July 30

Shalosh Seudos: Sponsored by David Besserglick in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of his father, Yisroel Chaim Halevi

Shabbos Parshas Masei, August 6

Kiddush (1st Minyan): Co-sponsored by Yesocher Ginzberg, Dov & Raizel Goldman, Shlomo Goodstein Ira & Rochelle Miller for Rosh Chodesh Av

Kiddush (2nd Minyan): Sponsored by Joey & Alyssa Gilbert in honor of the birth of their daughter, Sophia Belle

Shalosh Seudos: Sponsored by Joey & Alyssa Gilbert in honor of the birth of their daughter, Sophia Belle

Shabbos Parshas V'Eshchanan, August 20

Shalosh Seudos: Sponsored by Jerry & Hadasa Nagel in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of his mother, Molly (Malka Bas Shmuel) Nagel

CONDOLENCES

- On the loss of our member Ethel Mark
- Barry Goldsammler on the loss of his father, Mordechai Goldsammler
- Jerry Nagel on the loss of his father, Abraham (Avraham Ben Ephraim Yitzhak) Nagel

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

September

Mr. & Mrs. Dovid Adams (anniversary)
Mr. Seth Bailin
Mr. Irwin Benjamin
Mr. Barry Blatt
Rabbi Moshe Bleich
Mr. Jonathan Boyarin
Mr. Stanley Broome
Mr. Schmuel Elhyani
Rabbi & Mrs. William Erps (anniversary)
Mr. Matthew Fried
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Gross (anniversary)
Mr. Reuven Kaufman
Mr. Danny Levine
Mr. Aaron Liberman
Mr. Eli Mermelstein
Mrs. Judy Mitrani
Mr. Ben Mittman
Mrs. Deborah Mittman
Ms. Judith Pernikoff
Mr. Aharon Romm
Mrs. Shira Romm
Mrs. Chaya Sara Shiffman
Mr. Nechemiah Shiffman
Mr. Avi Zomberg

Birthday or anniversary missing? Call or email the shul at 212-475-0165 or info@bialystoker.org