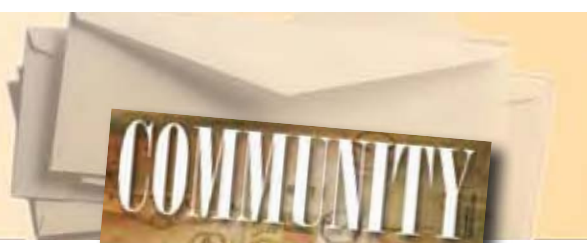


LETTERS



STRESS THE DETAILS

In another superb edition of “Files of the Bet Din,” Rabbi Sutton demonstrates the incredible wisdom of Torah law. But perhaps most instructive in this timely piece about the repercussions of “financial stress” is the lesson that only a qualified dayan should be trusted to issue rulings on these matters. The examples skillfully presented by Rabbi Sutton demonstrate how the intricate, sometimes seemingly insignificant, details within each case can drastically affect the final ruling. Unfortunately, with the ailing economy, we may be likely to see an increase in cases of “financial stress.” Hopefully, the parties involved will be wise enough to settle these matters before a proper Bet Din.

E. Shalom

MENTAL HEALTH PITFALLS

As a clinical professor of psychiatry, psycho-pharmacologist, psycho-endocrinologist and member of the Syrian community, I want to applaud your publication of the series “Has Mental Health Gone Mainstream?” However, it is critically important for your readers that you give voice to certain misconceptions that may result from the articles. First, while there was, in the ‘80s and ‘90s, great optimism about the use of medications, it has since been widely recognized that the drugs used for the treatment of most psychiatric disorders are neither as safe (some increase the risk of diabetes and of suicide in certain populations), nor as effective (antidepressants, while a useful tool for some people, are only fully effective in alleviating depression 30-50 percent of the time) as pharmaceutical companies would have us believe. A recent article in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine recently demonstrated a selective publication bias by pharmaceutical companies – only publishing studies that support their drugs.

Second, the head and brain are connected to the body by the neck. This means that mental health is affected by hormonal changes, allergy, infection, inflammation, and other medical disorders. The best medicine is that which uncovers causes of illness. Medicine, or in this case mental

health treatment, which simply labels a symptom (for example, “depression”) and applies a medication, ignores the vast body of information that documents a link between mind/mood/brain function and the gastrointestinal tract, detoxification systems, the immune system, all the hormonal systems, energy production systems, nutrition, epi-genetics, etc. While it is clear that our larger society is moving in the direction of one pill for every ill, based on economic incentives and drug-company supported misconceptions, I deeply hope our community will avoid that pitfall.

*Robert J. Hedaya MD, DFAPA
Founder, Centers for Whole Psychiatry*

MODERN DAY SULIKAS?

The story in the July issue about Sul Hachuel (Sulika) was both inspiring in its description of the Jewish heroine, and horrifying in its description of the Muslim authority’s cruelty. Though this episode took place over 150 years ago, we dare not fool ourselves into thinking that such brutality and malice do not exist among our avowed enemies today. Islamists today want more than total dominion over Jews and other non-Muslims. They seek nothing less than our annihilation. And don’t think that these fanatics are confined to the mountains of Afghanistan, either. The group involved in the heinous plot to blow up Bronx synagogues and shoot down American commercial aircraft is far from unique. They are among thousands of jailhouse converts to radical Islam who are being released after serving out their sentences. And the situation is only getting worse, considering, for example, Obama’s plan to shut down the Guantanamo Bay prison and allow the most radical jihadists into the general US prison population. But there is one significant difference between the situation today and in the time of Sulika – now, we can actually do something about it! Lobby your elected officials for tougher policies on extremists in our midst, join the effort to secure our synagogues and community centers, learn to take responsibility to protect yourself, and of course, most importantly of all, pray for a quick and triumphant end to this war on terror.

Penny C.

THE GOG UMAGOG SHAKEUP

While the entire “Mashiah Revealed” series presented over the last several months has been eye-opening, the latest installment, about the terrible wars of Gog Umagog, are downright frightening, to say the least. (If you haven’t read it yet, you owe it to yourself to go back and read it now!) The description sounds like a world almost hopelessly out of balance, being suddenly and violently shaken back to its proper course. Today, it’s not hard to see how out of balance things seem. The descriptions of the world just before the wars are eerily similar to our world today. Even without examining the prophecies discussed in the article, it’s not hard to imagine some sort of major shakeup coming to our world. The only questions are, when exactly will this happen, and on which side of the equation will we be?

Abe Sutton

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! WRITE US A LETTER

Letters submitted become the property of Community Magazine and will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Letters may be edited and revised for length, style and grammar before publication. All submissions are considered for publication unless otherwise requested. Preferential consideration is given to brief comments and insights that relate directly to published content.

**MAIL: COMMUNITY MAGAZINE
1616 OCEAN PKWY
BROOKLYN, NY 11223**

FAX: 718-504-4246

EMAIL: letters@communitym.com