

## Being Rear-Ended by a Truck and Other Miracles

by Marlin Killen

It was all meant to be.

It was something beyond coincidence, beyond reason. It was something otherworldly. There is no other way I can describe it other than to say that it was G-d's hand directing traffic, and I was along for the ride.

It started with a car crash.

It was a beautiful summer day, and I was driving my daughter and other kids home from day camp at the Mitzvah Factory. As I stopped at a red stoplight two blocks from my house, my car was rear-ended by a truck. The driver of the truck thought that the light would change and I would start to move, so he didn't slow down until he hit my car.

My car was totaled.

The kids in the car were shaken but uninjured overall. I thanked G-d that I had reminded them to buckle their seatbelts that day, something I rarely took the time to do. Today was the day they really needed to be buckled in, and they were. Those seatbelts kept them from getting badly hurt.

I, however, was another story. Despite being belted in, I could tell I was hurt immediately. My neck, my back, my head... ugh. Amazingly, an ambulance was stopped at the same light heading in the opposite direction. It pulled over to help. Police were called and additional rescue trucks arrived.

The other driver was so apologetic. We pulled out our licenses and exchanged insurance information. He was a driver for a kosher company, of all things!

It wasn't that everyone was belted in. It wasn't that the truck was from a kosher company. If it had only been these things, it would have been enough. But it was the strange turn of events that happened months later that made me know that the accident was a miracle intended to save my life.

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I knew that I was the only one with any significant injuries, but I hoped that my problems would be quick to fix. Not a chance. Months of physical therapy helped, but my neck was still not healing. I was sent for a CT scan of my neck. I went to pick up a copy of the report to give to my physical therapist, and the office offered me a copy of the CT scan to take with me. I took both the report and the scan.

The scan showed additional problems in my neck, which explained why things weren't healing correctly. My regular doctor sent me to a rehab specialist. I took my CT scan to show to the new doctor. She read the report and agreed that I needed some special help. Angela asked if she could keep the scan and review it with a radiologist she liked to work with. She promised to call me after they had a chance to look at the scan in more detail.

Angela's call was a surprising one. She said that my neck might not be quite as bad as initially thought. But, there was something else, something important to tell me. The radiologist found something odd in my lung, something the first radiologist had completely missed. I was to get more x-rays and CT scans immediately. I went to different radiology office. They took a chest x-ray and pronounced

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*The JCORKesher is published four times a year. It reaches the Orthodox communities of Northeast Philadelphia, Elkins Park, and Overbrook Park.*

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The next edition of JCORKesher will be published about March 30, 2005. Email article submissions for publication or to advertise in the next edition by **March 15, 2005.** JCORmail@aol.com or 215.745.8356

*This newsletter is not a guide to halacha. Please consult your rabbi if you have questions.*

President's Message

Reuven "Bob" Slurzberg



It's Chanukah! This holiday's message is one of hope and inspiration. Certainly we as Jews learn that we must never give up hope regardless of the odds. The story of Chanukah relates just such a miracle. This issue should help all of us to be inspired and to never give up hope. Marlin Killen's true story will touch all who read it and give hope to people who are suffering with a difficult disease. The formula gemach article will show you that you can make a difference. Two sisters, Tanya and Adle started this project and it is currently helping many families in Israel

afford to have formula that is very expensive. Sam Maron's piece covering the speech by Malcolm Hoelein at Politz Hebrew Academy will make everyone aware of the seriousness of the threat from Islamic fundamentalists. He is right on; we cannot sit by and do nothing- we must act and we must act now to prevent the spread of their hatred and their terror against Jews. Cindy Faust's article will definitely give you specific things to do to make your marriage better. A Jewish home ideally fosters love and caring. This article will help you achieve this type of atmosphere at home. Deborah Addi has contributed an interesting interview with one of the new residents of Rhawnhurst-the Carmels. Their enthusiasm for the neighborhood was in a large part generated by the warmth and caring they were shown by our community. The Girl Scouts continue to grow and to have significant programs under their tireless leader Betina Dunn. Our children need to know the contribution Jewish Americans have made to our armed forces. You will also notice that in this issue we have tried to publish davening times for the various shuls as well as times for shiurim. Inspiration is essential- so now that you are all inspired you can choose one of the shiurim (classes on Torah) and learn more and of course we all hope that by seeing all of the different times available you'll be able to find convenient times to daven and to be able to pray with a minyan. Finally, make every effort to gaze into the flames of the enorah and imagine your neshama being on fire and so excited about doing a mitzvah. I would be remiss if I did not warmly welcome our new advertisers who help us defray the publishing costs. "Wigs by Design" have really beautiful wigs and their prices are very good. Coleson Insurance is owned and operated by a good friend of mine, Gary Wilson. His philosophy (see ad page 10) says it all. Finally another friend of mine Dr. Ruth Horwitz, an attorney is extremely well educated and can assist you in all legal matters. Please patronize all of our advertisers.



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me fine, no further scans necessary. I went home to celebrate my good health.

My next visit to Angela was not fine, though. She was upset when I told her that the radiologist had pronounced me fine. She said, "Wait here!" and went off to get my original CT scan. She laid the scans on the table in front of me and said, "Look! This is what we are concerned about."

There, in my lung, was a large spot that even I could tell should not have been there. I was sent immediately to see a pulmonologist. Without an introduction, he entered the exam room, sat, and looked at me for a long time. Finally, he spoke. "I think," he said as slowly as I have ever heard someone speak, "that we will be ok." I knew immediately that this was serious and that we had a long road ahead of us. It was either a bad infection, or it was lung cancer. Never having smoked in my life, I was counting on it being a bad infection.

We were about to leave for our first trip to Israel to celebrate my oldest child's Bat Mitzvah. The doctor put me on high intensity antibiotics. I put a prayer for health in the Western Wall. I was hoping for tuberculosis. I had lung cancer instead.

I didn't know at the time that lung cancer is the number one cause of death in the world. And now I know why people don't know they have it until it is too late. And you don't even have to be a smoker or near second hand smoke to get it. You could be just like me — a healthy non-smoker with generally good habits — and still get it. You could have no symptoms at all and still have it. Until, of course, it has spread everywhere and your death is imminent.

Immediate major surgery was necessary to remove a lobe of one of my lungs. My family was horrified. No one imagined that I might be ill, let alone ill with lung cancer.

I was ready, though. I knew that everything would turn out all right. I knew G-d wanted me to be well. Why else would He have given me an accident that hurt me just badly enough to need extra care and extra radiology and extra-fantastic specialists? I knew that He wanted me to find the cancer and have it removed. I knew that I would be well.

My mother was the only person who understood. Amazingly, she had had the exact same type of cancer at the exact same stage level two years earlier! She was now healthy and well. She and I knew that she had gone through her ordeal so that she could be an example of

courage, faith, and hope to me. G-d works in mysterious ways! I knew I would survive.

Today, I am well. Today, I am happy. Today, I can thank G-d for the blessing of this day. Today, I can hug and kiss my children and my husband and share life with my family and friends. So, I breathe a little funny when I do aerobics. So, I have a few complications left over from my surgery. So, some days are a bit achier than others. So, my neck is still bothering me from the accident. It is all good. It is all part of being alive.

It was a miracle to have been rear-ended by that truck. It was a miracle that saved my life. I know that I am supposed to live and I know that there is more that I am supposed to do.

G-d wants me to live! What a joy and a blessing!

I know that my accident was bashert. And, in telling my story, I have met others with similar tales of something beyond extraordinary, something beyond coincidence, something that is G-d's hand directing traffic and they are along for the ride.

Perhaps something like this has happened to you or someone you love, something that seemed like a tragedy but was a miracle in disguise. Please join me at this wondrous and miraculous time of year to give thanks for the blessings that arise from accidents and share these stories with others.

Write to me and tell me your story of a miracle.



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## Kayla's Joke Corner

Welcome to this issue of Kayla's Joke Corner! This is officially the Computer and Science issue. Remember, please email your jokes to me at [Wolfkid27@msn.com](mailto:Wolfkid27@msn.com)! Enjoy the laughs!

### **Just Wondering...**

If the formula for water is H<sub>2</sub>O, is the formula for an ice cube H<sub>2</sub>O squared?

### **Please Hold...**

Once I was on the phone with the customer service center. I was complaining, but not getting far. This is the point at which I hung up: "Welcome to MegaComputer's 24-hour help line. If you have been waiting LESS than 24 hours, please remain on the line. If you've been waiting MORE than 24 hours, touch '1' to order a life." Click!

### **A Poem**

Once upon a midnight dreary,  
fingers cramped and vision bleary,  
System manuals piled high  
and wasted paper on the floor.  
Longing for the warmth of bed sheets,  
still I sat there doing spreadsheets.  
Having reached the bottom line,  
I took a floppy from the drawer.  
Typing with a steady hand,  
I then invoked the SAVE command,  
But instead got a reprimand.  
It read "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

Was this some occult illusion?  
Some maniacal intrusion?  
These were choices Solomon himself  
had never faced before.  
Carefully, I weighed the options.  
These three seemed to be the top ones.  
Clearly, now I must adopt one.  
"Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

With my fingers pale and trembling,  
slowly toward the keyboard bending,  
Longing for a happy ending,  
hoping all would be restored.

Praying for some guarantee,  
finally I pressed a key —  
But on the screen, what did I see?  
"Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

I tried to catch the chips off-guard  
— I pressed again but twice as hard.  
Luck was not in the cards.  
I saw what I had seen before.  
Now I typed in desperation,  
trying random combinations.  
Still there came the incantation:  
"Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

There I sat, distraught, exhausted.  
By my own machine accosted.  
Getting up, I turned away and  
paced across the office floor.  
And then I saw an awful sight,  
a bold and blinding flash of light.  
A lightning bolt had cut the night and  
shook me to my core.  
I saw the screen collapse and die.  
"No! No! My database!," I cried.  
I thought I heard a voice reply,  
"You'll see your data Nevermore!"

To this day I do not know  
the place to which lost data goes.  
I bet it goes to Heaven  
where the angels have it stored.  
But as for productivity, well I fear,  
it goes straight to heck.  
And that's the tale I have to tell,  
"Abort, Retry, Ignore?"



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## Turning on the Light of Marriage

by Cindy Supnick Faust, MSW, LCSW

Mt. Laurel Center for the Family

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The beauty of Chanukah is upon us — the glow of the Chanukah candles as they shine in the window and reflect the joy in our children's faces. We work so hard to create a feeling of happiness, simcha, wellbeing, and fulfillment in these eight days — learning, cleaning, shopping, cooking. We accept the avodah because we believe in keeping the foundation of our Jewish heritage alive. So too in marriage, it is important to keep the light shining. Many couples begin with a “fully lit” feeling, with all eight “lights: shining a warm, reassuring glow in the home. We begin marriage viewing it as the “gift” or a prize we have received, just like the presents we received as children; there is a sense of entitlement, that we are owed a lifetime of bliss, respect, adoration and more. As time goes on the glow of the lights often dims due to all the stress and pressures of family life. Those individuals who see marriage as an opportunity for growth with another person in service of HaShem will keep the flames burning brightly. This is a mindset that requires work, perseverance, dedication, and willingness to put your partner's needs ahead of your own.

Just as we instill the true meaning of Chanukah in our children- to look beyond the materialistic and embrace the beauty of the true miracles, we need to illustrate to children that a loving marriage is more than how we live in the material world, it is a reflection of our relationship with HaShem.

How do we keep the “lights” of marriage burning brightly? Here are eight guidelines:

1. All relationships are challenged at times. Learn to grow from the hard times and the sweet times. Each challenge is an opportunity to grow .
2. In the middle of a disagreement, ask yourself: “Do I want to be right, or do I want a relationship.” Develop the midah of humility.
3. Stay out of the courtroom of the mind!! Keep discussions free of blame and shame. Remember, when we stand in front of the Heavenly Court, we will want to be judged favorably.

4. Don't ever stop dating once you are married! The happiest partner is one who feels nurtured and important. Beware of the common excuses: Lack of money, time, babysitters, energy. Some of the best dates take place over a cup of tea in the kitchen at midnight!

5. Learn the art of endorsing and reinforcing. Make a habit to always say at least one positive thing to your partner every day.

6. Don't let little sparks turn into big fires. Have the courage to address issues as they come up. It is much harder to deal with feelings that are wrapped in resentment year after year.

7. Seek assistance from professionals when needed. Marriage can present situations that require the wisdom of those who are trained to help. A solid marriage always has a rav.

8. Study the art of communication; do not mind read. Learn how to state your feelings and needs in a way that your partner can understand.

## Two Book Reviews

by Howard Riell

*Bible Heroes I Can Be*, by Ann Eisenberg, pictures by Rosalyn Schanzer (Kar-Ben Publishers)

Our youngest readers will be charmed by these short, warm-hearted stories about Biblical heroes like David, Moses, Rebecca and more. The illustrations are eye-catching, and the language quite simple.

*Let's Visit Israel*, by Judy Groner, pictures by Cheryl Nathan (Kar-Ben Publishers)

From landing in Ben Gurion Airport to floating in the Dead Sea, this mini-excursion for very young readers is a nice read.

## Spotlight on New Rhawnhurst Residents

by Deborah Addi

Recently, I had an opportunity to speak with Ziv and Helena Carmel, new members of the Rhawnhurst community. Both in their middle twenties, Ziv and Helena are both professionals. He is a civil engineer while she is a pharmacist. Due to the birth of Emunah Rachel, Helena is not working presently.



Ziv and Helena moved to Philadelphia in May 2004 due to Ziv's new position in Jenkintown. As with any big move, this move was accompanied by a number of apprehensions, due to all of the transitions that were occurring — new job, new baby coming, as well as a new neighbor-

hood. According to Helena, however, these fears quickly dissipated due to the wonderful welcome they received here — loads of support from the members of the Jewish community including Mitzvah meals delivered for one week and a lot of other support and information such as information about shuls, schools, and restaurants and shopping.

Ziv and Helena are presently members of B'nai Israel shul. Helena reports that they are thrilled with the outpouring of warmth and community spirit they have received since their arrival. They are truly happy with the kosher facilities and other facets of Jewish life that they have encountered here. Ziv feels particularly pleased at the amount of shiurim that are available nightly, either at B'nai Israel, Ahavath Torah, or privately with different chavrusas.

Ziv and Helena are a young couple who are delighted with their decision to relocate to Rhawnhurst. They feel truly pleased to be members of our special community. We wish them a long and productive stay here in Rhawnhurst and hope they will report all of their good feelings to a lot of people. Good luck!



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## Jewish War Veterans Donate Flags to JCC Shomer Shabbos Girl Scouts

by Bettina Dunn

The lucky members of the JCC Shomer Shabbos Girl Scout Troops had the distinct honor and pleasure to meet some real Jewish American heroes this month, an experience they won't likely forget anytime soon. On November 14, 2004, in a ceremony attended by Jewish War Veterans National Commander Louis Abramson, JWV Philadelphia County Council Commander Allen Abramson and Richard Fine, Senior Vice Commander JWV Post 98, the Jewish War Veterans presented our troops with flags and flagpoles for both the Junior and the Brownie troops, a donation for which we are extremely grateful.

The veterans came well prepared with individual flags for each scout along with flag and liberty bell pins for everyone. Each scout learned how to properly fold the flag and learned how to show respect for the flag and what it represents. The veterans taught the scouts about the contributions Jewish Americans have made to our armed forces and the importance of scouting to build good citizens. In gratitude to the JWV for their donation, our troop hopes to help the JWV with its "Support our Soldiers" program

when it comes to Northeast Philadelphia by packaging items to go to Jewish chaplains and soldiers serving overseas.

We would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who donated items to sell in our community yard sale in August. The money raised has helped our troop get going to a great start this year. Additional plans in the works include a Chanukah party, swimming night, and a trip to the Philadelphia Mint. The troop currently has space for three more members. Anyone interested in being a Brownie, Junior or Cadette please contact Bettina Dunn at 215-342-2790.



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## We May Not Be Able to Help Settle the Israeli-Arab Crisis, But We Are Able to Help Settle A Few Babies Tummies

By Shalva Elstein

### *Rhawnhurst Makes a Difference in the Lives of Needy Infants in Israel*

The Rhawnhurst Baby Formula Gemach continues to be a huge success, providing infants with the proper nutrition that they need. Babies who are sustained on foods such as sugar-water or watered-down formula are at risk for developmental delays. Thanks to our generous community, many families have been aided in their struggles to feed their little ones. As we go to press, approximately 100 cans of baby formula (over \$1,100 worth) are heading to Israel with a local family.

Here is a glimpse at some of the families that the gemach has helped, relayed by our Israeli connection, Tanya Goldfrad, of Remat Beit Shemesh:

“While giving out formula in Kiryat Sefer, I was introduced to a woman who lives in Talmon, a small settlement made up of a group of families, helping to ensure a Jewish presence throughout Israel. Cans were donated there as well.

“A family of three small children were forwarded to me from another chesed organization in the area. They have three children under four, the newest a preemie. The mother is at home and the father is in the army's Nachal Charedi. Thanks to foresight on your side of the Atlantic, the Gemach had preemie formula to give her as well as regular formula.

“Maor is an adorable baby boy. His parents both work full time to try to make ends meet. Still with jobs that pay minimum wage, the cost of living too high, and they end up deep in overdraft land most months. Saving her the money she would spend on formula is not the end of her financial woes, but it is one less worry.

“Chagit is the mother of five young children, and is no longer able to work. Now her family is trying to scrape by on her husbands small salary. The six can she received freed up 180 shekels for buying chicken for Shabbas.

“Aliza and her husband were both born in Ethiopia. They are now Orthodox and he learns in a Mir satellite Kollel here in the Rama. She supports the family by working as a cashier in the local supermarket, leaving her no time to express milk for her baby. She just had her fourth child and Number 3 has allergies and needs to be on Isomil even though he's over one year old. Becoming more familiar with her situation, it became evident that she needs more than formula, and I am currently working on obtaining

other items for her as well. To date the children were sleeping on the floor, but this week a second hand double bed futon is being donated to them. Hopefully after Chanukah, someone else will be donating another bed so each of the children will have a place to sleep. Last week we received a donation for them of a baby swing and the week before a second hand oven - they had been without one.”

### **NOT FOR NOUGHT**

Tanya writes further: “I just wanted to let you know that your donations of formula, your willingness to bring the formula to Israel is not for nought. Each small step, each coupon for discount on formula, is making someone's life here easier. May it be a Melitz Yosher for the Rhawnhurst community in particular and for Klall Yisrael.

Keep up the good work.  
Warm wishes from the Promised Land,  
Tanya Goldfrad

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

- Add a can to your shopping list each supermarket visit (please get powder only- liquid is too heavy to ship)
- \* Ask friends, relatives, doctors, and pharmacy reps for their extra cans.
- \* Money also buys formula: drop off a check.
- \* If you are going to Israel, volunteer to take formula (Powder Formula is light).

To help in this Great Mitzvah, Call: Adle Elstein- 215-745-5097 or email [immaelstein@msn.com](mailto:immaelstein@msn.com)

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## Malcolm Hoenlein: A Critical Time

by Sam Maron

PHILADELPHIA—Warning that “there is no capital in Europe where you (Orthodox Jews) can walk safely and don kippahs,” Malcolm Hoenlein told the Philadelphia Friends of Ner Israel Rabbinical College. He also said that international Jewry is facing “the most critical time” in its history.

Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish organizations, was the keynote speaker at the Friends’ annual melaveh malkah. He said the continuing and rapid spread of fundamental Islam throughout the world is still the top global threat to Jewish security and welfare.

“Saudi Arabia by the end of this decade will be totally fundamentalist,” Hoenlein said, adding that even Hasni Mubawrak’s Egypt is “tottering” towards a takeover by fundamental Islamist forces — the kinds of forces that were behind the 9-11 tragedy here and that are at work in the terrorist war being waged against Israel by groups such as Hamas and the PLO. “If elections were held in Egypt today, it would go to the fundamentalists,” Hoenlein said, creating an even greater threat to Israel.

Taking his audience on a tour of the European continent, Hoenlein said there are 40 to 60 million Moslems in Europe, in Nigeria 51 percent of the country is claimed by fundamental Islam, and 12 Black African countries are “going to fundamentalism.” In Scandinavia, he said, “aside from a 90 percent rate of intermarriage,” children attending Jewish day schools cannot go to school alone, and in Stockholm today 25 percent of the population is Moslem. “There is no future for Jews in Europe,” Hoenlein said.

In France, he said, there has been in the past year a 60 percent increase in anti-semitic activity, much of which goes unreported. As a result of the growing threat to Jewish security in France, 30 percent of French Jews are leaving their home — many heading for Israel. “In Israel,” he said, “you hear French being spoken frequently” with many newly immigrated French Jews buying apartments and homes quickly. “Twenty-three hundred mosques have been built in Europe in the last decade,” Hoenlein said.

In England, he said, in the last 2 years, 100 synagogues have been attacked.

“As Islamists arise, we see the rise of anti-semitism,” Hoenlein said. “In the past year, we have seen the greatest number of anti-semitic incidents since Kristallnacht. We see the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Anglican Churches passing resolutions divesting themselves from doing business with companies that do business with Israel.

Turning to the American scene, he said, “100,000,000 Moslems are on the move today. This is a war against us. We have to wake up. Our Torah is the enemy. The values we hold are the enemy.” Noting that Saudis hold mortgages on mosques throughout the world and the US, Hoenlein said that there are 12 mosques in New York City that operate day schools in which fundamental Islamic teachers “teach about Jews in derogatory terms. These schools are their community centers. They’re building for the future. They understand the importance of time.” These, he said, are Wahabi mosques, representing the most extreme form of Islam.

“Jews who believe that this is someone else’s problem are making a mistake. The real target is the US,” Hoenlein said, admonishing that Orthodox Jews must as a community educate our elementary children, high school and Yeshivos students across the board about the threat fundamental Islam is posing. Unlike Jewish leaders at the time of Kristallnacht who knew of Hitler’s growing threat but remained silent, he said, “There is not going to be any cloak of ignorance for us to hide behind. Your grandchildren will ask what you did to stop this.”

For example, he said that the Saudis have spent \$70 billion in the past 10 years to control various infrastructures of countries in which they win elections and gain access to power. When they win elections, they ask for the Ministry of Education. They know that whoever controls the minds of the young controls the future.

“Do we (American Jews) understand this?”

In 155 school systems, he said, the President’s Conference learned that Moslems introduced a textbook to teach elementary children that Moslems came to America before

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Columbus and became Algonquin Indians. When an Algonquin Indian leader heard about this, he went to the school systems and had that textbook removed. "It would have taken us a year," he said, referring to American Jewish communal leadership.

"We have 8,000 illegal immigrants coming in everyday. Many are known terrorists, and they are coming in state by state," Hoenlein said.

In the next six months, he said, American Jews need to closely monitor the international community's response to Iran's bid for nuclear power. "If we don't stop Iran in the next meeting (of the European Common Bloc nations — France, Germany, and Great Britain), the whole picture of the Middle East will change," he said, warning that Iran's nuclear capability includes weapons that have a 2,000-mile-range capability along with a biochemical cache. He said in the last year 168 Iranians have been executed publicly, including Moslems and Christians.

"When I told [Secretary of State] Colin Powell about this, he said, 'What executions?'"

Hoenlein said American Jewish communal efforts must focus on aid for Israel in the post-Arafat world as well as defusing Iran's bid for European aid for its nuclear program.

"When Jews stand together," he said, "we can overcome. In this critical time, if we come together, our children and grandchildren will praise us for making it a safer world for them."

A native Philadelphian and brother of longtime Rhawnhurst resident Steven Hoenlein, Hoenlein has held the top post at the President's Conference since 1986. Previously, he served as Executive Vice President of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater New York, an agency he founded himself that has developed as a major New York Jewish communal force. He has also served as the executive of the Greater New York Conference of Soviet Jewry and as Director of the Soviet Jewry Committee of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia.

A graduate of the Talmudical Yeshiva of Greater Philadelphia High School, he holds a masters degree in government from the University of Pennsylvania's prestigious Fels Institute.

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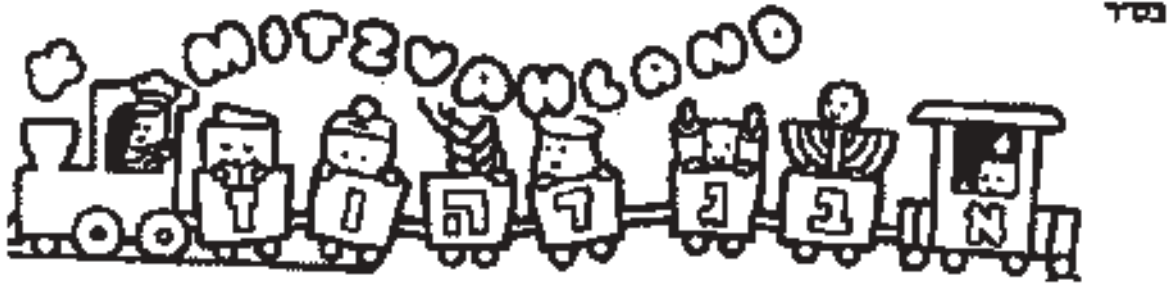
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## An Open Letter to Rhawnhurst

Rabbi Zelig Pliskin Shares His 'Strongest Wish' For Jews Everywhere

By Howard Riell

His books have educated thousands of Jews across the world. And with the publication of his latest, *Growth Through Tehillim: Exploring Psalms for Life-Transforming Thoughts* (ArtScroll, 2004), Rabbi Zelig Pliskin is once again helping Jews reach closer to Heaven even as they get further in touch with themselves.

As caring as he is insightful, Rabbi Pliskin has dedicated his life to, as he puts it, “having a positive influence on the lives of others.” And in this exclusive interview — presented in the rabbi’s own words — he tells the Jews of Philadelphia and the readers of the *JCOR Keshet* where he came from, what drives him, and what he hopes to accomplish.

“I’ve lived in Jerusalem for the last thirty-five years. I was born in Baltimore, where my father was rabbi of the Bnai Israel Congregation from 1937 until his passing in 1977.

“My father studied Torah under the Chofetz Chaim in his yeshiva in Radin, Poland. My father was there for a total of 12 years. Before that, as a young boy, my father learned in the Ponevez Yeshiva.

“I’m named after my father’s father. My grandfather was a student of the Volozhin Yeshiva and he died when my father was only three. After the Chofetz Chaim died my father wrote the first biography on him in Yiddish while he was still in Radin.

“Until my Bar Mitzvah I studied in the Talmudical Academy Day School. From 1959 until 1969 I studied in Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, Ohio, where I received Smichah. After our wedding, my wife and I came to Jerusalem, where I studied in the Brisker Kollel under Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveichik, of blessed memory, from 1969-1974.

“When Aish Hatorah Yeshiva started in 1974, I was one of the original teachers. I still give lectures in Aish Hatorah on areas of Torah and personal growth.

“I started writing my first book, *Guard Your Tongue*, on the laws of shmiras haloshon (watching our words) in 1974, and it was published in 1975. Given the fact that my father was a disciple of the Chofetz Chaim, I’ve always

felt a connection with the Chofetz Chaim and his teachings. So it was with great enthusiasm that I worked on the English adaptation of his classic work.

“I presently have 19 books published. My last eleven books have been with ArtScroll. These include: *My Father, My King: Connecting with the Creator, Anger: The Inner Teacher, Marriage, Happiness, Kindness, Courage, Patience, Serenity, Enthusiasm, and Harmony with Others*.

“My latest book is *Growth Through Tehillim: Exploring Psalms for Life-Transforming Thoughts*. In the words of ArtScroll: ‘In his captivating style, Rabbi Pliskin offers analyses of many verses of Psalms with practical suggestions how to implement their message to transform our lives.’

“As a teacher in Aish Hatorah, I have counseled many students and made a comprehensive study of the fields of psychology and counseling. I have read many books and attended many classes and seminars on these areas. I have a degree in Counseling Psychology from the State University of New York.

“The reason I write about the subjects that I do is because I find them personally fascinating, and because my strongest wish is to have a positive influence on the lives of others.

“There are four areas that I feel are most important for each of us to develop, and these are my focus in my teachings and counseling. They are: Goals, Traits, States, and Self-image.

“We each have a life’s mission and purpose. This is our major life goal. By focusing on what we specifically need to do to reach our clear and specified goals step by step, we live a life of accomplishment and fulfillment. There are general goals of studying and knowing Torah, of prayer and connecting to Hashem, and of doing acts of kindness. We each need to create our own specific points of focus to accomplish in our own unique way.

“The Torah commandment to refine and upgrade our character traits is the mitzvah of walking in the Almighty’s

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ways. We each have a unique personality and character. We need to find our strengths and be aware of our weaknesses, and it is a lifetime process of patiently developing ourselves.

“We are always in a state of mind. Our states of mind are the key element how we will think, talk, and act. Emotional and mental states that are necessary to master are those such as happiness and joy, inner peace and serenity, confidence and courage, being centered, focused and flowing. I have a recorded CD seminar that explains concepts and provides tools to help one master one’s states. This is called *Creating the States You Want: More Joy and Less Distress*.

“This is a key focus when I work with people. Most problems in life come from negative and ‘unresourceful’ states such as frustration, anger, sadness, being stressed out, anxiety, worry, and general states of distress. Each person can learn to gain greater mastery over his or her own states. From a Torah perspective this is an integral aspect of developing our middos (character traits).

“The thoughts that you think either help you live a more joyful enhanced life, or a life filled with negativity and distress. In my books, I focus on the Torah concepts and ideas that give us life-enhancing thoughts.

“Our time is often called an age of anxiety. It is not the age that causes this; in every generation there are unique challenges and problems. Our task in life is to grow from the challenges that come our way.

“The fourth aspect I deal with is self-image. Developing a Torah sense of our own value is a foundation for a healthy life. Living a joyful life of mitzvos is a fundamental part of living a Torah life. People think more in our time about how they are feeling. When people’s survival was their key focus, thinking about one’s feelings was a luxury. But today, this has become a most important area of life. There are many Torah resources for this. In my lectures and books I focus on these areas.

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“The ideas and principles that are necessary for living a life of emotional and psychological well-being are found in Torah verses throughout the wide world of Tanach, the wisdom of the sages in the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash and the writing of the later Torah scholars which give us a picture of how to live a life of meaning and fulfillment. I make an effort to learn from our sources and to show others how we can apply them in our daily lives.

“In my books I have many hundreds of stories to illustrate how people have applied these ideas. Everyone who looks will find these same stories in their own lives. By pointing out the direction in which to look, my books and teachings help us travel with greater clarity along our life’s journey.

“A question that arises is how a Jew can remain optimistic in the face of rising anti-semitism. King David, in Psalms, had to deal with every major challenge that people had in his times and still do today. He had enemies, internal and external, and needed the Almighty’s help. We need to call upon the same ultimate, unlimited force of the Creator to help us. Tehillim points the way.

“What is important for us today is to see people with a ‘good eye.’ See the good and positive in people, and point out to them how they can enhance their lives by living with Torah wisdom.

“I would like to finish this off with a poem that a student of mine once wrote right before leaving Aish Hatorah (after staying for a year). The day he arrived, he was the only fellow who showed up in the class that morning. It was during the intifada, and our beginning classes are geared towards tourists who are just visiting Israel for a short time. He tried to sit in the back so he could doze off if he wished. But since he was the only fellow in the room, I invited him to sit right opposite me and we would be able to have a discussion. This is the poem he wrote a year later:

I must shout, “THANK YOU, RABBI PLISKIN!”  
Since our first meeting a year ago, my life has  
changed in many way. Now I’m in a “STATE” of let-  
ting you know.  
I remember wandering into your class upset, wanting  
only to daydream. When no other students arrived in  
the room, I was so mad I wanted to scream.

You called me up to the front, there was nowhere I  
could run  
Through your warmth and understanding, a relation-  
ship had begun  
The clarity that you highlighted, made me think of  
walking out the door. The result of that discussion,  
had me wanting and waiting for more.  
The way you entered my world, taking for yourself a  
front row seat  
Knowing the sources of my issues, putting my pes-  
simism into defeat.  
I never related to a person, in the way you touched  
my soul. Radically helping me shed old habits, find  
success and really grow  
Torah discusses “feeling,”(and) that was opposite  
everything I knew  
It reveals what the mind can achieve, and this knowl-  
edge I owe to you.  
Rabbi Pliskin, you are amazing, the way you placed  
into my hand,  
so many ingenious points of view, with a simple clari-  
ty I understand.  
Upgraded in organizing thoughts, how to be aware,  
and what I know, is realizing what it means in life, to  
stand tall and be in control.  
Replacing the word “mood,” with a more resourceful  
“state of mind,”  
accessing those states, and G.T.S.S., means no longer  
flying blind.  
I always felt that the world around me, was so  
restricting, like a vice,  
learning I was causing those restrictions, is knowl-  
edge beyond price.  
It’s freedom from the slavery, of anywhere, anytime,  
‘I’m depressed.’  
So many burdens have been lifted, I’ve never felt so  
blessed  
Your world is full of meaning, and its so enjoyable  
when you’re around, the way you convey thoughts  
and humor, is absolutely profound.  
‘This is my Karate state!’ and you jumped up with a  
punch and a kick,  
you had me hysterical, yet I was learning and ensur-  
ing your ideas would stick.  
You’ve helped so many people open their ‘Gateway  
to Happiness.’

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'I thank you SO MUCH with all my mind and my heart...Rabbi Pliskin.'

Thank you very, very, very much Rabbi Pliskin!!!

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## Look What's Going On at Congregation Beth Solomon Synagogue & Community Center

By Rabbi Akiva Pollack, Educational Director

It has taken many years, but what some people said would never happen has become a reality. Just before Rosh Hashana of this year a Kollel was brought to Northeast Philadelphia. It was "brought" in the sense that hours upon hours of work were spent on making this Makom Torah possible.

The Kollel is learning at Rabbi Isaacson's Shul, Congregation Beth Solomon Synagogue and Community Center, 198 Tomlinson Road, 215-671-1981. Just a few months after its inception, the Kollel has become a central place where people know they have someone to learn with. Sunday morning is the busiest of all with many different programs happening at once. After the 8:00 a.m. Shacharis, breakfast is served. Men, women and children alike join for the hot meal and then go on to their specific classes. The Hebrew School, which has doubled in size since the Kollel arrived, starts at 10:00 a.m. It is a very comprehensive class and some of the children go on to regular day schools. There are also classes for adults. The Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Aharon Notis, gives a shiur for Balebatim on Chumash, while the Kollel members learn bichavrusoh with anyone on any topic they choose.

At 10:30 a.m. starts a gymnastics class. Many kids from the Rahwnhurst neighborhood have already joined the class and the class is growing. There are actually two separate classes for the different ages. It is a lot of fun and the kids really learn a lot. There is also a special class given to 1st grade Politz kids by one of the members of the Kollel, Rabbi Kremansky. It is followed by karate class given by Mr. Bill. At the same time there is a women's class available for anyone who would like to attend. It is given by Mrs. Sorah Kremansky.

Monday evening is also a bit busy with an advanced gemoroh Shiur given at 8:30 p.m. It is given By Rabbi Nochum Baskin on the sixth perek of Brachos. At the same time there is a women's class given by Rabbi Elya Ber kantorowitz in Russian. It is extremely popular and growing very fast. The other members of the Kollel are available at this time for anyone who would like to come in and learn one on one.

Tuesday evening, we are about to begin a basic Aleph Bet class for adults at 8:30 p.m. There has been a tremendous interest among the community and everyone is invited.

Wednesday night is a special "chavrusoh," partner night. Everyone who comes must bring someone to learn with. After Maariv, there is a hot supper and a ping pong tournament against the members of the Kollel. If you think they can teach well wait till you see them at Table Tennis.

Thursday night is dedicated to a special Chumash Shiur given by Rabbi Reuven Shmulevich. It is a very thorough and in depth shiur which has proven to inspire everyone who attends. As time goes on, the shiur keeps going.

If you would like to join us for Shabbos you are more than welcome. There are two classes given, one Friday night on Halacha by Rabbi Nochum Baskin and one is given Shabbos day on Pirkei Avos by myself. The davening is Yeshivish with a hint of chasidish and the baalei tefilah are excellent. We have just started a new minyan for Maariv. Until now we have had a joint Mincha and maariv minyan with a short shiur in between. We have now added a second maariv minyan at 8:00 p.m.

If you are in the neighborhood, make sure to drop by.



## Sharon's Gaza Plan Prompts Questions by Aaron Klein

*Israel to still engage, host Palestinians after 'separation'*

With Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral withdrawal plan passing an important Knesset vote last month, and evacuation from Gaza drawing ever closer, the recent release on the Internet of the details of the disengagement plan have some asking whether members of the Knesset and Mideast journalists covering the issue have read the plan's fine print, which discloses the withdrawal is not as complete as many are portraying.

Sharon last month won a historic vote in the Knesset, with a majority of the Israeli parliament voting to approve the disengagement plan and remove all settlements from Gaza and some from the West Bank. Deputy State Department spokesman Adam Ereli praised the vote, saying "We think the withdrawal plan presents an opportunity to advance the interests of both sides."

The evacuation from Gaza has been mostly portrayed by the Israeli government and media as a separation from the Palestinians, who turned down an offer of a state at Camp David in 2000, and instead launched a terrorist war that Israel says proves the Palestinians are not negotiating partners, and that the Jewish State has no choice but to separate itself until a Palestinian leadership emerges that is willing to make peace.

But the details of the plan, recently released on the website of the office of the prime minister, seem to indicate the disengagement is not a complete one, and that after the plan is implemented, Israel will continue to maintain strong ties to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

While the premise of the plan, for example, states "the process of disengagement will serve to dispel claims regarding Israel's responsibility for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip," the plan later details that Israel will be obligated to continue to "provide water pipes, electricity, industrial zones, markets, employment and an industrial zone to sustain the Palestinian Arab economy of Gaza."

The plan mandates "other existing arrangements, such as those relating to water and the electromagnetic sphere shall remain in force" while "economic arrangements currently in operation between Israel and the Palestinians shall, in the meantime, remain in force."

Many have said the after disengagement, terrorists wouldn't be able to enter Israel, but according to the published plan, economic arrangements that shall continue after the withdrawal include: "the entry of workers into Israel in accordance with the existing criteria; the entry and exit of goods between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Israel and abroad; the monetary regime; tax and customs envelope arrangements; postal and telecommunications arrangements."

The plan also obligates Israel to "improve the transportation infrastructure in the West Bank in order to facilitate the contiguity of Palestinian transportation."

Another section of the plan seems to state that while Israel will vacate Gaza, there is the possibility a military presence may remain in Gaza. "Military installations and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria will be dismantled and removed," the plan states, "with the exception of those which Israel decides to leave and transfer to another party ... ."

"While the Sharon Plan is described as a disengagement plan, it does anything but disengage Israel from the Palestinian Arab population," said David Bedein, Bureau Chief of the Israel Resource News Agency, who recently published an analysis of the plan.

The plan states the Gaza Strip "shall be demilitarized and shall be devoid of weaponry, the presence of which does not accord with the Israeli-Palestinian agreements," but Bedein points out the plan "doesn't even allude to the fact that the PLO violated all previous agreements in this regard and refused to implement the agreement with Israel to have their personnel vetted by Israel. ... How are they going to keep Gaza demilitarized?"

Bedein explains Sharon's plan doesn't state exactly who will take over security in Gaza when the IDF leaves its positions.

"Does that mean that the PLO security forces, described in Clause 1 of the Sharon Plan as 'not a reliable peace partner,' will now inherit Israel's abandoned IDF military bases?" he asks.

The plan also says Israel will provide "advice, assistance and training" to "the Palestinian security forces for the implementation of their obligations to combat terrorism

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