

hammor

The Alex Clare Enigma

An in-depth interview with Nishmas Yisroel's most famous congregant

A Cry for Help

Dealing with abuse in the Jewish community

Balak means "Watch out for my Donkey!"

A four-day discovery of Jewish roots in Morocco

Taking a Walk on Shabbos

A look at Techum Shabbos and the problem of Elstree and Borehamwood

hamaor

5775 has been a busy year for the Federation; a year of growth and change. It has now been nearly nine months since I joined the Head Office team as Communications and Projects Manager, and it has been truly exciting to witness the revitalisation of an organisation that is such a strong part of British Jewish history and that has so much to offer the Jewish community today.

While we will be spending a great deal of time in shul over the coming weeks, I hope you will find time to enjoy reading Hamaor - this edition is packed full of interesting, informative and entertaining articles.

From Dayan Lichtenstein's hard-hitting feature, to Dayan Elzas' fascinating halachic insights, there is much food for thought.

Food also features in gastronomic form with delicious recipes from Jenny's Cakes, and a delectable interview with Daniella and Ariel Kamara, who make mouth-watering raw chocolate goodies under KF supervision.

A few months ago, I was also privileged to interview well-known singer Alex Clare, who has strong connections to the Federation, to find out about his Jewish journey as well as his musical march to fame.

Finally, we have another exciting article from former CEO Dr Eli Kienwald, who this time takes us on a whirlwind tour of Jewish Morocco.

Please continue to give us your feedback on what you would like to see in future editions of Hamaor

Wishing you a *kesiva v'chasima tova*.

Judy Silkoff, Editor

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During the winter months both cemeteries are open daily, except Shabbos and Yom Tov, from 9am until dusk. During British Summer Time gates are open until 5pm and during the month of Ellul until 6pm

Rainham & Edmonton Cemeteries Visiting Times For Elul 5775 & Tishri 5776

The cemeteries are open from 9.00am

Please note the cemeteries close early on Fris and Erev Yom Tov and remain closed all day on Shabbos and Yom Tov

The cemeteries will remain open each day from 9am until the following times

Sun 16th Aug – Fri 11th Sep 2015
until 6.00pm (Fris – until 3.00pm)

Sun 13th Sep – Erev Rosh Hashono
until 3.00pm

Wed 16th Sep – Monday 21st Sep
until 5.30pm
(Except Fri 18th Sep – until 3.00pm)

Tuesday 22nd Sep Erev Yom Kippur
until 2.30pm

Thurs 24th Sep
until 5.00pm

Fri 25th Sep
until 3.00pm

Sun 27th Sep Erev Succos
until 3.00pm

Wed 30th Sep – Fri 2nd October
Chol Hamoed
until 3.00pm

Sun 4th Oct Hoshana Rabbo
until 2.00pm

Visitors are kindly requested to arrive no later than 30 minutes before the gates close

Visitors are advised to check the closing times of cemeteries during the rest of the year by calling the office numbers listed below or online:

www.federationofsynagogues.com/burial-society/
Rainham 01708 552 825 | Edmonton 020 8807 2268



a cry for **Help**

Dealing with Abuse in the Jewish Community

Dayan Y Y Lichtenstein
ROSH BEIS DIN

A Cry for Help

There is no question about it. The Jewish community has finally begun to recognise that child abuse exists in our community and while its prevalence is still unknown, it is likely far greater than previously thought. The abusers, who have included prominent members of our community, are slowly beginning to be exposed. As hard as it is for us to accept this reality, there is no more running away from it. Or is there?

The press in its usual inimitable fashion keep on uncovering scandal after scandal of child abuse in the Orthodox Jewish community. Invariably there is an element of cover up. Yet while we are quick to condemn such behaviour this has yet not triggered the understanding that as a community we are failing if we don't do anything to help the victims. What is the root of this failure?

Firstly, we are blinded by our shame, which prevents us from accepting that even in our society, which claims to have a higher moral code than the general society, there are deviants in disguise. This is further supported by our ignorance of how long-lasting and deep is the damage done to the victims of abuse. Lastly, we harbour a distorted Jewish form of 'omerta', which is often called by its Hebrew name of 'mesira' (informing civil authorities).

None of this has any validity. It is true that our mission in life is to be a 'light unto the nations' but this is an ongoing process which we must strive towards, not a fixed given. Sadly, every society

we will not tolerate abusers and they are not the Orthodox Jews they pretend to be.

Secondly, our naïve belief that there is no serious damage to the victims, and therefore why make such a tumult, could not be further from the truth. Victims of abuse can suffer for decades after the event and the damage can be so deep that only with longterm intensive therapy can they be healed and sometimes not even then. Ask the therapists who deal with these victims how damaging the abuse can be. It is simply infantile to dismiss the seriousness of abuse.

Finally, this misconceived idea that according to Halacha one may not inform the authorities of the behaviour of an abuser is a distortion of that Halacha. It is not only permitted to inform the authorities, it is obligatory to report these abusers. Allowing these dangerous predators to roam freely throughout the community puts every child in danger. It is sheer foolishness to think that these issues can be handled quietly within the community. Abuse is a crime, the abuser is a criminal, and the only remedy is to remove them from society until it is possible that they can be healed. We do not have the facility to do so within the community. Therefore the only recourse is through the civil authorities.

But our obligation to the victims is more than just locking up the abusers; it is also to support the victims, to offer a lifeline of support and acceptance to them and to let them know we care.

Some progress has made in this area. One example is the recent initiative by Rabbi Shimon Winegarten of Golders Green with the establishment of his organisation Shema Koli, a helpline run by religious, trained counsellors and therapists, designed to assist Orthodox Jewish victims of abuse. Often victims may misguidedly feel that they share some of the blame, that they are no longer accepted or worthy of being a part of the community. Shema Koli extends a welcoming hand and a listening ear as well as practical advice to combat this.

This type of assistance embodies some of the finest Jewish values.

KOL YISRAEL AREIVIM ZE LO'ZE - all Jews are responsible for one another

NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVERO - sharing the burden of your fellow Jew

"Our obligation is to support the victims, to offer a lifeline of acceptance to them and to let them know we care"

including ours has its rotten apples. What is especially galling are those abusers who pretend to be religious and who use their status and position of authority to cloak their activities under a mantle of holiness and helpfulness.

This hypocrisy only serves to give these abusers a status of 'rodef', a pursuer who is trying to kill or maim someone else. The Taz (a commentator on the Shulchan Aruch) says in Yoreh Deah 157.8 that a Jew who counterfeits money is considered a rodef because he puts all his fellow Jews in danger. In the same vein, a Jewish abuser who pretends to be Orthodox makes all Orthodox Jews suspect. In contrast to the view that by admitting such activities exist in our society, and by exposure of such individuals, we are creating a slur on Judaism, a chilul Hashem, it is incumbent upon us to expose and publicise these villains. By doing so we bring a Kiddush Hashem, a sanctification of G-d's Name, by showing that

NOSEIN EITZA HOGENES - giving proper advice, which is a Torah value derived from the prohibition to give bad advice.

KOL YISRAEL AREIVIM ZE LO'ZE

All Jews are responsible for each other. The word 'areivim' actually means guarantor and so every Jew acts as a guarantor for his fellow Jew. The Torah is particularly concerned with the most vulnerable members of society. There is an extra commandment not to oppress the widow and the orphan because they feel downtrodden. Rambam points out that even a wealthy widow is included in this prohibition because she feels alone. They must be treated specially and looked after.

However they are not the only vulnerable members of society. It is in the very nature of abuse cases, especially in the Orthodox world, that the victims are frightened to report abuse. This is true in general society but even more so in our community because it is so close-knit and victims are often fearful of being stigmatised as a 'moser', an informer, or if they are single that it will ruin their chances for a good shidduch and they may carry a burden of guilt!

A helpline provides an answer to this problem. Victims find a sympathetic ear to talk to and are guided as to how to proceed if necessary. This prevents them from locking up their feelings. This is our society's recipe for dealing with abuse in a totally unthreatening manner. It is our way of saying to the victim - "We feel responsible for you and will assist you in your time of need. You are not alone."

NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVERO

The second Torah value that a helpline puts into practice is sharing the burden of your friend.

Being alone is a terrible thing and being alone when you are a victim of abuse is even more terrible. Chazal tell us that to be a Torah-true Jew one has to develop the character trait of sharing your friend's burden. Very often your friend may have a problem and while there is nothing tangible you can do to help, there is one thing you can do - you can listen. Just by listening to someone's pain, by making them feel you understand what they are going through, they know they have your sympathy and they feel you are sharing their burden. This alleviates the agony immeasurably and that is why Chazal praised this Torah value of chesed - loving kindness of the highest order. You're not giving your money but you're giving something even more precious - yourself.

We must provide a listening ear, which is often the beginning of a process but undoubtedly the most important step. Listen to my voice means - listen to my pain. There is someone out there who I can talk to, who will share my burden.

NOSEIN EITZA HOGENES

Thirdly, a helpline facilitates and advises concrete help; psychological, emotional, moral and legal guidance - in other words, eitza hogenes, proper advice.

The Rambam writes in Chapter 12 of Hilchos Rotzeiach and Shmiras Nofesh that included in the prohibition to intentionally give bad advice to someone who comes to see you, is included a positive imperative to give good advice. Similarly, the Shaarei Teshuva and the Chinuch instruct the advisor to advise someone properly and correctly.

In addition to being a listening ear, a helpline can advise its callers about all types of help that are available to them, and thus fulfil the Rambam's instructions admirably.

"We must encourage the victims to report the abuse despite the inherent pain and exposure"

As is crucial for any helpline like this, Shema Koli has the guidance of experienced qualified Rabbonim in the field who can give proper halachic guidance, together with the professional supervision of experienced mental health practitioners. It can also call on the legal support of experienced lawyers where necessary. It is also crucial for the entire community to stand behind and support these initiatives.

Helplines such as Shema Koli constitute a concrete first step for our community to begin to deal with the abuse in its midst.

The next step is for the community to encourage from people to train as mental health practitioners including psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists, to address the mental health needs of the community in particular of those suffering from abuse and trauma. A further essential step in the prevention of abuse will be for the community to support the introduction of child protection training for teachers, parents and children in our Orthodox schools.

And lastly we must encourage the victims to report the abuse despite the inherent pain and exposure for them when doing so. We must support them in grappling with these issues and discourage them from running away and hiding, no matter what standing the abuser has had or still has in the community.

If we wish to truly be a light among the nations we must make it clear to abusers and those who have been abused that we will not tolerate it in our community. We will stand up for and protect those who have been abused - no-one has the right to get away with abuse without facing up to the consequences.



Shema Koli - a confidential Helpline for women and men in the community who have experienced or been affected by abuse. Abuse of any kind. To yourself or others, children or young people. Now or in the past.

GIVING A **VOICE** TO VICTIMS OF **ABUSE**

Shema Koli is run by trained, sensitive and experienced professionals.

You do not have to give your name and your call cannot be traced.

You will find a listening ear and you will be treated with respect and dignity.

Shema Koli Hours

SUNDAY 6pm-8.30pm*

*Male helpline operators

MONDAY 3pm-5.30pm

TUESDAY 11am-1.30pm

THURSDAY 11am-1.30pm

020 3670 1818

www.shemakolihelpline.org

LISTENING • SUPPORT • ADVICE • REFERRAL

shemaKOLI
Giving a voice to victims of abuse שמע קולי

Initiated and supported by leading Rabbonim.

shemaKOLI

Giving a voice to victims of abuse שמע קולי

Why is Shema Koli needed?

Shema Koli means "Hear My Voice" – that's what we do. The Shema Koli Helpline exists to help those many silent and silenced victims of abuse in the Jewish Community tell their story – men, women and young adults – often for the first time, possibly years since the abuse took place.

How do we work?

We offer a sensitive, confidential and professional service which validates, helps, supports and listens to those who have experienced or been affected by any form of abuse, whether now or in the past. Importantly people can remain anonymous so that their fear of exposure and shame is minimised. Some calls are once-off; but since speaking is often so painful, people are encouraged to call us back and may do so over a period of time.

What do we do?

- **LISTENING** calls are taken by professionally trained operators who are skilled in listening to victims of abuse
- **SUPPORT** we show sensitivity to our callers and validate their experience, recognising it may be years since the abuse first took place
- **ADVICE** we give guidance about next steps, including face-to-face work, checking on their safety, exploring them talking to others and, where appropriate, helping them to consider next steps such as reporting
- **ONWARD REFERRAL** we signpost our callers to a range of other specialist agencies, helplines, Rabbis and counselling.

Why is Shema Koli unique?

It's the first ever abuse helpline designed with the Orthodox Jewish community in mind, while being open to all. It is run by trained therapists (not

volunteers) from within the Orthodox community who understand the religious/cultural context. It is supported by a Rabbinic Board (Vaad HaRabbanim) who provide Halachic guidance. We have links to designated contacts in police, social services and the voluntary sector and a range of therapeutic and NHS services.

Who calls us?

Our callers include victims, young and older men and women, their parents, siblings and spouses and other relatives; we get calls from teachers, rabbis and professionals who are looking for advice.

Where do our calls come from?

Most callers ring from London (North & North West), Manchester, Gateshead, and some from other parts of the UK and Mainland Europe

What kind of abuse have they experienced?

All forms of abuse inevitably include emotional abuse – cruelty, denigration, blame, harsh criticism – all of which lead to fear and guilt. Our callers may have experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, children may have suffered neglect, and spouses report domestic abuse and violence. Others may call us with mental health disorders and trauma which relate to their abuse.

How do we do?

In almost 100% of calls, we get positive feedback about the callers' sense of relief; as one caller said:

"I am enormously grateful; you have really helped me and I feel so much better; you are what your name is, Shema Koli, you heard my voice."

SHEMA KOLI HELPLINE 020 3670 1818