

## This Monday, Tu B'Av In Amuka – A Special Segulah for Shidduchim

BY MANOR PERETS

*Harav Yechiel Abuchatzzeira will daven for you at the resting place of the Holy Tannah Harav Yonason ben Uziel on the Fifteenth of Av.*

For those who haven't yet merited to find their *zivug* (match), Amuka isn't just a place, it's an extraordinary opportunity to have their prayers answered, especially on the auspicious day of Tu B'Av.

"There were no better days for the Jewish people than the 15th of Av...," says the Talmud. On this day the young women of Jerusalem would go out dressed in white finery and dance in the vineyards, in a courtship ritual that led to marriage.

This year Harav Yechiel Abuchatzzeira, scion of a family of renowned *Kabbalists*, will once again be going to Amuka on the 15th of Av – August 11 – on behalf of Yad L'Achim, to lead a mass *tefillah*. The Rav, Chief Rabbi of Ramle, will read from a list of names given to Yad L'Achim and daven for each petitioner by name.

Many of those who participated in last year's event have reported seeing positive results.

The event, which is shrouded in an aura of holiness and reverence, begins with *Minchah*, as it says, "Eliyahu was answered only at *Minchah*." Afterwards, Harav Abuchatzzeira will lead the crowd in the recitation of *Seder Hatikkun*.

The Rav will then take out a 150-year-old *shofar*, an inheritance from his grandfather the *Admor* Rabi Massoud Abuchatzzeira, who received it from his father, the Abir Yaakov. Rabi Massoud was the father of the Baba Sali and of the Rav's father, the Baba Chaki. Before blowing it the Rav will ask the assembled to have *kavanah* that the prayers they offer on behalf of men

and women in need of a *shidduch* will be answered quickly.

The *Admor* will ascend to the roof of the holy *tziyun* and circle it seven times, holding lists of those who have donated to the *mitzvah* of *Pidyon Shvuyim*. He will recite relevant chapters of *Tehillim* and again blow the *shofar*, followed by the recitation of the moving *Ana BeKo'ach* prayer.

Harav Abuchatzzeira will then enter the *tziyun* and, after spending long minutes lighting candles, will begin reading the names of those in need of *shidduchim*, carefully enunciating each one in a heartfelt plea.

At the conclusion of the *tefillah* Harav Abuchatzzeira *davens*: "Let it be His Will that our *tefillot* are accepted by the Holy Throne, and the donors whose names we read now will merit mercy and salvation and to quickly establish a *bayit ne'eman beYisrael*, among all of *Klal Yisrael* in need of a *yeshuah*."

The tomb of Rabi Yonason ben Uziel has special meaning for this cause. The great *Tanna*, who studied under Hillel the Elder and wrote *Targum Yonason*, is believed to have remained married; he understands the pain of those who are still single and the importance of pleading on their behalf.

The *Gemara* says he was so holy that if "a bird flew over his head when he was learning, it would be burnt up."

A donation to this unique project does more than give the child, sibling or friend in need of a *shidduch* an opportunity to benefit from a proven *segulah*. It is the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *Pidyon Shvuyim*, of which the Rambam states, "There is no greater *mitzvah* than the *mitzvah* of *Pidyon Shvuyim*."

Hurry! To participate, call Yad L'Achim at 1-866-923-5224 or submit names online at [www.yadlachim.org](http://www.yadlachim.org).

## Hikind, SBA Present Small Business Resource Forum to Aid Community Businesses

Assemblyman Dov Hikind (D-Brooklyn) is partnering with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to offer a valuable forum that will allow community members to identify resources that can aid in their business growth.

The Small Business Resource Forum will present numerous opportunities that exist for local small business owners. It is a

valuable opportunity to network with SBA resource partners.

Lenders and successful business owners from the community will also be on hand to share entrepreneurial best practices.

The event will take place on Wednesday, August 13, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Boro Park Y, 4912 14th Avenue (corner of 50th Street).

## Shema Kolainu Legislative Breakfast Hears the Voices

BY NORA GUTKANST

Shema Kolainu – Hear Our Voices hosted its 12th Annual Legislative Breakfast celebrating advocacy efforts that resulted in the historic agreement announced in City Hall by Mayor de Blasio in conjunction with Speaker of the New York State Assembly, Sheldon Silver, regarding the placement of special-needs children in private schools. The changes announced will be implemented by September 1, and will expedite the process for families seeking assistance and financial reimbursement in placing their children with special needs in schooling. It will also reduce the legal headache and paperwork associated with the process of placing children in special programs.

Speaker Silver was honored for his role in this monumental achievement and commended for his commitment to all children and schools across the city, which are better off because of his leadership and advocacy.

Dr. Joshua Weinstein, founder and president of Shema Kolainu, emphasized "that this year, more than ever, the need to bring awareness and recognition to the autism community is critical, as statistics now show that 1 in 68 children in the population are autistic. As we recognize the historic agreement at City Hall, we also feel a huge debt of gratitude to Mayor de Blasio, a longtime friend of our community, and his administration, represented by Avi Fink, for embracing the pain of parents and implementing these changes long sought by our advocates."

Shema Kolainu welcomed a diverse group of participants including community leaders, civic and religious leaders, elected officials, and honored members of the city council and the state Legislature who have shown commitment and passion for helping those in the autism community, especially when it comes to giving access to resources for children on the spectrum.

New York State Senator Simcha Felder delivered the keynote address, emphasizing "the need for every citizen to be an advocate and to speak out about the needs of their communities." Senator Felder's passionate speech on the Senate floor that expressed the feelings of the community regarding the special education bill greatly contributed to the historic announcement.

Honorees included Assembly Member Helene Weinstein, who introduced the special education bill, along with Assembly Members Steve Cymbrowitz, Phil Goldfeder, and Dov Hikind. Comptroller Scott Stringer received the Appreciation Award and spoke admiringly about his visit to Shema



L-R: Peter Rebenwurz, chairman of the board of Shema Kolainu; Dr. Joshua Weinstein, founder and president of Shema Kolainu; NYC Councilmember Brad Lander (speaking); Menachem Lubinsky, Lubicom Marketing, MC of the breakfast; and Milton Weinstock, board member of Shema Kolainu.



L-R: Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group; Peter Rebenwurz, chairman of the board of Shema Kolainu; Dr. Joshua Weinstein, founder and president of Shema Kolainu; NYS Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver; Menachem Lubinsky, Lubicom Marketing; and Milton Weinstock, board member of Shema Kolainu.

Kolainu.

Shema Kolainu Board Chair Peter Rebenwurz introduced New York City Councilmember Brad Lander. Mr. Lander, who secured a million dollars to restore Brizzi Playground, located across the street from Shema Kolainu – and used daily by the children from the entire community – was presented with the "Children Appreciate Award."

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. presented Larry Seiler and Michael Max Knobbe of BronxNet Community media, the local access channel for the Bronx, for their commitment to the special-needs population. Assemblyman Dov Hikind gave a rousing speech which resulted in a standing ovation for Mrs. Leah Steinberg, director of Project LEARN – Special Education Affairs-Agudath Israel of America.

Jeff Leb, New York State director of Political Affairs for the Orthodox Union, was praised by New York City Council Member Mark Levine as a "mentch" and for his advocacy efforts on behalf of special-needs children.

Special recognition was given to Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, represented by Jennie Berger, for funding a total of \$690,000 for the city-wide Autism Initiative that will benefit numerous programs, an effort championed by

Councilman Mark Weprin who sponsored the autism initiative and NYS Assemblymember David Weprin who pioneered the program. Honorees included Assembly Member Helene Weinstein, who introduced the special education bill, with Assembly Members Steve Cymbrowitz, Phil Goldfeder, and Dov Hikind; Comptroller Scott Stringer received the Appreciation Award and spoke admiringly about his visit to Shema Kolainu.

As always, the breakfast was masterfully emceed by Menachem Lubinsky, CEO of Lubicom Marketing Consulting, and Kalman Yeger, a top adviser to various elected officials in New York City; it was coordinated by The Friedlander Group.

"I thank the honorees and distinguished guests in the legislature who push for funding and resources for the autism community, and for the need to continue advocating on behalf of those children, who need the support of therapists, teachers, parents, and community members alike. All children, on the spectrum or not, deserve access to an education that meets their needs. Your unwavering support regarding issues important to the autism community and your recognition of the work that Shema Kolainu does inspires us and allows us to fulfill our commitment to our children," concluded Dr. Weinstein.