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OU Calls For Round-The-Clock Torah Study During Nine Days

Continuing its all-out effort to find ways in which American Jews can become actively engaged in supporting their besieged Israeli brethren, the Orthodox Union is calling for a nationwide effort to utilize the power of communal Torah learning.

The *Mishnah* teaches that the *Shechinah* – God's presence – is to be found wherever a *minyan*, a quorum of ten, comes together, thus elevating and magnifying the power of the group's prayers and studies. Therefore, the OU is seeking to maintain at least one *minyan* studying Torah somewhere every hour, night and day of the first eight of the upcoming Nine Days, the period leading up to Tisha b'Av (Thursday, August 3), which marks the destruction of the Ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

Torah study is not engaged in on Tisha b'Av itself.

"We believe that such a major continuous spiritual effort," said OU Executive Vice President, Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, "will have a meritorious effect on the welfare of our fellow Jews in Israel at this critical time."

Synagogues, summer camps, *yeshivot*, *kollelim* and other

groups are being urged to sign up on a special calendar page on the OU website, www.ou.org, for one or more one-hour slots of learning. Participants can opt to study a text or topic of their choice, or to utilize the audio, video and text resources, as well as live web-cast *shiurim*, to be made available online by the OU.

"Hundreds of synagogues heeded our call for one evening this week devoted to special prayers, and *Tehillim* (psalms) to be said simultaneously in communities across North America on Israel's behalf," noted Stephen J. Savitsky, the OU's president. "Now we're calling for massive involvement in Torah study, because this is one way in which we feel we can make a difference and demonstrate our concern."

Many other groups are joining this effort, including the Rabbinical Council of America, Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future Summer Batei Midrash and Learning Programs and the National Council of Young Israel and Young Israel Council of Rabbinis. The OU has arranged for its own NCSY summer camps and its Seymour J. Abrams Jerusalem World Center to participate. ■

Shema Kolainu Breakfast To Raise Autism Awareness

On Tuesday, August 1, Shema Kolainu – Hear Our Voices, a school and center for children with autism, will host a legislative breakfast at the Renaissance Ballroom in Brooklyn, New York. The goal of this event is to educate legislators about the urgency of autism care and research, raise support and awareness and share ideas about working toward combating autism through effective policy and legislation. In addition, communal, civic and religious leaders, philanthropists and elected officials will be in attendance to pay tribute to several outstanding public officials and community leaders for their dedication in furthering the mission of Shema Kolainu.

Menachem Lubinsky, president and CEO of Lubicom Marketing Consulting will serve as master of ceremonies. New York City Councilman James F. Gennaro, who is on the City Council Committee on Mental Health and Mental Retardation, is the breakfast chairman. New York State Senator Martin Malave Dilan will deliver greetings.

Shema Kolainu-Hear Our Voices will express its gratitude to several honorees.

They are: City Comptroller William Thompson, Jr.; NYC Council Speaker Christine

Quinn; State Senator Thomas P. Morahan; David G. Greenfield, executive director of the Sephardic Community Federation; and Rabbi Shlomo Braun, community representative for State Senator Martin J. Golden and director of the Aleh Foundation, the American division of Israel's foremost provider of care and treatment for severely developmentally disabled infants and children.

Shema Kolainu will also express its gratitude to Commissioner Thomas A. Maut of the New York State Office of OMARD, where he has served through several state administrations.

Shema Kolainu, founded by Joshua Weinstein in 1998, is a non-profit, non-denominational organization.

This breakfast is being generously sponsored by Liberty Health Advantage and Health Plus.

To make a reservation and/or contribution, or to arrange for a visit to the school, please contact The Friedlander Group at 718-436-5555 or e-mail RSVP@FriedlanderGroupPR.com ■

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