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Blessing in Hard Work

[Sorry Kids, the Pipeline's Closed / Issue 615]

Your article about shutting off the spigot for adult children was thought provoking, and I would like to add a number of points.

Dr. Lieberman asks, "If the first generation supports a bunch of kids, is the supported generation capable of supporting their children?"

I remember hearing this complaint in the '80s, from an older person lamenting the *kollel* phenomenon. Yet here we are, 30 years later, and the same issue is being discussed. Is there a piece missing? Isn't it obvious that these doom-and-gloom predictions must have been off?

Dr. Lieberman's assertion that it's wrong for a 70-year-old woman to still be working hard is also baseless. Working hard is a *brachah*. The American ideal of working until 65, then taking advantage of good health and less responsibilities to "chill out" and take some cruises, is in fact what is wrong. If the

grandmother is being compelled to do something she does not want to do, we would have what to discuss. But this absolute assertion that hard work is wrong for an older person is not consistent with Jewish sources.

The idea that staying in *kollel* is wholly dependent on (often resented) parental support is also fallacious. True, when parents appreciate their *kollel* child and truly consider it a privilege to be a partner, the child is more likely to stay in learning for longer, but those who do it on their own and retain the idealism necessary to keep it up are more likely to be successful. Many of the most successful *avreichim* don't rely on parental support — and many of the wealthy ones drop out early. No system is perfect, and situations are as different as people themselves.

Yehuda Gold, NJ

Let's Define "Support"

[Sorry Kids, the Pipeline's Closed / Issue 615]

As a child whose own parents "closed the pipeline," I eagerly read your cover story. My wife and I are grateful for the years we were helped, but if I could change one thing, it would be about managing expectations. Parents should be completely up front about what they're prepared to do, and what they're not prepared to do.

"Support" is a vague term. What happens when the couple needs a car, or has a baby and needs to make a bris, or if, *chas v'shalom*, there's a medical emergency? The system must be fine-tuned so that there are answers in place before, rather than after.

One more point. The topic isn't only relevant to *kollel* families. Most young couples today need parental help, even those who don't learn in *kollel*.

Heshy Braun, Marine Park

What Are They Saving?

[Sorry Kids, the Pipeline's Closed / Issue 615]

Regarding deciding when to stop support of children in *kollel*, on what basis can parents assume that by stopping their support for their children's Torah learning they can save their own budget? Is it not perhaps that their support for this Torah learning is the merit by which they receive income in other areas in the first place? If they think that by closing the "pipeline" to their support in Torah they will save in their personal budgeting, they are sadly mistaken. And needless to say, there is nothing comparable to the reward for supporting Torah. (And even in cases of supporting needy children in other areas that do not involve Torah study, are the parents not aware that a person does not lose out from giving *tzedakah*?)

Emmanuel Akiva Russek

Provide the Funds, Not the Dependence

[Sorry Kids, the Pipeline's Closed / Issue 615]

In the name of Mesila, I'd like to thank you for your excellent article. This is a subject many people struggle with, and your well-written piece definitely gives greater clarity on the subject.

I think it's important to stress, however, that the message should not come across as suggesting that supporting married children is not a good idea. For those who can afford to do so, it is a wonderful thing and helps the young couple lay the foundations for a solid Torah life. In fact, it may even be the parents' obligation. The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* maintains that a father's *chiyuv* of financing

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his sons' *limud haTorah* continues even after his sons are married, including covering their families' living expenses.

Still, there are two points that need to be emphasized: One, this does not justify people going beyond their means to support their children. Two, even when providing children with support, there are different ways of doing so, and we should take the path that encourages independence, rather than dependence.

Shmuli Margulies, Chairman, Mesila



Dangerous Comparison

["Checkmate" — LifeLines / Issue 615]

It was so impressive to see how the narrator in the story worked so hard on himself to try to figure out the world around him, even though many things made no sense to him. He claims he was never officially diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, yet as a therapist specializing in Asperger's, I'm concerned that this article may be misleading to those who are living with a spouse, child, or even parent with this syndrome.

The narrator tells of his poor social skills, stressing on how he takes everything literally and how he had to learn the language of communication. Taking things literally is just one component of the Asperger's trait.

There was no mention of other components such as lack of empathy, rigidity, sensory issues, self-centeredness, inability to take

responsibility, obsessive behaviors, and lack of initiative.

This, together with the fact that he had the depth to tune in to someone else (empathy!) to try and understand their world and what matters to them (which is usually out of character for someone with this condition), makes me wonder what his diagnosis would be if he was actually assessed.

We need to recognize that living with someone who has one or two traits of AS, even if it may be challenging, cannot compare to the challenges of living with someone — particularly a spouse — with the full-blown syndrome.

It would be unfair to expect someone with acute AS to reach where this man has managed to get to, and the story also gives unfair expectations to a spouse.

A.L.

No Divine Endorsement

[Point of View / Issue 615]

I have always found Rabbi Moshe Grylak to be an eloquent espouser of the *daas Torah* of our *gedolim*. It's for that reason that his recent editorial, "A Different Entebbe Memory," left me scratching my head. In that piece, Rabbi Grylak put forth the question "Why, in fact, did Israel's leaders decide to undertake such a complex and dangerous rescue attempt, although by every military parameter its chances of failure were so great?" The conclusion he reaches is that "Someone Up There pushed them to go ahead despite the odds of disaster."

Such a position would seem to be contrary to the opinion of Maran Harav Shach *ztz"l*, who stated at the time that the launching of the raid was not in accordance with halachah, and that it would have been preferable to give in to the hijackers' demands in return for the safe return of all of the hostages. As quoted in *Michtavim U'Maamarim* (vol. 1, p. 10), Rav Shach said "...halachah determines our conduct in times of danger, and if according to the

law one should not act, even if it is ultimately successful, this does not justify the action."

That does not sound like going ahead with the raid conformed to the Will of Hashem, and how much less so that it was Hashem that "pushed them to go ahead." One should also bear in mind that in the course of the raid four Jewish lives were lost, not including Mrs. Dora Bloch, who was later killed in a Ugandan hospital as a retaliatory measure against the Israelis. Had these lives been lost directly at the hands of the hijackers, there would justifiably have been no end to the anger of Jews worldwide. Yet, all seems to be forgiven when it's viewed as merely the collateral damage of an otherwise "stunning victory" (to quote Rabbi Grylak). Indeed, if one subscribes to the philosophy of *kochi v'otzem yadi asah li es hachayil hazeh*, then the "successful" outcome is a source of pride. But to those who are guided by Torah and halachah, the only source of pride comes from faithful obedience to the Ratzon Hashem as expressed by our *gedolim* and *manhigim*.

Certainly, we should be proud of the brave and courageous soldiers who were willing to risk their lives to rescue their fellow Jews, and thankful to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for the amazing *Hashgachah pratit* and *nissim* that prevented even further loss of precious Jewish life. But I feel that it's a dangerous stretch beyond our meager realm of understanding to interpret the relatively successful outcome as a ringing Divine endorsement of Operation Thunderbolt.

Rabbi David Gross

Harmful Stereotyping

[Zack Power / Issue 614]

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Ruderman Family Foundation. As a leading advocate of the inclusion of people with disabilities, the Foundation closely follows articles and general media coverage about and by people with disabilities. We are glad to see that you featured Zack Pollack, a truly remarkable

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thanks all of our readers for their letters and comments. Due to printing deadlines, most letters can only be published two weeks after they are received. The editor reserves the right to edit and shorten letters. All letters will be considered for publication unless otherwise indicated. We urge our readers to keep their letters as brief and to the point as possible. Letters not meant for publication may be any length.

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