



**Shabbat Across America,**

1.- An annual nationwide event that introduces Jews on all levels to Shabbat is taking place on Friday evening, May 4, 2007. Join us for this national occasion and bring friends!

2.- **Sponsors are needed** to enable Havurat to run this event, if you can help, please see Rabbi Algaze or Arlene Ross

3.- Also this Sunday April 22 from 10:00am to 1:00pm we will need Volunteers to give out flyers for our Shabbat Across America Dinner, We will have a table on Continental Ave. Between Queens Blvd and Austin St.

**Needed : Membership Dues!** Please pay your membership dues and remain a member in good standing. Help our synagogue continue its program of education and outreach and to serve our community with dignity.

**Your Butcher Your Baker  
Your Havdala Candle Maker.....**

There are just a few of many places which you can go to get **Business Ads for our Journal!!** The list is endless!  
.... Your Doctor , your accountant, your grocery store, your Dentist, your stockbroker.....

Remember! Business ad blanks are now available!  
*Watch this space! More Journal details to follow!*

NEW GROUP BEING FORMED AT HAVURAT AFTER MANY YEARS OF DORMANCY, OUR WOMEN ARE STARTING HAVURAT WOMEN ONCE AGAIN. THE NEW GROUP, CALLED **N'SHEI**, WILL START MEETINGS THURSDAYS AT 6:30 PM. A CHALLA CLASS IS ONE OF THEIR FRIST PROJECTS. FOR INFORMATION, CALL HENNI LEVY AT 718-544-5881 OR 917-742-2718

**WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE**

*by Rabbi David Algaze*

Our society is in a convulsive state regarding the monstrous mass murders perpetrated this week in Virginia. Why, how and what are the questions in everyone's mind. We mourn for all the victims, for their parents, their children, and their fiancés. The death of a Holocaust survivor on Yom Hasho'a was especially touching. The violent death of any human being, created in the image of G-d, is a tragedy. This country is right in holding its many memorial services, lighting candles and holding hands. But the main question we should be asking is how could it happen? The reasons being adduced may all have it right, partially. Maybe it is the problem of immigration, or it may be the victimization of women or even the availability of guns. The larger question is what is the fabric of this society that can make this possible.

First, the overwhelming presence of violence at every level. Recently, a well known radio personality was fired because he said some impolite things about black women athletes. In the ensuing discussion as to whether the firing was appropriate we have forgotten that this same man has been abusing people in his program for decades. Presidential candidates, senators and other celebrities remained quiet while this man insulted other people because they wanted the exposure or his support. Our society has accepted a culture of insults, vituperation and name calling that is appalling. This radio personality was one but how many others populate our radio and television waves spewing the same or even worse venom? These celebrated and well paid "singers" and "musicians" as well as other comedians, actors and so on, receive applause for their vilification of manners and brutalization of speech. The expletives are funny, they color our speech, and they appear to be "cool." That is what is wrong with our society.

Violence at different levels remains a part of our culture. The lack of manners exhibited by drivers toward pedestrians, the cutting of people in traffic, road rage and other insolent behavior are symptoms of a diseased society. How can it be that an enforcer of traffic safety and a governor of a major state can flaunt all laws and precautions in driving recklessly and endangering the lives of others? When the policemen and the leaders show such disregard for proper behavior, what can we expect from the rest? The violent computer games, of which the murderer was fond, the executives who create the movies and the entertainment that is molding the minds of our young, are they not responsible? The murderer lived in this society, witnessed its flaws and was influenced by all these factors. ***We are not all guilty, but we are all responsible.***

Together with a culture of materialism we have developed a culture of indifference. Kindness, concern for others have all disappeared from our society. The murderer was a person who needed help and he did not get it. Neither in the form of human concern for the victim nor the taking of disciplinary actions a responsible society should have undertaken to protect others. In the name of privacy and a variety of other mistaken legislation, we have effectively tied the hands of those who would protect us and exposed us all to the danger of death around the corner. No one cared to do anything. Shrugging of the shoulders is one of our most popular exercise! ***We are not all guilty, but we are all responsible.***

There is a lot we can do beyond saying a prayer and lighting a candle. We can in our own world begin to clean up our speech, lower the volume of our voice, exhibit more tolerance and patience, show respect, give way. There is a beautiful Yiddish expression which is untranslatable in any other language, *verginnen*. It can be translated as "yield", "allow others to pass before you" "let others succeed". The interesting fact is that the absence of the word in other languages reveals the lack of sensitivity in other cultures towards this simple but effective tool of civilization. In a world of "dog eat dog" it would be good if we adopt this quality of *verginnen*. Let the other win, let him pass sometimes ahead of us, let him be right once. Let us use kind words, show compassion and act with more love. The world can become better one act at a time. And let us resolve not to allow curses, insults, lashon hara, hate speech in our midst. This too can clean up our society one person at a time. We are not all guilty, but we are all responsible. The venom I deposit today in my vicinity can reach the whole universe! Let us be careful with one word. The Rabbis tell us that we should always regard the world as if it were equally guilty and innocent, and that the next act we are doing will tilt the balance one way or the other. Let our next action or word tilt the world towards becoming without fault. We can undertake to not ignore the pain of others, to try to help, to see and to offer a hand. There is plenty of people around us who could benefit from a word of encouragement, help with a shidduch, finding a job or just as simply as making them feel better about themselves. "Greet each person with a smile" advised our Rabbis. In this period of the sefira, when we are discussing ways of improving our character, what better time to ponder these questions? When despair plagues a society, ***we are not all guilty, but we are all responsible.***