

ROCHELLE'S REVIEWS

By Rochelle Miller



THE 40-DAY CHALLENGE: DAILY JEWISH INSIGHTS TO PREPARE FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS BY RABBI MARK WILDES

With *Chodesh Elul*, the days of *rachamim* and *ratzon*, about to grace us, all of *Klal Yisrael* seek to garner as many *z'chusim* as possible. The 40 days between *Rosh Chodesh Elul* and Yom Kippur are a soul-stirring and special time during which every Jew can experience a tremendous spiritual awakening. This is a time like no other, when "the King is in the field," receptive to our heartfelt *tefillas*. These precious days are to be treasured, as we prepare for the pinnacle of crowning Hashem as King of the Universe at the conclusion of *Neilah* on Yom Kippur, along with the hope of being inscribed for a good year.

and giving *tzedakah*. The common denominator between all of these practices is that this is a time of spiritual improvement and for preparing for the days of *din* and *rachamim*.

Entrenched as we are in the rigors and responsibilities of our daily routines, transforming our mindset from the mundane to sublime can present quite a challenge. Rabbi Mark N. Wildes, founder and director of Manhattan Jewish Experience (MJE), recently released *The 40 Day Challenge: Daily Jewish Insights to Prepare for the High Holidays* (Kodesh Press, June 2021) to help people spiritually prepare for the *Yomim Nora'im*. It is an excellent resource for scholars



From right to left, Rabbi Mark Wildes, comedian Elon Gold, and the rabbi's son Yehuda at the book launch at Manhattan Jewish Experience.

ligiously significant day on the Jewish calendar. It draws on ancient and classical sources like the Talmud and Rambam; historical lessons from Abraham Lincoln, Alfred Nobel, and the Holocaust; as well as discussions of contemporary cultural icons like Super Bowl Champion Tom Brady and *The*

Bachelorette winner Zac Clark.

A *musmach* of RIETS of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Wildes received a JD from the Cardozo School of Law and a master's in International Affairs from Columbia University. Since founding MJE 22 years ago, Rabbi Wildes has become one of America's most inspiration-

al and dynamic Jewish educators.

The son of one of the nation's most prominent immigration attorneys who successfully defended the late John Lennon when the government sought to deport him, Rabbi Wildes

Continued on Page 86



Rabbi Mark Wildes

Our *gedolim* have revealed that the way to merit and receive *berachos* at this auspicious time is by preparing properly—by meticulously reviewing our deeds of the past year and by taking stock of our ways. Clearly, attaining spiritual height requires painstaking preparation. Some communities recite *Selichos* during the entire month; others do so at the month's conclusion. Some communities recite chapters of *Tehillim* every day, while others increase Torah study

and laymen alike to make the 40 days between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Yom Kippur not only meaningful, but poignant and transformative. Written in an approachable, uplifting, and accessible style, it is an invitation for people who believe there is more to life than the daily grind. Elucidating, engaging, and inspiring, each chapter offers a succinct spiritual lesson in daily Jewish insights beginning with Rosh Chodesh Elul and culminating with Yom Kippur, the most re-

OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 8/8
11:00 - 1:00PM

940 Greenfield Road, Woodmere
4BR, 3 Full Bathroom Center Hall
Colonial with finished basement,
CAG, Gas Heat, F L/R, F D/R, BR
\$899,000

830 Channel Road,
Woodburgh
4BR, 4 Bath, State of the art gourmet kitchen
with high end appliances, spectacular garden
heated pool, 2 overland motor SW & S
mud room F.O.R.

759 Hampton Road, Woodmere
4BR, 3 Bath, S.P.O.R.

Renovated on Cul-De-Sac,
SD #15, MBR Suite,
Magnificent Yard,
Renovated Eat-In-Kitchen,
Sep. Elegant Formal Dining Room

NEW LISTING!
857 Glen Drive, Woodmere
Renovated 4BR, 2 Full Bath,
SD #15
Offered at \$789,000

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HomeServices

Laffey International Realty

Whether buying or selling real estate...

Get re**MARK**able results!

Give me a call today!

ML MARK LIPNER
Licensed Associate Broker, G.R.I.
mlipner@bhhsaffey.com
516-298-8457

OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 8/8
1:30 - 3:30PM

NEW LISTING!
24 Anson Road, Hewlett
5BR Colonial, All Bedrooms w/
valetted ceilings, very spacious BR
w/granite countertops, MBR Suite,
Fin Basement, \$899,000

NEW LISTING
940 East End
Woodmere
5BR, 4 Bath, Magnificent Home,
Top of the Line, IGIP, All Systems
P.O.R.

43 Valley Ln., North Woodmere
4/5BR, CH Colonial w/ Full Basement, Gas
Heat, CAC, Huge MBR Suite, Formal LR
& D/R, Lg Den w/Fyle - \$1,100,000

839 Lowell Street
Woodmere
5BR, 3 Bath, SD #15,
Expanded Eat in Kitchen
\$899,000

Co-Ops:			Woodmere		
Cedarhurst	1BR • 1.5BA	\$229K	2BR • 3BA	\$289K	
Cedarhurst	2BR • 2.5BA	\$249K	2BR • 2BA	\$269K	
Hewlett	2BR • 2BA	\$225K			
Hewlett	2BR • 2BA	\$225K			
Hewlett	2BR • 2BA	\$225K			
Hewlett	3BR • 2BA	\$239K			
Lawrence	1BR • 1BA	\$189K			
Woodmere	2BR • 1BA	\$239K			
Woodmere	2BR • 1BA	\$239K			
Woodmere	2BR • 2BA	\$249K			

Homes:		
Cedarhurst	3BR • 2BA	\$599K
Woodmere	5BR • 3BA	\$899,000
Woodmere	5BR • 4BA	\$1,100,000
Woodmere	3BR • 3BA	\$799,000
Woodburgh	4BR • 4BA	S.P.O.R.

Any many more... Call for details!

elected to change career paths and pursue his passion for *kiruv*. Twenty-two years ago, he founded Manhattan Jewish Experience in loving memory of his mother, Ruth B. Wildes, *z"l*, an *aishes chayil* and an exemplar of *kiruv*, whom he cites as his inspiration.

MJE is a warm, welcoming, and open community where men and women in their twenties and thirties can explore Jewish life and meet new people. MJE runs a multitude of engaging and innovative programs for thousands of young Jewish professionals. Each program, event, and initiative is truly unique. Consider the extraordinary MJE Fellowship Trip to Israel, where the fellows travel to and explore Israel's history, spirituality, food, and culture, bringing to life what they have learned all year.

Now in its 16th year, MJE Fellowships has over 180 graduates to date. It caters to a select cadre of participants with little or no prior Jewish education who have expressed a desire to move their Jewish learning to the next level. The program seeks to educate and helps to produce knowledgeable and passionate leaders for the future.

Since its inception, MJE has celebrated 344 marriages. Providing a congenial and safe setting and myriad opportunities for quality singles to meet, it is an ideal option for alleviating the *shidduch* crisis and returning to a kinder, gentler, and less frenetic era.

On Monday night, August 2, comedi-

an Elon Gold interviewed Rabbi Wildes about his book at MJE in front of a crowd of about 200 people. An aura of camaraderie prevailed as the audience laughed at Gold's interjected humor and took heed of Rabbi Wildes's discussion of the importance of connecting to Hashem, as well as to one's own spirit, through physical actions.

Hachnasas orchim is the hallmark of the home of Rabbi Wildes and his lovely *rebbetzin*, Jill. True exemplars of the "open door policy," they graciously host Shabbos guests each week, raising their beautiful family in a home steeped in Torah and *chesed*. "My wife prepares food for 20 Shabbos guests every week. We've hosted over 10,000 guests throughout the past 22 years," Rabbi Wildes proudly shared.

"I have always believed that when you show people the beauty and wisdom of Torah, they will run to it," Rabbi Wildes said. "People are looking to connect to something beyond the daily grind, something to uplift them, especially in times of crisis. You don't have to push people. You just have to share the light of Torah and show how it is relevant to everyone's life, no matter how many challenges we all face."

"Rabbi Wildes has dedicated his life to transforming the lives of young professionals where they live—in the heart of Manhattan—and helps connect them to their heritage, so, given the opportunity to work with him, I jumped at the chance," shared Alec Goldstein, founder of Kodesh Press. "*The 40 Day Challenge* represents Rabbi Wildes at his finest. The daily numbers are accessi-

ble, informative, and humorous. Each short entry is a simple step to emotional and spiritual growth—something so many people are looking for, regardless of their level of observance."

The book offers numerous elements of introspection, including strategies to overcome anger, how to judge others favorably, and how to develop a deeper sense of gratitude to Hashem and to other people.

The 40 Day Challenge is an excellent follow-up to the author's first book, *Beyond the Instant: Jewish Wisdom for Lasting Happiness in a Fast-Paced Social Media World*, which warns against a reliance on technology that risks dehumanizing our interpersonal relationships and presents ten different ideas from the Torah on achieving long-term happiness.

This book also has an interactive component. The Facebook group "The 40 Day Challenge With Rabbi Mark Wildes" will feature a daily prompt during this year's 40-day period to engage and hold accountable those on this transformational journey.

Each chapter of *The 40 Day Challenge* is relevant, timely, and touching. With a dose of humor, Rabbi Wildes offers pithy and pragmatic guidance devoid of pedantic rhetoric, as he guides the reader throughout this spiritually enriching 40-day journey.

We are pleased to present an excerpt from this practical and inspiring field guide to becoming a better version of yourself. Please join us as we preview Day 4, "Making Music with What Remains":

The great violinist Yitzhak Perlman contracted polio at the age of four, and for his entire life he had to wear metal braces and use crutches to walk. One time, the musician came out on stage and as he was tuning his violin, one of the strings snapped. Instead of asking for another string, he continued to play the concert on just three strings (a violin has four strings). When Perlman was finished, the crowd gave him a standing ovation. When they asked him to speak about what happened, he famously remarked, "Our task is to make music with what remains."

(As we have discussed) Elul is a time of spiritual greatness "Ani l'dodi v'dodi li—I am for my beloved and my beloved is mine," but it is also a time to accept our own reality, to appreciate what we have—even if we don't have all of the strings.

My friend Rabbi Eitan Mayer taught that we can all learn a powerful lesson of Elul by reading the word in reverse. If we spell Elul backwards, it reads lamed, alef, lamed, alef. This spells "lulei," which is a combination of two words: "lu" meaning "if only" and "lo" meaning "no."

Thus, "lulei" means, "if only, no"—if only things were not the way they are. Much of the year, we live a "lulei" kind of existence where we say to ourselves, "If only things were not the way they are, my life would be so much better."

"If only I got a bigger break at work, I would be much more successful."

"If only I were smarter, I would be further along in my career."

Continued on Page 87



Fruit Platters and More
Always in Good Taste

Summer 2021

Sorbet Flavors \$7.50/pint

- Strawberry
- Mango
- Coconut
- Fruit punch
- Lemon-Lime
- Pineapple
- Peach
- Chocolate

Salads \$7.50/pint

- Corn
- Tomato
- Cole slaw
- Quinoa
- Chickpea
- Israeli salad
- Potato salad

Dips \$4/half pint

- Tehina
- Chumous
- Turkish
- Matbucha
- Tehinaganoush
- Dill
- Tomato Dip

Hot Vegetable Soups \$9/quart

- Vegetable
- Butternut Squash
- Zucchini-Broccoli
- Carrot Dill
- Tomato Rice

Fruit Soups \$15/quart

- Mango Pineapple
- Very Berry

Fruit Platters & Vegetable Platters
in a variety of sizes

No-sugar-added fruit soup available

Ask for our Fruit or Vegetable Family Bowls!

Call or text: 718.406.4310
frishmanfamily@gmail.com
www.fruitplattersandmore.com

We now carry Belgian Pralines from Excellence Chocolate of Montreal



FIVE TOWNS TEEN SCENE

A SPECIAL WEEKLY SECTION
WRITTEN BY TEENS, FOR TEENS
SUBMISSIONS WELCOME • 5TJSTORIES@GMAIL.COM

BROTHERS WINDOW CLEANING

- Windows & Mirrors
- Skylights
- Gutter Cleaning
- Washable Wallpaper
- Patio Furniture

FREE ESTIMATES

Power Washing Many Outdoor Surfaces

Owner Operator - JOE 516-593-5956

Steinmetz Tablecloths
THE LARGEST TABLECLOTH STORE IN N.Y.S.

The Biggest Selection at the Lowest Prices

1729 46th St. | Brooklyn, NY 11204
TEL 718-871-6964 FAX 718-438-0621
Sun Hours: 10-6 (Please Call)

Visit us and shop online at www.steinmetztablecloths.com

FULL LINE OF: SPERRY - LUNCH - BUFFET - WATERFORD - JOSH HOUZARDEL AND MORE

FULL LINE OF: HAND, BATH & DISH TOWELS - up to 80" wide - 280" long in stock

ACE GARAGE DOOR
SINCE 1924

Sales • Service • Installations

516-593-2030
www.LilKerlsAce.com

207 Vincent Avenue
Lynbrook, NY 11563

Relaxing Waxing
Professional hair removal from head to toe

- Expert eyebrow shaping
- Painless method
- European wax- gentle on sensitive skin
- Convenient evening hours

By appointment only
Call or text Rachyles: 516-659-4305
E-mail: Relaxingwaxing1@gmail.com

Shaya Lloyd One Man Band

Enhance your Simcha with Spirit & Style

Keyboardist & Singer
Vorts, Sheva Brachos, Bar Mitzvas
All Simchas, Yeshiva & Shul Functions

347-996-8665
718-312-2685
Sheldon.Lloyd@yahoo.com

Protect your valuable furniture & dining room tables

Custom Made
TABLE PADS & GLASS TOPS

For Easy Shop at Home Service Call
Ushi Steinmetz (917) 776-7371

WE NOW OFFER CHAIR & SOFA SLIPCOVERS

ROCHELLE'S REVIEWS

Continued from Page 86

"If only I were more attractive, people would pay more attention to me."

"If only I had different parents, maybe I wouldn't have such problems in my relationships."

"If only I had been raised religious, it would be so much easier for me to be observant."

If only!

The month of Elul comes along and tells us we've got it backwards because by definition we have exactly what we need to accomplish our goals in life. The great Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (eighteenth century), taught that the deck of cards each of us is dealt is presented to us in the specific way it is in order to challenge our souls in the precise manner we need to grow. The challenges we are given in life are exactly what we need to actualize our unique potential. That is why, although understandable, it is foolish to desire the circumstances of someone else, since they are different than we are and, therefore, need to be placed in a completely different situation to reach their potential.

What is critical to remember is that it is not what happens to us in life that is important—that is often out of our control—but rather how we react and handle the situation. The Talmud teaches us, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven" (Megillah 25a). "Of Heaven" refers to the values and principles we use to manage the situations in which we find ourselves. That we do have control over. So much else—

who our parents are, what we look like, or what kind of religious background we come from—are all circumstances over which we have little or no control. But we can control the attitude and values we apply to whatever situations are thrust upon us, and that is ultimately what shapes and develops us into the people we become. The type of person we become does not depend on our circumstances themselves, but rather on how we respond to them. The great psychologist Viktor Frankl said, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

And so, sometimes in life, the string breaks, and we're forced to deal with the situation. Rather than simply becoming upset at the inconvenience, try to visualize your soul needing that difficult moment to get to where it needs to go. In those challenging moments, instead of feeling deprived or playing the "if only" game, let us approach the situation for what it truly is: a growth opportunity. In doing so, we will not only be actualizing our potential but learning to find happiness in what we already have. As the Sages of the Mishnah famously taught: "Who is rich? One who is happy with his portion" (Pirkei Avos 4:1). ■

Rochelle Maruch Miller is a contributing editor for the Five Towns Jewish Times. She is a journalist, creative media consultant, lecturer, and educator, and writes for magazines, newspapers, websites, and private clients. She welcomes your comments at Rochellemiller04@aol.com. Read more of Rochelle Miller's articles at 5TJT.com.

IRENE Steiner
Licensed Associate Broker
516-652-7099
irene@bthsallafey.com

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HomeServices
#1 AGENT
Chairman's Circle Gold

Looking to BUY or SELL Your Home? NOW IS THE TIME!

<p>HEWLETT</p>  <p>Spacious 4BR, 2.5 Bathrm Balcony Split W/2 Large Dens, EIK, & Fin Bsmt \$779,000</p>	<p>WOODSBURGH</p>  <p>Magnificent 4+BR 4.5 Bathrm Home W/Gourmet EIK, Den, Music Rm, & Fin Bsmt On 3/4 Acres W/Heated IGP P.O.R.</p>	<p>THE REGENCY IN LAWRENCE</p> <p>A Luxury Condominium With Concierge, Doorman, Valet Parking, Year Round Heated In Ground Pool, Gym, Party Room & Wine Cellar!</p>
<p>WOODMERE</p>  <p>New To Market! Contemporary 3BR 3Bath Colonial W/Master BR Suite On First Floor, 145' Deep Property! \$799,000</p>	<p>LAWRENCE</p>  <p>Beautiful 1st Flr 1BR + Bonus Rm Apt W/ EIK, W/D Hookup & Many Closets. \$189,000</p>	<p>NEW EXCLUSIVE FOR SALE</p>  <p>Magnificent 3 Br 3.5 Bathroom Apt w/12' Ceilings, WD & Granite Kitchen, SS Appliances, Lg Terrace, Incredible Views, Parking & Storage Included.</p>
<p>HEWLETT</p>  <p>Spacious Townhouse with 2 Large BR's in SD #14, Includes Parking Spot, Private Yard/Deck, W/D, \$389,000</p>	<p>HEWLETT</p>  <p>Beautiful 1st Flr 2BR, 2 Bath Garden Apt w/Extra Bonus Room and Terrace \$239,000</p>	<p>FOR SALE</p>  <p>Magnificent 1st, Flr 3BR, 2.5 Bath Apt, X-Lg Wd & Granite Kitchen W/Island & X-Lg LR/DR, Terrace, W/D, Parking & Storage Included. \$2,295,000</p>