

## Yad HaChazakah Advocates For Captioned Tishah B'Av Programs

BY E. APPELBAUM

By now, the Tishah B'Av programs of the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation are a well-known part of this meaningful day. Last year for the first time, the option to order DVDs with captioning — the spoken words written onscreen — was made available, and this year, too, CCHF will produce and provide captioned films for those venues that request them.

In between last year and this year is a story.

A deaf couple, Mr. Samuel Landau and Mrs. Rachel Landau, had been urging the captioning of these presentations, and in 2011, the captioning was made available. They and others in the Jewish deaf and hearing-impaired community were finally able to take part in the Tishah B'Av event. The Landaus arranged for captioned DVDs at the Jewish Education Center (JEC) in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

"As we are deaf, we were happily surprised to get the email about CCHF having captions on Tishah B'Av 5771," Mrs. Landau said.

Then, the disappointment: the Landaus learned that the option might not be available this year.

And so they approached Mrs. Sharon Shapiro-Lacks, Executive Director of Yad HaChazakah-JDEC. Led by Jews with disabilities, Yad HaChazakah-JDEC pro-

motes access to Jewish community life for people with hidden or obvious disabilities, or ongoing conditions. The organization does this by providing guidance, resource information, advocacy, and other kinds of support.

Mrs. Shapiro-Lacks and Mrs. Landau wrote to Michael Rothschild of the CCHF, urging the organization to provide captioning program again this year. They responded immediately and affirmatively to this advocacy.

"The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation is, thank G-d, one of those organizations that want to reach many Jews," says Mrs. Shapiro-Lacks. "It's in their interest — and it's in the community's interest — to provide captioning." Indeed, the captioning feature allows the DVDs' important messages to reach even more Jews than before.

How large is the Jewish deaf and hard-of-hearing community? About 17 percent of the general public in the United States — 36 million — has some kind of hearing loss. That statistic, applied to the American Jewish community, translates to about 1.1 million people. But the number of people who benefit from captioning goes beyond those who are deaf or hearing-impaired.

"People think, oh, we don't have any hearing-impaired people in our shul or in our nearby community — why do we need

captioning?" notes Mrs. Shapiro-Lacks. "They don't think, first of all, that their bubbly might fit into this category, or someone who is a 'visual learner' — someone who takes information in more easily by seeing it rather than by hearing it."

Twelve locations requested the captioned DVD this year, including in Staten Island, Brooklyn, Cedarhurst, and Rochester, New York; Elizabeth and Teaneck, New Jersey; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; North Hollywood, Burbank, and Los Angeles, California; Evanston, Illinois; and Toronto, Ontario. "We will have the information in our ads too, with details of time and location of showing," said Ms. Shira Lazar, of CCHF.

This year's captioning was once again generously sponsored and made possible by the owners of Seasons' supermarkets.

Mrs. Shapiro-Lacks writes, "We applaud CCHF for captioning their DVDs. It's our hope that requests by venues for captioned DVDs will increase year after year so that all Jews may benefit from the words of *chashuve* Rabbanim."

Those who want Yad HaChazakah-JDEC to advocate with them should please email [access@yadempowers.org](mailto:access@yadempowers.org) or call (646) 723-3955.

## Bais Havaad Releases New *Halachah* Audio Series *Daf Yomi - In Halacha*

The Bais Havaad Halacha Center has introduced its newest and most anticipated audio-series to date. "*Daf Yomi - In Halacha*" brings together many of the most-renowned *poskim* and *maggidei shiur* in America, who give brief halachic discourses related to each and every *daf* of the upcoming cycle of *Daf Yomi*.

The first in a series, the MP3 consisting of short (10 to 20 minute) *halachah shiurim* connected to *maseches Brachos*, demonstrates how each *sugya* relates to the day-to-day decisions with which we are constantly faced. The participant comes away with a practical insight into *halachah* as well as a greater understanding of the overall *sugya* of the *daf*.

Renowned *maggidei shiur* such as, *shlita*, Harav Shalom Kamenetsky, Harav Noach Isaac Oelbaum, Harav Yisroel Reisman, Harav Doniel Neustadt and many others,

offer engaging halachic guidance that will benefit even those who do not keep up with the *Daf Yomi* cycle.

This latest offering of The Bais Havaad Halacha Center highlights just one of the many areas that the Bais Havaad promotes as it increases halachic awareness among Torah-Jews nationwide. Relied upon since 2007, the Bais Havaad, along with its accomplished *Dayanim*, Rabbanim and *poskim*, has helped individuals, corporations and families mediate differences as well as offer guidance and *psak* in all areas of *halachah* with a unique and hard-to-find specialty in business, monetary and marital law.

For *she'eilos*, inquiries or to obtain a copy of the MP3 series, please call the Bais Havaad Consultation Line at 1-888-485-8223 or email [Info@TheHalachaCenter.org](mailto:Info@TheHalachaCenter.org). The *shiurim* can also be downloaded at [www.TheHalachaCenter.org](http://www.TheHalachaCenter.org)

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