

Agudath Israel's All-In in Albany

An impressive entourage from Agudath Israel of America recently visited Albany and met with Assemblyman Hikind, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and other elected officials to discuss major issues facing the Jewish community. The key issues included the special education legislation that passed the Assembly last session but did not become law and must be re-introduced this session; school bus transportation issues for community students; and tax credits to parents of children in yeshivas and parochial schools. Assemblyman Hikind met with Cheskal Bennett, Rabbi Mordechai Biser, Rabbi Heshy Dembitzer, Rabbi Yitzchok Fleisher, Leon Goldenberg, Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, Rabbi Shimon Ostreicher, Rabbi Shiya Ostreicher, and Leah Steinberg, among others.

"It's always good to see our old friends who have been working for so many years to help the community, but I was particularly impressed by the many young *Askonim* who came to Albany this time," said the Assemblyman.



Assemblyman Hikind, Speaker Sheldon Silver and other elected officials meeting with the leaders from Agudath Israel.



Assemblyman **Dov Hikind**

Reports to the People

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, March 3

Shredding Event

Boro Park Y, 4912 14th Ave.,
11 am – 3 pm. Free opportunity to
shred sensitive documents.

Thursday, April 18

Job Fair

In conjunction with the
Orthodox Union – 4-7 pm at the
Young Israel of Midwood,
1694 Ocean Ave. (corner of Ave. L)

Assemblyman Dov Hikind

DISTRICT OFFICE:

1310 48th Street
Brooklyn New York 11219

718-853-9616 • Fax: 718-436-5734

ALBANY OFFICE:

Room 551 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

518-455-5721 • Fax: 518-455-5948

Email: hikindd@assembly.state.ny.us

At Last! A Safe Shaimos-Burial Opportunity

Sacred items should be treated with respect, regardless of their usefulness. That's why Assemblyman Hikind is delighted to announce the availability of a safe and respectful way to dispose of *shaimos* (books or other sacred objects which can no longer be used but may not be destroyed). The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has granted Beth Geniza Olam in Monroe, NY, authorization for the burial rights of religious articles recovered from cleanup efforts from the impact of Hurricane Sandy. This opportunity will also allow community members to bury other *shaimos* items during the coming month.

"Does anyone ever question what happens to their *shaimos* after it's dropped in the back of a truck?" asked Assemblyman Hikind. "Last year we were appalled to learn that boxes of *shaimos* had been abandoned and treated with utter disrespect." When Boro Park residents discovered the abandoned *shaimos*, they contacted Assemblyman Hikind who saw to its disposal at Beth Geniza in Sullivan County, New York, which is overseen by the Vaad L'mishmeres Hashaimos.

This year, between the holidays of Purim and Passover, Beth Geniza will dispatch large box trucks to Boro Park, Flatbush, Lakewood, Monroe, Monsey and Williamsburg to collect books, documents, papers and other religious articles consisting of paper, cloth, leather and wood. *Shaimos* items will be buried under supervision in upstate New York. Beth Geniza is certified by the OU (United Orthodox Union), the CRC and others.

"With Passover just around the corner, I'm delighted to announce this opportunity to turn over *shaimos* without having to worry about its safe and respectful burial," said Assemblyman Hikind.

Beth Genizah trucks, which will be clearly marked, will be found at the following locations:

- Boro Park, corner of 14th and 49th, as well as corner of 13th and 53rd (near Shomer Shabbos shul).
- Flatbush, corner of Ave. L and E. 9th Street (near R'Landau's shul).



Truck filled with abandoned shaimos found last year in Boro Park.



Assemblyman Hikind meets with Rabbi Yosef Schwartz of Beth Geniza to review the NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation authorization for the burial rights of religious articles.

Looking for Work? Visit our Job Fair

Assemblyman Hikind will host his fourth annual community job fair in conjunction with the Orthodox Union's Job Board. This is the ideal opportunity to match prospective employers with community residents looking for work. The job fair will take place Thursday, April 18, from 4 to 7 pm, at the Young Israel of Midwood, 1694 Ocean Ave. (corner of Ave. L). To reg-

ister for the event, visit the OU Job Board at www.oujobs.org/ events. If you have a business and are looking for employees, please contact Assemblyman Hikind's office at 718-853-9616. Our previous job fairs have been *enormously* successful and have resulted in many people being hired, so don't miss out!



Local business leaders meet with Assemblyman Hikind prior to the Job Fair.



Last year's Job Fair was a huge success for businesses and local residents seeking employment.

We Love Banks But...

It's clear that rents have increased on 13th Avenue and consumer prices with them. That's why Assemblyman Hikind is hoping to put a halt on banks opening new branches on Boro Park's 13th Avenue. Over the last few years, an increasing number of banking chains have secured real estate or long leases on an avenue that otherwise caters to a neighborhood community of local shoppers. The result has been a steady increase on rents that has already driven out a number of local merchants, left store fronts vacant, and threatens to change the character of the neighborhood.

"It's hurting our community," said the Assemblyman. "Small store owners—people whose family businesses have served residents for generations—can no longer afford the rent. There's already 17 banks in a ten-block span and an 18th one plans to open. That's plenty. Increased rent doesn't just drive local merchants out of business—it impacts the ones who can weather the increase but at a huge cost to the residents here. When rents go up, so do prices. Our community members are paying a heavy toll for these banks." Assemblyman Hikind has reached out to NYC Council Members David Greenfield and Brad Lander who enthusiastically support this effort, as does Yidel Perlstein, Chairman of Brooklyn Community Board 12 and Wolf Sender, District Manager of Community Board 12. Kosher Delight and Donut Man are among the many small, local businesses that were part of the neighborhood for many years but have recently disappeared from the landscape due to an inability to meet rising rent demands. Simultaneously, additional banks have targeted 13th Avenue as a desired home for a new branch.

"In the interests of this community and its residents, I intend to work with elected officials and City Planning to implement these changes," said Hikind. "During these difficult economic times, it's important to keep prices reasonable."



Assemblyman Hikind discusses how a new bank is pushing Siebrow Cleaners out of its current location with neighborhood residents.

"It's hurting our community, small store owners—people whose family businesses have served residents for generations."

Stolen Torah Recovered

Assemblyman Hikind had high praise for Deputy Inspector Michael Deddo, Commanding Officer of the 66th Precinct, as well as the community *Shomrim* (neighborhood volunteer security watchmen), the *Misaskim* (who assist community members in crisis) and the Boro Park community following the quick recovery of a Torah scroll, which was in the backseat of an automobile stolen in Boro Park and, just days later, recovered in Flatbush. "The safety and sanctity of a Torah scroll means a great deal to our community," said the Assemblyman. "The speedy recovery of *this* sacred scroll is a testimony to our ability to work together and the dedication of our extraordinary Police Commander Michael Deddo.

Jacob Ostreicher: In Our Prayers and On Our Phone

No, Jacob Ostreicher is not home yet, but we continue to remain confident that he will be soon. Released from a hellish prison in Bolivia to house arrest after a year and a half (without ever being charged with a crime), Boro Park's Jacob Ostreicher remains front-of-mind for so many of us as he continues to fight a legal battle in a country whose justice system can clearly stand improvement. Assemblyman Hikind and his staff remain in *constant* touch with Jacob's family and attorney, ready to help in any and every way possible. In the meantime, we urge everyone to continue praying for Jacob.



Pollard's Pardon is Long Overdo

Assemblyman Hikind and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver led nearly 100 of their legislative colleagues representing areas throughout New York State and New York City in imploring President Obama to pardon Jonathan Pollard. The push for clemency followed the release of a recently declassified 1987 CIA damage assessment, which reveals that Pollard never sought to disclose information on the United States but rather only on Israel's enemies.

The legislators' letter to President Obama stated in part: "We are writing to urge you to use your Constitutional power to grant clemency to Jonathan Pollard and commute his sentence to one of time served... Mr. Pollard has repeatedly expressed remorse and has now served nearly three decades of his life sentence... Mr. Pollard's sentence was based on the presumption that he violated his plea agreement by granting an unauthorized interview. We believe it improbable that an interview in prison could occur without the prior authorization or awareness of government officials... There is no question that Mr. Pollard broke the law. However, he is now in his 27th year in prison, most of these years in solitary confinement, which is far more than others who were found guilty of similar activity on behalf of countries that are not adversaries of the U.S. have served. We believe and hope you'll agree that the time that Mr. Pollard has served is more than sufficient from the standpoint of punishment and deterrence."

After a personal visit with Pollard at the Federal Correctional Complex in Butner, North Carolina in 2007, Hikind reflected, "I can attest to the fact that Jonathan is remorseful for his actions. He acknowledges that he broke the law. All he is asking for is proportionality, and today, we asked President Obama to give him that much. I hope and pray to G-d that our request is granted."

Yad Ephraim Dinner

Assemblyman Hikind addresses the crowd at Yad Ephraim.



Yad Ephraim dinner saw hundreds turn out in enthusiastic support.

"If you've been to Maimonides Hospital, you've seen Yad Ephraim's outstanding work," Assemblyman Hikind told the packed room at Ateres Golda. "The beautiful work that this organization does for our community is quite literally unparalleled." The occasion was the annual dinner to benefit Yad Ephraim on January 8. "Yad Ephraim has become a major force for good—I don't know how we ever got by without them," said the Assemblyman who also had the highest praise for the organization's C.E.O. Pesach Greenberg.

Four Generations Celebrate Centennial Birthday



Assemblyman Hikind was delighted to attend a special celebration with Margaret Freed, who turned 100 in January. Mrs. Freed was presented with a citation from the NY State Assembly in the presence of three generations of her family.