

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

Stop the Talking in Shul!

Rabbi Inspires Hundreds in the Community to Stop The Talking In Shul

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The "Stop the Talking in Shul" movement, highlighted over the past few months in the Flatbush Jewish Journal has flourished in recent weeks, with countless individuals and shuls signing on to stop the talking.

The Sephardic Community has responded overwhelmingly, most recently at a major Azkarah conducted this past Sunday night at the Sephardic Lebanese Congregation on Avenue T and East 8th Street that attracted more than 1,000 men and women from all over Flatbush. The gathering focused on a recent *nifteret* (*meruhemet*), to elevate the *neshama* of Mrs. Roula Bukai Meta (Ruth bat Lattife.) Last Wednesday night, despite many Tehillim gatherings in our community to arouse *rahamim* from *shamayim*, she passed away.

At the gathering, they listened to words of Chizuk and were inspired to turn their grief into positive actions. Each speaker addressed various points of chizuk to an extremely receptive audience, thirsting for guidance and longing for improvement in their lives. Rabbi Meyer Yedid, Rav of Shaare Zion Congregation, spoke about the importance of Tzniut (Jewish modesty) in dress and all facets

of life. Rabbi Yosheyahu Shammah, Rav of Shevet Achim Congregation, spoke of the *nifteret's* closeness to her children and the importance of good parenting, encouraging others to emulate her ways. Rabbi Eli Mansour, Rav of Bet Yaakob Congregation, spoke on *Agrah D'Hespeidah Diluyah*, usually meaning that the reward for attending a eulogy is to cry, can also mean to draw – to take something from the Hespel to elevate themselves.

The *meruhemet* and her husband were members of Ahi Ezer Congregation, Ocean Parkway and Avenue S, the long-time flagship of the Damascus community in America. Their Rav, Rabbi Shaul Maslaton, spoke to Mr. Meta and explained that in light of the great loss that so many members of the community are currently experiencing as a result of his wife's tragic *petirah* there is a need to offer everyone a chance to direct

this emotion towards a positive spiritual elevation that will also serve as a *zechut* for Ruth bat Lattife.

The concept that came to Rabbi Maslaton was a result of reading in the Flatbush Jewish Journal about the weekly initiative for Jews to commit themselves to stop talking in shul. This step towards increasing the dignity of the shul and Kavod Shamayim takes into account that keeping quiet in shul is a great *zechut* for *parnasa*, *shidduchim*, *refuahs* and *yeshuahs*.

With the husband's consent, Rabbi Shaul Maslaton opted in his hespid for Ruth bat Lattife to speak to all those gathered for the Azkarah in the Lebanese Sephardic Congregation about the great value of making a commitment in her memory to not talk in shul, especially at least for the Sheloshim of the *nifteret*.

Rabbi Maslaton asked a cousin of his

who is a graphic artist to prepare an attractive document to serve as a Community-Wide Prayer Initiative in memory of Roula Bukai Meta, a"h in which one would sign his or her name and "accept upon myself, *bli neder*, not to talk in shul during Kaddish, Kriat HaTorah & Chazarah from Sunday 12 Tevet December 15 until Shabbat 10 Shevat, January 11." (The concept was based on the "No Talking in Shul" contracts previously promoted in The FJJ.)

The response to Rabbi Maslaton's hespid at the Sephardic Lebanese Congregation to adopt the initiative to not talk in shul during the Sheloshim was enthusiastically accepted by many hundreds who attended last Sunday's memorial gathering for the *nifteret*, including members from other synagogues in the community. As he explained from the words *Hikovtzu V'shimu* in the Parasha, when we gather to hear Divrei Chizuk, it becomes a time when the Geulah can come and that would certainly be a tremendous *zechut* for Ruth bat Lattife.

May this initiative serve as a *zechut* for the *neshama* of Ruth bat Lattife and may Hashem comfort her family amongst the mourners of Zion and the gates of Jerusalem.



Individuals and Shuls are welcome to request copies of the "No Talking in Shul" contracts by e-mailing stophthetalking@gmail.com

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