

Saving Lives on Shabbat

■ Both Yehuda Avner in his interview (“Up Close with Yehuda Avner” by Michael Freund, summer 2011) and Joseph Lieberman in his book, “The Gift of Rest: Rediscovering the Beauty of the Sabbath,” excerpted in the same issue, discuss their experiences in which life-threatening circumstances required them to perform normally forbidden activities on Shabbat. Unfortunately, both gave the impression that there is a conflict between observing Shabbat and saving lives, which regrettably requires one to violate Shabbat.

Senator Lieberman presents a philosophical justification for doing so, writing: “To do otherwise would be to put form over substance, to elevate the [Sabbath] law above values on which the law is based, and to forget that the Sabbath is primarily a day to affirm and uphold life.”

In fact, performing normally for-

Out-of-Town Living—A Boost for *Aliyah*?

■ We very much appreciated Rabbi Weil’s article “The Out-of-Town Advantage” (summer 2011). We did, however, want to comment on the note at the bottom that reads, “This article is intended for couples and families for whom *aliyah* is not currently an option.”

We believe, in fact, that out-of-town Jewish living is the best move for families who wish to make *aliyah*. This follows directly from the two arguments Rabbi Weil makes for living “out of town”—finances and idealism.

Financially, the cost savings of living out of town is key for a family’s preparation for *aliyah*. Furthermore, families most often make *aliyah* for idealistic reasons and moving out of town on their way to Israel can nurture that idealism and sense of *she-lichut*. By simply being a member of an out-of-town community, they serve as role models and have a tangible impact on the community in which they live. Furthermore, those living in out-of-town communities tend to have more

bidden activities on Shabbat to save a life is an integral part of Shabbat law and the highest form of its observance. Additionally, Shabbat *brit milahs* or Shabbat sacrifices in the time of the Temple both require performing normally forbidden acts. All these activities are part and parcel of how the Torah tells us to observe the Shabbat.

Avner states: “If I had to be driven somewhere [on Shabbat] to attend a meeting that had life and death implications, I used to sit on the car floor to ensure that I would not forget that it was Shabbat.” Should the *mohel* at a Shabbat *brit* and a Kohen performing Shabbat sacrifices also sit on the floor while performing their duties to remind themselves that it is Shabbat?

The suggestion that there is an advantage in inventing new practices to remind oneself that the day is Shabbat is inconsistent with the spirit of Jewish law.

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of a pioneering spirit, not unlike the first Jews who made *aliyah*.

Assisted by the guiding vision of the OU, communities such as ours in Overland Park, Kansas, are growing and becoming realistic options for Orthodox life outside the major metropolitan areas. Support from the OU has been a vital boost, especially programs such as the OU Emerging Jewish Communities Home and Job Relocation Fair, last held this past March, which introduced over one thousand people to the beauty of out-of-town Jewish living.

Supporting communities in Middle America does not stand in contradiction to the value of *aliyah*, but rather can support that goal as well. With hearts in the East, *aliyah* is a core value for so many of our families that can often find great support in a stopover in the Midwest.

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