

Dear Members of the Board, family and friends.

I am told that on such occasions it is customary for the CHATANIM to deliver a funny sketch or one liners, in particular reference to our Shul, gabbaim, Eruv and such like.

I am afraid you are going to be disappointed. I am far from being a stand-up comedian - I can barely stand up - and am told that my sense of humour is not what it used to be.

So instead I would like simply to thank this special community, its past and present Rabbis, the various chairmen and directors for giving my family a wonderful Jewish life over the last 40 years, the opportunity to develop at our own pace and to make so many friends among you.

It has been an amazing journey culminating with the honour which you have bestowed on me.

I still do not know why I deserve this but.... I would not recommend to anybody to break their hip as a means of getting there.

Vera and I got married on 13th May 1971. That day was Lag Ba'omer. 46 years later the 13th May this year, Lag Ba'omer fell on the same date again. Also, on that date we read Sidrat Emor, the Sidrah that happened to be my son's Bar Mitzvah portion, which we studied together some 26 years ago.

So to celebrate these amazing coincidences, I agreed to lein. The traditional good luck wish is "break a leg" and what do I do, yes you guessed it right. I broke my femur.

I was told by a member of our community, the well deserved recent MBE recipient, that my leining on one leg was better than my usual standard. The rest is history.

For over three months in hospital the community provided endless visits, support and of course food, for which Vera and I are very grateful.

And then came my first return to Shul, the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanna. My companion, who shall remain nameless, insisted that I enter the Shul via the main entrance and not, as I preferred via the back. Despite the very late arrival, I got an allyiah, which was very emotional.

Tongue in cheek, my companion remarked the following in a subsequent email addressed to a few friends:

"Eli pitches up at Shul after 1030. You would think that to arrive so late would make it hardly worth the effort but wait.....Despite not having been in Shul for some 4 months he is awarded an allyah. Outrageous!

*AND what makes it worse, he was not in his seat before leynim commenced and it is well established rule in Pinner that **no one** gets an allyah unless present before leynim starts. **He must have some dirt on the wardens** to get such a preferential treatment!*

On top of all that he is trying to undo another member who has taken to having a portable desk at his seat. Eli's ruse is to sit atop two chairs.

Where will this end? The established order is crumbling

*Yours in religious dismay
The frummer"*

My address would not be complete without mentioning the **Chattan Torah and his wife**, whom I hardly knew before now.

I very much enjoyed our morning whiskey meetings, Norman's dry sense of humour and the ease upon which agreements have been reached. Vera too appreciated Edna's taking charge and her efficiency in making this event successful. Edna, **in turn**, apparently praised Vera's **non-interference** and permission to get on with it as "**she know best**".

A special thanks goes to our caretaker Vaz who provided his physical support when it was needed most.

And finally, to quote our Rabbis and as it is not yet 1200 o'clock I would like to end with a special message composed by my children one early morning before they went off to work.

Shabbat morning Eli tripped on a stair
His trousers were too long a pair
He leyned Parashat Emor
With a hip that was sore
Then he was pushed back home in a chair

Back home while he sat on the throne
He dislocated his new hip bone
They sorted him out
Then he hobbled about
And we barely heard a groan

As soon as Eli was able
He acquired a bridge table
So now Park Royale
Was more Casino Royale
All the whiskey made him even less stable

Eli's visitor schedule was packed
If there was anything that he lacked
Friends would pour through the door
With schnitzels and more
So his waistline remained intact

Back home they heard Eli could Lein
Despite the great ache and the pain
of a broken hip horror
So come Simchat Torah
They made him do it again.

From having his little fall
Eli is now standing tall

He stumbles and bumps
And his friends came up trumps
Thank you, thank you to you all

All I can say to Sharon and Dan
The limerick was a wonderful plan
Thanks for writing this rhyme
In double quick time
It was better than doing the can-can.

You will no doubt clearly see
Their sense of humour did not come from me.
But from Vera, my dear wife,
Who's supported me through strife
A true heroine, I'm sure you'll agree.

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