

Savvy Advice for a Peaceful Home

In Hebrew, we both greet someone and send them off with the same word: Shalom. G-d's earthly creation was incomplete after six days; it was perfected only after a seventh day of rest. Peace, then, is at the center of everything, yet many of us spend a lifetime searching for it. In Jewish tradition, lighting candles each Friday night illuminates the home with the light of, and hope for, peace.

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach has built a career tackling the most difficult problems in human relationships. Author of books like *Kosher Sex* and *Parenting with Fire*, Boteach is renowned for his frank approach to husband/wife and parent/child dynamics. His new book, *Shalom in the Home: Savvy Advice for a Peaceful Home* (based on his successful TLC television series), was born out of his own unhappy childhood experience. His parents divorced when he was eight, and he spent many hours flying back and forth between them while observing happy, intact families around him. He vowed to dedicate his life to bringing peace to human relationships.

In his television series, Boteach drew on Jewish traditions to help families in distress across America. He exposed destructive family dynamics and worked with parents and children to heal broken relationships. In his newest book by the same name, he reviews and updates the stories of the families he encountered in the course of the first season of his show.

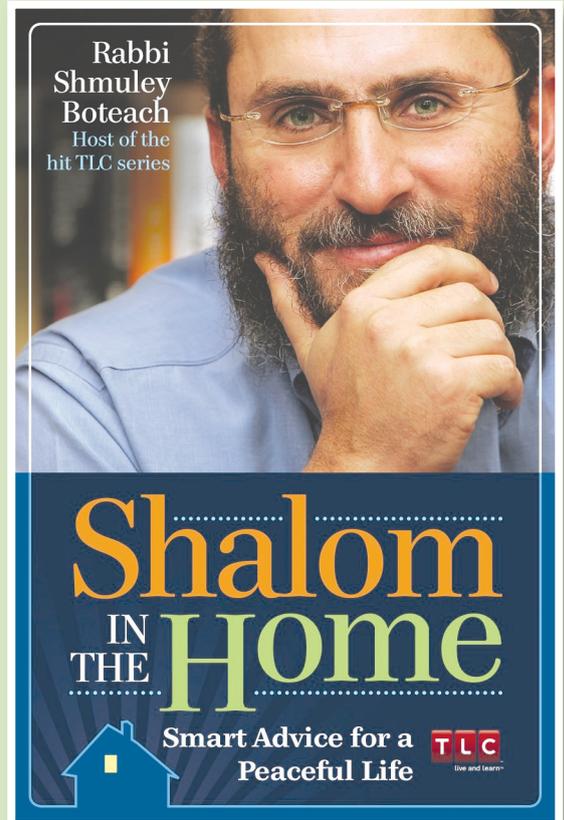
Death, adultery, discipline, passionless marriage, poor communication: Boteach encounters a wide range of family dysfunction. Bringing parents and children together, Boteach imparts pearls of Jewish wisdom that serve as themes for repairing and rebuilding families. He counsels a grieving wife to choose life for herself and her children after the death of her husband, tries to revive the relationship between a husband and wife torn apart by adultery, and encourages a blended family to remedy their daughter's ADHD diagnosis with love and attention instead of medicine.

Boteach reflects on the success of his interventions and recognizes the instances where his "cult of personality" interfered with his subjects' ability to go it alone when he was no longer present to facilitate. While his convictions are always strongly expressed, he is clearly empathetic to those who have made mistakes with their spouse or children, and Boteach himself learns through his experience with human brokenness.

Reading about families in crisis is emotionally wearing and leaves one wondering how do things in life get so bad? Even so, the painful relationships it describes serve as templates for smaller yet aggravating problems in everyone's lives, and Boteach offers practical, useful advice.

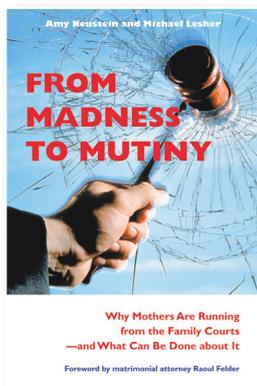
A second season of the series aired March 4th, 2007 and will continue to run Monday nights at 10 pm on TLC.

— Reviewed by Allie Vered



Shalom in the Home
Author Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

Books of Interest



From Madness to Mutiny

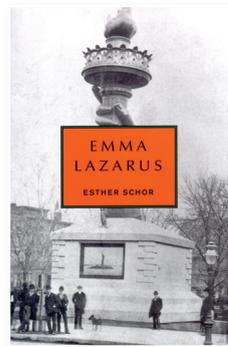
Author Amy Neustein and Michael Leshner

"The truth about the family courts gives the lie to some cherished American assumptions. Americans believe they are safe from arbitrary abuse of governmental power—yet child protective services, "law guardians," and family court judges can cast aside the norms of due process," wrote UVa graduate Michael Leshner in his book about mothers trying to rescue their children from the horrors of sexual abuse.

Leshner will return to Charlottesville, Virginia on April 17th, 7:30pm to speak at Congregation Beth Israel about his work in the family court system.

Co-author sociologist Amy Neustein also lived and worked in Richmond, Virginia. She is a religious Jew who has dedicated her life to exposing the family court system's prejudice against mothers trying to protect their sexually abused children.

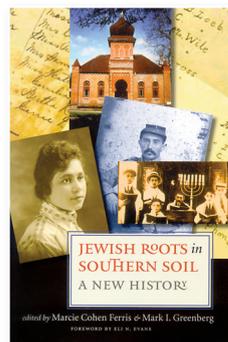
From Madness to Mutiny offers an overview of family court malfunction and the parental mutiny that results from it. The authors outline the new legal landscape that makes the madness possible and show how the system has failed to react to severe criticism from media and legislators. And they discuss ways to reform the family courts, with the goal of transforming them from instruments of punishment to true institutions of justice.



Emma Lazarus

Author Esther Schor

Winner of a Jewish Book Award, this biography of Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), the author of "The New Colossus" (the poem affixed to the base of the Statue of Liberty) is a picture of a woman of passion and deep conviction. Fellow poet Schor (a professor of English at Princeton) paints an intriguing portrait of a Sephardic Zionist before Zionism existed.



Jewish Roots in Southern Soil

Edited by Marcie Cohen Ferris & Mark I. Greenberg

This anthology of original essays delves into an area of American history long neglected – the stories of Southern Jews. Including work from some of the country's most accomplished historians, this book is a must-have for anyone interested in the American Jewish experience.