

# LIVELY OPINION

## I would like to tell you how to grow a melanoma

By RICHARD ASARCH

Special to the Intermountain Jewish News

I would like to tell you how to grow a melanoma. The environment is important so you should choose a location which has many days of sunshine. It would be even better if it could be at a higher elevation so that the intensity of ultraviolet rays is even stronger. Then you need participants who love spending time outdoors giving themselves a “healthy” tanned appearance, and a special bonus would be having them visit tanning salons to augment their “healthy” tan.

As you suspect, the “How to grow a melanoma” is happening here in Colorado where the incidence of melanoma is higher than in the rest of the United States.

Let me share a few unsettling facts with you.

Every seven minutes someone in the US is diagnosed with melanoma.

Melanoma is the second most common skin cancer among men and women aged 17-29.

Every hour someone will die from melanoma.

Just last week our office diag-

nosed four melanomas and we are seeing more than ever before.

I see parents being very consci-

entious with applying sunscreen to their children but things seem to change when they reach teenage



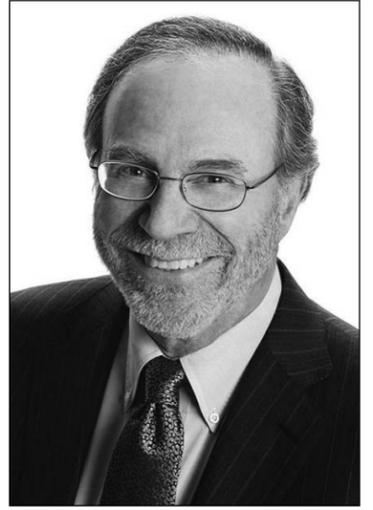
years when tanning and tanning salons become important. Studies have found a 59% increase in the risk of melanoma in those who have been exposed to UV radiation from indoor tanning.

We are now at a point where one in 50 Americans will develop melanoma in their lifetime. So if you look around, six or seven of you will probably develop a melanoma.

We have made progress, since it wasn't long ago that if you had a melanoma, the treatment was to remove a circular area of about four inches. Today, if we diagnose it early, it is often just an inch and we can treat some melanomas with Mohs micrographic surgery to further minimize the size. The key is to find and diagnose this early.

Scientists have made great strides in cataloguing the many genetic abnormalities of melanoma. Combination therapies are proving to be more effective. There are now treatments to prolong life that didn't exist just two years ago, but early detection and prevention are still the best route to preventing the spread and fatalities of this disease.

But, as you might expect, there is much work to be done which is why I am a supporter of the Melanoma Research Foundation's efforts to increase prevention and early detection awareness efforts, and to expand their melanoma research grant program to accelerate the devel-



Dr. Richard Asarch

opment of the most promising therapies. We also need to support efforts to educate children and their parents about sun protection.

So remember these three important points:

- Wear your sunscreen and protective clothing every day.

- Do frequent self-examinations of your skin and have an annual skin exam by your dermatologist, since finding melanomas early is the most effective treatment of all.

- Support the work of the Melanoma Foundation. Tremendous progress is being made; private-foundation funding has been critical in helping melanoma research surge forward. We are the building blocks that will be helping future generations as well as yourself, your friends and family as we continue to enjoy the Colorado lifestyle.

*Dr. Richard Asarch, a dermatologist in Denver, was recently honored by the Melanoma Research Foundation, at whose dinner these remarks were delivered.*

## HILLEL GOLDBERG: VIEW FROM DENVER

### An uncomfortable defense

It is easy to say, “free speech.” It can be difficult to accept. Yet, accept it we must. The alternative is Stalinist Russia or, in more contemporary terms, Saudi Arabia, with its beheadings, hand-choppings and lashings for the exercise of freedom of speech in the field of religion.

Feel free to substitute for Saudi Arabia other Islamist regimes in which it is punishable by death to convert from Islam to another religion.

Even under the specter of Stalinist Russia and radical Islam, free speech can be difficult to accept. It means defending the purveyors of obscenity, of insults, of bad taste, of the lowest in human expression.

The INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS goes to great lengths not to print visual or written matter that crosses the line into bad taste and worse. Yet, we live under the First Amendment, and if we cannot defend it we die, and free society dies along with it.

Tolerance is inherently a double-edged sword. The test of tolerance is whether one is tolerant of the intolerant. It is easy to be tolerant of people like you; it is diffi-

cult to be tolerant of people who reject you or your ideas. Yet, that is what free speech demands.

If I may digress, religious pluralism, to be genuine, requires the tolerance of those who reject reli-

gious pluralism. Religious pluralism isn't only “you do your religious thing and I'll do mine,” it's “you do your thing even if it rejects the religious thing I do.”

Free speech is a paradox. Though I have never once read the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, 12 of whose staff were murdered last January by Muslim terrorists in France, I surmise, from what I read, that I would be greatly offended by what this magazine often prints.

Yet, I must defend its right to publish. I must regard its murdered staff members as heroes for free speech. If I don't, then all publications, even those of the highest merit, will quickly cease to exist. Witness

the attempted mass murder in Garland, Texas this week at an exhibit of caricatures of Mohammed. The attempted murder was emblematic of the Stalins and Hitlers and their ilk, whose first order of busi-

ness is

the law. No society has yet been devised that publishes only matters of the highest merit. The choices, far from wholly palatable, are either the denial of liberty or virtually unre-

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ness upon taking power was, and is, to stifle the press. When it is said that the press is mightier than the sword, it is not a cliché.

It would not be my choice to publish cartoons that caricature Mohammed. I was deeply offended by the “art” some years ago that had Jesus depicted in a latrine. I subscribe to neither Mohammed nor Jesus, yet why this gratuitous insult? I need not believe in non-Jewish religious figures to regard their degradation as beyond the pale.

Beyond the pale of what? Of decency. Of taste. Of common sense. Of religious discourse. Of literary merit. But not beyond the pale of free expression. Not beyond the pale of

restricted free speech (the famous “fire in a crowded theater” exception).

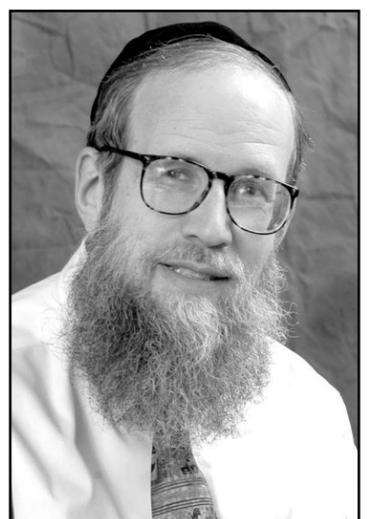
Free speech can have negative consequences. It can damage reputations, slander whole groups of people and inculcate sympathy for bad public policies.

The answer to bad speech, as Justice Brandeis put it, is more speech. If an idea is bad, counter it. Do not suppress the original expression; add another and a better one.

Those who slander public figures are generally exempt from legal action. Jewish law is different, in two senses.

First, under the civil law, to slander someone is to tell untruths about them. That is not protected under free speech, unless one is writing about a public figure. Under Jewish law, however, to slander someone is, yes, to tell untruths about someone, but also to tell unpleasant but true information about someone. “But it's true!” is not a defense under the Jewish laws of *leshon ha-ra*, or forbidden speech.

Add this to the levels of uncomfortable defense. It is not only the right to publish unseemly material that, under the value of free speech, one has no choice but to defend. The right to publish ugly truths must also be defended, though most of the Jewish journalists I know try to



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impose on themselves the rather complicated rules in Jewish law against *leshon ha-ra*.

These rules include exceptions. If a distinct good will come from the publication of uncomplimentary information, one may do so. The reportage of unseemly information often sets in motion societal reforms. One thinks of the reportage of sexual abuse, for example. Another exception to the restrictions of *leshon ha-ra*, though less cut-and-dried, is when the information is already known by three people.

The second difference between Jewish and civil law on slander is, under Jewish law, there is no distinction between public and private figures. To slander either via lies or unpleasant truths is not allowed.

Free speech is a paradox, both a guarantee against oppression, of which the Jewish people has known far more than its share, and a necessary evil, enabling the degradation of standards in society.

As I say, no free society has yet been devised that publishes only material of merit. To adapt Churchill, free speech represents the peak of liberty, after all of the alternatives have been exhausted.

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