

**READERS' FORUM**

More on Ride Sharing

By Dr. Yitzchok Levine

When I first read Rabbi Moshe Schochet's article in the *Hamodia* "Readers' Forum" (April 12, 2007) about giving "people waiting by the bus stop a ride," I thought, "What a nice idea!" Then I recalled an incident that happened to me a number of years ago.

I was riding along 49th Street in Boro Park, heading towards 14th Avenue. I stopped at a light at 18th Avenue, and a fellow tapped on my window. He asked, "Are you heading towards 15th Avenue?" When I replied in the affirmative, he quickly opened the rear door of my car, put an 8 or 9 year-old boy in the back seat, and said, "Please take my son to 15th Avenue." He then promptly closed the door. The light changed and I took the boy to his destination, all the while thinking, "How could a father, any father, entrust his young son to a total stranger?" True, I have a beard and was dressed as an observant Jew, so this father simply assumed that I was "okay." And, *Baruch Hashem* for this youngster, I was. However, as we all so sadly know, this is not always the case. One really cannot judge a book by its cover in today's world.

With this in mind, I reflected some more about Rabbi

Schochet's suggestion of giving rides to total strangers. The following issues came to mind.

Given that Rabbi Schochet does not know the people he gives rides to, he could end up with a passenger who might well turn out to be an undesirable. Again, one cannot and should not judge a book by its cover.

Should we encourage those waiting for a bus to take rides from total strangers? Recently, I received an email with the subject line "Boro Park Shomrim: Car service WARNING." The email stated, "The patrol issued its warning following a most unfortunate incident in which a driver took advantage of a child and Shomrim efforts to investigate the matter were hindered by hostile and uncooperative employees at two car service companies, who attempted to 'cover up' for the offending driver." What is to prevent an undesirable driver from driving around and offering people rides?

While Rabbi Schochet's suggestion about giving others a ride may at first glance seem extremely meritorious, it is in truth not such a simple issue.

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