

## An Overview: Parental Alienation

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Not long ago I met my dear old school friend Chana that I hadn't seen in many years and amiably asked, "Tell me, how is your daughter Rochel doing? Is she married yet?" I was a little hesitant with the second part of the question wondering if I had overstepped my boundaries. Should I not have waited rather for Chana to offer that which she wished to share? Looking at her expression, where her color suddenly drained, and a tear appeared to roll, I quickly apologized. The truth was that I hadn't meant to pry. It was only that I often thought of Rochel and so deeply wanted to hear good news. I hoped my tone of voice echoed my true sentiments. As I searched Chana's eyes to see if she could sense that I had only meant well I was gifted with a barely noticeable smile. With a trusting gesture reminiscent of our earlier friendship days she turned towards me, put her hand on mine, and in a low whisper shared, "Yes, Rochel is married, only I was not at her wedding." And then the tears came down in buckets.

Not more than a week later as I sat at my desk in the Bikur Cholim office where I had been active for three decades came another call. I could hear the anguish in the father's cry "Can you help us out please? My twenty-seven year old son is hospitalized but my daughter-in-law will not allow us to see him."

At that point being totally clueless of any terminology that could be destroying parent-child relation-

ships, yet wanting to help, I sent an email to a local publication stating that a support group will be opening for parents of alienated children. That was less than a year ago. Our first meeting had a total representation of only four members. Today our organization called Broken Ties unfortunately has over two hundred members – representing hundreds of alienated children – all from within the frum community.

As I look around the room during our monthly support meetings, what strikes me most, is the caliber of our members. One by one they are wonderful people. Many are professionals, articulate, hard working, and accomplished. In fact, I have made many new friends from amongst our members.

So what went wrong?

Honestly, we too are asking that question. Sitting on couches and end tables or wherever we can find a spot, we have learned that many of our parents share common ground. It's fascinating to see the relief on the others as one woman wails, "my life was rewritten!" and then to hear the cheering as another woman counters with, "and I was blamed for something I never did." Some have reached out for help just to be rebuked with "we're working in the best interests of the child." All their pleas that they are warm and loving parents and that a third party has been fabricating evidence to undermine them goes unheeded.

We have learned that oftentimes all it takes is a talented individual that uses his charisma and power to overstate his opinion to these vulnerable children who will then reject their parents. Sadly their ability to play the children's psyches tend to succeed. Once

a child is lost to alienation the pain of the parent is paralyzing. It grips their emotions with a vengeance and refuses to release its grip. Mothers and fathers yearn for their children night and day and although they appear to go to work and to be well groomed the anguish of their loss is always right before their eyes. The ache in their heart is constant and no one can comfort them.

Our goal is to build awareness that alienation can happen to loving and devoted parents while under the spell of these manipulative individuals. We will not give up! We are here to continue to fight the battle and to help parents regain their trust with their children.

*If you too are an alienated parent, please contact [brokenties3@gmail.com](mailto:brokenties3@gmail.com) or call 518-941-6316. If you would like to learn more about alienation please visit their website at [www.parentalalienation613.com](http://www.parentalalienation613.com).*



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