

THE WORST IN-LAWS EVER

by Mike Harris

"BISAMACH BIKELKEE." These two Hebrew words come to mind. In my getting educated it happened that I sat in on a class given by a Rabbi. The title of the class was "BISAMACH BIKELKEE." For this group I will offer a translation, "Peace within your household or home."

Whenever one is faced with a serious problem, my father used to say, "Look in the mirror, you might find some solution or truth to help you." What he was really saying in reference to this title was, "This is not a one-sided thing."

If one feels that their in-laws are the worst ever, how come you are in love with their son or daughter? Before one condemns the family they have joined by marrying, maybe, just maybe something took place or happened to set up this situation. In-laws have loyalties the same as most people, and their loyalties are strongest within the members of their family. Now a new person joins the family. This new member may not be warmly accepted at first for whatever reason. The new member may take offence at the lack of warmth shown at their introduction, "Hey, I am also now your family." This can be a basic flaw that can expand and grow and cause "the worst in-laws ever."

The Rabbi in teaching this class on peaceful homes stressed first, learn to be patient; second, be gracious. Think how hard it may be for a close knit family to accept a new addition with strange precepts. The new family member must in turn make allowances for the close knit loyalties.

The following are my own suggested solutions based on the class the Rabbi taught. Not many of my peers were exposed to this kind of experience. The Rabbi's teaching also suggested that the new couple put some physical space between themselves and both sets of in-laws in order to lessen the chances of abrasion between the two families that are now closer due to their new situation.

The new couple also needs time and space. Time to settle in, space to think and adjust.

There does not have to be "worst in-laws ever." The learning period that is necessary for the newly married should be a growing and accommodating time, free from outside influences, regardless of good intentions of extended families.

Time and space, minimum outside influence and common sense will eventually avoid "worst in-laws ever."