

Recently we have received a letter written by a mother to an autistic youth. This is what she had written to us:

“On Sunday, the 23rd of November 2008 I walked into a Pizza store in Tel Aviv with my son (a charming autistic child, relatively high functioning) as we did several times before.

I gave him 20 Shekels bill and told him to ask the pizzeria owner politely for a pizza slice and grapefruit juice. Together we calculated how much change he should get in return. My son reached the counter and asked politely, with a shaken voice for the pizza and juice. The pizzeria owner ignored him and attended to other customers who arrive after my son. This behavior repeated itself for three times, and then he turned to me and angrily asked “what’s for you Madam?” My reply, as I tried to keep cool, was “My son has already told you three times for what he wants”. The pizzeria owner then barked at me: “This is no school here and I have no time for you to teach your child what to say, I am not ready to waste my time on your trainings, so if you want something – you tell me.”

I looked at my son. His hand still stretched out with the money and my throat was choked with tears. My son did not understand what have happened, but I was deeply hurt for him.

Inclusion of people who are different is no empty slogan; it is a day in day out struggle. As parents of children with special needs we try to do whatever we can to give our children the tools to get included in the community, and any such incident brings us backwards.

I turn to any one who had suffered such a behavior as I did, Lets bring a clear message to all, that such an intolerant behavior is not accepted.

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