

# Magic

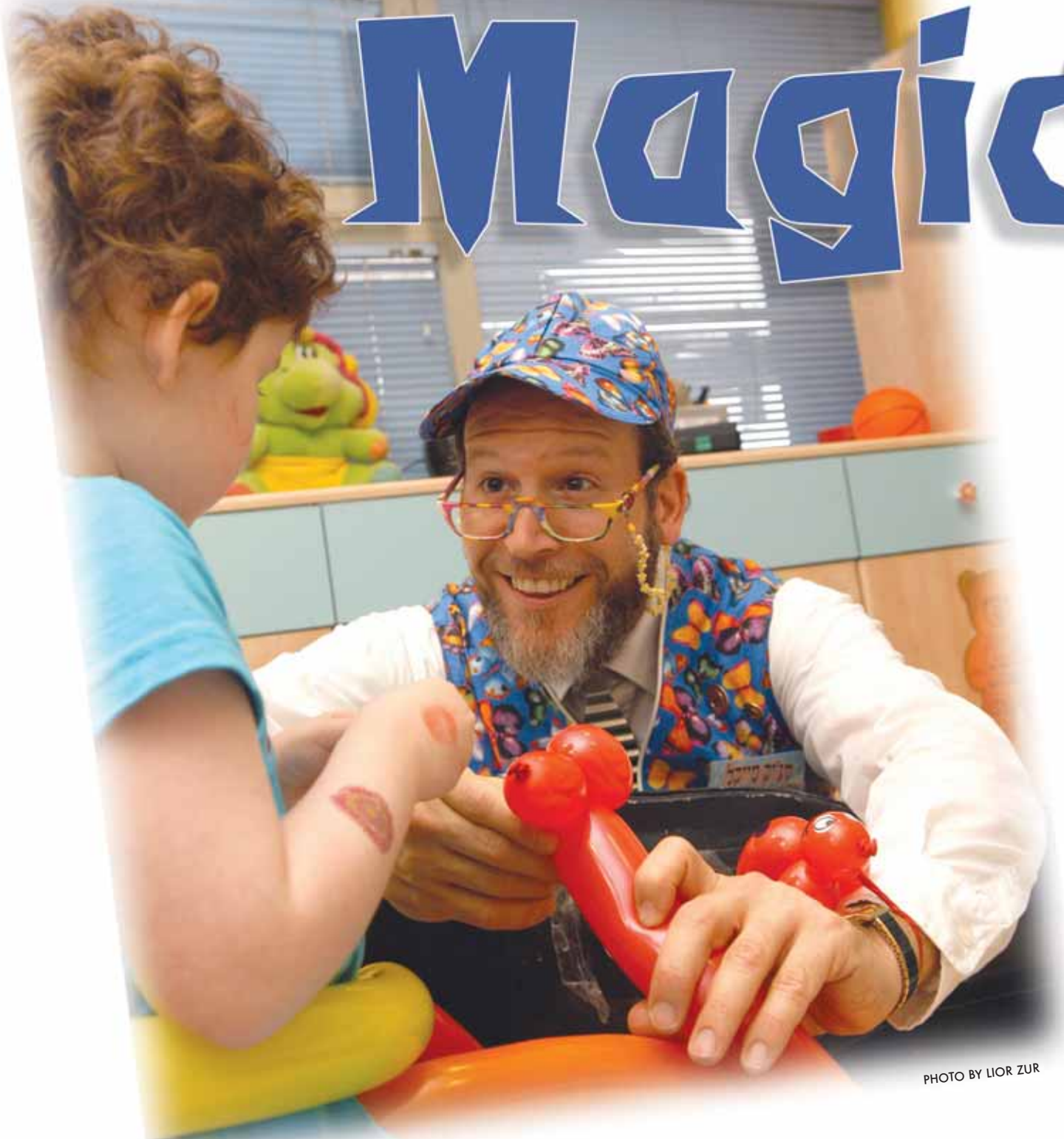


PHOTO BY LIOR ZUR

## the medical magician

By John Moehring

# Michael Tulkoff

He's not a physician who's a magician, nor is he a hospital clown. Better known as "Magic Michael" in children's hospitals and pediatric wards throughout Israel, Michael Tulkoff describes himself as a "medical magician." And lately, he's been prescribing generous doses of magic and laughter as the very best medicine.

Eschewing the traditional doctor's bag for a violin case packed with colorful balloons and scarves and miscellaneous magic props, Magic Michael's day usually begins with a stop at a nurses' station. After

a briefing on the patients, he begins his rounds. Wearing a gigggle-provoking vest patterned with colorful butterflies, a matching baseball cap, outlandishly mismatched yellow and turquoise tennis shoes ("I've got another pair exactly like these at home!"), and a kazoo/harmonica contraption strapped around his neck,



PHOTO BY ALYN.ORG

A bit of sleight of hand is enhanced by Magic Michael's harmonica accompaniment.

Magic Michael's goal is to create laughter and happiness.

Michael performs in English, Hebrew, and Spanish. His growing Arabic, Russian, Georgian, and Amharic, further aid in his professional care. He works alongside nurses and doctors, sometimes distracting the children from painful therapeutic procedures, encouraging them to use motor skills in reaction to his magical antics.

He often tailors his tricks to help a child work on those areas that need strengthening, such as blowing bubbles for a smiling boy who needs to

strengthen his lungs. "I'm not there simply to make the kids smile or laugh," says Tulkoff, "but to help, whether it's getting over the fear of an examination or making their potentially traumatic stay in the hospital a bit easier. I also try to introduce a degree of empowerment to the children."

“I greeted David and told him I was Magic Michael, the hospital magician. I asked his permission to visit for a few minutes. The 17-year-old patient with severely advanced cystic fibrosis nodded his agreement, as I also said hello to his rabbi who was sitting nearby. For the next 15 minutes or so, I bantered and chatted with him, interspersing some magic with sponge balls he could grasp. I showed him an optical illusion with paper rainbows, complete with a story that he seemed to enjoy. I gave him the paper rainbows to show the magic to others, hoping to add whatever I could to his self-esteem. However, with whirring respirator, IV tubes, dingy alarms, hovering nursing staff, it is easy to think you are capable of... nothing. “I had been asked to look in on David (actually not his real name) and see what I could do for his depression. The teenage girls who work in the ward as part of their national service to the State told me he was not doing well. One of them said he interacts with her using a letter board, spelling out his communication. He most recently wrote, ‘I want to die.’”

“David had been at Jerusalem’s Alyn Hospital for the last month, after he took a turn for the worse, needing specialized treatment. Imagine a living skeleton, someone unable to stand or sit up on his own or feed himself or address his personal needs. His eyes are large and capture yours, as they bob and rock with the unsteady movement of his head. He needs suction at times to clear the phlegm that collects in his mouth and throat.

“Eventually we progressed to balloon twisting. I held up my bag of balloons for him to pick a color. With great effort David’s skeletal arms wavered upward and jerkily headed toward the bag, his gnarled fingers slightly opening to draw out a balloon. I had him select two more. The use of his motor skills was both an unspoken challenge and a triumph for David. Each twist of the inflated colorful latex pleased him greatly, causing delight and attention. Finally, what took shape with my accompanying one-liners, jokes, and commentary was a multi-bubbled, big-lipped fish bobbing on a rod and reel, complete with fishing line and handle for him to grasp.

“Thanking David for the visit, I told him I hoped to see him again soon, better out of the hospital than in. I reached to grasp the back of his hand and let the warmth of my hand flow into his and vice versa — the closest to a handshake under the circumstances.

“As I turned my back, David’s rabbi popped up and grasped my forearm. He said,

‘Look at my eyes, look into my eyes.’ The urgency in his voice was great and I was concerned until he said, ‘You made him smile, he laughed! Look at the tears in my eyes. See the tears. Do you know I do not remember the last time I ever saw him laugh or smile.’ He relaxed his grip, turned, and sank back into his chair beside David. I held onto my violin case full of gadgets, balloons, and magic, and exited for the next room. The whirring of the respirator thrummed onward.”

This touching vignette was part of a speech Michael Tulkoff gave in 2004 at a Jerusalem hospital dinner honoring his work and the doctor who brought him into the hospital. As a postscript, David was subsequently transferred to a different hospital due to declining conditions of health and he died within the year.

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Michael Tulkoff and his family lived in Baltimore, Maryland before they made *aliyah* (immigration to the Holy Land) in the summer of 2001. Along with his wife Debbie, a special-education teacher, and their five children (now a half-dozen, ranging in age from 2 to 17 years), they moved to Rehovot, which is about 15 miles south of Tel Aviv.

Growing up in Baltimore and having earned a college degree in business administration, Tulkoff had always worked in sales and marketing. But in the early 1990s, his childhood interest in magic took precedence and he began pursuing a second career as a professional children’s magician. In 1994, he began working as a regular volunteer at Johns Hopkins Hospital, planting the seed for his present career in Israel. Continuing to offer a variety of 45-minute magic shows for kids with themes such as the environment, recycling, fire safety, and nutrition, Michael eventually found himself in demand at schools and libraries, civic organizations and community centers, and shopping malls all over Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia. All this in a six-day week, since as an observant Jew, Michael does not

work on his Sabbath. In 1996, *Baltimore Magazine* named him “Best Kids’ Entertainer” and two years later honored him as “Baltimore’s Best Magician.”

Because of this wealth of performing experience and the fact that he had owned his own medical supply business in the late 1990s, when Tulkoff moved to Israel five years ago, he figured he would continue with magic shows for hospitals as a sideline, and use his business degree to help Israeli companies enter the Western marketplace. He sent out lots of resumes, but received few calls of interest. Because nothing looked promising in marketing, he turned back to magic.

Tulkoff volunteered to perform weekly at Kaplan Medical Center in Rehovot. Within a few more months, he found himself teaching his brand of medical wizardry and balloon sculpting at Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikvah, as part of a course called “Humor in the Care of Sick Children in Hospitals.” He started conducting magic sessions with patients at Dana Children’s Hospital in Tel Aviv, and then performed at Safra Children’s Hospital in Tel Hashomer.

“People heard about my work,” Michael recalls, “and they gave designated donations to the hospitals to hire me, and thank heaven this is what I do now. It was *min hashamayim* (orchestrated by heaven). I feel this was his way of saying, ‘This is what you were meant to do.’”

The difference between what Magic Michael does and what a clown or walk-around magician does is that he doesn’t come in for hit-and-run laughs and thrills. Tulkoff has regular meetings with the doctors to discuss the various cases and talk about the most effective and entertaining way to achieve the healing goals. And one of the key skills of the job, he says, is “to be able to assess from quickly observing the people in the hospital room whether or not it’s an appropriate situation to put my nose in. I never just barrel in. This is not a summer camp; the children are sick.”

Fourth floor pediatric ICU 3.25.03: “Each time I visit the hospital the number of staff who meet and greet me grows. Be it the guards at the entrance, the housekeeping crew, or the staff in any of the many departments I visit, they are always happy to have a new joke to share or hear, a colorful balloon to receive, a magical feat to witness, or a story to swap. Most importantly, they are quick to tell me which children are most in need of visits. Although I take care to try and see every child in every ward I visit on a

given day, this vital input clues me in as to who may be depressed, without family or friends at their bedside. The staff also informs me of who is asking for me in particular to visit them. Rehabilitation is a major interactive goal. A child may need, for example, to utilize a limb, walk, sit up, take deep breaths, or squeeze a fist tightly.

"I saw some of the boys and girls I have come to know by first name, and their parents. These oncology kids come in for treatments and sometimes, extended stays. Their frequent testing to monitor their conditions makes them Tuesday morning regulars. The staff and volunteers pour their hearts out to these kids, be they Jews, Arabs, or Gentiles from, for example, Romania, Nigeria, or the Far East. It is heartening and incredibly satisfying.

"In ICU today we had a little Israeli girl in fourth grade that laughed and laughed at my kazoo playing and silly jokes. She loved the oversized baby pacifier I fashioned from balloons, and her mother was bursting with smiles to see her baby giggling away. In another bed an Arab Jordanian boy was being huddled over by his parents as he wailed and cried, due to a catheter. He was about seven years old. I stepped forward and began to blow soap bubbles and toot my kazoo. His parents turned toward me and back to their son as his crying stopped cold. I told him I was Magic Michael and asked his name, telling him, in Arabic, to watch and guess what I was making for him from balloons. Despite a swollen face with one eye shut and bulging like a tennis ball, he asked for more and more balloons. He was post brain tumor removal and his bare head had staples closing his scalp from behind an ear up and over to near his temple. He was very little in a big bed and the IVs and other tubes were thick about him. His father and mother kept thanking me. By the time I danced away from his bedside, he was surrounded by a colorful butterfly, a turtle, a swan, and a smiley face on a pole.

"Other visits were with a 15-year-old Israeli and his mom and with a girl of about the same age... post surgery and in a lot of pain. She was able to ask me to stay and make her orange balloon creations, her favorite color. The magic is not so much what we do in their hands as what it does to our collective situations when applied properly and with care. As always, I leave many

balloons, and my best cheer for the staff as they battle fatigue in such high-pressure work as is theirs.

"I have had the amazing blessing to work with families who are victims of terror; both Jews and Muslims, Arabs and Israelis. I have also had experiences to teach kids to use a prosthetic leg and not fear to walk again, to get up and out of a wheelchair and play once more. To



PHOTO BY ALYN.ORG

At Jerusalem's Alyn Hospital, a magical gesture from Tulkoff coaxes a burn victim into doing his physical therapy.

stare into faces, or what is left of them, that are mangled from fire and other causes of horrific burns. To have held the hands that once had fingers upon them, melted away in their personal tragedy. Being in various hospitals I have met folks in one ICU and then rejoined them as they are transferred to a rehabilitation hospital where they will learn to use a joy stick to re-enter life as a quadriplegic, needing to learn how to operate an electric vehicle and use a computer. To hear the cries of families that are the dictionary definition of 'anguish.' And I must say that as incredible to believe as it may sound, not once has anyone ever looked at me and said, 'What are you doing here? This is not the place for a guy in colorful clothes and with magic tricks and a balloon!' On the contrary, some of these folks come looking for me when I return to their hospital and ask me to please visit with them, even when their child is still in a coma."

Forty-three year old Michael Tulkoff wasn't one of those kids bitten by the proverbial magic bug at an early age. "I didn't have an uncle who vanished a coin for me when I was three, causing me to immerse myself in magic, go on to study theater, drama, voice, etc." However, when he was 11, he did see a magic show that jump-started a short-lived career as a teenage magician. "I began performing magic for youngsters in 1974, which was the year I saw Denny & Lee onstage at a fifth grade school assembly program." And it was a big show. Michael remembers watching Dennis Haney perform the Zig-Zag Lady, the Canvas Covered Sub Trunk, "and other entrancing mysteries."

He and best friend Steve rushed to the library and checked out every book there was on magic. They soon discovered Phil Thomas' Yogi Magic Mart and, after several wise and prudent purchases, Michael and Steve had enough repertoire to start giving shows at birthday parties throughout their neighborhood.

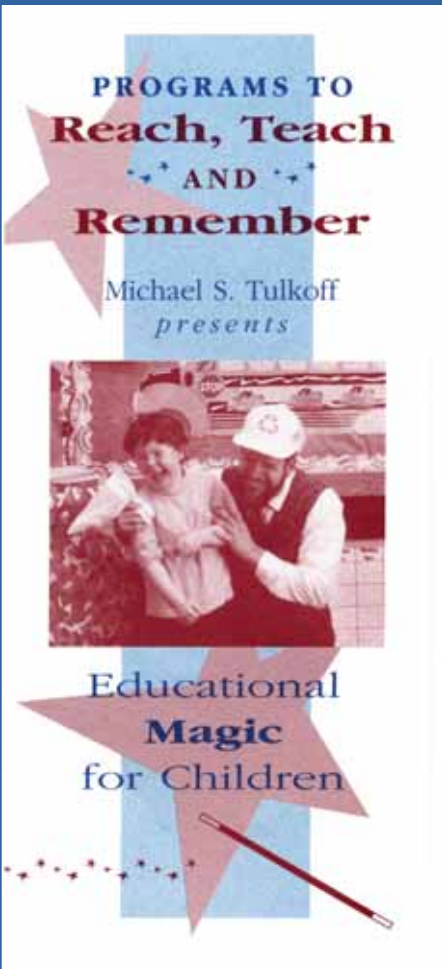
Michael even booked himself at a local pediatric hospital. But the boy wizard's interests quickly shifted. "When I hit my mid teens, due to high school studies and sports, I took a break from magic until I was about age 30."

For the next decade or so, Michael, who, incidentally is one of the grandsons of the founders of Baltimore's famous

Tulkoff Horseradish Products Company, worked in sales, manufacturing, insurance, and even spent almost a year in Spain teaching English.

He briefly joined the family horseradish business because, as he says with tongue in cheek, "That line of work is a real grind, and I didn't want to have to cry for my money."

By 1995, Tulkoff had decided to use his acquired business acumen to produce a series of educational magic shows for children — "Programs to Reach, Teach, and Remember." The Safety Program focused on fire, household, traffic, and strangers, and used magic to teach lessons with life saving applications. The Recycling/Environmental Program taught the three R's, reduce, reuse, recycle, and magically demonstrated how, whether it's paper, bottles, or metal, kids know where it goes and how to keep the world clean and green. A Healthy Living Program empha-



In the late 1990s, Tulkoff was successful in getting his programs approved by the Baltimore County Board of Education.

sized how proper sleep, exercise, and eating keep kids going strong and so did the magic that Michael performed for his young audiences.

"To simply do a magic show, a plain-vanilla show with no rhyme or reason, is not fulfilling to me," he says. "And that's why my programs have theme topics such as the environment or safety, which is by the way, the most popular theme. Any clown can stub his toe and make kids laugh, but to give truly important and maybe life-affecting messages with the fun, comedy, and humor and cause it to be retained by a child is a skill of another level entirely. I just do not have the interest or motivation if I read tricks that are just tricks and they lack a reason for what you are doing. In-your-face street magic and loud screechy rock music backgrounds on these trick video clips that pollute magic on the web are nauseating to me."

Tulkoff became a member of the S.A.M. in 1994. He maintains that he will always be grateful to O'Neil Banks, a past president of the Baltimore Kellar-Thurston Assembly 6, for the invitation to attend that first club meeting. "The S.A.M. was the foundation stone that has benefited me until this very day. I usually roll my eyes and am disappointed when I read some general slam against magic clubs. Like anything in life, you can have an open attitude to try and make something work for you and others or be negative. Overall, though, I have to say that magic clubs are one of your best investments in your magic, especially if you can find a like-minded magician in the club."

Michael served as President of Assembly 6 in 1996, proudly reminding, "It was the year we had the great honor of bringing Paul Gertner to Baltimore for a well-attended public show/lecture." He continues to be an associate member of the S.A.M, even though he no longer has the opportunity to enjoy the monthly meetings as he did in Baltimore. "Admittedly, I am not a magic junkie in that I do not eat, drink and sleep magic, and I have blessings in my life such as my wife and children and communal commitments. Yet, the benefits of associate membership are great. I highly recommend your signing onto the excellent feature that moderator Bruce Kalver provides with SAMTalk, our club's free Internet newsgroup. Just in the past few months I joined SAMTalk, and since I have the EG in my past while still in the States to compare it with, I can tell you it is first rate. It

is almost attending a meeting any day you wish in that you can brainstorm and get support from other SAMTalkers.

Michael strongly believes that success in magic means more than back palming. Quoting from Fitzkee's *Showmanship for Magicians*, he advises: "Try to give everything something individual and exclusively your own." Michael tells of how his friend Dick Biow (who passed away in 2004) reinforced this theory. "Dick was a wizened advertising man, living till age 84, and he took a keen and kind interest in me. He would occasionally say, 'The problem with magicians, or any variety arts entertainer for that matter, is that they say to themselves, 'Gee, I am not getting enough gigs.' Guess I better go home and learn to do my triple back palm under the neck and through the leg card work better so I can get more gigs.' Hopefully, Dick's point is not lost on most people. We would discuss what I felt was the secret of my blessing and success and that was approaching magic with a businessman's head. Most magicians do not, in my opinion, go at things with enough thought or planning to make things easier and more productive. Most things in life are common sense and most of us overlook that quite often, me included. For example, do you have goals that are quantifiable and definable and realistic and do you track them? Do you have a method to build and track leads and clients? Customers are one-timers, whereas clients are ongoing satisfied returnees for more of your product."

Zooming in on an aspect of the magic business that Mr. Tulkoff understands best, he outlines the challenging parameters of hospital and special-needs magic, saying, "Hospital magic offers an incredible array of opportunities to challenge you and make you grow." There are basically four genres of magic that come into play when working hospitals: close-up, parlor, stage, and television.

Close-up can mean performing bedside or in the waiting area, in the emergency room or ICU, at a reception area or the desk of an employee. Michael reminds, "Not all members of your audience are hospitalized."

Parlor magic often comes into play when the performer steps into a waiting area. "At outpatient clinics, there may be as many as 50 people sitting around, and the added challenge here is to project, since you have kids on the floor playing, infants yelling, and impatient parents sitting restlessly awaiting their turn." Michael also warns that performing in hospital waiting rooms, where there are wall-to-wall people, presents interesting problems with angles.

Stage magic skills (and the necessary props) are required when the hospital magician is inevitably asked to perform at hospital par-

ties and events with large audiences. Sometimes you're fortunate to have a platform, but if not, you must consider how those audience members seated in the far back rows will see your show.

The medium of television allows you to spread your magic throughout a hospital. "At Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore there was, and still is, a closed circuit TV system. With such in-house broadcast capabilities, you can have part of your audience before you in the area where you are performing and another part in the individual rooms and wards, people viewing your performance because they may be unable to come to you due to isolation or other reasons."

Tulkoff believes that hospital magic has the power to touch souls and make a difference in this world. But the path to achieving that lofty goal is often fraught with challenges. "Hey, imagine this," he says with a grin, "You are told to don purple latex gloves, a face mask over your mouth and nose, and a smock that completely covers your neck, arms, and down to your knees. You may even have surgical slippers over your shoes. Now you're ready to go in and perform for someone in isolation that you cannot touch, even with the get-up you're wearing. Doing your sponge ball routine like this forces you to quickly learn to project the magic with *only your eyes and your voice*. How is that for a challenge to connect?"

Even when a hospital entertainer can make physical contact with a patient when performing, all of his or her magical gear — be it a playing card, a shoelace, a coin, or a magic wand — must go into a plastic bag if anyone touches it. Then every single prop in that bag must be cleaned with antibacterial soap and alcohol if it is to be used again. And it goes without saying, that you're always aware of your own sanitary state, constantly washing your hands as you wander the hallways performing. Magic Michael says, "The hospitals could hire me for several more hours per week, but there is a limit to how much medical magic I can do each day, due to the physically demanding nature of the work."

Medical magic is often more demanding mentally. "My good friend, juggler and physical comedy performer Michael Rosman says that working comedy clubs allows you the best chances to improvise. In hospitals the opportunities to become quick thinking on your feet are boundless. Hospitals are an excellent venue for learning to ad lib, come up with word play, experiment, try out new material, and refine routines. The timing for your Egg Bag can do nothing but get near perfect, performing it not once a week but six times a day for audiences in hospitals. And where else will you have the need to come up with distinctive routines that use tongue depressors, rubber gloves, and specimen cups?"



PHOTO BY LIOR ZUR

Working with families who are victims of terror, be they Jews and Muslims or Arabs and Israelis, Michael Tulkoff continues his unceasing efforts of *tikkum olam* — "repairing the world."

Posted on a bulletin board in Denny & Lee's Magic Studio in the late 1990s was a one-page article with a critic's sarcastic review of the type of magician who dresses in all black and sneers at the audience. "We always had a hoot over that," Michael recalls. "It was ironic and completely in contrast to the single most important goal my mentors always drilled into me — Entertainment is your goal, not distancing your audience or having a superiority complex." Michael also notes that the Dean of the S.A.M., George Schindler, makes the point beautifully in his written intro to his great lecture, aptly titled, *Entertainment First*.

Denny Haney tells that when he opened his Denny & Lee Magic Studio in Baltimore in

1996, Michael Tulkoff quickly became one of his most valued customers. "The price of a trick was never an object if Michael wanted or needed it for his show. And when it came to buying books, it seemed like he had to have them all."

It's evident Michael studied them all, because he's usually armed with a quote from a book for just about any subject in magic that comes up — as when he was asked about the importance of mentoring in magic. "Harlan Tarbell writes in the Preface to the first volume of the *Tarbell Course*, 'To be a great teacher one must not only teach but inspire.' As I said previously I did not grow up eating, drinking, and sleeping magic, however, I do feel I was blessed and profited from

finding my mentors locally — Denny Haney, Joe Bruno, and Eddie Robinette — three whose combined years in magic likely are close to 150 or more.

“Denny Haney, of Denny & Lee fame, is a name that if you do not know, you should be asking *why* do you not know of it. Go to [dennymagic.com](http://dennymagic.com) and read the excellent biographical article about Denny. I could write an entire essay about the man and his influence on me and hundreds of others, too, and then I would read the article and see I missed so much.”

Tulkoff, who entered magic in 1974 because of Haney’s profound influence, re-established a connection with Denny exactly 20 years later. “When we got together again in 1994, I did not know then he had done two tours, and returned for more time on his own, in Viet Nam. Since then he continued to travel the world and perform in venues most folks can only dream about. Denny is an encyclopedic brain and an artisan in every manner of magic. There is a DVD of Denny’s show from the mid ’90s that is mind blowing, not because of the magic — although that is amazing, too — but because if you study the performance, you will learn more than at any so-called master classes, which, in my opinion, too many names in magic are charging fees like \$1,000 for you to attend.

“On the other hand, the video of Denny’s show is the epitome of effusing honest enthusiasm and joy that infects the audience and creates *real* magic. He taught and continues to teach me so much — Magic is only 10% the trick, the other 90% is *you* and the entertainment you add. And Denny has always said books are your best investment for learning magic — books allow you to apply yourself to what you read.”

Joe Bruno, Michael’s second mentor, was a top engineer in his profession until retiring about ten years ago. He has been in magic over 60 years as a close-up and platform performer. Bruno wrote the book *Anatomy of Misdirection*, which Tulkoff finds eminently more readable and practical than Mr. Fitzkee’s work of that principle of magic. In addition to marketing several of his tricks, Joe’s original material in two *Linking Ring* Hocus Pocus Parades *both* won trophies for “Best One-Man Parade of the Year.”

“What I learned from Joe Bruno was not new tricks,” says Michael, “but how to be forever on the lookout for creative solutions, and to always ask *why* you are doing the tricks that you are doing. Joe accompanied me to more shows than anyone else, and why he subjected himself to such torture I’ll never know. But whether it was at a stage show for elementary school kids or an intimate session at a daycare center, it was Joe Bruno’s laser-sharp constructive criticism that proved invaluable in shaping the direction my magic career would take.”

Eddie Robinette, Michael’s other Baltimore mentor, was a public school teacher for 30 years until he retired. “All that time Eddie’s magic, from his close-up to outdoor shows on the county fair circuit, always glowed with his own enjoyment, which in turn you could feel in his audiences. Eddie’s Linking Ring routine is the prettiest I have ever seen, and when I first set out to learn my variation of Whit Haydn’s four-ring comedy routine, it was Eddie and Joe who literally held my fingers and taught me the handling.”

When Eddie was hired for an elder hostel gig in 1994, Michael went along to watch his show. “It was this touching performance that clinched for me the decision to build my series of educational magic programs and have a go at a new profession. From Eddie Robinette I learned how to combine effects and thereby come up with new ones, as well as how to be an original thinker and achieve a particular goal for my magic and themed programs.”

Finally, if you cannot find mentors in the flesh, Tulkoff suggests that you take inspiration from the literature of our art. For starters, he recommends reading Milbourne Christopher’s *Illustrated History of Magic*.

There’ve been numerous comparisons of Michael Tulkoff’s achievements as a medical magician and humor therapist to the career of Patch Adams, the celebrated American doctor, professional clown, and social activist who uses humor to help heal. The media has more than frequently referred to Magic Michael as the “Patch Adams Mitzvah Maker,” a reference to the 1998 Robin Williams Hollywood movie based on Dr. Adam’s life. Michael admits he never saw the movie or read the book, preferring to remain uninfluenced.

The inevitability of a film extolling Michael’s heroic efforts of *tikkun olam* (“repairing the world bit by bit”) became a reality last year when filmmaker Todd Felderstein created a documentary called *MAGIC(S)*.

Felderstein, who had gone to middle school and high school with Tulkoff in Maryland and both had played on the Pikesville High School football team together, called his friend about three years ago to ask about life in Israel. When Michael told his tales of performing for Palestinian and Israeli hospitalized children and using his magic to “make a difference,” Todd saw a story and was soon en route to Israel. For 15 days, he became the eighth person in the Tulkoff’s Rehovot apartment, and every day his cameras would follow his friend from hospital to hospital and shadow him in his daily life.

In a country divided by political strife and cultural diversity, the documentary shows how Magic Michael, the medical magician, penetrates deep-seated bias with magic and humor

in an effort to rehabilitate children afflicted by disease and terror. Narrated in part by his children and the doctors, nurses, aides, and administrators, Michael’s practice is documented while he magically seduces all he meets with a toot on his kazoo, a wave of his wand, and the love only an entertainer this unique can provide.

The film, however, is not just about Tulkoff’s magic. “It has a very political slant because you can’t make a film in Israel without one,” Felderstein stated in a November 4, 2005 story in the *Baltimore Jewish Times*. “What was really remarkable to me is that what Michael does deals with everybody — Palestinians and Jews, and Russians and Ethiopians, Christians and Druze, and all religions. And people talk in the film about everything that’s going on: war, terrorism, Osama bin Laden.”

*MAGIC(S)* has won six awards to date, including the prestigious L.A. Indies Awards for “Best Documentary” and “Best Soundtrack” (presented to composer Smokey Miles). A five-minute trailer of *MAGIC(S)* can be viewed at [www.magicsdocumentary.com/](http://www.magicsdocumentary.com/)

All the funding for Michael Tulkoff’s ongoing hospital work is donated from private individuals or organizations, not from hospital budgets. “I need your support if you believe in what I do and have accomplished in these past few years,” Michael says. “To be a part of my work in hospitals, you will need to earmark your gift as going to the ‘Magic Michael Tulkoff Program’ with checks payable to ‘American Friends of Chaiyanu.’ Mail your U.S. tax deductible donations to: Rabbi Y. Pinsky, Director Chaiyanu, 41 Yirmiyahu Street, Center 1, Jerusalem 94467 Israel.

Tulkoff is also trying to gain support for his Magic Michael Tulkoff Road Safety program, which is promoted by Metunah, an organization that seeks to lower Israel’s disturbingly high traffic death rate. Israel is a world leader in pedestrian traffic injuries and sadly, death. “I work with far too many victims of preventable accidents in rehabilitation hospitals and painfully see the ravages first hand. The fledgling road safety program parallels the award winning board of education approved work I did in Baltimore, D.C., and Northern Virginia. Aimed at teaching kids how to buckle up, check the roads carefully as pedestrians and more, this program hopes to go national throughout Israel’s nursery and elementary schools.” To support the Road Safety programs, earmark your U.S. tax-deductible gift to the “Magic Michael Tulkoff Safety Program” and payable to “P.E.F. Israel Endowment Fund.” Mail to Metunah Organization for Road Safety, P.O. Box 7007, Netanya 42120 Israel. ❖