The $1 million “Genesis Prize,” founded by three Russian-Jewish businessmen, is a case study in assimilation at its worst. Its modus operandi is to ape the general society around us, thus inescapably falling prey to the perilsof inauthenticity.

Awarded jointly by the prime minister’s office of Israel and the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Genesis Prize has fallen on its face for the past several years. These failures should not mask the structural deficiency at the heart of the prize. First, however, the specific failures:

This year’s awardee, New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft has been charged in Florida with soliciting prostitution. In November 2017, Kraft was arrested at a massage parlor in West Palm Beach, Florida. The charges were dropped in 2018, but Kraft had been warned that repeated offenses could result in a federal conviction. Kraft has been a lifelong supporter of Israel and has been active in the community for many years.

The prize is supposed to recognize Jews who provide “inspiration to the next generation of Jews through their outstanding professional achievement along with their commitment to Jewish values and the Jewish people.” Sounds nice, but in practice the prize of $1 million is almost always awarded to millionaires. It is not a prize to recognize inspiration, but wealth.

We are not one of those who believe that being a billionaire is a sign of social failure, as a first-term member of Congress recently put it. But the idea that a $1 million prize serves a social good when almost all of its recipients are already using their wealth for social good sends two messages. First, the prize is pointless. Second, there is no inspiration other than through wealth. Who is kidding whom? Does a prize to Robert Kraft, worth $6.6 billion, or to former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, worth $47.6 billion, say anything else?

The problem with the Genesis Prize is not that it’s had a run of bad luck. It is misconceived in principle. It is not a prize for achievement, but for flattery.

As an occasional awardee, a philanthropist is a most worthy choice. But the “Jewish Nobel” is ignoble because it does not recognize excellence that is truly competed for, as is the case in medicine, economics, chemistry, physics, literature and peace. Not that these Nobel Prize categories are the only areas of genuine human achievement, but they do salute an authentically competitive playing field.

The Genesis Prize will never be the “Jewish Nobel” because it tries too hard to be something it is not. And that is the essence of assimilation.

David Suson, 1954-2019

David Suson bowled four perfect 300 games in his life. The vast majority of people never bowl even one perfect game. But then again, most people aren’t David Suson.

Those perfect games are symbolic of how David lived his life, illustrious by his role as a rabbinic student before going into the insurance industry, his love for Torah study and synagogue leadership, his wide circle of friends, his exemplary mitzvah or personal character, and, most of all, his beautiful devotion to his wife Connie, their children and grandchildren.

Let us break this down:

David built up his own insurance agency which he started when he first married Connie 42 years ago. Through his steadfastness, strong work ethic and commitment to customer service, he amassed a loyal customer base which enabled him to provide for his family and allowed him to pursue the other endeavors he loved.

Endeavors such as serving as president of BMH-BJ during a time of transition for the large congregation, where he served on the board and committees and led family and youth services for many years. In fact, for a period of time, David seemed to be the rabbinic program and lay leadership of BMH-BJ all wrapped in one. Everyone knows the challenges typically involved in being a synagogue president. David was invariably unfurled, candid and considerate.

Jewish study was a passion of David Suson. He started out as a rabbinical student before going into the insurance industry. He was a dedicated and proud participant in Daf Yomi, a page of Talmud study dedicated and proud participant in Daf Yomi, a page of Talmud study.

We will always remember Mar- godman as the friendly face and welcoming voice at the front desk of the Jewish Community Cen- ter. From where Margot sat she could see everyone coming through the front doors, and always made it her business to say hello and greet visitors by name if she knew them and she knew most of them. This was before all the security pro- tocols changed the way people enter Jewish institutions.

By nature, Margot was warm, efficient and down to earth. No pretens- es there.

She escaped from Nazi Germany and was able to reach Paris as a child in 1933. She came to America in 1939 and to Denver in 1951. The Holocaust shaped her youth, which made her a fitting match for her late husband, Jack J. Goldman, a sur- vivor. Together, the Goldmans were fixtures in our community, serving as living reminders of the brutal Jewish past, even as they were personally congenial, friendly, outgoing and proud of their family.

Margot Goldman was also proud of the artistry and pedagogy of her husband Jack, a photographer, artist and Holocaust survivor and educa- tor. If Margot was outgoing, Jack was introspective, though he gave presentations about his experiences in concentration camps to students around the state and founded a Holocaus memorial event. Margot Gold- man supported her husband’s efforts in this painful but critical work.

Margot, along with Jack, were strong Zionists and instilled their love of Israel into their children, two of whom made aliyah and have raised their own families in Israel.

Although the Goldmans tragically lost a son, Margot persevered and lovingly raised her family and lived to enjoy grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

As a person of faith, persistence, pleasantness and perennial concern for the welfare of others, Margot Goldman was a role model. Her welcoming and soothing presence is deeply missed.

Margot Goldman, 1931-2019

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