

# Hebrew symbols put life in lawsuit

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Gideon Peleg wanted to make a point. So he sued for life.

After his contract as education director was not renewed, Peleg filed a suit against the rabbi at Bnai Torah congregation for \$18.18, a number that symbolizes life in Hebrew.

"I could not sue for what it is really worth," Peleg told Circuit Judge Howard Harrison. "So I sued for a figure symbolic in Judaism."

The symbols that form the number 18 are the same symbols that spell out the word life in Hebrew, according to local rabbis.

"In Hebrew, the numbers were the letters in the alphabet," said Rabbi Sam Silver of Temple Sinai in Delray Beach. "If you take the two numbers that make

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up the number 18, when they are used as letters, they spell life."

It wasn't the \$18.18 that Peleg wanted from Rabbi Murray Ezring, said Ezring's attorney, Kenneth Lipman.

"The amount was symbolic," said Lipman, who also sits on the board of the Boca Raton area synagogue. "His primary motive was to allow his views to be heard."

In his suit, Peleg claimed that Ezring had conspired against him and had defamed him.

It was that contention, Lipman said,

that prevented the synagogue from turning over the \$18.18 and settling the case.

"As a matter of principal we will not admit to doing something that was not done," Lipman.

On Monday, after an hour of discussion with a mediator, Peleg agreed to drop his suit against the rabbi and the synagogue if he is allowed to speak before the board of directors of the congregation.

Lipman said he will meet with the board of directors today and ask them

to let Peleg make his presentation. If the board agrees, Peleg will appear before the board next month.

"We hope this brings a difficult story to a happy conclusion," Lipman said.

Peleg told Harrison he was hired to administer the synagogue's Hebrew school program in July 1990 and was there until August of this year.

"His contract was not renewed and he expressed great bitterness," Lipman said. The administrative structure of the after-school program was changed.

He said a synagogue administrator was named and will now be doing the job Peleg did in addition to other responsibilities.

"The board of directors changed the position and there were questions of his performance," Lipman said. The rabbi had little to do with the board's decision, he said.