



CHINUCH

AL

TAHARAS HAKOIDESH

For boys and girls

The great importance of learning religious subjects the whole day and being careful about studying secular knowledge



Excerpts from the Teachings
of the Rebbe MH" M Shlita



Crown Heights

יחי אדונו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד





Third edition
Newly expanded
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Introduction

In 5715/ 1954, the Rebbe campaigned strongly for our children to receive a pure Chinuch – al Taharas Hakodesh. As a result, Oholei Torah, the first Yeshiva in the United States to provide Limudei Kodesh exclusively, was established for boys that year. On many occasions, the Rebbe wrote that this education is "the highest and holiest level," and derived much nachas from it.

In addition, the Rebbe wrote that the gift of Chinuch al Taharas Hakodesh applies to boys and girls, with no distinction between them. In this vein, a similar mossad chinuch was established for girls in Detroit, in 5725/ 1965.

Even more so, the Rebbe wrote a number of times that if there is no recourse but to study secular subjects (because of the demands of the government and the like), one should make every effort to minimize as much as possible the hours devoted to these studies, as well as the enthusiasm and energy dedicated to them.

It should be mentioned and added, that by carefully examining the Rebbe's words in the above it is clear that the responsibility to ensure





that the children receive an education al taharas hakodesh to the maximal degree depends on the parents! The parents must do all in their power to ensure that their children, particularly at a young age, receive an education of only purity and holiness. Therefore the parents must seek out the best educational institute in the environment--an institute that is run al taharas hakodesh to the highest degree.



These Sichos and letters were one of the driving forces that led to the establishment of a mossad chinuch al Taharas Hakodesh for girls in Crown Heights, in Elul 5759/ 1999 – Beis Chaya Mushka.

The purpose of Beis Chaya Mushka is to educate girls to approach the world with a Chassidishe perspective and a solid value system, so that they can become talented and inspiring wives, mothers, teachers and active members of their communities.

Beis Chaya Mushka emphasizes Tznius, Yiddish language skills, Yiras Shomayim, Midos Tovos, Geulah, and high academic standards, combined with Hiskashrus to the Rebbe Melech haMoshiach. We hope, thus, to instill in our students an ambition to exemplify Bnos Chabad according to the Rotzon of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach--to be true "Moshiach'dike meidlach."





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This brochure contains quotes and letters from the Rebbe on the topic of Chinuch al Taharas Hakodesh, with subtitles and footnotes for easy reference.



This booklet is now being published by Beis Chaya Mushka as a second edition. The first edition was published by Rabbi and Mrs. Eliezer Gold. The Sichos and letters were compiled by Rabbis Levi Goldstein and Zalman Hertzfel, translated into English by Dovid Y. B Kaufmann, and edited by Binyomin Kaplan.

The current edition contains additional letters of the Rebbe MH" M on this topic. The English translation has also been extensively revised and re-edited.

We invite you to come visit Beis Chaya Mushka and see us in action, fulfilling the Rebbe's hora'os on a daily basis.

May we soon merit much Yiddishe, Chassidishe nachas from all our children.





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From the Sources

...And not just idle talk but even pursuit of the sciences of the world is forbidden, as it says "and you shall speak of them [i.e. words of Torah, not other things]." This means not combining Torah study with other subjects.

Even if one who has already learned the whole Torah will say "I have learned the knowledge of Israel, I will go and learn the knowledge of the nations of the world," Scripture states, "And My statutes you shall keep to go in them' - you don't have permission to exempt yourself from them."

And needless to say, concerning Torah scholars who are obligated to fulfill "and you shall meditate in them day and night" literally, the Talmud comments that there is no time that is not part of either the night or day. And nevertheless Torah scholars are permitted to learn secular knowledge on occasion when it is possible to learn matters of Torah and fear of heaven and good conduct, although





this is not permitted to other people.

And this is only true as long as these are not heretical books, i.e. works by gentile philosophers who were heretics and who denied Divine Providence and prophecy. It is forbidden to read these works and to even look at them at all, even occasionally, and even to learn ethics and fear of heaven. Therefore, even when these works are quoted in Jewish books one needs to be careful about them. Indeed, our sages have stated that one who reads secular books does not have any portion in the world to come.

The sages of earlier generations (the Rivash, for example) did involve themselves in these books somewhat, but only to be able to refute them and to strengthen our religion. It was necessary to be able to refute the heretics among the gentiles, who were forcing the Jews to participate in public debates about religion in those generations, which is not the case now.

(Hilchos Talmud Torah 3:7)



The sciences of the nations of the world are also included in the category of inconsequential matters in connection





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with the sin of neglecting Torah study, as is explained in Hilchos Talmud Torah.

Moreover, the impurity of the science of the nations is greater than the impurity of idle speech: for [idle speech] clothes and defiles only the emotions [which emanate] from the holy element of ruach within [the person's] Divine soul, [tainting them] with the impurity of kelipas nogah contained in idle speech (which is derived from the evil element of ruach of this kelipah in his animal soul) as is mentioned above.

[Idle speech] does not, however, defile the levels of Chabad in his soul, for it is merely words of foolishness and ignorance, since even fools and ignoramuses can speak that way. It is otherwise with the science of the nations. [Through studying them] one clothes and defiles his Divine soul's faculties of Chabad with the impurity of kelipas nogah contained in those sciences, which have fallen [to that level] through the "shattering of the vessels," out of the "hind-part" of chochmah of holiness, as is known to those familiar with mysticism.

(Likkutei Amarim (Tanya) From Ch. 8)





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Encouraging the Chassidim regarding authentic education, following the sicha of Simchas Torah 5715

On Simchas Torah 5715 the Rebbe spoke at length about the necessity for an authentic education. Following this sicha, many Chassidim began activities in their areas. When they wrote about this to the Rebbe, they received different answers and instructions. Excerpts from the sicha and what followed from it are presented below.

When a Jewish child walks in the street, people should be able to tell he is a Jew from a great distance away.

Ideally, wherever a Jew comes he must take charge and guide the spiritual life of the whole city with its surrounding areas, and indeed the whole country. Instead, however, not only does he fail to influence others, but he is influenced himself and imitates all the follies of that country, environment, or city.





Instead of persuading those around him to accept the *Shulchan Aruch* to be their authority in all matters, he accepts the environment as the authority, with the next-door neighbor as his final authority, directing the conduct of his household.

It states about the Jews during the Egyptian exile, "The Israelites were distinctive for they did not change their names, language, and garments." In our times, however, there is such a lack of pride that people look for various ways to prevent their children from looking Jewish. If the child has *payos*, they are trimmed, if they cannot completely shave them. If he has *tzitzis*, they get tucked in. The parents seek all kinds of stratagems that it should not be recognizable that he is a Jew.

Ideally, when a Jewish child walks in the street, people should be able to tell he is a Jew from a great distance away, for "Israel" is a term of distinction. Instead, however, people are ashamed of their identity.

And when the Jewish child becomes *Bar Mitzvah* and begins to put on *tefillin*, about which it states, "And all the people of the land shall see that the name of G-d is called upon you, and they shall fear you," and he has the power that the greatest of the gentiles shall be subservient to him, then the parent takes the child and the place on the head where the *tefillin* rests has to be covered over with hair--where is the fortitude that a Jewish person should have?





“ . . . Until nine years old, until twelve years old and I would like to say until even older. . . ”

The parent is afraid that by chance when the child goes in the street and has to ask directions, he will speak English with a Yiddish accent, and it will be noticeable that he is a Jew. And so he teaches him English, and all the other secular subjects, contaminating his young mind.

During the first three years that a child begins to learn, which provide the foundation for all his future success, the parent takes the child and contaminates him with English, grammar, etc. It would be a good thing if the adults didn't know about these things, certainly not the children until nine years old, until twelve years old, and I would like to say until even older-but “one who gets too greedy ends up with nothing.”

Nobody Knows the Future

G-d has said that He doesn't need *Gan Eden* and He doesn't need the *Beis Hamikdash*, He wants nothing, only that the precept of “And I will dwell among them” will be fulfilled. The mind of a Jewish child is where He wants to dwell. But one takes the mind and contaminates it with secular subjects. Actually, the parent would prefer his children to learn secular subjects only. However, there is a grandfather who would object, or one is afraid of what a certain Jew





in New York will say, so one teaches him Torah, etc. Where is the pride?

The claim that learning English will benefit the child materially, making it easier for him in the future, has no basis--because nobody knows what the future will be--what will happen later. All actions have to be according to the Torah.

Everything that has a benefit is discussed in the Torah. If learning secular subjects would have some benefit physically, it would say in the Torah that one has to learn them. If there is no such ruling in the Torah, and on the contrary the Torah states explicitly that one is not allowed to learn them, and that they contaminate the "Chabad" of the soul, this means that there is no material benefit from them--the opposite is the case.

It is Impossible to Outsmart G-d

A person may think that he can outsmart G-d. He won't consider the ways that He has given us in His Torah in order to be successful. Rather, he will seek his own ways--he will try to learn English and be successful in that way. We must realize that G-d created the world 5714 years ago, and He runs it as He wishes, and He will also keep running it as He wishes--according to the Torah.

G-d gave the Jews the Torah over 3000 years ago. One sees the "*batlanish*" [idle] people, who have not learned grammar etc., standing firm--while nothing





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remains of all the other peoples, each with its own wisdom. Without any secular wisdom and practical knowledge, however, but through holding fast to the Torah, the Jews, a “*batlanish*” people, stand very firm.

What gives a parent the right to rob the children of years of Torah education?

The claim of material benefit from secular knowledge is not valid. For something not in accordance with Torah cannot be put to any use, and the opposite is the case. So the children do not get what they need, either materially or spiritually--the parents are robbing them of their lives. What gives a parent the right to rob the children of years of Torah education? Is this why G-d gave him children?

Is it because he has a *yetzer hara* [evil inclination] and he cannot deal with it, that the minds of the children must suffer the consequence, to lose their years of Torah learning?

(The Rebbe said this *sicha* with great emotion. He also said many other sharp expressions that were not recorded. In the middle of his talk he said many times: “I say this on the basis of the statement of the Rebbe of blessed memory [referring to his Father-in-Law, the Rebbe Rayatz] that *Simchas Torah* doesn't bring any harm; this will be with kindness and mercy.”)

(From *Sichas Yom Simchas Torah*, 5715)



[After the above *sicha* was delivered Rabbi M. P. Katz of blessed memory arranged a new program in the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah (Bedford Avenue) in which only Jewish subjects would be learned. And the Rebbe wrote the following letter (hereby translated into English) concerning this.]



A Whole Day of Religious Studies

B"H Marcheshvan, 5715

Brooklyn

Harav Hachassid, G-d-fearing and honored, involved with community needs, energetic and achieving a great deal, etc., etc. *Moreinu Harav Moshe Pinchas Hakohein*

Shalom Uverachah!

I was pleased to receive your letter, good news, and blessing, that you arranged that your son Ze'ev Yechezkel *Shlita Hakohein* should learn Jewish subjects the whole day-and also that you took part in arranging this kind of program, so that this also became a matter of causing the many to have merit. Our sages have ruled about this that the merit of the many "is attributed to him." And see *Igeres Hakodesh*, ch. 21, of the Alter Rebbe, the author of the *Tanya* (an authoritative work in the esoteric Torah) and the *Shulchan Aruch* (an authoritative work in



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the revealed Torah) that the act of the *Akeidah* itself is not as significant as the fact that Avraham acted with amazing alacrity, showing his joy and desire to fulfill his Creator's will and to gratify Him. And G-d has affirmed that He will fulfill His promise in our Torah, the Torah of life that such a practice protects and rescues with its "fruits" in this world, as is written in the passage in *Igeres Hakodesh* cited above.

And also the above-mentioned is repeated many times, for every day that your son will learn Jewish subjects during those hours that were designated for other learning, this counts as another good act. And thus, the principle of increased blessing according to the number of acts also applies. And may G-d help both of you, the father with the mother, to fulfill your heart's desires soon and to have good news constantly and every day.

With Blessing,



To Publicize the Above

It is self-understood that you can use this letter of mine as you wish, or relate the content to others, to all those that have already done this, and how much more so, to those that have not yet "chosen the good" (and who therefore have not actually done this). And it is a presumption that a sincere effort will not fail to have results, and specifically





when you add words that come from the heart-they will enter into the heart. May G-d grant you success to be a good *shliach* in this lofty matter as well.

(Igros Kodesh, vol. 10, p. 43)



This Teaching also applies to Girls

Teves-571 5

In 5715 after *Simchas Torah*, the Rebbe *Shlita* spoke about secular learning, saying that children should not pursue secular studies until the age of 9 or 10 or 13. He also said, "If I were not afraid I would say more" and I heard that he also mentioned girls.

Rabbi S. P. was not in New York on that *Simchas Torah* and he was in doubt whether these things applied also to his city Pittsburgh. Therefore I asked the Rebbe *Shlita*:

- 1) If the above matters apply to Pittsburgh.
- 2) If they are also relevant to girls.

The Rebbe answered that all claims to the contrary are the counsel of the evil inclination, and there is no difference between boys and girls, and between New York and Pittsburgh, etc.

(Notes from a *yeichidus* [unedited] of Rabbi Y. Altein,)





Regarding the defilement of the mind with secular studies there is no difference between boys and girls

Along the same lines it was heard that Rabbi Y. L. Zeitlin of blessed memory asked the Rebbe *Shlita* if there is a difference between boys and girls in connection with being careful about learning secular studies. The Rebbe answered: Even though there is a difference regarding the laws of Torah study, regarding the defilement of the mind with secular studies there is no difference between boys and girls

(Oral transmission)



One year, several young children in the Chabad community in Montreal died. The Rov of the Community, Rabbi Hendel, together with the mashpia of the community, R' Peretz Mochkin, went to the Rebbe and in yechidus, they asked that mercy be aroused on behalf of the community. They said they requested that the Rebbe shouldn't be upset with them.

Better wasting time than learn secular studies

The Rebbe said he is never upset with Jews, but since, when a person's hand hurts, he does not go and look for problems in other parts of the body, so too, in their circumstance. Since this was associated with mothers and children, they needed



to strengthen those areas that pertained to them and then there would be a double consolation. The Rebbe spoke to them about being exceedingly careful regarding sheitels for women and chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh.

Right after the yechidus, Rabbi Hendel began to arrange classes for learning al taharas ha'kodesh. In the meantime, he told his son not to attend the secular studies in his school until he organized a class for limudei kodesh.

Some parents said it was preferable that their children learn secular studies than having no school at all. When Rabbi Hendel repeated this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe said that secular studies was far worse than wasting time because it says explicitly in Tanya that they spiritually contaminate the Chabad (i.e., chochma, bina, daas) of the soul!

(Beis Moshiach, issue 637)



In 5725, R. Sholom DovBer Shemtov spoke with the Rebbe during a yechidus. On that occasion he asked regarding his efforts to teach children only Jewish subjects:

They will see him and they will do the same

His question was, since he has by him two boys, three years old and a girl, five years old, should he



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hire a tutor for half the day so that they won't have to learn secular studies?

The Rebbe answered affirmatively, and added that certainly the students would increase “Though your beginning was small, your end will be greatly increased” (Job 8:7). They will see him and they will do the same.

Rabbi Shemtov said that from this they began the cheder Oholei Yosef Yitzchok in Detroit.

(Oral transmission)





Instructions to Institutional administrators

Throughout the years - even prior to 5715 - the Rebbe instructed administrators to try to structure their institutions so that the students should not have to learn secular studies:

The Administration Must Try [To Insure] They Won't Learn Secular Subjects

To the Administration of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim Montreal.

... With pleasure I received their regards through R. Shmuel Halevy, who is involved in community work and one of the senior rabbis of Lubavitch.

In answer to their questions and the different proposals offered in their name and also in his name, I would suggest the following:

1) It is quite correct to order the studies in a way that those who do not want to learn secular subjects,





particularly those who come from across the sea, are able to avoid doing so.

Certainly there are also others who are similarly inclined. If the students themselves also want [such a system], the principal must try to arrange [the curriculum so that] they don't have to learn those subjects.

. . . Certainly they will acknowledge receipt of my letter as soon as it is received. I look forward to their answer concerning whether my suggestions have been accepted. The main thing is they should actualize them with good and appropriate action in the different classes of the yeshiva.

With blessings for success in their holy work.

(This letter, from 2 Shevat 5712, was printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 5.)



One must be Brait (Confident), Specifically in Those Subjects Our Rebbes Considered Fundamental

To R. Refael Nachman HaCohen:

. . . 3) In [answer to] your question about secular studies in their yeshivos, in general these subjects don't need enhancement. Any augmentation is disgraceful. It's difficult for me to discuss details since I don't know the current curriculum or the requirements. But the time has already come





for them to be *brait* (self-confident). In truth it's appropriate that they should intensify this [self-confidence in opposing secular studies]; since G-d is with us and the verse concludes, don't fear them. Specifically we see how in actuality all things done with truth and without an ulterior motive succeed. Even in matters on which the so-called experts and certainly those who have connections say from the beginning that the thing can't succeed, but in the end it is successful. All the more so there must be *braitkeit* (self-confidence) from those on this side, and particularly in matters that our Rebbeim thought as fundamental. And this is sufficient for those who understand.

(This letter, from 16 Sivan 5712, is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 6)



Secular Studies should not be introduced into the curriculum of the Yeshiva

The Administration of Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim in Lod:

. . . Concerning what you wrote regarding the innovation in the curriculum of Tomchei Temimim, to introduce secular studies, even for only a few individual classes, I don't know where they have the *breitkeit* (audacity) . . . to change the curriculum of Tomchei Temimim that existed for many years. It's understood that what was said above does not apply to learning grammar [and similar subjects] in





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Hebrew, for they are learned in Tomchei Temimim.

Certainly there was a special program -- in all Chabad institutions -- for the days of Redemption, and every institution should notify the appropriate details accordingly.

Thanks in advance

(This letter, from 16 Tammuz 5715, is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 11)



Future Teaching Career, not a justification to pursue a Diploma

The hanholoh of the Seminary Bais Rivka, the meeting of parents of the students from the seminary in Kfar Chabad, "There Hashem commanded his Blessing,"
ה' עליהם יהיו

I acknowledge the receipt of their letters and the minutes of the meetings of the Hanholoh and parents. I was pleased to read in the letters that they are all of one heart and opinion, that it is essential in the seminary to strengthen the Jewish and Chassidishe education more than it was until now, and likewise to add in *limudei Kodesh*. As a result of this it is understood that since this all depends on the members of the teaching staff, they are interested that the teachers will be suitable for the above mentioned, teachers whose fear of Heaven is first and foremost to their wisdom.



Certainly, as per the above, each and every one, whether from the administration or from the teacher body, will do all that is dependant on him to reach the aforementioned goals. If, in any place and in any time, our sages taught that if you put in effort you will succeed, how much more so in our times, that we see the success resulting from efforts in matters of Torah and Yiras Shomayim, if there is only involvement with sincerity and the required energy. Especially in our Holy land, which will be rebuilt and reestablished through Moshiach Tzidkeinu, all of the above mentioned is much more crucial. It is therefore understood that all exertion and effort in this matter are worthwhile.

And because of the great value of this matter (meaning, all matters in the field of education, since a change in the one being educated, has an effect on his entire lifetime afterward) it is understood and quite obvious, that something that places doubt in the concept of *yiras Shomayim* and Jewish tradition is not worth to get involved in. This is similar to the idea that even the slightest doubt in matters of life and death is also forbidden, and this is understood also by the healthy human intellect.

From this is understood my approach to books that are dubious from the perspective of *yiras Shomayim*. The same applies to teachers for whom there is doubt as to how they will influence their pupils in matters of *yiras Shomayim*. For added measure, I will add one more point. As mentioned earlier, these types of books and teachers should be ruled out



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even in situations where there is no alternative for other books or teachers, since the first and foremost thing for the administration and certainly for the parents is to see that their pupils will be faithful to Hashem and his Torah, and this is their spiritual and material fortune. [However,] certainly now is a time where teachers and books can be found that will be complete from the standpoint of *yiras Shomayim* (as they themselves write in their letter), as well as academically being on the appropriate level. There are many Bais Yaakovs in the Holy land, that after going through the beginning stages of dilemmas and doubts, based on the experience of several years, they showed a way to solve the aforementioned problems. Certainly, the Bais Rivka Seminary can also utilize the results of this aforementioned experience, and as per their correspondence, they also have unanimously resolved that the *yirah* must be primary to wisdom, like the words of our sages in the Mishna. It is certainly superfluous to add that this priority is not only in time but also in virtue, meaning to say that when choices need to be made between one teacher and another, or a certain book [or the other], which vary between their *yirah* and wisdom, as per the above, the former one gets priority. It is also understood, that in the points that they mention, in certain subjects, the lessons in ... were on a higher level than in ... In all of the aforementioned, the intent is not to lower the standard of learning if it does not pertain to matters of *yiras Shomayim*, and certainly also in this there is no disagreement amongst them. Therefore, it is a





bit unclear why they mention this in their letter, as if there is doubt in the matter.

It is also not clear from the letters concerning the point of the program for the High School, which is mentioned several times. The seminary is in the first stages of its founding, and despite this is succeeded, at least relatively speaking. And it does not make sense to give it the format of a [secular] High School. I believe that I already wrote this in the past, that it does not seem right to me whatsoever, and the seminary should be in the style of a seminary for teachers and preschool teachers, like the seminary of ..., a position which in our times is very much essential. And the concern that they mention, that perhaps the appropriate government agencies won't agree to recognize teachers without a diploma, there is a good chance that also this will change. The main thing is that even without the abovementioned recognition, there is a very broad working area for teachers and preschool teachers that do not have this government recognition. As mentioned earlier, what is paramount and very much relevant is that the teachers and preschool teachers should be one hundred percent suitable for their highest position, and we should not lessen this suitability, even in the slightest measure, through a change in the curriculum a change in the style of the seminary, etc. ..

(This letter, from 11 Tamuz 5718, is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 17.)





In accordance with the kavanoh will not learn secular subjects

The Administration of Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch in Montreal

. . 2) Certainly you will arrange it so that those students who in accordance with the *kavona* will not learn secular subjects will not go idle during the time of secular studies, but will be busy with another subject or reviewing their studies. Obviously, the primary concern is the supervision so that they aren't idle.

3) Certainly they already have a curriculum how to organize the religious studies regarding the students who came from France. [I would be grateful] if they would make known the details.

(This letter, from 1 Elul 5712, is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 6.)



The vocational school is also not a school established in order to learn secular subjects

. . . The Administration of the vocational school of Kfar Chabad





. . . Gladly I received the letter of 3 Tammuz. [In response] to what was written regarding secular studies, the point here is that it is not the function of Chabad to establish schools for secular studies, even in a subordinate way. The exception to this (and only under duress) is what was done with the approval of my sainted Father-in-Law in the United States, learning the minimum secular subjects the law requires until the age required by the government. Otherwise it would be impossible to maintain the younger grades and classes, principally the network of schools, the Talmud Torah of the Kfar, Beis Rivka, etc. This is not the case in regard to a vocational school and in general to classes which have already passed the age of obligatory education but have parents or certain individuals close to Chabad who are pushing that secular subjects should also be taught. This is not a change which can be approved.

It's understood that the above speaks about secular subjects in general. But an auxiliary [subject] supplementing the vocational training is not a subject unto itself but a branch of the vocational education being learned in the trade school.

Likewise in regard to the curriculum of the vocational school, it's irrelevant if someone calls it a secondary school, because I spoke here with Rabbi Yung regarding the basis of a vocational school and not a high school for secular subjects or even for secular and religious studies together. From this it will be understood that there's room to learn





subjects relevant to the work, as mentioned in the letter. But there's no place in this school for learning subjects in order to receive a high school diploma and the like. Certainly here also one should begin in a peaceful and pleasant manner, even though it's impossible to compromise on the subject.

2) I'm pleased that you write that religious studies and prayer have much more time than the vocational and related studies. Certainly this will be preserved.

Certainly it's superfluous to once again urge [you] to be careful that the vocational school should not become a place to flee from the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim of Lod. Also, in general, entry there should be after learning for a period of time in the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim of Lod and only in exceptional cases should other students be accepted. . . .

With blessings for success in their holy work.

(This letter, from 15 Tammuz 5714, is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 9)



The hours of religious study must be greater than the hours of secular study

... The Administration of the Chabad Vocational
School in the Holy Land

... Obviously the curriculum for the agricultural
school depends on the level of knowledge of





the students, but [just as] obviously it must be safeguarded, as I wrote in regard to the vocational school, that the time for religious studies must be greater than that of secular studies (particularly with the very young). That the day must begin specifically with religious studies, and that the agricultural school should not be used as an inducement or enticement to run away from the yeshiva.

(This letter, from 3 Teves 5716, is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 12.)





Instructions to Students' Parents

On many occasions the Rebbe also addressed the parents of the students concerning the importance of only learning religious studies. We present several Igros Kodesh on the subject:

This is the concern of all parents who want true good for their children, not just the Principal of the institution

In answer to your letter [sent] with the enclosed *pidyon nefesh*, in which you write concerning the subject of secular studies, and [his intent] to write to the Principal about this, etc.

Clearly, this is not the way, since this is everyone's concern, and not [just] the institution that has a charter for it. This is the concern of all parents who want true good for their children. They have the responsibility to fulfill the instructions of our sages and rabbis to “feed [the child with knowledge] like





an ox." And if they tell us that instead of serving vegetables, serve meat, how much more so in the current situation where there aren't even vegetables. Just the opposite, as explained in the Alter Rebbe's laws of *Talmud Torah*, *Tanya* and elsewhere.

Regarding what you wrote that they said to you, "One needs to know how to ask." The truth is that there is no need to inquire about this matter, for as mentioned above, the matter is obvious in the laws of Torah study, in *Tanya* and in many places.

(This letter of 5 Marcheshvan 5718 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 16.)



Put on hold the study of secular subjects

In your question concerning your son, your thought is correct to put on hold the study of secular subjects until he will have a full understanding of *Gefes* [*Gemoro*, *Pirush* (*Rashi*) *Tosfos*].

(This letter of 9 Kislev 5713 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 7)



Negation of secular studies also affects success in religious studies

In answer to your letter of 22 Teves, in which you write concerning . . ., [stating] that the teachers are not satisfied with his diligence in his studies,





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because he prefers to play rather than to learn, particularly his secular studies.

Now in general it is natural for a child to elect play over study, even when older than your brother. Therefore don't be overly concerned about this. But it should be understood he needs to be influenced in a pleasant way and principally through competition and comparison with friends his age who are more diligent. It's also appropriate to reduce the time that he learns secular subjects if it is impossible to cancel them completely. Perhaps he is hinting that he doesn't want secular studies (even though at this time he doesn't understand the inner meaning of this); automatically this influences as well his diligence in religious studies.

I hope it's superfluous to awaken you to the great merit of your involvement in kosher education, which draws the hearts of the children of Israel close to their Father in Heaven, and the according responsibility. But certainly she is given the strength to fulfill this task completely and it depends only on the will. Our Father in Heaven, who says to each and every Jew you are children of the L-rd your G-d, promises to bestow His blessing that you will be successful in this work, and the success will extend as well into your particular concerns and those of your family.

(This letter of 4 Shvat 5715 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 10.)





Answers to Questions and Additional Explanations on the Subject

On this subject - as on many other subjects - many sent their questions to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, to properly understand his holy opinion. In the letters before us we can follow the different questions and see the Rebbe's answer to them:

Not to desensitize the minds of the children

... [This is] in answer to your letter of 26 Tishrei, in which you write the reasons of the side opposing the position not to desensitize the minds of children with external subjects.

Our sages and rabbis say the opposite, that [the child's mind] should be stuffed like an ox with religious studies. It is surprising to hear their reasons, which have no basis in rationale (except as it seems in their desire, but the will bribes and misleads the intellect, and particularly the human intellect of the animal soul). Obviously your conduct





is correct, but you must make the maximum effort that the [children] not go empty of every subject, but busy themselves with religious studies, reviewing what they've learned and similar activities. *Hashem* will make them worthy and make them successful in breaking through the ice which their pure camp seems to have in this matter, transforming the cold to the warmth and light of holiness, the warmth and light of *Chassidus*.

(This letter of the first day of Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan 5717 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 14.)



Which category of the nations' science is included in this

...In regard to what is written in *Tanya* at the end of chapter eight concerning the science of the nations, if the intention applies only to philosophy or to other branches of study.

It seems you want to distinguish between them, since there are prohibited subjects in philosophy because it deals with matters antithetical to religion, which is not the case with mathematics, etc. But obviously the intention includes all disciplines. Aside from the proof since it mentions disciplines in the plural, it is explicitly stated that the *tumah* [impurity] comes from *kelipah nogah*. This is not the "wisdom" of heretics which is actually forbidden because it is from the three totally impure *kelipos*, like other aspects of idolatry. Furthermore, since the





Alter Rebbe explains they are forbidden unless one is using them like a useful instrument [literally, like an ax to chop with]. The matter is more explained in the Alter Rebbe's laws of Torah study chapter 3, section 7.

(This letter of 19 Elul 5715 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 11.)



Even to lighten the work of Shlichus he should not spend much time in perfecting his English

... To spend a lot of time now perfecting [his] English – is not appropriate for him. As my sainted Father-in-Law said: How much is the limit to carry the trough (matters of Torah and mitzvos) to the horse, it is about time the horse should already go to the trough.

(This letter of 11 Tammuz 5710 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 3)

[To perfect his English: to make his Shlichus work easier, in spreading Judaism into wider circles.]



Not to worry about the “future goal” [the child’s future arrangements] because our Rabbis have already written that no one knows from what will come his livelihood

... [In answer] to what you write [concerning] the reasons of ... to transfer his children’s education





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out of our yeshivas, that the first reason is he is a member of the Agudah and the second reason is for the "future goal."

These two reasons aren't valid.

1) As to his being in the Agudah, it's known that everyone must try to influence his environment, and not the opposite. Since he has a connection to Chabad, and he was also attached to my Sainted Father-in-Law, and he finds himself in the neighborhood of Agudah, surely it is by Divine Providence that he should make from the Agudahniks Chabadniks, and not that he should make himself, his wife and children who are Chabadniks - Agudahniks. For within two hundred are one hundred, and not the opposite. I don't need to elaborate on all this because it's obvious, and it's superfluous to continue.

2) As to the reason he says it is for the future career, our sages write that no one knows from what he will profit [earn his livelihood], and their intent includes both spiritual and physical profit. If [this is true] for adults, how much more so for children who are still at the beginning of their education, when it is impossible to know at all what will be the profit [livelihood] when they grow up and become adults.

(This letter of 24 Elul 5710 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 3.)





The One who feeds and provides for all certainly has already prepared the channel for the student's livelihood

. . . [In answer] to what you write concerning your son. . . that it troubles you that [your son] doesn't know secular subjects and therefore he doesn't know how things will be settled in the future. (In truth, it's not surprising he doesn't know this, because this accords with what our rabbis say in regard to everyone, that no person knows how he will make a living. He should examine the *Igeres Hakodesh* of the Alter Rebbe, beginning of section 22, where he compares this unknown to the unknown of when the Kingship of Dovid will return. But there are those who deceive themselves and bless themselves in their hearts that they know clearly the future manner of livelihood for themselves and their families).

Of practical relevance, since he [the son] is eighteen, it's best for him, both spiritually and materially, that they should not confuse him with thoughts concerning the future goal, but learn with tranquility, diligence and perseverance. The One who feeds and provides for all certainly has already prepared the channel of his livelihood. What difference does it make if he doesn't know now what the channel and manner is. Especially a father who has merited to be educated in the walls of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva is obligated to thank and praise Hashem, for notwithstanding all





the concealments and darkness and annihilations, Heaven forbid, Hashem granted him success with a son who is involved in Torah and *avodah* [prayer], fulfilling the purpose of a person's creation, which is to serve his Maker.

It's a wonder that immediately afterwards you write about your second son who has no talent for perseverance, according to what you write. Therefore many times [his learning] is negated, even though he is talented. I don't find in your letter that this also troubles you. If only you would consider how to correct the situation of this son any not change the conduct of your older son. Obviously it's not my intent in the above to preach *mussar*, Heaven forbid, but since you asked my opinion I must describe matters as I see them, as mentioned above.

(This letter from 25 Shevat 5715
is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 10.)



Not to stuff them with secular studies until a certain age

. . . Since I have received your letter of this day, when I will be at the graveside of my sainted Father-in-Law I will mention your children, that they should be easy to raise, and that you and your wife should receive from all of them much *chassidische nachas*.

It is proper that they should at least minimize and





not be stuffed with secular studies until a certain age, for this the street atmosphere will already arrange, and to increase in religious studies. And it is well known the saying of our sages on the verse, "It will fill from the ruin," that *Tzur* did not get full [built] etc. [only from the ruins of Yerusholayim. Meaning that the side of *tumah* gets its sustenance on the expense of the ruins of Yerusholayim and vice versa] this will automatically cause an increase in the physical well being, because "Israel is one people on the earth" [a unified, unique nation]. Therefore there must also be a complete unity between the body and the soul. When there is an increase in the soul, automatically there is an increase in the body.

(This letter of 18 Marcheshvon 5714 is printed in
Igros Kodesh volume 8.)



Not to listen to the advice of the yetzer [the evil inclination] which clothes its claims in the cloak of calculating the future "result"

. . . In answer to what you write concerning your son . . . in connection to the question about secular studies, obviously this situation should be negated now since *Hashem* has made him successful and he is diligent in his studies in Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim. . . . He must seize the blessing of *Hashem* and the success [that follows] and take advantage of every possibility and not to listen to the inducements of the *yetzer hara*, which searches for excuses.

Its intent is to confuse a person in general and





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youth in particular from following the path of *Hashem*. The *yetzer hara* knows that if it reveals this intention it won't be listened to. Therefore it clothes itself in the cloak of calculating the end result. There is a well known saying of our rabbis that this is the craft of the *yetzer hara*. Today it says such and such, etc. Fortunate is the lot of one whose son is found within the four cubits of Torah, and whose fear of Heaven protects him from the uncommon winds now blowing in the world at large and in particular in the land where the "eyes of the L-rd our G-d are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." Obviously great care is required for those found in the palace of the King. I hope that these few lines will suffice, not just for yourself but you will also extend your influence on your surroundings with this intention. In the great merit of your assistance to the immigrants in general and in matters of being G-d-fearing in particular, [may *Hashem*] bestow upon you blessing and success in all your needs and those of your family.

(This letter of 1 Elul 5714 is printed in *Igros Kodesh* volume 9.)



The yetzer hara is able to deceive a person

... with wonder I received your letter of Erev Shabbos. After writing a life history you come to the simple conclusion that the only way out that you have to arrange your life is only through learning





English and afterwards . . . Chemistry, etc. and then you can again have complete trust in G-d to set things in order, etc. From this one can see how the *yetzer hara* can fool a person -- knowing that in his entire circle there isn't even one who has gone on this path. How can you thus imagine and this yet with a final resolution, that all the other ways are not for him and a new way will assure you of a good arrangement? And in addition even more, also spiritually! True, you also write that if there will be . . . a special miracle, you can also be settled in a different way. It's self-understood that what you write about the young man . . . is no proof for your words, because he comes from a completely different circle. Notwithstanding that he learns secular subjects a few hours, if only you would be no more involved in them than him. Indeed, you should become involved in learning Chassidus - no less than him, and consider all the more where he is going from year to year -- consider it all the more.

In practical terms, about you, as about all Jews, it is written, "If one says, 'I didn't put forth the effort and was successful,' don't believe him." And about you, as about all Jews, it is written that no one knows in what will be his livelihood, as explained in Igeres Hakodesh section twenty-two, and all the calculations come out afterwards topsy-turvy. In particular, you would go in a way that no one in your circle has carried out and you do not even fathom all the tests associated with it, or the great difficulties in physically arranging this way for young men such as yourself.





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And this that you write that you have no enjoyment in the subject or in a second subject, it's like someone saying he has pleasure from fasting and finds eating delicacies repulsive. A stubborn willfulness, the opposite of sense, can also bring this about.

I don't know what gave you this startling and troublesome idea, or why you don't see what we're dealing with. If you will listen to my opinion and advice, you have to abandon all thoughts about the future and sit and learn with diligence and perseverance and only religious subjects, the revealed [Torah] and Chassidus, at least three or four years. And I am sure if you will do this, you will have an arrangement for a livelihood in a material sense, and in a spiritual sense. And obviously you must not fool or deceive yourself that those around you want only to make you miserable and don't think about your good.

(This letter of 10 Tammuz 5716 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 13.)



Not to learn secular subjects in order to receive a 'diploma'

... In answer to the letter from . . . in which you write concerning your son with the argument that he should learn in order to receive a diploma, as if this is the only way for your child, so that he can arrange his future life.





It's amazing, since they are in a place like Israel, and they certainly know, that thousands of young people - may they increase - their son's age are in the yeshivos of Israel, learning our Torah, which is also call the Torah of life, including the life of this world and the world to come together. [These young people] learn with perseverance and diligence, with a trusting soul and joy and gladness of heart. What increases my astonishment even more is that they certainly know what's published in many periodicals in Israel concerning the deep feelings and conduct of the youth over there. The strongest immunization against the undesirable winds blowing in the world is received precisely in these yeshivos. [This protection is such that] of the thousands of juvenile transgressors, not one is found to be a yeshiva student who learns Torah all day. A parent's task in regard to their children, their primary function, is to raise their children to be strong in life, with no tear in their soul and no inner conflicts and complexes. After many different pedagogic methods have been tried in this recent period, the dry statistic, as mentioned above, and publicized everywhere, and in other countries, is a clear result with one meaning, which is easy to understand.

In other words, if their child would not lean in the direction of an education in the study method he has chosen, it would have been their duty to influence him to agree to this [a yeshiva education] at least for a period of time of a few years. Behold, through the kindness of G-d Above they have been graced with





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a son with fine character traits and of high caliber who on his own chose what is good, beautiful and holy, to go in the aforesaid approach and to study what is appropriate to it. There is need to thank G-d for His blessing in this, and to strengthen and encourage their son in this resolution, in a way that it will continuously increase. And it is absolutely certain that He about Whom it is said that "in His goodness provides sustenance for the entire world with grace, with kindness and with mercy," Who sustains two and half billion people, will provide a livelihood at the proper time also for their son. He should learn the Torah of the Creator and Guide of the world with warmth and enthusiasm. This will increase G-d's blessings, as it is written, "If you will walk in my statutes (as the rabbis interpret, you should toil in Torah), then I will give your rain, etc." and all the blessings enumerated in the parsha.

With a blessing for Jewish, *Chassidishe nachas* [pleasure] from their child, which this is the true *nachas*, and with health and a good heart from the above mentioned.

(This letter of 20 Iyar 5720 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 19.)



Attachment to Torah - a wondrous plan for making it easier to earn a living later

I received the letter of 23 Shevat, in which you write briefly the order of things, how you entered





Tomchei Temimim of Lod and you conclude that you are now fifteen and a half years old. Your question is if you should leave the yeshiva to learn a trade or not.

Obviously it is marvelous, as you write in your letter, that you merited to enter a yeshiva, particularly a yeshiva like this where they learn the revealed [parts of Torah] and Chassidus. You have to understand how assistance from Above placed you in a good situation, both materially and spiritually. It's also understood that in order to test you occasionally you will have thoughts about interrupting your learning. You must therefore nullify them and devote yourself to your lessons in the revealed [parts of Torah] and Chassidus with great perseverance and diligence. Obviously He who feeds and sustains all will also provide your sustenance, when the time comes and you will need a livelihood for yourself. At your age, you shouldn't confuse yourself by being involved now with preparations for a livelihood which depends only on G-d. Therefore, the connection with His Torah and His Mitzvos is a wondrous plan for making it easier to earn a living later. Leaving the tent of Torah prematurely disturbs this. G-d should grant him the merit and success to learn Torah with *yiras Shomayim* [fear of heaven].

(This letter of 27 Shevat 5713 is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 7.)





It is not the function of those working for Chabad to be involved in spreading secular studies, particularly among the daughters of our community

... In regard to the girls' secondary school, the main point is missing in your letter. That is, what is the curriculum.

Certainly it's superfluous to elaborate that it is not the function of those working for Chabad to be involved in spreading secular studies, particularly among the daughters of our community, and even more particularly since some are over-involved in this. If the intent of the secondary school is that the girls should continue their religious studies locally, this is quite correct. On the other hand, if the intent is for secular studies, this is not similar to Beis Rivka, which due to the young age of the students they come under the law of obligatory secular studies. However, at the secondary school age, they are exempt from this. If only they would focus their energy and talent on religious studies relevant to girls. Obviously the boundaries should not be broken to establish in Kfar Chabad a secondary school for secular and religious studies together. . .

To summarize the above: it is very much correct if there are suitable students and a suitable administration to establish in the Kfar [village] itself a continuation of religious studies for those who have already completed the curriculum of Beis Rivka. But a secondary school in the Kfar to





teach secular and religious subjects should not be established.

With blessings for success in their work, looking forward to good news in all the above details.

(This letter of 25 Tammuz 5714 is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 9.)



The secondary school of Kfar Chabad should be organized so that there will be only religious studies

... The Vaad of Kfar Chabad

... In answer to their letter of 18 Menachem Av in regard to the question about the secondary school, in which they explain their intent is that the girls should be able to continue their studies within the village itself, in an appropriate environment, and their goal is not to spread secular studies.

Certainly the school will be set up in a way that its basis will be religious studies. Understandably, it will be arranged that those who learn secular subjects should travel once or twice a week to an appropriate institution – understandably one with yiras Shomayim - in Tel Aviv or someplace similar.

It is self understood that the education of Beis Rivka must be arranged properly, beginning at the required hour as customary in all other educational institutions. For it is impossible to have a normal





education without a fixed and strong order. This must be considered from the beginning, for it is a fundamental concern. If one is forced, G-d will exempt him, but the students do not receive their education through this exemption, and therefore it is a deficiency.

(This letter of 4 Elul 5714 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 9)



It is not the concern of those working for Chabad to spread secular studies

3) . . . in regard to night classes for working youth, I have already written to many of our community [Anash], that it is not the concern of those working for Chabad to spread secular studies, nor is it their business to certify schools in general, particularly as discussed above. But if it is possible to also spread among those who study secular studies, Jewish studies in general and matters of Chassidus in particular, this and more should be tried. But in a manner that this will not serve as certification of an undesirable school. This is possible -- if it is done not as part of the curriculum of the school. Likewise regarding precautions that are contingent on the conditions of the place and time. It's not proper to decide the whole matter on your own; rather you should take counsel from among those of Anash [members of the Chassidic community] found there.





You should explain to them the points that require concern, as explained above.

(This letter of 4 Iyar 5715 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 11.)



Referring students to an all day Religious studies institution

. . . [in answer] to your question that one of your students wants to attend an institution where they study only religious studies, and you ask if you should assist in this or do nothing.

The doubt and question are surprising. In matters of Torah study and the like, if everything possible isn't done, that is, doing what is needed, such a situation is a most terrifying neglect of Torah. About such a person it is said . . .

(Although at the other extreme, if it is impossible any other way, he fulfills [his obligation for Torah study] with a chapter in the morning and a chapter in the evening, examine the Alter Rebbe's explanation why there is no contradiction.) Accordingly, it's understood that if anyone desires to learn the holy Torah an hour more, every Jew must exert himself in all that depends on him to provide assistance. [This is so] particularly when speaking, as he writes, about a talented individual, or as our rabbis express it, a "sharp" individual.

(This letter of 29 Iyar 5718 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 17)





Since until now he has also learned secular subjects, it is proper that for at least one year he should dedicate for religious studies only

. . . in answer to your letter of 16 Teves, in which you write concerning two paths before him, in relation to your near-term arrangements, and ask my opinion about it.

It often happens, as in this case, that the decision and its establishment comes through a previous decision related to other points more important than the question about which he needs to decide; the question at hand follows after the other points. In my opinion, this is the situation here, for you have to order your life in such a way that 1) you can marry a Jewish woman in the near future; 2) you can establish regular times to learn the holy Torah. Until now you have learned taking a mixed approach, that is, religious studies with, *l'havdil*, secular studies. It is proper that for at least one year you should dedicate for religious studies only. The decision on the question about which you write must also be in accordance with these two points.

From this my opinion will be understood. That the idea of a course of studies which will prevent you from getting married for four years is ruled out. If it is possible to attain certification in this profession





by studying a year or two and no more, and better yet that you will also be able to get married during this time, it's appropriate to consider this.

(This letter of 22 Teves 5718 is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 16)



At a young age one should be in a holy atmosphere every hour of the day, for this affects the formation of his character throughout his life

. . . After a long interruption, your letter from 15 Sivan was received. In it you write that in another month you want to return to . . .

Even though it seems you did not ask advice about this, nevertheless I will seize the opportunity to urge my opinion, that if at all possible, it would be very worthwhile if you would extend your stay in Israel, at least for a few more months, until around Passover, or at least until the month of Shevat. For then, it seems, in . . . a new period of learning will begin. During these months, you should learn in a yeshiva where only religious subjects are studied every day. It's fundamental that you should try to be in the dormitory, i.e. to be in a yeshiva atmosphere the entire day. Precisely these years, at your age, are the most important for forming a person's character for his entire life. Also, and this is of fundamental importance, to strengthen and protect [one's self]





against the winds blowing in the world, for exactly in our times many uncommon winds are blowing, and violently, as is easy to understand. Even though the value and importance of the task you want to fulfill in . . . is clear, working in an area of traditional education, still a more basic preparation, as outlined above, will certainly pay back many times over, increasing the effectiveness of your influence, in addition to the benefit to yourself. Certainly it's superfluous to emphasize that the educational influence depends on more than on the knowledge of the teacher; it depends on his world-view and his devotion to his role as an educator and guide. And precisely regarding these points, the influence of a yeshiva's atmosphere, and the benefit of the penetrating light and warmth of Chassidus, are of utmost importance.

(This letter of 20 Sivan 5719 is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 18.)



So much time on secular studies - shocking

4) . . . The spending of more time on secular studies and physical education than for religious studies -- is shockng. "Will he even attack the queen with me in the house?" (See Esther 7:8)

G-d should help each and every one of us not to exchange the most fundamental for the most trivial. Such an exchange is out of the question on its own





merits. Additionally, it also harms the trivial matters, as is understood.

(This letter of 8 Iyar 5713 is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 7)



Efforts at the government offices to lessen the hours of secular studies and in exchange increase religious studies

. . . Greetings to those gathered in the annual convention of *Igud Horabonim* (the Rabbinical Association)

. . . 2) It's a happy fact that lately the number of students in yeshivos, lower grade yeshivos, Talmud Torahs and the like are ever increasing. All indications are that there is a general movement to increase Torah study.

The law of mandatory education requires a curriculum of secular studies until a certain age. The curriculum also includes subjects that the law does not consider so necessary. Therefore they are abridged in certain educational institutions under recognized conditions.

Taking into account that the number of hours set aside for religious study in the Talmud Torahs, lower grade yeshivos, etc. is not at all sufficient.

It is imperative to arrange organized and devoted efforts in the appropriate offices, and it would be





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best in the general federal offices, that upon the request of a certain number of parents or schools they should reduce the time spent on the above mentioned subjects by a number of hours and so that these hours will be devoted to learning Torah.

In these years when there is great fear and deep concern about the moral condition of the youth, the situation requires a very urgent and fundamental correction. And as most educators, including the best, agree that religion and religious studies are a curb and a shield against calamity and this situation.

It is close to certain that this effort will succeed if you act with energy and actions and words that come from the heart.

The vast majority, practically all, of the members of the association, have among their primary tasks, the administration of or participation in a yeshiva, Talmud Torah, etc. Thus the above problem is close to their hearts, and it is their responsibility. And according to the camel is the load.

With respect and blessing for, the conclusion [of the letter] similar to the opening words [of the letter], holy and successful activity.

(This letter of 18 Sivan 5716 is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 13.)





Imagine if at the last moment before leaving galus “the plate is overturned” and his mosad is listed among those that first teach ABC and only then the Aleph Bais.

He writes in his letter whether it is possible to change the order of some of the classes, that they will first learn secular studies and then Limudei Kodesh:

It is certainly known how much this is against the values of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, its founders and directors, and the whole matter of secular studies in a yeshiva. I am not familiar with the way things were done and in what manner they agreed to this. I’m not sure if they [the institution] did not carry out the instruction in a way of *maavar* [“passing”, meaning unintentional, without being fully involved in the mindset of trying to add secular subjects] or in a way of *hislabshus* [fully “enclothed”, involved; meaning they were very involved and cognizant of their act to add secular subjects]. In any case, the whole matter of this learning is only because there is no choice, and therefore it is understood that there is no need to make any changes in the opposite direction. Even for the current situation one must be in pain, particularly when the change will overturn an order that already existed as a *chazaka* for many years. To change to a worse situation, and undoubtedly this change of curriculum will become known in all the other branches [of the Chabad yeshiva system], it is impossible to imagine from the outset all the results from this. From all the





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above it is understood that my opinion, regarding his question if there is room to try and change, is that they need to strengthen the matter even more than it is now, and not the opposite.

And in order to make it easier for him to follow through and have an effect on himself and also on the *baalei bayis*, he should imagine to himself, like all the Jewish people who are believers, we also hope that any day Moshiach will come and take us out of galus physically, and as a matter of course also from the spiritual galus. Then imagine to himself that he would make this change, and also contemplate that for ten years he withstood the trial despite all the difficulties and concealments, and the result was that he implemented that Limudei Kodesh were placed at the head of everything. Then at the last moment before the release from all the concealments, the plate is overturned, Chas v'Shalom. When he will go out of galus with his disciples, his institution will be listed among those who start with learning ABC and only then, *l'havdil*, to learn Aleph—the Master of the world, [which consists of] Yud—above, Yud—every single Jew below, and the line that connects them—the line of the *Seder Hishtalshelus*, the line of Torah and Mitzvos, through which the Jews and Hashem are one.

With blessings for success in his holy work, and he should accept this easily and not only because of his G-dly soul but also his animal soul.

(This letter of 12 Sivan 5712 was printed in Igros
Kodesh vol. 6)





In all classes, learning must begin with Limudei Kodesh

...Regarding the school, the learning in all classes must begin with Limudei Kodesh, as is known from the words of our sages, "The first portion," etc. He should also try as much as possible that the number of hours dedicated to Limudei Kodesh should, at the very least, not be less than secular studies, and how much better etc.

(This letter of 8 Shvat 5715 is printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 10)



In our days we must make the greatest effort that every Jewish child learn Limudei Kodesh the entire day

... The yearly gathering of the Igud Horabonim of America

... Anyone whose heart is awake to what is transpiring among the youth knows, that in our very eventful era a spiritual revolution is underway in many circles, following the adventures and the disappointment in different philosophies and movements, and other causes which cannot be enumerated here. However, among many, this arousal is still in the form of "He prophesied but





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did not know what he prophesied." Among others, the arousal is more concrete and clear, to the point that it has been called "returning to roots." The equivalence between them is that this arousal has created an opportune time to set up broad circles of our people on the true and proper path, the path of Torah and Mitzvos. However, the trouble is that this opportune time is not being utilized as it should be, and many are still groping in the dark, without influence or proper guidance, to teach the nation of Hashem the path to go in and most importantly, the actions they should do.

It is especially important regarding the youth, since according to their nature (*tchunas nefesh*) the inspiration is more internalized and stronger, and they are not intimidated by the thought of making changes in their lives, if they only have a sense and an inner recognition that they are being given the absolute truth without any compromise. Any good influence is intensified many times over with them, and how much better if it reaches them one hour sooner.

And on to a related matter, to the issue of the status and state of the very young Jewish sons and daughters, on whom in particular it is said, "You shall teach them to your children" in the first parsha of Shma, immediately following the acceptance of the kingdom of Heaven. It is then repeated in the second parsha, to the great necessity for a full education *al taharas hakodesh*, and Talmud Torah is above all.





Also in the time of the *Gemoro*, there were those who dispensed with their obligation to study Torah with one *posuk* in the morning and one *posuk* in the evening, and there were those who engaged in Torah study day and night. How much more so in our times, when it is absolutely necessary to make the greatest effort that every Jewish child should study *limudei Kodesh* all day long, and at the very least, that they should study in educational institutions that are called in this country "*yeshiva ketana*." However, together with this there is no room for despair, or to neglect, G-d forbid, those who learn in public schools. The call of the hour is to try with all our power to preserve these embers, that they should not be extinguished G-d forbid. At the very least, through proper prayer every day, the name of G-d will be familiar on the lips of the children. It is understood that this is not the ultimate purpose, because the necessity is, as mentioned, to study *limudei Kodesh* all day long. However, this matter should not be light in your eyes, particularly since we are assured that "One mitzvah leads to another." And due to our many sins, one of the plagues of our generation is that there are those who fight against mentioning the name of G-d in public schools, and also cause an unbelievable desecration of Hashem's name which was unheard of until today. It is unnecessary to stress over and over that we are referring to a proper prayer, which is called "non-denominational." In order that this be accepted and effective, we must negate the reading of the Bible in public schools, since this could give an opening to





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demand reading, and *l'havdil* etc.

(This letter of 15 Tamuz 5723 was printed in Igros
Kodesh vol. 22)





Sichos regarding required efforts in the matter

The following are a number of Sichos in which the Rebbe speaks about the special efforts that must be made to conduct the studies al taharas hakodesh, and of the necessity of avoiding limudei chol:

There must be mesirus nefesh for the learning al taharas hakodesh

The second point which is relevant particularly in our era—the manner of educating the children, *tinokos shel bais rabban*:

Regarding the laws of this country and others that are similar to it, a dreadful situation has developed. It has been established that a child—not only a five year old but even those who are at the age of ten for Mishnah, or 13 for Mitzvos, or 15 for Gemoro, cannot go through a day in the school year without learning secular studies.

For this we must take a lesson from the Baal Hilula, who sacrificed himself literally—and even





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sent others on *mesirus nefesh*—in order to establish chadorim for Jewish children and to ensure that the learning in the chadorim will be *al taharas hakodesh*, not to G-d forbid change the style of education as it was conducted by Jews over all the generations.

How much more so in our generation, in this country etc., in which there is no danger to life G-d forbid, we must place the greatest effort that the education of Jewish children should be *al taharas hakodesh*; not to mix in any secular studies, except when the law does not allow any room whatsoever not to learn it, and even then, only the minimum.

In cases where the government requires secular studies, make every effort to minimize as much as possible

Even those who cannot withstand the test—the truth is that in several instances one can suffice with a detail of a detail and with a minimum of involvement. There is entirely no compulsion that the *limudei chol* should be with the same quantity and quality as is currently carried out in schools that are under the directorship of men (and women) who are G-d fearing.

We must stimulate and encourage them that their efforts should be dedicated not at being scrupulous in fulfilling the laws of the country, but to fulfill the Mitzvos and laws of, *l'havdil*, Hashem, since we were sworn to uphold them from *Har Sinai*, even before the laws of the country existed.



It is true that *Dina d'Malchusa Dina*; however (in addition to the fact that in matters of Yiddishkeit "We Jews have no one over us who gives an opinion," even when one cannot withstand the test of only *Limudei Kodesh*), within the framework allowed by the laws of the country, effort must be made that most of the time of the students, boys and girls, and even more so more attention, should be associated with *Limudei Kodesh*. Only that which is required according to all opinions should be dedicated to *Limudei Chol*.

Studies must begin with Limudei Kodesh and only afterwards—when the child is already tired and only where necessary—to study a bit of Limudei Chol

This is in addition to the fact that the learning of *limudei chol* should not be in the morning at the beginning of the studies, "the first of your portion." It is entirely not against the law that "the first of your portion" should be "dedicated as an offering to Hashem." We should raise up the child to Hashem through study of His Torah. Only then, when the child is already tired, and there is no choice, we give a very brief time for *Limudei chol*. Since "I do not demand except according to your abilities," it is certain that with a small effort and with the proper attention we can minimize the time that Jewish children spend learning secular studies, and dedicate incomparably more time, both in quantity and quality, to studying *Limudei Kodesh*.



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The decision must be in a manner that we feel this matter is absolutely necessary since this is the *psak din* in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*. Therefore, it is clear that it must be carried through.

Just as we saw by the *Baal Hilula*, that notwithstanding the fact that in his days there did not appear to be any way according to nature that his efforts in *Chinuch al Taharas Hakodesh* should be successful—yet now we see the fruits of his efforts with the eyes of flesh.

(This sicha was printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 16,
Sicha of Yud Shvat)



A devastation spiritually and physically

There are those who argue that Torah study is a matter of understanding and grasping, “Since it is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations.” If so, what does it matter if other wisdoms will be mixed in as well, to learn Torah for a number of hours and other disciplines, *l’havdil*, for a number of hours, and to connect them and make them into one thing. What harm could come out of this?

The miracle of Chanukah teaches that not only does the pure oil not purify the contaminated oil, but on the contrary, “They contaminated all the oil.” The pure oil was also contaminated. This brought not only to spiritual destruction but physical destruction as well, *r”l*.





LEARNING IN COLLEGE

The following are letters of the Rebbe MH" M cautioning about studying in college etc.:

I was shocked to hear about the idea to study in college

...I was shocked to hear that he is considering the idea of visiting a college to study there etc. It is my hope and trust that he will abandon this idea altogether and my spirit will be calmed by this good news.

(This letter of 13 Elul 5710 was printed in Igros
Kodesh vol. 3)



“What does he have against the Rebbe that he is dragging him along to college”

Due to time constraints I did not dwell at length as necessary and also I thought that perhaps there is no need to dwell at length on this matter, and a few short words would suffice. However, since he has been silent and did not answer me on this matter, it





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is known that in Shas there are two interpretations for silence: Either silence indicates agreement, or it indicates nullification of his words. Since there is room for doubt, I will elaborate a little more. This is the situation as I see it:

My father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe chose him and made him his Shliach to lead a Jewish community in our camp. The emissary of a person is like himself, and one of the reasons for this is that the sender gives his energies to his emissary. This applies to every person, particularly to one who is a *Pnimi*, an inward person, and even more so if the sender is an *Atzmi*. The saying of the Baal Shem Tov is known, that when one grasps a part of it one grasps it in its entirety (as brought in Maamar Rosh Hashana Perek Bais). When the sender gives the Shliach of his own powers, it is if he is found there in his entirety.

For what purpose did my father-in-law send him? It is clear that it was to lead his community in the ways of Torah and Mitzvah, and to assist them that each of them should ascend in the path that leads to the House of Hashem. It is also clear that for this the Shliach also needs to be steadily ascending much more than his community, since he has been appointed as a leader over them. Through which means can a Shliach rise? For this there is a path to the King of the universe, a paved path as explained by our sages in general, and by the leaders of Chabad in particular, and especially by my father-in-law. [This path] explains the means whereby one can be freed of the enticements of the





yetzer hara, who is called the "*kluginker*," the clever one, which is the path of turning away from evil, as well as how to ascend, the track of doing good.

After all this, if the rumor that I heard is true, G-d forbid, about his desire to study in college, there are a few possible outcomes: 1) Out of his limited time, in any case a large share will go to matters that are unrelated to efforts to fulfill his above-mentioned purpose. 2) A share of his time will be used for matters that are in opposition to his fulfilling his above-mentioned purpose. 3) Others in his community will see and follow his example, and even more so. They will argue: If the emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe of blessed memory, after studying for years in his yeshiva, nevertheless feels that in order to be a mentch he must study in college, then why should we live in error? Better for us to send our sons and daughters to begin with to receive such an education. 4) And this point is primary above the others: What does he have against the Rebbe that he is dragging him along in college? The G-dly soul which is trapped in the body is forced to go along also, and as a matter of course also the powers of the Rebbe which are encloded in his G-dly soul, and as mentioned before, that a small portion of the essence, etc. It follows that he is dragging along the Rebbe, so to speak, together with him.

I do not desire to dwell on this at length, and I also see no need for it, since surely this is sufficient and more than enough.

I do not know if the challenge is so great for him,





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and in any case it is my hope and trust that he will withstand the test and then certainly he will see that this is simply a test and there was nothing substantial to it. As is known the difference between tests and refinements. He should add a shiur in Torah study in general and the Torah of Chabad in particular, and the Torah of my father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe especially. All of this is advice [that will help] not to be confused by thoughts that should be foreign to him, and he will be able to fulfill the purpose of his soul in this world with peace of mind.

(This letter of 24 Elul 5710 was printed in Igros
Kodesh vol. 3)



**A pity on every moment that is not being
used to the utmost for fulfilling the
Shlichus**

...in continuation of the two letters I wrote you prior to Yom Tov, since the affairs of Tishrei, a comprehensive month, prevented me from pursuing the subject. Although my two letters have not yet been answered, with this I will continue my discourse (concerning college), as a continuation of the above [mentioned letter]:

It seems you could say, I believe (the opposite of what the Rambam writes in the Laws of Divorce, end of chapter 2) that I want to attend and learn in college, but there's someone who says this isn't appropriate because of my position and general situation. For it's not appropriate to the image of





a *tamim* and student of the [Previous] Rebbe, since the [Previous] Rebbe accompanies him wherever he goes. If so, when I go to college he is forced, as it were, to go with me there, according to the ruling of our sages that when a student is exiled, his teacher goes into exile with him (Makkos 10a). Who says I need all this? Temporarily I'll relinquish, G-d forbid, the image of a *tamim*; I'll temporarily relinquish, G-d forbid, the image of a Chassid of the [Previous] Rebbe. Automatically, the complaints will cease.

But you no longer have this [option]. It's well known in Jewish law that a non-Jew who converts [to Judaism] can no longer retract, G-d forbid. Even if he sins afterwards, he remains a Jew since he once converted. It is similar with holiness itself; you, having once been a Chassid and connected to the [Previous] Rebbe -- and therefore the [Previous] Rebbe is connected with you, like a face reflected in water -- can no longer interrupt, G-d forbid, the connection. For that depends on the [Previous] Rebbe as well, and he, in his great goodness and kindness, is bound to you in chains, according to what's written in Igeres Hateshuvah, beginning of chapter 7, "The king is bound with tresses," the tresses of the mind. Therefore, the Holy One is called the "humiliated King." (This passage should be studied.) The same [applies] to tzaddikim, in particular to the leaders of the generation, and especially to the readers of the mystical dimension of Torah, as known from the Zohar (Volume II, 38a), "Whose is the face of the L-rd Hashem? This is Rashbi."





...I have no desire to continue with this, since I am sure that, ultimately "throw a stick in the air and it falls on its roots": the root and source will be revealed in you, namely, the connection with the [Previous] Rebbe. This [revelation] occurs when we go "in the right direction which we learn from his ways and [when] we will follow his conduct." You will [certainly] give me good news about this, obviously, the sooner the better, for it's known that the days are set, that a [certain] number of days are allotted a person to purify his portion of the world. If so, woe for every moment of every day not occupied [with things] appropriate to the fulfillment of his soul's Shlichus [mission] in this world.

(This letter of 28 Marcheshvan 5711 is printed in
Igros Kodesh volume 4)



"he who sends his child to college ... subjects him to shock and profound conflicts and trials and invites quite unforeseen consequences"

A COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR A YESHIVA BOY?

I am in receipt of your letter in which you ask my opinion about the advisability for graduates of a Yeshiva to continue their sacred studies in conjunction with college attendance. By way of preface, let me state at once that my views on the subject under question apply not only to students of Yeshivoth, but to all Jewish youth, since all are





children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the souls of all were present at Sinai and received the Torah and Mitzvoth. This is, indeed the basis of my view, which will be outlined below, after some introductory observations.

Jews have always been a “minority among the nations”, even in the best of times. At the same time “their laws differ from those of any other people”, and they differ not only in regard to special occasions, or special aspects of life, such as on Shabbos, or Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, but they differ in their way of life, and in every aspect of their daily life. For the Jew the Torah and Mitzvoth are the guide of daily life and the source of life and true happiness, and this is the simple meaning of “Toras Chayyim” - Law of life, and the definition of the Mitzvoth as the essence of Jewish life, “whereby Jews live”.

It is clear that being in the minority; Jews must have special reinforcements from childhood on, in order to be able to hold their own in the face of overwhelming odds. If it was difficult enough to live as a Jew in countries where Jews were persecuted, confined to ghettos, etc., there was one redeeming factor at least, namely that under those circumstances Jewish adherence and loyalty to the Torah and Mitzvoth was put to the test. An individual Jew could sever his ties with his people, but that involved a sudden and complete break; it was therefore rare and extreme. But in the free countries, and under the present economic and





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social conditions, there are no outside barriers separating Jew from gentile; the road to assimilation is wide open, and the danger is all the greater since the process is a gradual one. No sudden break with tradition is entailed, but a gradual deviation, step after small step, leads in that direction. There is a well known parable for this, about the boy who strayed from the road and later found himself in the midst of the woods. He got there by making a small false step off the road, which led to another, and yet another.

The condition and environment in a country such as this call, therefore, for an even greater spiritual reinforcement of the Jewish boy and girl than ever before and elsewhere. This reinforcement must be of such strength and duration that the Jewish child will always be conscious of the fact that no matter what the environment is; he is the bearer of the sacred tradition of the Divine Torah and Mitzvoth and belongs to a people that is holy and different. For this, it is essential that right from earliest childhood, to adolescence the Jewish child should receive the fullest possible Jewish education, throughout his formative years.

Hence, when a Jewish boy completes his compulsory education, it is an absolute must that for a couple of years, at least, he should dedicate himself to the exclusive study of the Torah and sacred subjects, in a most conducive atmosphere of a Yeshivah, without distraction of secular studies, all the more so as the teen-age are crucial and





formative an of lasting effect, in the crystallization of the character.

This would have been my opinion even if college entailed no more that the distraction secular studies. Actually there is much more involved.

Theoretically a college and its faculty should not try to impose any particular views, much less a way of life, on the students.

Actually however, the student cannot help being impressed, on the conscious and subconscious level, by the views, outlook and way of life of his professors. These, as well as the whole atmosphere at a college, are unfortunately, not compatible with the Jewish way of life, and frequently if not always quite contradictory to it. This so even in colleges which are theological, or having so-called religious studies. Needless to say, the whole atmosphere of college is in violent conflict with the Shulchan Aruch way of life, whereby the Jew is totally committed – in every detail and aspect of his personal daily life – to the Torah an mitzvoth and the service of G-D, as is written “You shall know Him in all your ways,” to which a whole chapter in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim (ch231) is devoted: note there.

In other words, the Jewish boy or girl entering college, yet desiring to retain the Jewish way of life in accordance with the Torah, finds himself tossed about in the raging waves of conflict between two contradictory worlds. He is at a further disadvantage in finding himself in the minority camp, since those





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sharing his views and convictions are few on the college campus, while the forces pulling in the opposite direction are overwhelming; forces he must confront at every turn - among the student body, faculty members, text books, newspapers and periodicals. It is very doubtful whether even an adult and mature person who is subjected to such "shock treatment" day after day would not be shaken; how much more so a teenager.

Needless to say, I am aware of the argument that many Yeshiva boys attending college, or even college graduates, remain loyal to the Torah and mitzvot. The answer is simple. The number of such students and graduates who have not been seriously affected is relatively very small indeed, much smaller than imagined. They are so exceptional that the wonder of it attracts attention, since those who go astray under college influence are taken for granted, while the one that still puts on Tefillin calls forth amazement. One may use the analogy of the Shoe-shine boy who became a millionaire and everyone talks about him; it is not because he was a shoe-shine boy that he attained success, and no one will suggest that in order to become a millionaire one should start in the shoe-shine business. The greater the exception and sensation, the greater is the proof of the rule.

Some people ask, is there really such a conflict between attending college and remaining an observant Jew. I can speak from experience and personal knowledge, having attended various



colleges and seen the painful inner upheavals of Jewish students, and having for many years been the confidant of Jewish students who are otherwise reluctant or ashamed to open their hearts. I can therefore state with the fullest measure of conviction and responsibility that he who sends his child to college during the formative years subjects him to shock and profound conflicts and trials and invites quite unforeseen consequences.

In view of all the above, it is my definite and considered opinion that all Jewish children, upon completing their compulsory secular education should devote at least several years to the exclusive study of the Torah, without the interference of other studies, not even training for a trade, in order to obtain the maximum insurance against all trials and dangers that their future life may hold, when they attain adulthood and settle down to a family life.

To put the matter in bolder relief, by way of illustration. Take the general attitude to polio G-d forbid, and the precaution taken against it. Fortunately, the incidence of Polio is not widespread, and where it strikes it cripples only a part of the physical body; yet, though the odds are far –fetched, it would be reckless not to take the necessary precaution.

Unfortunately, the victims of college education are numerous indeed and most widespread, by far in the majority, and the harm is even more far reaching.

Another point which is often the subject of



misconception – the importance attached to a college degree from the economic point of view. Statistics show that the majority of college graduates eventually establish themselves in occupation and business not directly connected with the course of study in college. The moral is obvious.

Reprinted from the Jewish Press



It is forbidden for a person to put himself in a place of danger

It is certainly understood (and common) that the youth have a thirst to find new and challenging things etc. – and even more so, there is a basis for this in the instruction of our sages of blessed memory, that one must accomplish “What one is **expected** to accomplish,” meaning to utilize the powers that one has been given to their fullest capacity.

On the other hand it is also understood and **quite simple** that there is no point **whatsoever** to search for challenges before one is properly equipped with the right ammunition necessary to overcome the challenge and to correct it (at least to the point that he knows there are good chances to accomplish this). And in the language of our Sages, it is forbidden for a person to put himself in a place of danger and even more so – like the prayer that we say **before** the morning prayers, “Do not bring us into a situation of being tested”.



With regard to the Jews, especially in our time period, "secular education" as you mentioned earlier, and College in general – is similar to a healthy person who says that he lived all his life in healthy conditions and was always healthy and only saw healthy people, and therefore he is not utilizing his powers at all, and what is the purpose of his life?

Therefore he comes up with the idea to relocate his home to a place of contagious diseases that are dangerous, and afterwards he will try and see if he is capable of starting to study medicine in this place etc. The *nimshal* is self-understood.

There is a challenge **prepared** already for Jewish girls like her, which is **crucial** to overcome and that is: the faults that you mention in your letter concerning the atmosphere in the seminaries (and in general in the schools), are **possible** to correct, but only by those who **themselves** felt and were affected by these faults. However, like all good achievements, there must be self-preparation, including **strenuous effort** in the matter, meaning: to acquire sufficient knowledge in the subjects that are taught in the seminaries, pedagogical expertise, a firm resolution not to take to heart if results are not seen right away, and not to be embarrassed from those who mock. Afterwards, begin to change the atmosphere etc. and with enthusiasm and *mesiras nefesh*. And certainly G-d will grant success in this.

(This letter of Shevat 5732
is printed in Igros Kodesh volume 27)



College will not help fulfill the true and inner desire of the Jew to carry out his above mentioned task and purpose in life

By the Grace of G-d

28 Cheshvan, 5715

Brooklyn, NY

Miss

Blessing and Greeting:

Your father has conveyed to me your inquiry as to what my attitude would be to the idea of your going to college. Incidentally I was pleased to note that you are in an environment where the idea of your going to college has met with surprise, and I, somewhat surprised myself that you did not fully share the same attitude as that of your environment.

It is surely unnecessary to explain to you at length that every Jew and Jewess, young and old, has a purpose and task to accomplish in his or her life. **The task, broadly speaking, is to illuminate the world with 'Ner Mitzvah v'Torah Or' in every-day life.** After so many Jews lost their lives in recent years, among them the best and choicest of our people, the responsibility of those whom G-d in His mercy has spared is increased many-fold. It is therefore more obvious than ever that no Jew has a right to give of his time, and even more so of his





heart and mind, to matters which not only do not help but are very likely to hinder in the fulfillment of his sacred task and purpose. One of these matters would be to spend several years in college, and especially in a college environment. While it is true that in recent years, in certain colleges, especially in New York, there are groups of Orthodox Jewish students, young men and women -- and may G-d help them to come out of it unharmed, at any rate not worse than they were when they entered college -- we have a rule not to rely on miracles. It is certain, however, that college will not help fulfill the true and inner desire of the Jew to carry out his above mentioned task and purpose in life, so that even at best it would be an irretrievable loss of time and energy.

It is therefore my sincere hope that you will discard the idea, and do so not only because -- as you told your father -- that you wish to be guided by me, but also because you will recognize that the idea does not represent your own true thinking and desire. I hope, moreover, that you will use your good influence in this direction with your friends who might entertain a similar idea in the mistaken belief that it might be a good idea.

With blessing,



By the Grace of G-d

14th of Adar 1, 5719

Brooklyn, NY

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of January 19th, in which you write that, inasmuch as about two years ago I expressed my opinion that your son ___ should devote at least a period of two years exclusively to the study of the Torah, which I considered especially essential for his happiness, and inasmuch as this coming summer this period will be fulfilled, you bring it to my attention. I assume that you are referring to my letter of the 28th of Sivan, 5717.

No doubt you will note that I wrote there that in my opinion this period of study is considered absolutely essential, and that I said, "At least two years." This, of course, did not mean that at the end of the two years your son must necessarily go to college. Nor did I, of course, imply that college is the only solution to your son's future.

I also need hardly say that I do not go back on my word, and although you state in your letter that you expect me to honor my promise, I do not see what promise I made in my said letter, except that after the two years of exclusive study of the Torah, your son would be much better prepared to cope with any contingencies which his future life may present to deal with anyone who goes out into the world, especially a Jew.



As for the question itself regarding your son's registering in college, needless to say that the decision whether or not to enter college will have to be made by your son. I can only suggest that it may be advisable that your son, as well as you, should consult with the administration of the Yeshivah in Montreal where your son is learning at present, and who know your son intimately and the progress he has made, and what are his future prospects, etc. I may add that from the general information which has reached me, I understand that your son has become successful in his studies and, what is not less and even more important, that being in the Yeshivah atmosphere, his general character and self-assurance have been strengthened. After consultation with the Yeshivah administration, it will be easier for you to make a decision as to what your son should do in the future.

Let me conclude again in the same vein as I wrote to you in my above-mentioned letter, and with even greater conviction at this time, that your son's Torah study will certainly bring him true happiness, and that you will have much *nachas* from him, and may G-d grant that you enjoy this in good health and happy frame of mind.

With blessing,





STORIES

What does it say about a shliach . . when he sends his wife to university

A *chosson* asked the Rebbe if he should go on Shlichus to a certain city in Israel, after his marriage. The Rebbe told him to ask the rabbi of the city. He proceeded to ask the Rebbe if his future wife could continue her university studies at Bar Ilan for the next three years.

The Rebbe responded sharply, "What does it say about a shliach who is supposed to be a living example of a shliach on Shlichus, when he sends his wife to university and for 3 years!"

Handwritten note 1987
From: The Rebbe's Advice Vol V



Make sure that people will not say that Lubavitch finds it acceptable to study in college

A person wanted to name his institution Torah Or. The Rebbe told him that he specifically chose a





name which imitates the name of one of the Alter Rebbe's seforim on Chassidus.

If he does decide to use this name he must make sure that people will not say that Lubavitch finds it acceptable to study in college; since it is practically impossible to avoid this occurrence he should choose a different name for his institution. In his institution they studied secular subjects.

From: The Rebbe's Advice Vol V:
Igros Kodesh Vol 23 page 454;



Give the Rebbe good news!

I'm distressed to hear you have a reason to attend a particular college. I hope and I'm confident that you will completely abandon this reason; this good news will relieve my soul.

(This letter from 13 Elul 5710 is printed in Igros
Kodesh volume 3)





WHAT THE REBBE SAYS ABOUT TELEVISION

As Jewish parents, particularly, we should be deeply concerned at the total breakdown on these media of all barriers of morality. How can our children possibly absorb our Torah's beautiful standards of Tznius when they are subjected to such an intensive and attractive barrage of the complete opposite?

As in so many other areas, the Rebbe Shlita spoke out on this subject long before others realized the problem. Almost 40 years ago, in a private audience, he warned about the dangers of television and movies (today the same would apply to videos not produced by Torah-observant Jews). This remarkably prophetic Sicha remains highly relevant today.

...Television is an unparalleled departure from the bounds of Torah morality. Even non-Jews have recently raised a storm of protest against television because of its destructive influence on youth, and they're looking for ways of limiting it as much as possible. It's a disgrace that Jews have to learn this from non-Jews.





This is especially so after the recent cases of killings and murders by young people, which are partially a result, everyone agrees, of television and movies where one sees how people are killed and shoot each other.

Furthermore, even if someone thinks he'll watch only the "kosher" television programs that he feels he's allowed to watch, how can parents guarantee that their children won't watch other programs that the Torah explicitly forbids us to watch? They will argue that if their parents watch it, they too can watch whatever they want, especially here in America where children don't listen to their parents as much as they should.

And who can guarantee for the parents themselves? Today they'll watch a program they feel is allowed, and tomorrow they'll catch a glance at another program, and gradually they'll come to feel that everything is permitted.

We should especially ask: How did the world get by ten years ago [a decade before 1954] before television became prevalent? Didn't the world proceed in every respect just the same as now?

Another problem results when others find out that such a respected person, who wears a full beard, has a television. They don't know, of course, whether he watches only such programs that he feels are allowed, so they'll watch all programs, even those forbidden, relying upon that person's stamp of approval.

Some may ask why others who are religious or





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even Chassidic Jews have a television. However, we should not look at them as an example. By way of analogy: The 248 organs of the body aren't always all well. Some people have weak eyesight, others a problem with some other organ. Would anyone say that because someone else's eyes are not well, he wants his own eyes not to be well? It's the same on the spiritual plane: No one's perfect — everyone does as much as they can to observe the Torah and its Mitzvos. So why learn from someone else's faults?

No one who has a television will argue that he bought it for the purpose of improving his Yiras Shomayim or good Middos. Everyone has an excuse — either he bought it as a piece of furniture for his home, or for his wife's sake, or else he says he got it as a present, so how can he throw it out?

At one time, Jews would take care to avoid passing a church, preferring to make a detour. A mother wouldn't allow her child anywhere near a church, nor to see a cross. Today, with television, people bring the church with the priest and the cross into their homes — may G-d save us!

A young rabbi, who happens to be sincere and G-d-fearing, and a graduate of a frum Yeshiva, tells how he listens and watches on television every day from twelve till one o'clock when a priest speaks, and learns from the priest's sermon what to speak from his own pulpit in his Shul! He told this innocently, even under the impression that he does it for holy motives (L'sheim Shomayim) so he'll have material





to speak in his Shul, without realizing how this transgresses a serious Torah prohibition!

At one time Jews sacrificed their lives not to hear a priest's sermon; today, with television, they bring the priest into their home, and clothe this practice in Kedusha — "L'Sheim Shomayim."

That was the attitude of the early [secular] Maskilim, whose motto was: "Be a Jew at home, and a human being outside." Among them were even ordained rabbis. On the surface, what's wrong with it? The Shulchan Aruch has no prohibition against it, nor indeed do we have to go outside and announce that we're religious. So what was wrong with that motto? Nevertheless, experience has shown us what happened to them and their children and descendants, among whom not a trace of Jewishness remained.

[Long ago,] a certain Shochet in a [Russian] township started wearing galoshes (rubber overshoes), for which he was fired from his position. We may ask: what was wrong with that? Even my father-in-law [the previous Rebbe] used to wear them. However, at that time when the Shochet started wearing them, it was an innovation — the only Jews who wore them were those who dressed and acted in imitation of the non-Jewish nobility, attending their dances and dissolute celebrations. If someone would wear them, it was sign he had become spiritually corrupted. Eventually it was discovered that the Shochet and his family had indeed become corrupted.





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Someone once came to the Rebbe RaShaB in Lubavitch and asked: What's so special about remaining a religious Jew when you live in Lubavitch, closed off in your room? Walk in the streets of Petersburg and avoid committing a sin — that's an achievement!

Actually, he continued, that's also not enough. Sit at a show in Petersburg with your eyes closed to avoid committing a sin — that's a real achievement! In fact, he went on, sit at the show in the Petersburg theater with your eyes **open** and still avoid committing any sin — that's even greater! But even that's not enough. Go into the theater, close to the stage where the actresses are performing, and still avoid committing a sin — that's really a great accomplishment! And he went on to specify a whole list. You can imagine how such reasoning can lead one to the lowest depths of depravity!

You should make sure to correct this problem in your city, and you can even start right here in New York, because here this problem seriously needs correcting.

(Sicha, Rosh Choidesh Elul 5714. Translation printed with permission from Sichos in English)





VISUAL EDUCATION

Because what one sees leaves lasting impressions, especially on young children, the toys that a child plays with, and the pictures that he looks at, should not be of impure animals.

Visual images have great impact on man's mind: What one sees can leave lasting impressions for good or bad.¹ Viewing sacred objects or images has positive benefits;² pictures of impure animals harm³ the mind and soul.⁴

- 1) See Kav HaYosher, ch. 2; Kuntres HaAvodah, ch. 2.
- 2) See Midbar Kadomos, section "picture;" Sefer Toldos Adam.
- 3) This does not apply to looking at animals for the purpose of reciting the blessing over strange animals. The Kav HaYosher notes that even in such a case, "he should only look at them temporarily." The same reasoning would apply to looking for the purpose of pondering on G-d's manifold works. Similarly, visiting a zoo would also be permitted.
- 4) In many synagogues, a lion's or eagle's head is depicted on the curtain in front of the ark, and on the Torah's mantle and crown. But this is to serve as a reminder that prayer to G-d shall be in the manner of "strong as a lion" and "light as an eagle," as the beginning of the Shulchan Aruch instructs (based on Avos 5:20). Another reason may be that it parallels the Supernal Chariot on which was the face of a lion and the face of an eagle.
In similar fashion, the reason some of the tribes had unclean animals





Children are particularly susceptible, for that which registers upon the mind when young forms an indelible impression. In the words of King Shelomoh:⁵ "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Impressions etched in a child's tender mind⁶ have potent effects even when older.

There are Halachic sources for this. The Jewish Code of Law states:⁷ "Upon leaving immersion in a mikvah women should be careful ... that the first thing they encounter should not be an impure thing [such as a dog or donkey⁸] ... If she encountered such things, a G-d-fearing women will return and reimmerse herself".⁹ The reason for this is as above: looking at impure animals can have a harmful effect on an embryo. Conversely, viewing something sacred after immersion has a beneficial effect on the embryo.¹⁰

It follows, then, that one should be particularly

depicted on their banners is because each picture was associated with the quintessence of that tribe (Bamidbar Rabbah 2:7).

- 5) Mishlei 22:6.
- 6) See Rokeach, Hilchos Shavuos 296: "On the day that a child is educated about the sacred letters, we cover him up so that he should not see a dog."
- 7) Ramah, Yoreh Deah ch. 198; Sha'arei Orah, Hilchos Niddah, ch. 26; Rokeach and Kol Bo, Hilchos Niddah; See also Shach on Yoreh Deah, ch. 198.
- 8) Shach, ibid.
- 9) Midrash Eleh Ezkerah (and Sha'arei Orah ibid) cites an actual case of the mother of R. Yishmael ben Elisha the kohen gadol, who repeated her immersion eighty times.
- 10) See Berochos 20a, that through women looking at R. Yochanan after immersion they had beautiful children like him.





careful of objects and pictures that a child sees. It is a Jewish custom, for example, to hang verses from the Torah or other sacred objects on the walls of a newborn's room, or around his crib. Conversely, a parent should ensure that no pictures of impure animals should meet the baby's gaze. Children also enjoy playing with toys, such as stuffed animals. Again, only pure animals, birds, and fish, should be chosen.

As the child becomes older, it is time for him or her to learn the aleph-bais. So that the child can move easily grasp the shape of the letters, it is usual to illustrate them with pictures. Only pictures of pure animals should be used.¹¹ Similarly, the pictures of animals used to make many text books and note books more attractive should only be Pure animals.

A popular character in this country, it is true, is a ... mouse. Other impure creatures have also become well-known symbols. So wide-spread has this become that Jewish publications, which otherwise are completely kosher, have unfortunately also become infected. But it is not at all a difficult task to see to it that from now on all illustrations in Jewish text books should be only of pure things.

The importance of the above is even more

11) This does not apply when learning in Torah of the different types of unclean animals; it is obviously permissible for the teacher to draw pictures of them to facilitate understanding. As Rashi, the most famed teacher of all, comments on the verse (Vayikra 11:2) "This is the living thing" – that Moshe "showed" the Jews the animals they were prohibited from eating.





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emphasized in our times, the era immediately preceding Moshiach's coming. It is our responsibility to prepare for the Messianic era, to "taste" of¹² those things which will then be present.¹³ And one of those things will be the fulfillment of the promise "I will remove the spirit of impurity from the land."¹⁴ A fitting preparation for the Messianic era is to ensure, where possible, that only pictures depicting pure and sacred things be used.

May it be G-d's will that we thereby merit an overflowing increase of the "pure waters of knowledge," until the fulfillment of the promise "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the water covers the sea"¹⁵ — in the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

(Sicha, Chof Cheshvon 5744. Translation printed with permission from Sichos in English)

12) As stated, "Those who taste of it merit life" — see Magen Avraham, Orach Chayim ch. 250, subsection 1; Aruch Admor HaZoken, Orach Chayim ch. 250, para. 8.

13) See Likkutei Sichos, vol. 15, p. 282.

14) Zechariah 13:2.

15) Yeshayah 11:9.





Tznius

Responses from the Rebbe regarding the importance of the tznius of teachers, and regarding the appropriate length of skirts

Attire of Teachers – an external indication of the Pnimityus

In reference to what you write concerning issues not included in the evaluation of teachers, the dress of the teachers is very pertinent as understood, and not only in the older grades but also in the lower grades. Much attention should be paid to this, especially as per the story that is told, that in a certain village in the time of the Tzemach Tzedek, a Shochet was removed from his position because he was wearing galoshes. Certainly there is no prohibition against wearing galoshes. However, it is an external sign on what is transpiring on the inside, and enough was written for an understanding person.

[in that time period, it was just beginning to be the new “style,” and was not considered acceptable footwear amongst Jewish people, as the Rebbe explains elsewhere]

(This letter, from 27 Tammuz 5714, is printed in Igros Kodesh Vol. 9)





Length of skirts

... and concerning the question that I was asked by many, regarding the [appropriate] length of skirts. My opinion is known, that the measurement which is universally applicable to all souls, (of Jewish girls, may they live) and in all places, is that the knees should be covered even when sitting.

The above is, as stated, universal and the minimum.

However, there are places where the above-mentioned length is not sufficient, because in matters of tznius and similar matters, in addition to the [general] guidelines of tznius that should not be changed in any place, there are also details that are contingent on the customs of the place – contingencies to be more stringent, and not to be lenient, as is self- understood. [Therefore] every local Rov should clarify and instruct concerning how people should act in actuality.

Moreover, and this is also a fundamental point, the necessity to be stringent as befitting the customs of the place is not merely a stringency [chumroh], for it is also possible that due to the customs of the locality, it is biblical forbidden [osur min haTorah, to deviate from the custom of the locality].

(Shaarai Halocho Uminhog, Vol. 4, page 145)

