

EDUCATION DAY USA

A National Holiday

The year 5736* was declared by the Rebbe to be a “*shnas hachinuch*.” Throughout this year, as well as during the years 5737* and 5738*, the Rebbe consistently spoke about the importance of Jewish parents giving their child a Jewish education, as well as the need to raise the bar on education in general. The campaign caused a rush of activities in the area of education, including the establishment of schools and other educational programs across the country.

In recognition of the Rebbe’s work in this field, in honor of the Rebbe’s seventy-fifth birthday on Yud-Aleph Nissan 5737*, the state of New York decided to proclaim Yud-Aleph Nissan to be “Education Day.”

As Yud-Aleph Nissan 5738* approached, both chambers of the United States Congress passed a joint resolution recognizing the Rebbe’s work in the field of education, and calling for all Americans as well as the president, to set aside one day on the calendar “devoted to the importance of education to the lives of its citizens and to the general well being of the nation.” The resolution went on to declare, that because all the educational work Lubavitch has done is at the Rebbe’s

initiative and instruction, Congress is suggesting that Yud-Aleph Nissan be inaugurated as Education Day USA, “thus concluding the year of Lubavitch monumental activities dedicated to the ‘Year of Education.’”

After affixing his own signature to the congressional resolution, President Jimmy Carter issued a proclamation calling on all Americans to observe Education Day as a time to reflect on their commitment to education, and its importance to the welfare of the nation.

During the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen of that year, the Rebbe publicly thanked the United States government and the President for

the generous gesture. The Rebbe then declared that the fact that the government of America, the most powerful country in the world, had publicly recognized the importance of education, was in itself a historical step, and a sign of Moshiach’s imminent arrival. The Rebbe then spoke at length about the topic of education and its importance. The Rebbe noted that the fact that America—a central player on the world stage—had taken this step, recognizing the importance of the education its citizens receive, would encourage other countries to do the same.

The Rebbe’s words were



PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP RECEIVES A GROUP OF SHLUCHIM TO SIGN THE PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF EDUCATION AND SHARING DAY, 5778*.



AN EVENT IN WASHINGTON ON THE FIRST EDUCATION DAY, 5738*.

published by the “American Friends of Lubavitch” on a full page ad in national newspapers, prompting a reply from the President: “I read with great interest the full page ad [...] portions of your response to the resolution passed by Congress designating April 18, ‘Education Day U.S.A.’ I admire the thoughts which you expressed—and am grateful for your support and prayers.”

In the above-mentioned farbrengen as well as in additional farbrengens throughout that year, the Rebbe laid out a broader vision for this national holiday. The Rebbe spoke about a day during which people would reflect on the importance of investing in their children’s education, a time for reflection on how to better educate the child as a human being, with an emphasis on moral and ethical values. Only then, the Rebbe stressed, would the American people be able to live in a healthy and normal society, and not in the jungle the world sometimes appears to be. At the Chof Av farbrengen of that year, the Rebbe called on smaller government bodies to learn from the example set by the federal government, and declare one day a year as “Education Day,” thereby placing an official emphasis on education. The Rebbe asked that the same be done in countries throughout the world.

Ever since the inaugural Education Day, every president without fail has followed suit, each publishing his own Education Day proclamation. During a ceremony which takes place in the Oval Office before Yud-Aleph Nissan each year, a delegation of shluchim, headed by the Rebbe’s shliach to Washington D.C. Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov, look on as the President signs that year’s proclamation. The text of the proclamation varies from year to year, with every President emphasizing different points, varying in tone or style.

It is needless to point out the tremendous honor these proclamations bring to the Rebbe’s name, as well as the prestige they bestow upon Lubavitch. The proclamation’s text usually points to the Rebbe as an example for all the peoples of the nation. For example, the proclamation of 5744* declares: “The Lubavitch movement and its greatly respected leader have shown Americans of every faith that true education involves not simply what one knows, but how one lives.”

Some years, the President would publicly acknowledge in the proclamation different milestones Lubavitch has reached. In 5742* the proclamation declared: “One shining example for people of all faiths of what education ought to be is that provided

by the Lubavitch movement, headed by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, a worldwide spiritual leader who will celebrate his 80th birthday on April 4, 1982. [...] He has provided a vivid example of the eternal validity of the Seven Noahide Laws, a moral code for all of us regardless of religious faith. May he go from strength to strength.” The same occurred in 5752*, when the President took note of the Rebbe’s 90th birthday. In 5748*, the year of the Rebbetzin’s passing, the proclamation saluted the Rebbe’s “lasting achievements in education, as well as those of his late wife, the Rebbetzin Chaya Moussia Schneerson.” More recently, in 5780* the President recognized the year as marking 70 years since the Rebbe accepted the *nesuis*.

Today, in countless countries worldwide, shluchim are invited to the government offices of their country, state or city, to be presented with their president’s, mayor’s, or governor’s proclamation declaring Yud-Aleph Nissan as “Education Day.” This timeless tribute, to the world’s most important leader, will forever be treasured and observed.

1. Additionally, for many years the Rebbe would also visit the Ohel on Yud-Gimmel Nissan (*hilula* of the Tzemach Tzedek) — twice in four days.
2. It should be noted, that in the *sicha* of Rosh Chodesh Nissan 5742, the Rebbe asked that instead of people traveling to New York for Yud-Aleph Nissan, the time should better be used for *mivtzoim*.
3. Yud Aleph Nissan 5745, et. al.
4. See “Yoma Tava L’Rabbanan” in issue 1 for details.
5. Hamelech B’mesibo vol. 2 p. 173.
6. See “Yoma Tava L’Rabbanan” in the previous issue.
7. The Rebbe’s new *kapitel*—51.
8. See *Eighty Years—5742* in the previous issue.
9. My Encounter with the Rebbe, vol. 13.
10. Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo 5723.