

# *A Chassidisher* **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

חינוך על טהרת הקודש

## PURITY OF THE MIND

*Educating children only with Torah*

**From Harvard to 770**

PROFESSOR YITZCHOK BLOCK

**“My Personal Guests”**

THE STORY OF THE “ORCHIM”—THE CHASSIDIM WHO TRAVEL FROM FAR AND NEAR TO SPEND THE MONTH OF TISHREI WITH THE REBBE

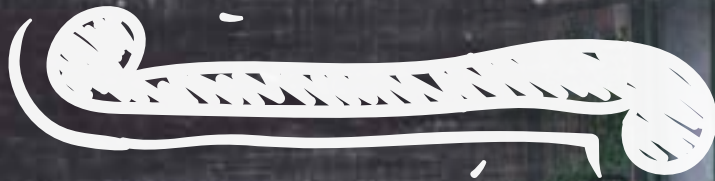


ELUL 5780  
ISSUE 97 (174)  
DECEMBER 2020

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לזכות  
הת' יהושע חיים שיחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתו ה' אלול  
שימשיך ללכת מחיל אל חיל  
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אבא וזוגתו מרת  
טויבא יונה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
פרידמאן



*At all times, and in all places, no-one is allowed to desecrate the religious sentiments of their fellow, even if they are coming from the government, and especially not in this free country.*

*Especially now, at a time when our brothers and sisters are being cruelly murdered, slaughtered, and butchered by the Agagi [the Nazis]*

*At a time that terrible danger hangs over the holiness of the land of our fathers, may Hashem have mercy on the land and on us,*

*At a time when our Jewish brothers of America are risking their lives on the battlefields of land, air, and sea,*

*At a time when this country needs heavenly mercies that the enemy not come to our shores and nearby, and that the American army and its allies succeed in the war for justice and peace,*

*At a time when the president of this country, President Roosevelt, is stirring the [nations's] feelings of belief, so that every nation turns to their G-d, that the light will overcome the darkness,*

*—At this time the members of the committee are considering a decree—may it never be—that touches on the apple of our eye, to desecrate what is holy to us.<sup>1</sup>*

With these stirring words, the Friediker Rebbe rallies against a possible law requiring *limudei chol* to be taught in the morning, before *limudei kodesh*.

What is so horrible about such a law that merits such a response? More generally, what is the Lubavitcher philosophy about studying secular studies in schools? Should all schools be teaching *limudei kodesh* exclusively? Should parents pull their children out of the secular studies program? Did the Rebbe agree to a secular studies program?

In the following article, we will explore the Rebbe's opinion on this matter, taken directly from the *sichos* and letters on the subject.

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE WITH LIMUDEI CHOL?

What, exactly, is the problem with secular studies, and what is included in secular studies?

In *perek ches* of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe explains various levels of *kelipos*, and how each of them affect a person: frivolous talk, *lashon hara*, and so on. Secular studies, the Alter Rebbe says, have a uniquely detrimental effect on a person: whereas other things affect a person's emotions and such, secular studies defile the *mind*, they make a person's very brain *tamei*.

The Rebbe points out that the Alter Rebbe doesn't use the term *assur* or *passul*—but *tamei*, impure. When something becomes *tamei*, there is no apparent trace, it doesn't look any different. Yet—it changes fundamentally, to the extent that anyone who even touches it for even a single moment cannot enter the Beis Hamikdash! *Tumah* is so serious that it affects even a newborn child: In no other area are an old person and an infant the same—except *tumah*; when an infant touches *tumah*, even he changes fundamentally, and cannot touch *kodshim* or *terumos*. From this we can understand the seriousness of *chachmos chitzoniyos*: it makes one's mind *tamei*!<sup>2</sup>

This is more serious by children than adults. Naturally, the mind of a child is completely pure of sin—like Gan Eden before the sin, or when Moshiach comes—and the only way it can become impure is if one goes and introduces impurity to it. Thus, one must be very careful not to defile their minds by teaching them *limudei chol*.<sup>3</sup>

This is especially true in the early few years of a child's education: “The first three years of a child's studies,” the Rebbe said, “are the most important foundation for his future success—yet they take a child and defile his mind with English, grammar, and so on!

“If only adults wouldn't know these things either! How much more so children, until nine-years-old, twelve-years-old—I would say even later, but *tafasta meruba lo tafasta...* Hashem says that He doesn't need Gan Eden, he doesn't need the Beis Hamikdash—all He wants is to dwell within them, within the mind of a Yiddishe child—yet they take this mind and defile it with secular subjects!”<sup>4</sup>

This refers to all secular subjects, not only subjects with anti-religious content, like philosophy. As the Rebbe explains in a letter, the Alter Rebbe explicitly writes that he is referring to subjects that are *kelipas noga*—neutral in content, including math and such (as well as grammar and English as mentioned in the *sicha* above).<sup>5</sup>

## THE TRUE STANDARD

Thus, it's clear from the Rebbe's letters and *sichos* that the ultimate goal is for the students to learn purely *limudei kodesh*. In an uncharacteristically warm letter, the Rebbe congratulates Rabbi Moshe Pinchas Katz upon enrolling his eight-year-old son (Rabbi Zev Katz) in an entirely *limudei kodesh* class:

*I was happy to receive your letter with good and blessed news that you arranged for your son Zev Yechezkel Shlita Hakohen to learn limudei kodesh the entire day, and that you also helped arrange a special track for this purpose. Thus, you have the merit of the public as well... This [zechus] is multiplied, for every single day that your son learns limudei kodesh in the hours that he would have been learning other studies... May you report good news constantly and forever...*

Obviously, you may show this letter to everyone else who did the same thing, and you should certainly show it to those who haven't yet made the truly good choice, and who haven't yet received these merits. "Every action bears fruit," especially when you speak with words that come from the heart and enter the heart. May Hashem give you success to be a good shliach in this lofty endeavor as well.<sup>6</sup>

In one revealing letter, the Rebbe encourages someone to continue their fight for purely *limudei kodesh*: "It is shocking that there are people giving reasons against [learning purely *limudei kodesh*], for there is no rational reason for it (although it seems that their logic is being twisted by their will)... May Hashem give you the merit and success *tzu durchbrechen dem eiz* [break through the ice] that seems to exist in your community, and may you transform this coldness to the light and warmth of holiness, the light and warmth of Chassidus."<sup>7</sup>

In fact, the Rebbe wrote that children themselves might feel an instinctive revulsion to secular studies. In a letter about a child who "prefers playing over learning, especially secular subjects," the Rebbe begins with an assurance that there's nothing to be concerned about, for it is very normal for children to enjoy playing, especially at that age.

But, the Rebbe adds, "you should reduce the amount of hours spent on secular studies—if you cannot cancel it completely—for perhaps this is a sign that he does not want to learn secular studies (although he himself does not understand the deeper reason for it), and it's also affecting his *limudei kodesh* studies."<sup>8</sup>

The Rebbe also advised such an approach for parents who wanted their children to be healthy. "You should minimize, at least, the amount of *limudei chol* that they learn until a certain age, and add in their *limudei kodesh*—they will pick up the *limudei chol* from the streets... By doing so they will be more healthy physically, for Yidden need to have harmony between body and soul, and when their neshamah gains, their body gains as well."<sup>9</sup>

## SECULAR STUDIES— TOOLS IN LIFE?

But how will a child succeed in life without the tools of a basic education? How will he make it without a rudimentary English?

In an emotional farbrengen<sup>10</sup> on Simchas Torah 5715\*, the Rebbe spoke strongly against such a mindset. If something is useful to us, the Rebbe said, the Torah, our guidebook instructs us to do it; if we would need to study English and secular subjects in order to make it in life, there would have been a *din* written in the Torah that we need to learn it. But not only does Torah not mandate it, Torah explicitly forbids it and tells us that it defiles the mind! This means that it will not help a person in life at all, but to the contrary!

"Some people think that they can outsmart Hashem; instead of using the tools that Hashem gave us for success, in Torah, they will look for their own methods of success—to study English—and then they will be successful. They must remember: Hashem created the world 5,714 years ago. Since then, he has been running it as he wishes, according to Torah, and he will continue to do so!

"Hashem gave the Torah to the Yidden over 3,000 years ago, and our *batlanishe* nation that does not learn grammar, etc. is standing strong! All the other nations, with all their *chachmos*, are gone. The Yidden, the *batlanishe* nation that has no *chachmos* and no expertise in the ways of the world—are standing strong, holding on to the Torah!



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“Thus, the argument that these studies will benefit them has no standing... Yet the parents come and steal years of their children’s lives! What right do they have to steal their children’s years! Is that why Hashem gave you children, so that you can take from their lives?! If you can’t overcome your *yetzer hara*, should you be putting that on the lives of your children?!”

(In the following *sicha*, the Rebbe said that if anyone was thinking that these words were applicable to them, they should know that it was meant for them. “You should know that I meant it for you! And you should start listening!”)

As the Rebbe put it in another *farbrengen*<sup>11</sup>: “The Rabbeim gave us a warning, that if anyone comes and argues that you must think about the future of the children and teach them secular studies, then you must disregard how they are giving their message, whether they are speaking openly or dressing it up in the style of our sages—because this is the *yetzer hara*! He might be quoting *maamarei chazal*, but he is distorting them...”

“Throughout all the generations, Yidden would cover the child with a tallis to bring them into *cheder*, so that they wouldn’t get affected by the *ayin hara*—meaning the *satan* and *yetzer hara*—which cannot handle Jewish children learning Torah. Instead of that, people are taking Jewish children and putting them into the hands of the *yetzer hara*, to tear them away from Torah!”

## THE REASON WHY SOME SCHOOLS DO TEACH IT

If it is so important to only study *limudei kodesh*, why is it that many religious and Lubavitcher schools do, in fact, have secular studies?

1. The main reason (mentioned by the Rebbe often when discussing this issue) was the legal challenges involved.
2. Another reason is that this could attract additional students who would only attend a school with secular subjects.

This brought about a nuanced approach, as the Rebbe writes in a letter to Rabbi Shmuel Abba Senig of Munich:

“Regarding the founding of a school where they would study both *limudei kodesh* and *lehavdil limudei chol*, this varies depending on the place and the people. We find both extremes: In certain situations, our Rabbeim opposed it completely; in other situations, they helped such schools from behind the scenes, although they themselves didn’t establish them. This was very rare but it did happen sometimes. Thus, you must judge the situation and decide.”<sup>12</sup> (In another letter to him, the Rebbe writes that it depends on the situation in the community and whether such a school would be pulling them to the right or to the left.<sup>13</sup>)

Thus, Rabbis Nachman Sudak and Avraham Korf related that when they set about to start day schools in their respective communities, the Rebbe instructed them to include a secular studies program, which would attract students from the broader crowd.

In a *sicha*, the Rebbe gives deeper insight into this: Being that we are coming closer and closer to the *geula*, it is critically important to reach every single spark of *Elokus*—even if we must be lenient in certain things in order to do so. That’s why, the Rebbe said, the Rabbeim stopped fighting wars against *limudei chol*—even though it used to be completely out of the question—for it enabled them to reach more and more sparks. However, the Rebbe added, this was only after they taught

the children more Chassidus, as a counter for *limudei chol*—and one must never forget that it's only a temporary solution.<sup>14</sup>

## SECULAR SUBJECTS IN BEIS RIVKAH

Following the *sicha* of Yud Shevat 5737\*, when the Rebbe spoke forcefully about going on *mesiras nefesh* to keep the purity of education (see below), the director of Beis Rivkah, Mrs. Chana Gurevitch, asked the Rebbe whether they should cancel the *limudei chol*.

The Rebbe replied:

That is **utterly impossible** with the current laws, the *dina dimalchusa*, here [in New York]!

(Igros Kodesh vol. 32 p. 112)

## DON'T LOSE SIGHT

The Rebbe explained that the Rabbeim's occasional support for *limudei chol* can be compared to the approach of doctors helping patients:

In a hospital, the patients have unique lifestyles: They rest the entire day without working; they have many meals a day; they walk around in white gowns; they imbue special medicines that are dangerous if taken in the wrong quantity; and so on. This is what will heal them.

But imagine if you would take a healthy person and put him in the hospital to live the hospital lifestyle, to rest the entire day and do nothing else. Not only wouldn't it help him, he would get dangerously sick!

The same is true with the educational institutions that teach *limudei chol*: These were established to help people who have a spiritual sickness in one of their spiritual limbs, in one of the mitzvos. Torah demands from us to have these institutions to help these people, and we must do everything possible in order to develop and strengthen these *mosdos*, in order to save Jewish *neshamos*—each of which is an entire world. But everyone must remember that this is like a hospital! It's only being done because there is no other way to heal these *neshamos*!

This is especially important, the Rebbe pointed out, for the people who are involved in the schools—the teachers, parents, and students.

Returning to the example of a hospital: Regular people would never dream of trying the lifestyle of the hospital. But people who have been sick and were hospitalized—they are the ones who must constantly remember that this isn't how life is supposed to be and that they should never get used to it! This applies also to the doctors who work the entire day in the hospital saving lives: They must never forget that this is only for sick people, and if they were to treat healthy people in the same way—they would be harming them.

The same is true in the schools with *limudei chol*: One must always emphasize to the people intimately involved—the educators, parents, and even children—that they should not be lulled into the notion that this is a healthy approach; it is only

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meant to heal the spiritually sick and gather all the spiritual sparks. As soon as one is healthy—one should begin acting like healthy people.

## UPLIFTING THE LIMUDEI CHOL

In a letter to a Rabbi Shneur Zalman Serebransky, who was having legal difficulties dedicating time in his school to *limudei kodesh*, the Rebbe advises him to fill the *limudei chol* with holiness: To study Jewish history from Tanach, and so on. (This was only a temporary solution, and the Rebbe advised him on lobbying the department of education to enable them to study more *limudei kodesh*.)<sup>15</sup>

The Rebbe had this outlook on a more general plane as well: All *limudei chol* should be studied in an uplifted manner. At one farbrengen the Rebbe said that he didn't even want to use the term *limudei chol* because the truth of the matter is that they should be studied in a pure manner, *al taharas hakodesh*, so that the *limudei chol* is a preparation for the *limudei kodesh*. For example, the Rebbe said, math should be studied with the goal of understanding the mathematical calculations in Eiruv, or the astronomical calculations of Kiddush Hachodesh.<sup>16</sup>

## THERE ARE NO LAWS ABOUT YOUR ATTITUDE

This was also the Rebbe's message for yeshivos and schools that have *limudei chol* for legal reasons: There is no law about your *attitude* towards *limudei chol* and *how* you should approach it.

Now, even regarding the existing laws one must have the correct attitude, as the Rebbe said in a *sicha*<sup>17</sup>—which was later edited and published: “Your focus should be less on fulfilling the laws of the country and more on fulfilling the mitzvos and laws of, *lehavdil*, Hashem. You swore an oath to do so at Har Sinai before there were ever laws of this country.” Of course, existing laws need to be adhered to, the Rebbe added, but there is no requirement about your attitude.

In a letter to a national conference of heads of yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe puts it succinctly: “Being that students are impressionable, both from direct influences and indirect influences, they are certainly affected by the attitude towards these two subjects [*limudei kodesh* and *limudei chol*]. It is absolutely necessary for the child to see clearly that although both of these subjects are studied in the yeshiva, the primary focus is the study of our living Torah, and the secular studies are only secondary and much less important than the main thing.”<sup>18</sup>

The child must always know that although he studies both subjects, they are not the same at all: During *limudei kodesh* he is studying holiness and purity, and then, during *limudei chol*, he is studying subjects of nature—and only because there



are spiritual sparks there. He should therefore give it only the minimum attention necessary.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the Rebbe saw that many educational institutions had gotten their priorities wrong: Instead of remembering that the secular subjects are only there for legal reasons, they put greater emphasis on the secular studies than *lehavdil* the *limudei kodesh*.

The Rebbe pointed to several areas that schools need to focus on in order to keep their priorities straight:

## THE EMPHASIS ON LIMUDEI KODESH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In a Purim farbrengen,<sup>20</sup> the Rebbe quoted a Gemara that explains that the Yidden were given the terrible decree of annihilation because “they enjoyed the banquet of that *rasha* [Achashveirosh].” But, the Rebbe, asked, why was attending so bad?

The problem wasn’t that they ate non-kosher food, the Rebbe said; and the problem wasn’t so much that they actually attended the banquet. The problem was that their pride and enjoyment *stemmed* from dining with the *rasha*—they enjoyed the banquet *because* it was the *rasha*’s.

It’s one thing to attend the banquet—even a *tzadik* can fail at a *nisayon*—but why are you enjoying it? And why are you so proud that you merited to sit with this *rasha*?!

The same is true with schools, the Rebbe said: It’s one thing to teach *limudei chol* because of the requirement to do so. “But why do you enjoy the banquet?! Why do you enjoy the fact that a student knows what Shakespeare wrote?!<sup>21</sup> If you think that there’s no other way, at least go into a room and cry about the fact that this is what you must do. But instead, you have deep pleasure that you arranged for another 30 children to eat from the banquet of the *rasha*!”

Why, the Rebbe asked, are schools *more* proud of their students’ secular accomplishments than their *limudei kodesh* accomplishments? Why are they so proud that they were able to impress even a non-religious teacher?!

When a student knows by heart 100 *blatt* Gemara or a certain amount of chapters in Mishnayos—it’s taken for granted. No-one gets overly excited, not the *roshei yeshivos*, not the teachers, and not even the parents. Of course, the parents are happy but they won’t buy him a car for it; the *yeshivos* are happy but they don’t publicize it.

But when a student is proficient in the works of Shakespeare, or some other drunk, and can deliver an analysis of the language and psychology—that’s when a *gevaldiker shturem* is made. The administration and *roshei yeshivos* publicize their amazing “accomplishment:” That they took a *bochur* who could have studied *limudei kodesh* all day, and instead they put him into the “the banquet of the *rasha*” so that he has successfully studied Shakespeare and even his secular teacher must admit that he is good! The parents are so excited that they purchase him a car, send him to the country on vacation, and make family events complete with photographs.

They themselves know that this child doesn’t come close to the one who finished 100 *blatt* Gemara so why don’t they publicize in the newspapers that the student completed this and this amount of Gemara?!

This attitude affects the children as well and ruins the very foundations of their education. When the children see that when they know this-and-this amount of

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lines written by “that rasha,” *es iz nisht shaychus tzu zogen*, everyone is excited. But when it comes to the words of *lehavdil*, Abaye and Rava, the Rambam, *rishonim* and *acharonim*, until the Rama—*meheichi teisi*, it’s no big deal! *Dayecha she’ani u’boraacha makirim kochacha!* (It’s enough that only a few people and Hashem know about this accomplishment.) You can just imagine the effect it has on a student!

The Rebbe directed his words to the schools as well as the parents: Make sure to show the child that your true *nachas* comes from their accomplishments in *limudei kodesh*.

## STAFFING PRIORITIES

Another area the Rebbe pointed to was staffing priorities. He decried the fact that many schools put a higher priority on their secular teachers than their *limudei kodesh* teachers, paying them more and on time, and accommodating their requests more readily.

In a warped way, this makes sense, the Rebbe explained.<sup>22</sup> The school knows that the *limudei kodesh* teacher would never quit due to lack of payment: “Being that he’s a *frummer Yid*, he will certainly not leave his job because of the mitzvah of ‘teaching your children’... He is obligated to teach because of Hashem’s commandment, we’re doing him a favor by paying him. Thus, he takes whatever he is given, and whenever it comes... Whereas the secular teacher is not fulfilling a mitzvah, and if he’s not paid he’ll go look for a job somewhere else.”

However you want to explain it, the children see one thing: The secular teachers are being paid twice or three times as much as the religious teachers. Not only that, but the religious teachers need to run after their checks; and even then—they receive head checks for a few months later, until they get another head check... The children will find out this information, and they will come to a simple conclusion: secular studies are more important!

(During this *farbrengen*, the Rebbe established a lending-fund to advance money to teachers that had been given head checks from the school.)<sup>23</sup>

This inappropriate attitude expressed itself in other ways as well. The heads of schools promote their secular programs, the physical textbooks and classrooms are higher quality, and even the donors are expected to give less for the *limudei kodesh*. “When it comes to a building for secular studies they find someone to give a quarter-of-a-million dollars, another person to give a million, a million and a half, two and a half million; they can even find a big donor if they teach *limudei kodesh*—as long as the focus is on *limudei chol*. But when it comes to a building for purely *limudei kodesh*, then even “*chai*” dollars is considered a large donation...”<sup>24</sup>

At the very least, the Rebbe said, there must be equality between the secular and religious subjects.

## LIMUDEI KODESH IN THE MORNING

One major point of emphasis by the Rabbeim was that the *limudei kodesh* must be in the morning, for all classes. As they quoted, “ראשית עריסותיכם תרימו תרומה,” “לה” —the first and the best part of the day—when the student’s mind is fresh—must be dedicated to studying Hashem’s Torah. The legally mandated secular studies should be in the afternoon when the child is tired.

(Although the Rebbe did not spell it out clearly, it is obvious why this was such an issue: it can be difficult and costly to arrange. When the schedule is flexible, the school can arrange that the teachers for *limudei kodesh* and *lehavdil limudei chol* switch off between classes, so that they are working the entire day. When all *limudei kodesh* is in the morning and all *limudei chol* are in the afternoon, the school often needs to employ double the amount of teachers.)

But the Rabbeim considered it to be a fundamentally important issue. In 5702\*, the board of education of New York wanted to coerce the Jewish schools and yeshivos to have their *limudei chol* in the morning. The Frierdiker Rebbe came out forcefully against this effort, decrying it as a horrible *gezeira* against Yiddishkeit, desecrating the holiness of Torah. “It must be explained clearly... that putting *limudei chol*—*lehavdil*—before *limudei kodesh*, cannot be done; they must know that they are desecrating the religious feelings of our nation.”<sup>25</sup>

In several stirring letters from the time, we see a glimpse of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s work in this area, as he lays out plans of action to deal with the government and to raise awareness in the Jewish community, emphasizing that no compromise was on the table.<sup>26</sup> “All Yidden, no matter their affiliation, must join in demanding that this horrible decree be nullified,<sup>27</sup>” he writes.

The Rebbe also took a strong stand on this issue, speaking about it in several *sichos* and corresponding about it to heads of schools.

One (unnamed) school wrote to the Rebbe that they wanted to begin having *limudei chol* in the morning for certain classes. After reminding them that *limudei chol* is in yeshivos only for legal reasons, and that one should never go further down the path of *strengthening* the *limudei chol* program, the Rebbe added:

“In order to make it easier for you, so that you can convince yourself and your supporters, consider this: For about 10 years, you have stood strong in this issue, and notwithstanding all the challenges and difficulties and costs associated with it, you prevailed that *limudei kodesh* should come first. Now, we all believe and hope every single day that Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come and take us out of our physical and spiritual *galus*, so imagine to yourself that you made this change—that after 10 years of standing strong, you gave in at the very last moment; when you and your students go out of *galus*, your institution will be counted among those who begin

## WHAT IF IT’S IMPOSSIBLE?

Rabbi Berel Gurevitch, director of the Beis Rivkah of France, seemed to be experiencing serious obstacles in having *limudei kodesh* in the morning. The Rebbe writes to him that if it is completely impossible to arrange that *limudei kodesh* is studied the entire morning, one can compromise *bedochak* if the day begins with one class in *limudei kodesh*. Thus, the first part of the day is dedicated to Hashem—ראשית עריסותיכם תרימו תרומה—לה—although really *all* the morning hours should be dedicated to *limudei kodesh*.

(The Rebbe concludes by advising Rabbi Gurevitch to find another way around the problem. “Find other people to influence this person, so that she agrees to continue as it was.”)



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the day with ABC, and then only afterwards do they have—*lehavdil*—Alef, referring to Hashem (*alufo shel olam*)...<sup>28</sup>

## WE MUST BE MOSER NEFESH!

Raising the standards of our children's *chinuch* is a critical priority, for which we must be *moser nefesh*, as the Rebbe said in a powerful *sicha* on Yud Shevat 5737\*:

*Due to the laws of this country and others, a horrible situation has come to be: Children cannot go through a school-day without studying limudei chol. This begins from the age of five (when they begin Chumash) and continues through the ages of 10 (when he begins Mishnah), 13 (when he becomes bar mitzvah) and 15 (when he studies Gemara).*

*We must take a lesson from the [Friediker Rebbe], the baal hahilula: He literally risked his life, and sent others to risk their lives, to establish chadarim for Jewish children, where they would study **al taharas hakodesh**, only limudei kodesh, without changing any of the educational standards that Yidden have used throughout the generations.*

*How much more so in our days, and in our country—where there is no physical danger, chas veshalom: The greatest effort must be invested that the children's education should be purely limudei kodesh, without any limudei chol, except when the law gives no leeway at all, and only to that extent.*

*...I am certain that with a bit of effort and focus, one can immediately minimize the amount of time that Jewish children spend on limudei chol, and dedicate much more*

## YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT

Notwithstanding the nuance in the Rebbe's approach to *limudei chol*—he even gave several oral directives to shlichim about *limudei chol* in their schools, as above—we find several letters to yeshivos and schools where the Rebbe demands and encourages them to bring up their standards—and certainly not drop them.

“Regarding *limudei chol* in your yeshiva,” the Rebbe writes to Reb Folle Kahn, “this is an area where one needn't be scrupulous—it is, in fact, wrong to be scrupulous... It's come the time to be more ambitious in this regard. You should be the leaders in this area, for 'Hashem is with us' and there's nothing to be afraid of... especially in such a thing, that the Rabbeim considered to be a fundamental priority, וד"ל.”<sup>30</sup>

To another head of school: “The tremendous amount of time spent on *limudei chol* and exercise on the account of *limudei kodesh* time—is horrifying. *Hagam lichbosh es hamalka imi babayis!*”<sup>31</sup>

To the administration of Tomchei Temimim of Lod the Rebbe writes, “You write about changing the curriculum of Tomchei Temimim and putting *limudei chol* into it, even for a few special classes. I don't know what the *breitkeit* is... to change the study curriculum of Tomchei Temimim established for so many years.”<sup>32</sup>

time—in quality and quantity—to limudei kodesh. If ones make the decision knowing that it is a necessity—for that is how the Alter Rebbe paskens in the laws of Talmud Torah—then he will certainly succeed.<sup>29</sup> **T**

1. Igros Kodesh Maharayatz letter 1,427.
2. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 3 p. 1837-1838.
3. Toras Menachem vol. 27 p. 103.
4. Toras Menachem vol. 15 p. 73-74.
5. Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 403.
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 43-44.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 14 p. 43.
8. Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 293
9. Ibid. vol. 8 p. 24
10. Toras Menachem vol. 13 p. 73-76.
11. Toras Menachem vol. 27 p. 105.
12. Igros Kodesh vol. 20 p. 120.
13. Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 297.
14. Toras Menachem vol. 19, p. 116.
15. Igros Kodesh vol. 12 p. 452-453
16. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 3 p. 1838; 5747 vol. p. 521
17. Likkutei Sichos vol. 16 p. 145.
18. Igros Kodesh vol. 22 p. 221-222.
19. Toras Menachem vol. 16 p. 143
20. Toras Menachem vol. 33 p. 226-234.
21. It should be noted that in a letter to the Rebbe (in 5737), Rabbi Shmuel Lew wrote that he had heard that the Rebbe was against allowing students to study Shakespere. However, he wrote, in England it is mandatory for all ages to study Shakespere, and he asked how to proceed in the Lubavitch schools in London. The Rebbe replied that he wasn't responsible for these rumors, and that obviously if it was mandatory, it should be done. See Igros Kodesh vol. 32 p. 94.
22. Toras Menachem vol 40. p. 321-326.
23. Ibid.
24. Toras Menachem vol. 33 p. 189.
25. Igros Kodesh Rebbe Rayatz 1,427.
26. See Igros Kodesh Rebbe Rayatz 1,428; 1,431-32, and in the footnotes there.
27. Ibid. 1,427.
28. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 1,635.
29. Likkutei Sichos vol. 16 p. 145-146.
30. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 119.
31. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 237.
32. Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 249-250.
33. Igros Kodesh, letter 1,810.

## DON'T WASTE THE TIME

At times, the Rebbe encouraged people to pull their children out of the secular program of the school, with one condition—that the time be filled with *limudei kodesh*. In one fascinating exchange, the Rebbe addresses a couple, where the husband wanted the child to study only *limudei kodesh*.

To the wife, the Rebbe writes: *Speak to [your husband] and I said many times that wasting time is worse than anything else, and it damages the hours spent studying as well. It is therefore necessary to arrange (together with other parents) a schedule of learning that will fill all spare time (like Oholei Torah, etc). If you do not wish to do so, for whatever reason—the children should be enrolled in the regular yeshiva schedule.*

To the husband, the Rebbe writes: *I already answered clearly: Wasting time is out of the question. If his time will be filled with limudei kodesh (so that his schedule is no shorter than the other students)—then there is no point in limudei chol.*

The Rebbe writes a similar point to the administration of Tomchei Temimim Montreal: You will certainly arrange that the students who—appropriately—are not studying *limudei chol*, will not do nothing during that time; they should be busy learning other subjects or reviewing their studies. The main thing is to have supervision so that they don't waste their time.<sup>33</sup>