



THE HIPPIE MOVEMENT



CHABAD OF CALIFORNIA

The late 1960s in America were years of social upheaval and discord. Thousands of young Americans (including a large amount of young Jews) were swept up in a new lifestyle of “freedom”—rejecting the norms and rules of the “establishment,” seeking to create a new social order. These hippies caused a whole lot of anguish for their parents, and their lack of restrictions made life tough on the authorities as well.

While the older generation bemoaned the frightening state of affairs, the Rebbe identified the root of the issue and emphasized the great opportunities the counterculture revolution presented for Yiddishkeit.

The following is a synopsis of how the Rebbe addressed the issue:

THE EDUCATIONAL VACUUM

Recently, a disastrous new style of education has become popular. Instructing children how they should behave is undemocratic and presenting a clear and straightforward path of moral and ethical thinking is too stifling. They are encouraged to explore and seek out their own path as they choose.

Nonetheless, as the time for bar mitzvah approaches, parents feel the social pressure to have their child perform well. Their synagogue membership is at the least demanding one in town and periodic attendance

at services is done out of duty. They badger the boy to rehearse the blessings of the *haftarah* and promise him a new car as a reward for putting up with the whole spiel.

The father is preoccupied with business and the mother is involved in the social scene, so the child needs to search for direction on his own. There are so many paths out there and to discover the true path of Torah, much *sayata dishmaya* is necessary.

The tragic results of this approach are, unfortunately, on public display. The youth see right through the transparent ideological dishonesty of their parents. They realize that a

lifestyle of competing with neighbors for social status and acceptance is not worth emulating. When the parents bemoan the fact that the children are a source of shame, the children respond simply: What have you offered us? You live a life devoid of true meaning. If you have a pathway to correct this, we are ready to join you. Otherwise, we will find the truth on our own.

A faulty educational model and the ideological bankruptcy of the parent have caused a major generation gap, forcing the youth to dabble in various new ideas and lifestyles, far from the truth of Torah.

INDEPENDENCE AND PASSION

The good news is, that today's youth are emboldened to reject these falsehoods. True, the reckless and sometimes violent behavior of the hippies is cause for concern. However, with the proper guidance, their unmitigated energy, independence and passion can be channeled in the proper direction.

When the *meraglim* scouted out Eretz Yisrael, they were alarmed that

“the people who inhabit the land are extraordinarily mighty . . . and we even saw the descendants of giants.”¹ Whereas the erroneous *meraglim* were intimidated and frightened by the unnatural strength they discovered, Yehoshua and Kalev correctly perceived it as a reflection of the great opportunities Eretz Yisrael presented.²

THE PROPER APPROACH

Many in positions of Jewish leadership and education are apprehensive about today's youth. “How can we influence them to observe all 613 mitzvos? They will surely reject our authority and be lost to Judaism forever.”

The hippies represent a generation of youth endowed with giant reservoirs of strength. They expect to be treated as adults and are waiting to be presented with a challenge. There are two conditions in succeeding with them. 1. Do not compromise one iota of *halacha*. Watered down Judaism will disappoint them. 2. Speak genuinely and passionately. “דברים היוצאים מן הלב, ונכנסים אל הלב—Words spoken from the heart, will penetrate the heart.”

Educate them of the all-encompassing life of *shmiras hamitzvos* and guide them on a path to gradual observance of every detail of *halacha*. Although at the beginning, observing one mitzvah at a time is advised, the knowledge that the expectation of them is the entirety of Torah, will be refreshing to their passionate hearts.

On the surface, their fierce independence seems to be an impediment to *kabbolas ol malchus Shamayim*; but the opposite is true. When one independently comes to the realization of the truth of Torah, the commitment to a life of *shmiras hamitzvos* is all consuming and unbreakable.³

UNLEASH THE REVOLUTION!

Their natural independence and lack of intimidation is a recipe for a positive revolution. If even one of these young people were to be inspired to the truth of Torah, he would stop at nothing to spread the word to the next person, who would, in turn, do the same—setting off a domino effect of a mass return to Yiddishkeit.

The independence of today's youth presents another unique opportunity. No longer is it necessary to influence the parents to educate the children in a proper Torah way. Today you can approach the youth directly with the truth of Torah and mitzvos and they will embrace it without the interference of their preoccupied parents.⁴ Upon delightfully basking in the *nachas* of their children, the parents will joyfully follow them in their newfound path.

INEVITABLE SUCCESS

We are all collectively responsible to influence the youth to follow the time-tested true path of Torah and mitzvos. *Chazal* teach that the members of Sanhedrin would travel through the hills and valleys of Eretz Yisrael educating the children in the outlying villages and farming communities.⁵ No one is considered too learned or legitimately preoccupied with holy affairs to be absolved from educating our youth. This urgent task must occupy the

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מרדכי צבי שיח'
לרגל הולדתו ג' אדר ה'תשע"ז
ולזכות אחיו
ישראל שיח'
ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת ח'
מושקא שיחיו שעיו

נדפס ע"י זקניהם
הרה"ת ר' משה אהרן וזוגתו מרת נחמה
דינה שיחיו ומשפחתם קראסניאנסקי
הרה"ת ר' אשר דוד וזוגתו מרת דניאלה
דיזי שיחיו ומשפחתם שעיו

attention of every Jewish leader and organization.

Success in this mission is a given; whether you will merit to see the fruits of your labor in real time, or if it takes weeks or months for the truth to penetrate. Every ounce of energy invested in educating today's youth will not go to waste.

In previous generations, it was possible for a Jew to be lost to Judaism. Since there was a substantial amount of time until the arrival of Moshiach, it was possible to delay the elevation and refinement of that particular *neschama* for later. Today we are on the dawn of *geulah* and delay is not an option. The assurance that “בל ידח ממנו נדח—No Jew will be lost” will surely be realized in our time. We must do our part. **1**

1. Shelach 13:28.
2. Toras Menachem, Vol. 53 p. 138.
3. *Michtav kloli*, Yemei HaSlichos, 5728. Igros Kodesh Vol. 25 p. 251. It is interesting to note that the Rebbe dedicated half of the *michtav kloli* to the situation of the youth.
4. Toras Menachem, vol. 53 p. 52.
5. Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabba, Chapter 27.



MAIN SOURCES:

19 Kislev, 5728. Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 334 – 346.
Listen to the recording: Chabad.org/ 551413
13 Tammuz, 5729. Toras Menachem vol. 57 p. 88 – 95.
Listen to the recording: Chabad.org/ 551503