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AWAKENING

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**RABBI SHMUEL
AVIDOR**

5728*

Shmuel Avidor: What should I write in the newspaper about maintaining the spiritual awakening of the Six-Day War?

The Rebbe: I began with *mitvza tefillin*, but the truth is that people can be influenced even in the most difficult areas—even *taharas hamishpacha*, which is extremely difficult; even someone who understands [its importance] may not agree to [begin] observing it, because he does not wish to create a difference between children [who were born while *taharas hamishpacha* was not being observed] and children [who will be born while *taharas hamishpacha* is observed].

We must see to it that Yidden should attend shul on Shabbos; but not by making the argument that “since today is Shabbos, you must go to shul,” because that will have no effect. Everyone differentiates between Shabbos and the weekdays. Even people who go to the beach [on Shabbos] take different food than they do on other days of the week. The day is not ordinary; they feel a bit festive. But even though they feel festive, they’re not observing all the other [Shabbos] observances; the things they do because it’s Shabbos don’t extend to the rest of their activities. For this reason, impressing upon them to come to shul “because today is Shabbos” will have no effect.

The very fact that a person goes to shul makes him feel more connected to all Yidden. Even someone who doesn’t daven at all—if he spends time in shul, he will eventually end up saying a short prayer, or a *kapitel Tehillim*, until,

eventually, he will daven together with everyone. A person might hear a speech that will bring fundamental change in his daily life. Just as davening Shacharis is intended to bring holiness not only into the time spent davening, but into the entire day, transforming it; so too, [bringing Yidden to shul] will transform them.

The Six-Day War deserves a real response; it must bring fundamental change in Yidden—*mesiras nefesh*. Not *mesiras nefesh* of the body, rather as the Alter Rebbe explains: to give up one’s will, as the *possuk* says “My will (*nafshi*) is to this nation.”

I argued about this with a certain *rosh yeshiva*, and he told me that the transformation must be in the form of an increase in fixed times for Torah-study. *The Rebbe explained:* This isn’t particularly connected to the Six-Day War—one should always be increasing and improving in all areas. Here, there needs to be a fundamental transformation, which will be caused by [bringing Yidden to shul]. *The Rebbe continued at length to describe the positive affect this would have.*

Regarding settlement in [the newly reclaimed] Old City of Yerushalayim the Rebbe asked why it is being prevented. It was a mistake not to expel the Arabs. They should have told each Arab: “In truth, you have incurred the death penalty for treason, but instead, take 100 Israeli Lirot, pack your bags and leave.” Then, they would have come to Egypt or Syria and settled there, telling of the good that there is in Israel—how in truth, they had incurred the death penalty,

In Memory of our Mother,
 Bubbie and Great Bubbie
 Zissel Bas Dovid A”h
 Reiter
 In Honor of Her First Yartzeit
 Second day of Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5779
 Dedicated by her
 Loving Family sheyichyu



but the Jews are merciful and descend from merciful people, and therefore allowed them to go.

Instead, the Arabs were allowed to remain in their places, where they speak badly [of the Israelis]. The elections are coming up, and since Israel is a democracy, they will vote, and who knows what will be. Certainly, the Israelis will build them new neighborhoods in the place of their ruins.

I was never in Egypt and I never spoke to [Egyptian President] Nasser, but I am certain that he had no doubt that the Sinai Peninsula belonged to Israel, and he did not dream that he would get it back. The rest of the world thought the same. Israel itself allowed the thought [of returning the land] to hold sway. This is an enormous, irreparable mistake. If they were motivated by fear of Russia, America should be afraid of Russia, not Israel.

They’re waiting for immigrants to arrive in Israel, but who knows when they’ll come. Even when they do come, they aren’t native-born Israelis and aren’t as capable of developing it. They need to urge an increase in the birth rate—to say that Israel has grown larger and must be settled. I am certain that [the Israeli citizenship] will listen, and there will be tens of thousands, or even 100,000 more children born. Native-born Israelis are more familiar with the land and are more capable of developing it.

Rebbi Chanina Ben Dosa was accustomed to miracles occurring for him constantly, but we are not. When a miracle happens, it increases people’s *emuna*. But if there are many miracles, people can be under the impression that it was their own power that caused it. This is what happened during the Six-Day War—there were many miracles, and there was reason to expect people to claim that it was their own power. So Hashem said, “Try it on your own, and see if you have the power.” So far, there has been failure after failure.

Is the awakening in Israel still going on?

Shmuel Avidor: It has cooled off a lot, but some still remains, particularly among our Sefardi brethren.

The Rebbe: Everyone has been awakened, but only by the Sefardim is it revealed. In general, it’s easier to have an



SHMUEL AVIDOR (LEFT) SPEAKS WITH SHIMON PERES AFTER HIS YECHIDUS, SHEVAT 5730*.

effect on them, for by nature, they show their feelings, while the Europeans conceal their feelings.

Shmuel Avidor: Should newspapers publish debates between religious and secular people?

The Rebbe: No. If people ask questions on their own, they must be answered and the question must be resolved, but if no one is asking, you don’t need to create questions. Especially since by doing so you would be giving them prominence and turning them into a force to be reckoned with. You would be inviting them to the newspapers and this in itself will cause them to be obstinate, especially since once they write a question, it’s taken as a valid question, and because it is possible that there will not be a good answer, the question can have more of an effect than the answer.

Shmuel Avidor: They demolished houses in the area of the Kosel. The government deliberated whether or not to do it.

The Rebbe: They did well. Even had they not done this, they would have been asked for compensation. It’s good that there was one *chutzpadike* person who took a bulldozer and demolished the houses. In truth, [U.S. President] Johnson also knew that the bulldozer wasn’t driving around there by accident, but the higher-ups required there to be an explanation.¹ ①

1. On the fifth night of the Six-Day War, Yerushalayim’s Mayor Teddy Kollek called upon civilian contractors to demolish the old Moroccan neighborhood that was built right next to the Kosel, paving the way for the Kosel Plaza to be built. To avoid outcry and to distance any official government organizations, civilian contractors, rather than military, were used, and it was done at night. Those who made the decision to demolish the buildings intentionally did not seek international approval.