

לזכות

התמים ברוך שמואל שיחי'
בשבח והודי' להשי"ת על
מילוי בקשתינו לרפואתו
ולזכות בריאות איתנה בגו"ר
לאורך ימים ושנים טובות
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יוסף וזוגתו מרת ביילא
ומשפחתם שיחי'
בראקמאן

A CHASSIDISHER SUMMER

New Perspectives

The word summer itself conjures up feelings of freedom, happiness, and warmth. All winter we sit bunched in our coats, locked in a classroom or an office, and dream of summer. When the bell rings on the last day of school it's as if the prison walls have collapsed. Students run to escape as quickly as possible, looking forward to the next few months of fun.

Some people bemoan this state of affairs. School shouldn't feel like a prison they say; just because it's warm outside doesn't mean one should be running around. They contend summer is no different than winter, nothing should change, and life goes on.

Others welcome the summer. It's a chance to cast off the heavy yoke of responsibility and have a good time.

As usual, the Rebbe turns the whole concept on its head. The Rebbe revolutionized the way we look at and act in the summer.

The guiding factor is לא ברא הקב"ה בעולמו דבר אחד לבטלה¹, Hashem did not make anything without a reason. If a certain reality exists, then it must be another opportunity to add in *avodas Hashem*. The Rebbe does not ignore the fact that summer is a time of freedom and fun, but he also does not see that as a negative thing.

A SPIRITUAL TIME

Externally, the biggest change in the summer is that the sun is out more. This alone shows us that as the physical world mirrors the spiritual, on a spiritual level the sun is shining brighter as well.

The summer months, when the "שמש הוי", the light of Hashem is shining brightly, are (mainly) dedicated to the neshama. In these months, the body does not conceal as much on the soul, and therefore a Yid can and must be



busy with neshama matters in a truly revealed way...

This is different than the winter, when the sun is not shining as much and it's cold. In those months, the main avoda is with the body, to work on refining and elevating the body.²

With the sun shining and nature in full bloom, the world suddenly opens up. The trees are full and the flowers are blossoming. This too is a lesson in *avodas Hashem*:

When the trees are flowering and nature's splendor is in full view, we make the bracha שלא חיסר בעולמו כלום [this is known as ברכת אילנות]. We must use this for kedusha as well and learn a hora'a in avodas Hashem—just like the trees are growing and expanding, we too must grow and thrive in our avoda.³

Making a bracha on the very nature of summer is already *avodas Hashem*. This, together with the lesson we must take, shows us how even on the most basic level, the Rebbe changes

the summer from a time of physical indulgence to spiritual growth.

A FESTIVE SEASON

Besides for more sun—a metaphor for G-dliness—there is another reason that summer is a spiritually uplifting time:

Chassidus explains that during the summer it is easier to serve Hashem than in the winter.

The simple explanation for this is that every Yom Tov has a spiritual effect on a person, and in the summer the Yomim Tovim are closer together, so the spiritual effect is stronger, and it is easier to serve Hashem.⁴

In the long winter months, the memories of Tishrei can start wearing off before Pesach is even in sight. Whereas in the summer we go straight from Pesach to Shavuot with barely any time to catch our breaths. This spiritual boost propels us until Rosh Hashanah is just around the corner.⁵

ישיבת כרכים קשה - City Life Is Hard

All that we spoke about regarding spreading Yiddishkeit to every Yid, even one who is far away, is especially relevant now, at the end of the school year and beginning of summer.

First of all we must be aware that graduation is not the end of learning, only the end of learning a specific thing. From there we move on to learning even more, or in a new place. So it's not really an end but rather a preparation for the next step.

In addition, the graduation is in the summer when some of you leave to the country. Even those who stay in town are not in school. All this extra time and no oversight could seem like an chance to distance oneself from Torah and mitzvos.

*It is incumbent upon every Jewish woman and girl, to promise not only **herself** to have a spiritually and physically healthy summer but to also influence those who are far from Torah values.*

Another special summer mission: By those who are not part of the "גוי קדוש", the holy nation, during the summer all standards of modesty are weakened and the temptations become stronger. There is a need for extra attention to ensure the proper tznius in the summer, no less than in winter time.

(Sicha to the graduating class of Beis Rivka—1 Tammuz 5726)

A staple of summer life is going on vacation. Whether it is to visit grandparents, taking a road trip with a mobile home, or going to the country, there is hardly anyone who doesn't travel over the summer.

While there is nothing wrong with leaving town per se, the mindset that all productivity is put on hold for a period of time is antithesis to Torah and Yiddishkeit. If someone had to travel to relax and regain their strength, the Rebbe encouraged them to not lose sight of their mission in life.

In a *sicha* shortly after the Entebbe rescue, the Rebbe recounted a conversation that he had with a rabbi:

I tried telling a rabbi that after such a story [the Entebbe rescue] he must use the chance to inspire his community to put on tefillin and put up mezuzos. He told me that now he has to relax, so he's going to the country. After he comes back in six to eight weeks, then he will start working on this.

He's going to the country, and he'll come back with a nice tan and with prepared speeches that he made there for the Yomim Tovim, and then he'll think about something he should be doing tomorrow.

He said that when he comes back from the country, I should remind him about this. Why should I have to remind him? It's his community! You need to make sure they put on tefillin and have mezuzos. The baalei baatim pay his salary, they pay membership to the shul, and that's how he can afford to go to the country; at least repay the favor!

Last year he went to the country, and then he also shouldn't have gone. If only he would have not gone, he could have accomplished a lot more. So it's bad enough that he went last year, but this year after such an incident, how can he go? He has to inspire his community!⁶



THE REBBE VISITS CAMP GAN ISRAEL IN UPSTATE NY, 15 TAMMUZ 5720*.

Really we should make a huge shturem: how could it be that a school is closed for the entire summer?!

On one occasion the Rebbe referred to going to the country as “a vilder minhag,” a wild custom:

In this country there's a wild custom, that for the summer everyone leaves the city and goes to the country for two and a half months. The result of this is a decrease in Torah learning.

Businessmen too, even though in the summer the business is slow and you would think they have more time to learn Torah, in reality there is not too much Torah learning during this time.⁷

A SILVER LINING

While our instinct would be to simply decry completely the notion of the country and its pitfalls, the Rebbe instead saw it as another opportunity for growth.

First of all, in the country there is a lot of extra time. All this time could be used for learning more Torah than usual.

Yehi ratzon that your vacation should have the desired outcome of increased health... See Rambam, Hilchos Deos, beginning of perek daled: Maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of G-d, etc.

This would apply even more so to a healthy soul. And if all year one must be concerned with this, then for sure in a time when one is occupied primarily with bodily health, it is vital to be aware of the potential “strong body [leads to] a weak soul” (תוקפא דגופא חולשא דנשמתא).

This is not just a nice vort, but a practical issue, to transform the days and idea of bodily rejuvenation into strengthening the soul. Namely by adding shiurim during vacation and

by finding opportunities to inspire other people whom you meet on vacation in Torah and mitzvos.

...We don't know the hidden agendas of Divine providence, so perhaps the true purpose of all of you coming to this place is to add precious gems to the crown of Melech Malchei Hamelachim. My father-in-law, the Frierdiker Rebbe, promised that any proactivity will have an effect, and he is trustworthy and reliable.⁸

The Rebbe compared going to the country to ‘הוי גולה למקום תורה’, exile yourself to a place of Torah.

People willingly go into exile, they pay huge sums of money to live uncomfortably in small bungalows, much smaller than their own homes. Not to mention the schlepping back and forth and packing and unpacking.

Once you're in exile though, turn the גלות into a מקום תורה. You have the power to make a whole new מקום תורה, a place of Torah. Don't forgo the opportunity!⁹

A NEW SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

As we saw at the end of the above letter, the Rebbe saw another advantage in going to the country—an opportunity to meet new people and have a positive influence on them.

In a letter to someone involved with Chabad schools, the Rebbe even advised him to utilize the fundraising opportunity.

It would be good to inspire the baalei batim involved in the school, that when they are in the country they should use every opportunity of meeting new people

to get them involved in supporting the yeshiva.¹⁰

NO VACATION

As Yidden and Chassidim we know that at every moment of our lives we are on a mission—to spread Torah and mitzvos. Yet for some reason, the attitude that summer is “vacation time” makes people feel like they have nothing to lose by being unproductive during that time:

The yetzer hara has a strange ploy called ‘vacation,’ and to our utmost dismay this idea has been adopted even by many otherwise G-d-fearing people. They say vacation is different, work has no place then. They say this without realizing that it is the opposite of the Torah view, that ‘אדם לעמל יולד’—man was created to work.

There are no extra days and extra hours, each person was given the exact amount of time that he needs in order to accomplish his true purpose... therefore any moment that is not utilized is an irretrievable loss.¹¹

On many occasions the Rebbe publicly criticized schools which closed for the summer, and called on the administrations to keep their schools running through the whole year.

*What is this idea that children are ‘exhausted’ from the school year? They're not tired; quite the contrary, they **grew and thrived** over the past year!*

Really we should make a huge shturem: how could it be that a school is closed for the entire summer?!

How is it possible that a ‘beis chaim’—in a good way—¹²a house of life, which refers to Torah היא חיינו, should be closed even for one day, and certainly not for many weeks and months.

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summer, but how can one even bring up money when **lives** are at stake!¹³

Not content with rebuking the schools, and not relying on them to fix the problem either, the Rebbe addressed the children directly in a *michtav kloli*:

*Beloved children, you must know that vacation does not mean a break from learning and education. A Jewish child must never be without Torah learning and proper education for even one day, summer or winter. On the contrary, taking into consideration the free time that students have in the long summer days, you must utilize them to review everything you learned and prepare for the future.*¹⁴

With schools closed and teachers on vacation, the Rebbe once suggested that parents could hire them as private tutors for their children. After all, it's not everyday that there are hundreds and even thousands of teachers available.¹⁵

CAMP

Today most children go to camp. Although the Rebbe was a strong advocate for schools staying open, he also saw the tremendous benefit that can come from going to camp. In fact, camp can be so beneficial for children, that the Rebbe even applied to it the *possuk* 'שבע יפול צדיק וקם'—that from a negative thing we end up even higher.

This is a unique maala of camp even compared to the school year. In camp the children live for an extended time in an atmosphere of holiness and Yiddishkeit, with no possibility of negative influences

*from foreign winds. In this time it is possible to imbue the campers with a spirit of Yiddishkeit more than during the rest of the year, in a way that the good influence of camp will even effect the rest of the year.*¹⁶

IN CAMP EVERYTHING IS FUN

Many children feel forced to go to school. They would much rather be playing outside or stay home than be dragged into the classroom.

This is another beautiful thing that happens in camp—the children want to go!

Everything that happens in camp is fun, including the learning. Learning in camp is full of fun and excitement, part of a big program.

In such an environment, it is much easier to educate the campers. As the Rebbe concluded about this:

*This is the maala of camp, that in a certain sense it can be a better educational experience than the rest of the year.*¹⁷

EVEN THE STAFF

This is true for campers, but what about the hundreds of staff? Aren't we depriving them of valuable education time? Shouldn't they be in yeshiva learning?

In a *sicha* expounding the great benefits of camp, the Rebbe explained how everyone benefits, not just the children.

Camp was made to strengthen the body. When we approach our physical health with the knowledge that this will

It was the custom that *bochurim* returning from *shlichus* in yeshivos would stay in 770 for the summer and not go to camp or Merkos *shlichus*.

In the summer of 5735*, Rabbi Sholom Spalter had just returned from two years of *shlichus* to the yeshiva in Melbourne, Australia, when the Rebbe said the *sicha* of 'הוי גולה למקום תורה' [see above 'A Silver Lining'].

After this *sicha*, he was asked by Gan Yisroel Montreal to come to camp as head staff. He wrote to the Rebbe and was sure he would get a response to stay in 770 as was customary. To his surprise the Rebbe responded that he should indeed go to camp.

"He's going to the country, and he'll come back with a nice tan and with prepared speeches that he made there for the Yomim Tovim, and then he'll think about something he should be doing tomorrow."

help us serve Hashem, it becomes a part of our avodas Hashem.

Additionally: Even if in the child's mind he is just having fun, with no intention of serving Hashem—and we know that the Alter Rebbe says in Tanya that when someone eats or engages in any physical activity solely for pleasure, then this action becomes part of שלש קליפות הטמאות—this however only applies to an adult, who has his own opinion. A child who is not yet capable of forming their his opinions, his actions count but his thoughts do not... So it is not relevant whether he is relaxing leshem Shamayim or for fun. It is similar to simply eating with no motive, not for pleasure and not for holy reasons.

This type of activity is much easier to elevate to holiness.

This is the uniqueness of camp—that it is created for the physical rejuvenation of children under bar mitzvah.

To take this even further: Since this is the very nature of camp, it drags with it even those who are above bar mitzvah and elevates everything they do in Gan Yisroel.

The campers will go on from here and bring what they learned in camp, and all the added yiras Shamayim, home with them to their parents and siblings and the whole family.¹⁸

NOT FOR EVERYONE

Although camp is a really special place, and on some levels even more effective than school, the Rebbe cautioned against applying this as a blanket rule for all children.

Some kids thrive in camp. The lack of a rigid structure and the freedom are exactly what they need in order to learn and grow. Other children however do much better in school. Some children can benefit from camp, but maybe not for a full two months. Then there are those kids who would enjoy camp, but the camp nearby isn't a good fit for them.

For this reason, the Rebbe strongly encouraged schools to at least give an option to stay in the summer. That way, parents can decide on their own where they think their kids would do better, and not deprive the school type of kid from a productive summer.¹⁹

In conclusion, we see how the Rebbe totally changed the perspective on summer vacation. Far from being a vacation from productivity, it is a tremendous chance for good things to happen. The Rebbe even turned schools closing into a positive, with the founding of Gan Yisroel.

May all our dear readers have a wonderful, rejuvenating, happy, healthy and productive summer. ❶

1. Shabbos 77b.
2. Lekutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 382
3. Toras Menachem vol. 11 page 256.
4. Toras Menachem vol. 14 p. 60.
5. Toras Menachem vol. 14 p. 60.
6. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 393.
7. Toras Menachem vol. 34, p. 243.
8. Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 344.
9. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol. 3, p. 21.
10. Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 372.
11. Likutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 300.
12. 'Beis hachaim' usually refers to a cemetery. Here the Rebbe uses the term 'beis chaim' literally—a house of life.
13. Toras Menachem 5745 vol. 4 p. 2450.
14. Igros Kodesh vol. 4 page 328.
15. Sichos Kodesh 5733 vol. 2 p. 2.
16. Toras menachem 5743 vol. 4 p. 1894.
17. Toras menachem 5745 vol 3 p. 1912. See also Vol 23 p. 115.
18. 16 Tammuz 5716. Printed also in Bineos Deshe p. 39.
19. Sichos Kodesh 5733 vol. 2 p. 3.

Since it is Shabbos Mevorchim Elul, so without waiting for everyone to come back from the country on the appointed day which is called Labor Day... we should already start with the avoda of Elul. In Elul, Hashem goes to the country - מולך בשדה.

(Toras Menachem 5722 vol. 3 page 243)



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