



לזכות  
 הרה"ת ר' נועם שמעון הכהן  
 וזוגתו מרת כוכבה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
 כהן  
 ולע"נ מאיר הכהן בן רוזה ע"ה



# Is Language Important?

15 Iyar, 5728\*

To the representatives of the parents of the students of the Talmud Torah in Kfar Chabad, Eretz Yisroel...

I received your letters, the point of which asks the question: which language should be used when learning with the Talmud Torah students.

As I replied on the phone, my opinion is as follows: The goal of the Talmud Torah is to educate the students in the love and fear of Hashem, and to teach them Hashem's Torah

and mitzvos, which "Longer than the earth is its measure, and wider than the sea." This is why our sages cautioned us about not stopping children from learning to the point where they even forbade [Torah-students to be idle] for the sake of building the *Beis Hamikdash*. With this in mind, it is obvious that the language in which the students learn is not the important thing. What is important are the points I mentioned: [increased] efficiency and the increase—qualitatively and quantitatively—in the knowledge of Torah and mitzvos.

[1:] (It follows, therefore, that if the language of instruction has an influence on the students' fear of Hashem, then deciding which language to use is important in this regard.)

2: It is obvious that, for many reasons, the language of instruction should not be changed in the middle of the school year (unless it is absolutely necessary to do so).

3: If conditions are met—including the above-mentioned condition that the language used does not affect the students' fear of Heaven or their adherence to Shulchan Aruch—then you should not impose upon the parents which language will be used to teach their children, but instead to explain to them—if their concerns are unwarranted—that just as in other areas, the language of instruction will be decided based on the opinions of the majority of the parents.

4: Kfar Chabad is unique in that—to my immense anguish—people jump at every opportunity to create conflict and discord. This is the *yetzer hara's* trick: it cloaks everything in the guise of fear of Heaven. From the letters from the administration and the parents it is clear that the same thing is taking place here. It is therefore recommended that a search be made by candlelight—“Man's soul is Hashem's lamp”—to determine what the reasoning is of each of those involved in this new dispute.

In summary: On the phone, it didn't sound like you wanted to change [the language of instruction] immediately, and as above, it should not be done in the middle of the school year. There is plenty of time for deliberations before the beginning of the next school year, and so you should deliberate again about these concerns before the beginning of the upcoming school year. The deliberations should focus on the above point regarding the goal of the Talmud Torah.

Regarding your mention of specific advantages that Yiddish has, it is doubtful whether imparting these advantages is part of the duty of the Talmud Torah, or the duty of the parents and the atmosphere [they create] in the home.

The main thing is as follows:

It is shocking that you don't mention a crucial detail about the students: I've heard from multiple sources something inappropriate about the students' behavior, particularly on Shabbos, Yom Tov, and the days preceding these days, as well as their behavior in shul on weekdays as well. True, some of the responsibility for this falls upon the teachers, for the students' education should inform their behavior even outside the walls of the school. The primary responsibility, however, falls upon the parents—the father and the mother—who must impart good *midos* in their children using all the resources at their disposal. Even if



they are busy with other things, this must be their priority. This holds true on school days, and all the more so on Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov afternoons as well as Shabbos and Yom Tov, when the primary responsibility falls upon the parents.

Since everything must be used to promote Torah and fear of Hashem, it is my hope that the enthusiasm and *koch* in the issue of the language in the school—which, as above, is only relevant immediately before the upcoming school year—will be used in the greatest way to guide the students in good *midos* and fear of Hashem in things that fall outside the jurisdiction of the school's topics of instruction—things like *brachos*, davening as one should, honoring parents and grandparents, and courteous behavior toward their fellows (teaching about treating others with respect is especially vital during *Sefiras Haomer*.)

As soon as you receive this letter, all of the parents—Ashkenazim and Sefardim, regardless of which language they prefer—should assemble for a meeting. They should deliberate about this problem—the behavior of the students. In addition, they should discuss the students' timeliness to class and their obedience. They should hold these discussions with the appropriate seriousness. The deliberation should lead to action: on the spot, they should elect a committee of parents, who will be held responsible from then on for the children's behavior. They should select a number of parents who will carefully supervise the children. They should also take additional measures to correct and improve the present state of affairs.

I hope to hear good news in a letter sent in reply to this one. The essential point is that everyone should become genuinely closer to one another, and each of them—and all of them together—should do what they must to ensure that it should be said of the students in the Talmud Torah—along with all the students in Kfar Chabad—that all those who see them (at home and outside, on weekdays, Shabbos, and Yom Tov) will recognize that they are “children blessed by Hashem,” fulfilling the will of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, founder of Kfar Chabad, as he expressed and demanded many times.

May you have good news in all of the above, speedily.

(*Igros Kodesh* vol. 25, p. 142)