

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' אייזיק גרשון
בן ר' אברהם זאב ע"ה
נלב"ע ב' מר-חשוון ה'תשנ"ג
תנ"צ'ב"ה

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' אברהם זאב
וזוגתו מרת הינדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
מינץ



Kollel

Establishing a Kollel is a novelty that I myself wanted to institute. For 180 years, Lubavitch never had a Kollel. I wanted to create a new phenomenon: that *yungeleit* should *kuch zich* in learning!

(The Rebbe on Shabbos Parshas Ekev 5733)

Sitting and learning after getting married is a multi-faceted, almost conflicting subject.

The Alter Rebbe writes in Hilchos Talmud Torah that, “Even after getting married, a person can still learn Torah undisturbed for two or three years, before he has a lot of children...”¹

Despite these strong words, the Rebbe explains that in today’s day, sitting and learning in Kollel indefinitely is halachically and morally incorrect:

“Regarding what you write about arranging a Kollel for the married students of the yeshiva:

“The Torah’s ruling in this matter is well known, that a mitzvah which cannot be done by anyone else trumps every other task. In our day and age, being involved in rabbinics and Torah-true education for the community is a matter of literally saving lives!

“To have tens of capable *yungeleit* sit and learn all day, while hundreds and thousands are screaming for help (though perhaps unknowingly), drowning in the fierce waters [of assimilation] flooding the streets; water which has now unfortunately penetrated homes as well—one has to wonder, who would permit such a thing?

“If only people would have realized this danger just one generation ago and sent the yeshiva students fresh out of graduating their yeshivos to take care of the Yidden being lost to assimilation and drifting off the way of Torah and mitzvos. In this manner, there would now have been tens of thousands of more students in yeshivos, shuls and *batei-midrash*.

“It is unnecessary to expound on something so painful and shocking. It seems there are still some *roshei yeshivos* who follow this path, thinking ‘At least I have saved my own skin...’

“...Imagine if the child [lost to assimilation] who needed to be brought back to Torah and mitzvos

was the only son or daughter of the greatest *rosh yeshiva*. Would he still lock himself up in a room relying on miraculous salvation, as long as he can study Torah for a few extra hours each day?”²

Nevertheless, on the Rebbe’s 60th *yom huledes*, Yud-Aleph Nissan 5722*, he laid the groundwork for establishing a Kollel:

“People have already gotten used to the fact that whenever I sit down, there will always be a new ‘*gezeira*.’ I don’t like that it’s referred to as a *gezeira*. We don’t take away anyone’s free choice!”

The Rebbe quoted and expounded on the Alter Rebbe’s words in Hilchos Talmud Torah about studying Torah for two or three years after getting married, and said that he’d like to bring this matter to everyone’s attention and requested that everyone should increase their own Torah study.³

A short while later, the Kollel was established.

The first *yungerman* enlisted in the Kollel was Reb Aharon Chitrik *a”h*. He related:

“When I got engaged in the winter of 5722*, I was summoned by the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim and told that the Rebbe wished to open a Kollel, and that I should be its first member.

“As the wedding day approached, I was concerned about supporting my family after getting married, so I asked the members of *hanhala* for some more details: who would be taking responsibility for this new Kollel and so on. My father, Reb Yudel, was not in a position to provide financial assistance, nor was my father-in-law, Reb Leib Kahn. With only a few weeks left to the wedding, I was starting to get worried.

“The next Shabbos, the Rebbe spoke about the concept of Kollel and I understood that the Rebbe was referring to me and my situation. Later, when I went into *yechidus* before the wedding, the Rebbe told me ‘I am taking responsibility.’ It seemed to me that the Rebbe was responding to my concerns.

“On the night before my wedding, I was summoned by Rabbi Hodakov and told that I would be given a monthly stipend as a member of the



* 5722-1962



new Kollel. Learning would begin the next year, at which time he hoped more *yungeleit* would join.”

Indeed, a few more *yungeleit* joined the Kollel. One of the members was Rabbi Zalman Lipsker, who related in his interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*:

“After our wedding, I became part of the founding group of the Kollel that the Rebbe established. Rabbi Hodakov called me and informed me that he had arranged for my father-in-law to support me in part, while the Kollel would provide some support as well; that way I could join and learn with peace of mind.

“The members were myself, Reb Aharon Serebransky, Reb Yosef Deitch and—*ybchl*”*ch*—Reb Aharon Chitrik *a*”*h*. We learned in the *ezras nashim* of 770, and Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin would give us occasional *shiurim*.

“We were also tasked by the Rebbe with publishing a *sefer*. The Rebbe instructed us to put together *mareh mekomos* for Likutei Torah. We split up the different tasks, and each week, on Motzei Shabbos, one of us—picked by rotation—would go into the Rebbe’s room to present our work from that week. I merited to go into the Rebbe’s room in this manner three or four times.

“Usually, it was very brief; we just entered and gave the Rebbe the pages of work from the past week; no words were exchanged...”⁴

The Rebbe’s Kollel

As the Rebbe himself said that the Kollel is “my responsibility,” the Kollel remained a *mosad* especially close to the Rebbe and under the Rebbe’s *nesius*. The story is told that the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin asked the Rebbe that the *yungeleit* should learn

directly under the Rebbe, and that the Kollel should carry the Rebbe’s name. The Rebbe agreed, though the Rebbe’s name was only added to the stationary in recent years.⁵

The Rebbe also insisted that the Kollel be seen as directly connected to the yeshiva. In fact, the Rebbe did not agree that the Kollel should be relocated to a different building, not adjacent to 770.

At times, the Rebbe himself assisted with paying the salaries of the Kollel’s members.

When Rabbi Shmuel Lew married the daughter of Reb Zalmon Jaffe, the Rebbe wrote to Reb Zalmon:

“In regard to your daughter and son-in-law, Rabbi and Mrs. Lew, they have no doubt written to you about the arrangements, in accordance with their suggestion, namely their desire that Shmuel should learn in the Kolel... What follows next was not

discussed, not even mentioned with your daughter and son-in-law, but I raise the matter here in connection with your mentioning the weight of the financial burden which you have had in the past in supporting them. I suggest that you should write to me (without involving them in the matter) what sum you would consider easy enough for you to send for their support in the future, and I would then בע"ה find a way to make up the difference..."⁶

Over the years, the Rebbe underscored the importance of learning in Kollel for the first years after marriage. "This is the proper way for Yidden to start out [their new life]," the Rebbe writes in a letter.

Kollelim in Eretz Yisroel

Early on in the Rebbe's *nesius*, an idea was raised by the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim in Eretz Yisroel to establish a Kollel for the graduates

of the yeshiva. The Rebbe responded in a letter that "this idea of a Kollel is not out of the question, though it is entirely new to Chabad..."⁷

The Rebbe stipulated that the *yungeleit* should be capable; ones who can later serve as *roshei yeshiva* and *mashpi'im*, and that at least some of them should be dedicated to the study of Chassidus.

The idea finally came to fruition in 5724*. Perusing the Rebbe's *horaos* to Reb Efraim Wolff of Eretz Yisroel, we learn that each *yungerman* who wished to join the Kollel needed to get special permission from the Rebbe.

In most instances, the Rebbe wanted *yungeleit* to remain in the Kollel for no longer than two years, after which they were to find an adequate *parnassa* and support their families. There were exceptions to this rule, however they would need explicit permission from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was constantly updated on the goings on of the Kollel and demanded detailed reports on the progress of the *yungeleit*. In one instance, the Rebbe noted that he received a report but it was missing the signature of a *mashgiach*!⁸

Although the Rebbe sees the study in Kollel as a direct continuation of yeshiva, he still stipulated that Kollel may not be for everyone. If a *yungerman* is not completely and totally immersed in his studies, he has no justification to attend Kollel. He is better off getting a job and earning an honest living instead of supporting himself from funds allocated for people who only want to learn. (See *ksav yad kodesh*.)

In a letter to a *yungerman* who was studying in Kollel because he couldn't find another way to support himself, the Rebbe writes:

"You need to be very careful and not make a habit out of not looking for

The Name

On numerous occasions, the Rebbe explained the meaning of the name "Kollel":

The word Kollel indicates that all the people enrolled in the Kollel are included in one entity. Not "*Kollelim*" in the plural sense, but one "*Kollel*"—connected with the One and only Hashem ("חידו של עולם").

On another occasion the Rebbe explained that Kollel does not only mean that all the members are included in one entity ("*Klal*"), but that they actively include (they are "*kollel*") others in their group as well.

(6 Cheshvan 5752;
20 Av 5740; et. al.)



RABBI EFRAIM YOLLES, CHIEF RABBI OF PHILADELPHIA, MEETS WITH THE KOLEL YUNGELEIT IN Kfar Chabad, 14 Iyar 5728*.

a proper job. The natural instinct of a person is to sit and not do anything. Instead, you need to really think about a stable means of income...”⁹

At the same time, the Rebbe strongly encouraged *yungeleit* to study in Kollel for a year or two after marriage, setting the foundation for their home on the base of Torah study.

Additionally, the Rebbe explained that studying in Kollel serves as a preparation for a lifetime of *shlichus* afterwards. As the Rebbe wrote to one *yungerman*:

כדי להצליח בשליחות צ"ל הכנה מתאימה ומהם עכ"פ שנה אחת לימוד תורה בחיות און מיט א קאך כו'. הכבר עשה זה?

*In order to be successful on shlichus, one needs an adequate preparation, including at least one year of Torah study with vigor and with a "koch" etc. Did you already do this?*¹⁰

Time is Precious

Given all of the above, the Rebbe was very scrupulous and extremely demanding when it came to the standards expected from members of the Kollel.

Yungeleit are being compensated to learn diligently; not to waste their time.

When the Rebbe received a report for the Kollel Tzemach Tzedek in Yerushalayim on the positive progress of the Kollel members, along with test results, the Rebbe wrote a comment directed to the administration of the local Kollel in Crown Heights:

מזכ': להראות הנהלת ולחברי הכולל

שי' - דכאן ולשאלם: (א) היש כאן משה דומה להנ"ל או יותר מזה - כיון שנתייחד כאן מכר"כ שנים לפני"ז. (ב) באם הן - למה לא הודיעני בשו"ט. (ג) באם לאו - היש מי שהוא וואס עס הארט עס. (ד) באם הן - מה עשה להתקון (אין כוונתי לאמתלא שאחר צריך לעשות). (ה) באם לאו - אולי כבר בא הזמן (יותר מג' שני חזקה) "לגמור" הכולל - גם לדעתם שהרי באם באלו שצ"ל נפשם חשקה בתורה אין כהנ"ל - הרי הכולל משמש רק הצדקה לבזבז ולבטול זמן - היפך מש"נ: אדם לעמל יולד.

(המענה קודם י"א ניסן)

[Instruction] to mazkirus: Show this to the administration and members of the local Kollel and ask them:

1) Is there **anything** here similar to this or better, being that this [Kollel] was established many years earlier. 2) If yes, why have I not been notified of the good news. 3) If not, is there anyone whom this bothers? 4) If yes, what are they doing to fix it (and I don't mean by providing an excuse that someone else needs to do it). 5) If not, perhaps the time has come (now that it's past three years; a "chazakah") to close the Kollel, even in their opinion. If people who supposedly long to learn Torah don't have [a system] like the one mentioned [in the letter from Yerushalayim], then the Kollel is only a justification for squandering and wasting time; contrary to what the possuk says: **Man was created to toil**.

([I need an] answer before Yud-Aleph Nissan).

In countless *sichos*, the Rebbe reminded the members of the Kollel (often in sharp terms) of the great responsibility they carry, to utilize their time wisely and learn Torah diligently without distractions.

On one occasion, the Rebbe asked, "Why is it that when he accidentally cuts his finger, the first thing he does is run over and write me a letter? If he doesn't get an answer within a few days he immediately sees it as if I have a 'kpeida' on him and he's not worthy of receiving an answer; he wants me to daven for him and help him out, etc. The question is: If you believe in me, why would you not want to fulfill my wish ('נאך געבען מיינע תאוה') and sit and learn Torah diligently?"¹¹

Royal Visit

At one point, the Rebbe decided to visit the Kollel on his own and inspect the situation.

It was Tuesday, 27 Iyar 5733*—right before Shavuos. At that time,

the Kollel was in the house directly behind 770 on Union Street. Above the Kollel, Reb Zalmon Jaffe had a small apartment which he stayed in when he visited the Rebbe each year on Shavuos. The Rebbe went to inspect the apartment, and on the way, he stopped in the Kollel.

Reb Zalmon records in his diary:

We learnt that the Rebbe had visited our apartment on the previous day. The Rebbe always loans us these rooms above the Kollel for our stay over Shavuos. Unfortunately, we were out. Furthermore we were still in England.

All "770" was in turmoil. Angry accusations were leveled at me that I had asked the Rebbe to ensure that our flat was clean and tidy. Of course, I would never have had the *chutzpah* to suggest such a thing to the Rebbe. Still, it was interesting to find out what did occur.

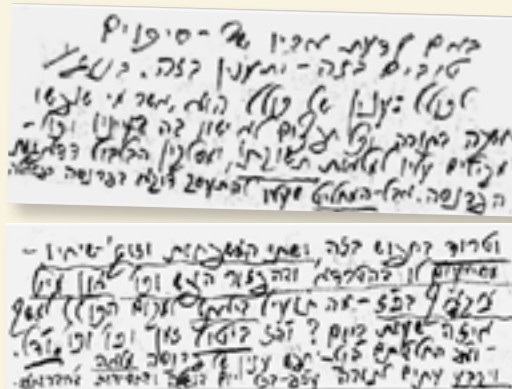
It seems that Binyomin Klein called at the Rebbe's home in President Street, in the car to bring him to "770," as usual. The Rebbe asked him to drive to Union Street, then told him to stop at the Kollel. This was the first time ever that the Rebbe had visited the Kollel, and no warning or intimation was given. One can just imagine the scene. Young men learning, studying, lounging or lolling about. Everyone's attire extremely casual, to say the least, and the whole place untidy; bottles, cigarette ends and paper strewn all over the floor and tables—when in walks the Rebbe.

I would not have liked to have been in their shoes for anything. On the other hand I would have hated to have been one of those young men who had pleaded with the Rebbe to be allowed to study in the Kollel for a further two years, and who on this important occasion was conspicuous by their absence. Actually, the Rebbe was very pleased to see 50 young men, all learning, except that they were all studying different *gemarachs*, instead of the same *Mesechta*.

Rabbi Chodakov remarked that it was a great *chizuk*—a source of strength

‘Don’t Waste Your Time

When someone wrote to the Rebbe shortly after getting married that he is thinking about learning half a day in Kollel and working the other half-day in business, the Rebbe responded:



בנוגע לכולל: ענין של כולל הוא, אשר מי שנפשו חשקה בתורה, וכל חפצים לא ישוו בה בעיניו וכו' - מקילים עליו למלאות תשוקתו, ומסלקין הבלבול דדאגות הפרנסה. אבל המחליט שעליו להתעסק דוקא בפרנסה כפשוטה וטרוד בחפוש בזה, ונשתי המשפחות וזוג - שיחיו - מסייעים לו בהטרדא ובהפזור הנפש וכו' און מיט א קאך בכ"ז - מה תועיל ביאתו למקום הכולל למשך איזה שעות ביום? וה' ביטול זמן וכו' וכו'. וע"ל. וע"פ החלטתם הנ"ל - יחפש ענין של פרנסה מלאה, ויקבע עתים לתורה עכ"פ - בכל יום בנגלה ובחסידות בחברותא.

Regarding Kollel:

The concept of Kollel is: when someone is adamant about Torah study, and nothing else in the world comes close to it in his eyes, etc.—we help him satisfy **his desire**, by relieving him of the hassle of the burden of *parnassa*.

However, if someone has already decided that he needs to have a proper job, and he has busied himself with this search, along with members of both families and his wife *sheyichyu*, who are helping bring more turmoil and disorientation in this regard, and with vigor—

What would be the purpose of him **coming** [i.e. in body] to the physical location of the Kollel for a few hours a day? This is a **waste** of time, etc. etc. **This is sufficient for the wise.**

In accordance with the above decision [i.e. that you are already looking for a part-time job], you should look for a **full-time** job, and set aside **fixed** times for Torah study every day, in both *nigleh* and Chassidus, and with a *chavrusa*.

(Teshura Simpson-Hazdan 5768)

for them, and they would all receive great benefit from this visit, ultimately. What they did receive the next morning was a very strong letter from the Rebbe enumerating all the points, which had to be attended to immediately or else—the Kollel would be closed down by Friday.

Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz who was a member of the Kollel at the time, relates:

“The day following the Rebbe’s surprise visit at the Kollel, Rabbi Hodakov came in to the Kollel with a long *tzetel* written in the Rebbe’s holy handwriting.



"I glanced at the note and saw that it was many lines long. Amongst the things the Rebbe wrote were:

"The Rebbe noticed that everyone in the Kollel was learning different subjects. Another thing: The Rebbe wrote that one of the *yungeleit* who had asked permission to stay in the Kollel for a second year was not there! In those years, most people only stayed in the Kollel for one year. If you wanted to stay for a second year, you needed to ask explicit permission from the Rebbe—and it wasn't always granted."

TzemaCh Tzedek

When the Yidden gained control of Yerushalayim following the Six Day War, the only shul structure that was still completely intact in the old city was the TzemaCh Tzedek shul. The Rebbe saw to it that the shul should be restored to the ownership of Chabad and eventually a Kollel was established on premises.

The Rebbe showed a special closeness to this Kollel and its *rosh kollel*, Reb Chaim Sholom Deitch. In *yechidus*, the Rebbe encouraged him to

keep up the "*koch*" in learning in the Kollel and that the members should publish *kovtzim* of their *chiddushim*. "If you're learning properly, there will always be *chiddushim*," the Rebbe said. "Where are the *chiddushim*?"

In another *yechidus*, the Rebbe said, "If the *yungeleit* in Kollel in the TzemaCh Tzedek shul [the only shul to remain intact] will have the proper '*koch*' in learning, this would make waves across the whole world; you'd never have to worry about having enough funds..."¹²



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 283757

Of all the Rebbe's *mosdos*, the Kollel is unique in that it was founded by the Rebbe himself as a special novelty; a concept that never previously existed in Lubavitch. Throughout the years, the Kollel was always directly under the Rebbe's *mazkirus*; a display of affection and closeness to the Rebbe, and it even carried the Rebbe's name (though not openly).

The members of the Kollel were often directed by the Rebbe to fulfill special tasks; whether gathering and elucidating the writings of the Rebbeim,¹³ compiling various

mafteichos, *marei mekomos* on Rambam, and others.¹⁴

After the Rebbe's heart attack in 5738*, he began handing out *matzos* to everyone on Erev Pesach through the members of the Kollel, and on Yud-Aleph Nissan 5744*, members of the Kollel handed out the Tanyas from the Rebbe to all the participants at the *farbrengen*.

At the ready, the members of the Kollel are true soldiers of the Rebbe. **T**

1. Hilchos Talmud Torah, 3:1.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 14, p. 30.
3. Toras Menachem vol. 33, p. 296.
4. *Better than the Best Father*, Derher Elul 5778.
5. Related by Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi.
6. 15 Cheshvan 5725; *Mr. Manchester*, p. 160.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 12, p. 303.
8. Yemei Temimim vol. 3.
9. Igros Kodesh vol. 18, p. 22.
10. Likkutei Sichos vol. 23, p. 540.
11. Shabbos Parshas Ekev 5733.
12. *Nitzutzei Rebbe*, Hiskashrus #726.
13. Chai Elul 5736; see *Avodas Hakodesh*.
14. See Derher, weekly newsletter #9.



RABBI EFRAIM YOLLES, CHIEF RABBI OF PHILADELPHIA,
MEETS WITH THE KOLEL YUNGELEIT IN KFAR CHABAD, 14 IYAR 5728*.