



Moshe Rabbeinu Is Jealous

New York State's Released Time program allows one hour of school time each week to be used for religious instruction. For decades, Lubavitcher bochurim have been spending Wednesday afternoons bringing Yiddishkeit to Jewish public school students. Rabbi Aharon Cousin studied in 770 from 5716 to 5721*, and each Wednesday he joined the "Mitvoch-Shooh — the "Wednesday Hour" as it was commonly known.*

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Every Wednesday, we'd leave Crown Heights at about 1:00 p.m., after having picked up our teaching materials from the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education. We would take a group of children from a public school in Coney Island and teach them Yiddishkeit in a nearby shul for an hour. It was very successful; we had a large group of students, boys and girls.

One year, my birthday fell on Wednesday. Before my birthday, I went into *yechidus* and I wrote in my *tzetel* to the Rebbe, "This Wednesday is my birthday. Maybe I shouldn't go to Released Time that day and instead stay a whole day in 770 and learn Torah — because on the birthday, one has

to add in learning *nigleh* and in Chassidus."

It was amazing. When the Rebbe read my note with the question, the Rebbe said, "Yes, certainly you should go [to Released Time]!" The Rebbe said it with such emotion, such feeling. "You should tell them something special," the Rebbe said. "Make it an extra special Wednesday Hour." Of course, I did my best to do that.

Now, there was one *bochur* who felt that this was a waste of time for him personally and he wrote in to the Rebbe asking if he could be excused from going to Released Time. First of all, he wrote, he doesn't think he's really achieving very much — he comes every week, says *brachos* and Shema

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with the children, gives out prizes, but he doesn't really think it's having any lasting effect. Secondly, he wrote, it takes 3-4 hours to get there, run the program, and come back, and he felt that time could be better used by sitting and learning — he was a serious *bochur*, a *masmid*, and he felt he'd spend his time better by sitting and learning. Also, he went on, it disturbs his mind all week because he knows that on Wednesday, at 1:00, he has to pick himself up and go out.

The Rebbe wrote back and said, "All the *neshamos* in *Gan Eden* — even the *neshama* of Moshe Rabbeinu *alav hashalom* — are envious of you that you have an opportunity to say

Shema and make a *bracha* with a Jewish child — and they don't have that opportunity."

That had a very deep impression on me. It moved me tremendously, and eventually, in my last *yechidus* before I was going back to England to get married, the Rebbe said to me, "You should work in Lubavitch House [in London]." I had a tremendous interest in going into *chinuch* and I started to teach as soon as I got back. Eventually, after a few years, I was appointed the headmaster — the principal — of the boys' school and kept that job for many years. **T**