

# From the Desk of **Badatz**

# משולחן הבד"צ

A periodical of the Beis Din of Crown Heights • יוצא מזמן לזמן על-ידי הבד"צ דק"ק קראון הייטס



In accordance with the annual long lasting tradition of the Badatz – as per the Rebbe’s instruction in the Sicha of Shabbos Parashas Bamidbar 5747 – a Welcome Farbrengen (Kabbolas Ponim) took place this month for the Chabad Rabbonim that came to “770” for Shavuos, in a manner befitting the honor due to Torah and Torah scholars. The Rabbonim assembled at the Badatz offices – led by the Rabbonei Haschunah, the Morei D’asra: **Horav Aharon Yaakov Schwei** shlita and **Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun** shlita – and deliberated on matters which preoccupied the attention of Anash communities during this past year.

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בס"ד

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– FREE TRANSLATION –

Friday, Parashas Shlach, 22 Sivan, 5777

**To all residents of Crown Heights – *kan tziva Hashem es ha-berachah*,**

In response to public demand and in continuation to previous years' publications we are republishing previous years' letters from the Badatz on the subject of *tznius* – an especially timely topic during the summer.

We wish to again caution and encourage, in the spirit of “We further encourage those who are already motivated” that each person take this matter personally.

“*The weak will declare: I am powerful!*” (Yoel 10:4). The Rebbe explained that even if one is apparently weak in overt capabilities, he should nevertheless declare, “I am powerful!” When the opportunity calls for it and when the matter at hand touches him personally, he is able to uncover hidden and essential powers within himself to accomplish what is necessary.

“*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh ba-zeh*” – “All Jews are responsible for each other”. Let each of us do whatever is necessary and at every opportunity to support *tznius* in our own environs, using an approach that is appropriate, pleasant, and peaceful.

In addition, we present a collection of laws that apply to the summer months.

We have added, for public benefit, a series of selections from the Rebbe's *sichos* and *igros* that discuss the summer season.

“*For behold, the winter has passed; the rain is over and gone, the time of singing has arrived, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*” (Shir Hashirim 2:11-12). Chazal say that this refers to the announcement of Moshiach the time of Redemption has arrived.

May Hashem grant the immediate fulfillment of this announcement through the true and complete Redemption led by our righteous Moshiach!

[Signed]:

**Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei**  
 Member of Badatz

**Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun**  
 Member of Badatz

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FREE TRANSLATION**Friday, 10 Elul 5771,***To all residents of Crown Heights, ה' עליהם יחיו,*

Tznius is one of the most fundamental aspects of Jewish life, not as many assume 'just a set of halachos', or worse 'just a *middas chassidus*.' Chazal discuss the severity of tznius, treating it as one of the most severe statutes in the Torah, to the extent that should one violate the halachos of tznius *chas v'sholom* they would be labeled "a transgressor of Torah law and general Jewish practice," resulting in severe consequences (in some aspects, even more than eating non-kosher food).

The enormous reward for observing tznius, as well as the consequences for violating tznius, is well documented in Seforim. Our sages tell us that "there is nothing more precious to Hashem than complying with the standards of tznius." And to the contrary, "nothing is more despicable to Hashem than walking publicly in a non tznius manner."

In the Rebbe's words: "the *tzoros* currently stemming from Jewish youth is a result of leniencies in the practice of *taharas hamishpacha* and tznius. From the reward of tznius, i.e. the fact that Kimchis had merited seven Kohanim Gedolim due to her diligence in tznius, we can deduce the consequences of its absence." Elsewhere, the Rebbe writes, "the immorality prevalent among many of our youth has led to terrible tragedies in many homes. It is abundantly clear that if the same youth would be raised with the values of tznius, in accordance with Torah, many tragedies would have been averted and many young lives would not have been destroyed."

Unfortunately, it is well known that the recent affliction of non-tznius has resulted in the innocent descent of many within our midst. In the words of the Tzemach Tzedek, "if women would have been accustomed to walking around bare-legged in the summer days, such a custom would be equivalent to *gehenom* (*minhag* spells *gehenom*), as this is considered *erva*." This breach of tznius causes many undesirable consequences amongst our youth. Strangers are questioning where our pride has fallen. This has, unfortunately, become so widespread that some are under the erroneous impression that these matters fall under the realm of 'chassidishkeit' etc., while in truth they are all clearly documented in Halacha.

In such times, we must all take a stand to protect our community and endeavor to retain its sanctity. The intention here is not to preach *mussar*, especially in the month of Elul "when the

King is in the field greeting us all with his shining countenance.” Rather, our intention is on a practical level; **all are encouraged to do all within their power to restore our dignity by promoting tznius**, in an appropriate and pleasant fashion, so that tznius becomes the top of the priority list.

Specifically, everyone should attempt to influence family members and friends in all matters of tznius. Likewise, **one should seek to influence wherever possible (e.g. schools, farbrengens, functions, stores) regarding the significance and severity and of tznius**. All those that heed this call have a tremendous *zechus*.

Stores that sell immodest clothing, which don't cover completely areas needing to be concealed, or inappropriate clothing, are guilty of assisting in performing an *avaira*.

This includes, but is not limited to, the following halochos:

- **Hair of married women may not be exposed even partially.**
- **Legs must be completely covered from the ankle and up, in addition to wearing dresses that cover the knees even while sitting. This is a minimum standard applicable to all individuals and in all places.**
- **The collarbone must be completely covered.**

**Most importantly, we call upon all to lend financial support to all activities that are being undertaken to promote tznius in the community. Maaser money may, and should, be used to support these activities. We are of the opinion that currently one should give preference to this cause\*.**

We conclude with blessing to all who will endeavor to assist in this matter, “with all berachos from Above and below, wealth, children and grandchildren” (Zohar), as well as a *kesiva va'chasima tova* for a good and sweet year. Observing tznius appropriately has the merit to bring about the Ge'ulah speedily in our days.

Signed:            Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei  
                         Member of Badatz

                         Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun  
                         Member of Badatz

*\* Examples:*

*a) Assisting in the publication of the sefer **Kevuda Bas Melech** on the laws of tznius which has been out of print for many years. The Rebbe has written to the author, Rabbi Moshe Wiener, “It is a pity every day that the reading and studying of this sefer is delayed”. Tel.: 917 282 7594.*

*b) Supporting the wonderful activities of the organization **Bnos Melech B'Yachad**. Tel.: 641 715 3800 # 5314010. Checks can be made payable to BMBY.*

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- FREE TRANSLATION -

Friday, 25 Sivan, 5772

To all residents of Crown Heights – *kan tziva Hashem es ha-berachah*,

One of the most widely publicized and discussed topics in Judaism, especially in recent times, is that of *tznius*. Torah literature throughout the ages is replete with references to the importance of *tznius*, and contemporary times have witnessed books (and *sichos* of the Rebbe, especially *sichos* addressing the summer months) filled with discussion on the subject.

Closer to home, much ink has been spilled and much paper consumed; many words have been sacrificed over the inadequate level of modesty in our neighborhood and community. Unfortunately, a large portion of it seems to be of no avail, and the *tznius*, or lack thereof, has become a hot topic that reaches far beyond our own borders.

On the positive side, there is much to be said about the women and girls of our community who stand steadfast by their principles, the principles of the Torah, and are impressively outstanding in their duty to safeguard the spiritual standing of their homes, as well as our streets. With all the prevailing winds that blow, storms of immodest fashion, gusts of temptation, wild winds of alien cultures and degrading attitudes, these individuals remain strong. We sincerely admire their fortitude. They are like trees with firmly planted roots that weather all seasons and emerge not only victorious, but stronger and healthier, as well. They are faithful and courageous daughters of the King of kings and dress accordingly.

On the other side, sad to say, our community suffers terribly from those who choose the path of haughtiness by concluding it is not the Torah, but rather their own whims and fancies that will determine the standards of our neighborhood. They imitate the ever-changing and degrading non-Jewish cultures and attitudes.

While many watch, wring their hands, and weep, few have displayed the insight or courage to challenge the disintegration of our moral and spiritual atmosphere in any meaningful way.

In truth, we have already spilled plenty of our own ink on the matter in a previous communal letter, and whatever needs to be stated has been already been aired. Nonetheless, we do not wish to fall into the trap described by our Sages – “He who has the ability to protest but fails to do so...” In addition, we are commanded to “rebuke your fellow, even one hundred times”.

Further, the Torah informs us that in addition to the function of *tznius* in safeguarding our sanctity as G-d’s holy nation, it also serves “*to save you and to place your enemies [defeated] before you.*” The physical protection and security granted by maintaining the standards of *tznius* is addressed in numerous sources. In this context, the Rebbe makes reference to the classic Torah principle to infer the reverse, namely that a breach of *tznius* invites danger, G-d forbid. Indeed, the Torah warns that “*your camp must be holy, so that He will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.*” When so much is at stake, when the physical protection of our community is being jeopardized, we can’t afford the luxury of remaining silent.

On our part, we have put our heads together and composed a message of guidance that explains what must be done, in practical terms, and how we can turn the tide – with the help of G-d, and with the active and full participation of the members of our community. Naturally, such an undertaking demands sensitivity, forethought, and must be done in a pleasant and peaceful manner. But it simply must be done, as the Rebbe insists, because, “**The topic of *tznius* must stand as one of the fundamentals of daily life among all responsible segments of Jewry.**”

To be specific:

1) First and foremost, every parent should influence their children, teaching them the laws of modesty in a clear manner when appropriate. A fitting time is when the fam-

ily is sitting together at the Shabbos table on Friday night “in order to guide their children and safeguard Hashem’s path,” and “know peace in your dwelling.”

Following are examples of topics for discussion:

- A married woman’s hair should be completely covered.
- The shok must be completely covered. This refers to the calf area between the knee and the ankle.
- In addition, a dress must be long enough that it covers the knees even while sitting. This is a minimum standard applicable to all women and girls everywhere.
- The collarbone must be completely covered.
- Tight-fitting clothing should not be worn.
- In all of the above, sheer garments through which the skin is visible is not a sufficient covering.
- According to Shulchan Aruch, a child must begin following the laws of *tznius* at age three.

2) To guard oneself and one’s family, things brought into the house must be completely consistent with the guidelines of modesty. (Obviously this includes the strict warning relating to internet usage, as discussed in the past.)

3) It is important for all of our educational institutions to devote a significant portion of the daily curriculum to teaching our students about the laws of *tznius* and to have them “stand strong like a rock, guarding Hashem’s vineyard - the house of Israel.” The administrators of our institutions should come up with clear strategies to ensure that these guidelines are followed in practice, by both students and parents. Along these lines, parents should send their children only to institutions and camps that strictly follow the above guidelines.

4) It is incumbent upon each individual to do his utmost to influence his fellow, i.e. friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, in a polite and appropriate manner, fortifying the gates of modesty in our midst, wherever possible (e.g. at gatherings, celebrations, in stores, etc.).

5) Stores that sell immodest clothing are enabling a forbidden act, and cause others to sin. We must not provide rental space for their store and we should not frequent these stores, even to buy permissible clothing, so as not to strengthen their activities.

6) According to the letter of the law, a woman who is lax in covering her hair or parts of the body that should not be revealed can be divorced without collecting on her *kesubah*, is not trusted in matters of *kashrus*, and her husband is not allowed to serve as a *chazzan* or a *shochet*. In our times, when many have become overly lenient in these laws and no longer view these matters as prohibitions, Heaven forbid, it is difficult to be overly stringent in this matter. Nonetheless, we can deduce from the above the extreme severity of the issues. Certainly, it isn’t the preferable mode of behavior to assume the most lenient approach.

7) Men should also be strict in the rules of modesty, particularly in the summer (as mentioned in the Rebbe’s *Sichos*). It is important for men to avert their eyes from inappropriate sights. According to *Shulchan Aruch*, it is strictly prohibited for men to walk in places where there are improperly dressed women if alternative routes (that are of equal duration and convenience) exist. Even in our times, where we encounter immodesty at every turn, one ought to choose the path that is least damaging.

We are hereby calling upon you, the righteous Jewish men and women, to be strong and to do all you can to fortify our holy nation. Even if it appears as though your efforts are futile and you are “a lone voice in the dessert”, perhaps even one person will hear you. It is known that one who saves even one person is likened to saving an entire world. In the words of the Previous Rebbe: “every individual is a multitude and has the ability to create and revive the multitude”. Specifically regarding *tznius*, there is a well known story how three righteous women who covered their hair properly brought about a major change in an entire Jewish community.

Whoever heeds our words can be assured of receiving all the *Brachos* in the Torah, physically and spiritually, with wealth, children and grandchildren, as stated in the *Zohar* (on the topic of a woman covering her hair entirely). May it be Hashem’s will, that in the merit of the modesty of righteous Jewish women, who do not change their attire, which is in fact the honor and glory of our people, and which is the source of all blessing, that we merit the revelation of *Moshiach Tzikeinu*, and may it be NOW!

[Signed]:

**Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei**  
Member of Badatz

**Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun**  
Member of Badatz

# בד"צ דק"ק שכונת קראון הייטס

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### – FREE TRANSLATION –

Erev Shabbos Kodesh, 22 Sivan, 5774

The auspicious dates of Chof-Ches Sivan, Gimmel Tammuz, and Yud-Beis/Yud-Gimmel Tammuz bring a heightened sense of awakening, longing, and expectant hope to see the Rebbe in his glory and holiness, and to flock to his doorstep with the true and complete redemption. This inner cry can be summarized by a phrase used by Chazal to describe our nation's longing for direct, unrestricted revelation: *retzoneinu lir'os es malkeinu* – “We want to see our King with our own eyes!”

Multiple members of Anash have thus requested guidance from the Badatz – in accordance with the Rebbe's directive (*Sichas Beis Adar 5748*) that the *kehillah* should address such questions and concerns to the Badatz, who should guide the community in matters small and large – asking, “On which areas in particular are we meant to focus at times such as these?”

Anash are seeking how to draw strength from the fountain of life, from the spiritual warmth and clarity of *hiskashrus*, a soul connection with the Rebbe, his teachings, and his directives, which, in the Rebbe's words, form one indivisible unit.

In reply, we would like to quote the Rebbe on the importance of *hiskashrus* and the indispensability of translating inspiration into action, before offering practical directives. The following is excerpted from a letter penned by the Rebbe in honor of Gimmel Tammuz 5710 and published as the Introduction to *Kuntres Yud-Beis Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5710*:

“It is imperative that we all – each and every one of us – know, through thinking deeply and concentrating our minds on the awareness that he [the Rebbe] is the *nassi* [Leader] and the Head, that all we receive materially and spiritually comes from him and through him, and that through *hiskashrus*, connecting ourselves to him (in his letters, he has already instructed how and with which means this connection is established) we are connected and united with our original source and with the root of that source, stretching further upwards, higher and higher, etc. ...”

Elsewhere, the Rebbe writes that “we must not permit this unique sense of awakening to remain in the realm of inspiration, but rather, we must allow it to control our faculties, influencing our thoughts, speech, and deeds in the practical details of our daily life.”

In light of the above, we have compiled a number of practical suggestions and directives:

**1. Focus on *hiskashrus*.** We recommend that each person set aside time during each of these days to explain to his household in terms that they could appreciate that the Rebbe is the leader of our generation (“the *nassi* and the Head”), and that he continues to give strength and inspiration to us all, and an inner strength to his *chassidim* and those who are deeply connected to him. A healthy and strong head gives life and power to the entire body; in the same way, the Rebbe is unwavering, alive and present, and he continues to give strength and blessings to those who are connected to him, with a powerful love for each individual, and especially for children.

As a practical expression of *hiskashrus*, we recommend training each boy and girl, as they reach the age of *chinuch*, to set aside money each one of these days for one of the Rebbe's institutions or for projects and activities that were dear to the Rebbe.

**2. Study Rebbe's Torah.** The truest form of *hiskashrus* is the bond between that is created through Torah study. As explained in *Tanya*, it generates "a wondrous unity; there is no unity like it whatsoever, nothing of the sort can be found in the physical universe, to be unified as one entity from every angle." We urge each person to set aside additional time for studying the Torah teachings of the Rebbe (the Rebbe calls for study that is firmly established in both time and soul). Let each person seek material that suits his level of Torah study and push himself to study a little more each day during this period. It would be best to learn in a group or to participate in public Torah classes.

Learning the Rebbe's Torah cannot be approached as a dry subject. Chazal instruct us to embrace Torah as a fresh royal proclamation that the entire populace rushes to read. One should study the Rebbe's Torah with an appreciation that this is our very life and in its study each person will discover a balm for his soul and appropriate advice for his every challenge in serving Hashem.

Study must lead to deed. We urge each person to participate in *chassidische farbrengens*, especially on these auspicious *yemei ha-geulah* at which the participants will inspire and encourage each other to translate study into action.

**3. The Rebbe's directives.** We urge each person to strengthen his study of the daily *shi'urim* that are incumbent upon everyone – *Chitas*, Rambam, etc. – and to reinforce his commitment to fulfilling all of the Rebbe's directives, including the ten *mitzvah* campaigns. (It is also worth reviewing these various directives in print. Many are recorded in the introduction to *HaYomYom*, as well as in the recently published *Takanos HaRabi*.) It is also important to encourage others (preferably ten individuals) to fulfill these directives, for they are the channels through which blessings are elicited for all of a person's needs.

**4. Moshiach topics.** The Rebbe insists that the fastest and most direct route to bring the revelation of Moshiach is to study the topic of Moshiach and the Era of Redemption in Torah sources. We urge every person to add in this study, with emphasis on relevant *ma'amarim* and *sichos* of the Rebbe. A specific emphasis should be placed on studying the most recent *sichos*, as the Rebbe had expressed on many occasions.

**5. Consult.** It is an indispensable obligation for each person to fulfill the Rebbe's directive (in fact an explicit instruction of the Mishnah) – "Appoint a *Rav* for yourself." As explained extensively in the Rebbe's *sichos*, it is critical to consult a personal *mashpiah* on a regular basis for advice in all matters relating to serving Hashem. One who needs advice in other matters should follow the Rebbe's instruction to seek guidance from relevant sources (e.g., medical experts for health issues, a local expert *Rav* or Beis Din for halachic issues, well informed friends for matters of livelihood and similar issues, and "three local *chassidische* Rabbanim" for matters pertaining to the community at large).

Let us implement all of the above with a genuine cry from the heart – "Ad Mosai! How long are we to remain in the present state?" Let us fulfill the Rebbe's command to do everything in our power (*oros d'tohu b'keilim d'tikkun*) to prepare ourselves and the entire world for the immediate revelation of Moshiach. With the spirited cry of *Yechi HaMelech* on our lips, let us remain steadfast and confident in the Rebbe's mission despite all opposition until we have caused "the fallen *sukkah* of Dovid" to be raised from the dust with the realization of the actual Redemption. May the Rebbe lead us immediately to our Holy Land and to the eternal Redemption!

Signed:

**Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei**  
Member of Badatz

**Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun**  
Member of Badatz

# Going to the “Country” & Appropriate Summer Conduct

## Selections from the Rebbe’s Sichos and Igros that discuss the Summer Season

### A Deeper Purpose in going to the Country

There are those who travel to the country for health purposes, insisting that the country air is unique. In actual fact, it may even be inferior – but it is considered special nonetheless, because it is different from the city air. And so, they insist on traveling to the country for their health, to breathe its special air....

The true purpose for their journey to the country is because their *soul* is hungry for the country. The soul needs to draw the Jews who live there closer to their Father in Heaven. However, were the soul to tell that directly to its body, the body would simply not understand what the soul is talking about! The soul is therefore forced to speak English to its body. It concocts some story about the country and its beneficial air. It tells it that in the country there are unique flying insects. They may even be inferior, but at least they are different. Therefore, one must travel to the country!

The true purpose, however, is that the soul has a mission to accomplish in the country.

Seeing that the primary reason for visiting the country is for the soul to accomplish its mission there, one must not consider the primary purpose as less significant, nor make the less significant reason his primary focus. When in the country, he must indeed work at drawing the hearts of his fellow Jews closer to their Father in Heaven.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei 5712 – unedited.*

### Ashamed Not to go to the Country

When it comes to giving *tzedakah*, someone might claim that he has insufficient funds. He needs it for his family’s needs and for going to the country, and so on. The fact that back at home, his family is forced to

diet on hard bread and water does not bother him that much. After all, no one else knows what goes on in his home. By contrast, were he to forgo travelling to the country – why, everyone would realize that he does not own six hundred and eighty nine thousand dollars! That would truly be unpleasant....

The Rebbe [Rayatz] once spoke with a businessman who dealt in lumber. The Rebbe told him that he should study Torah. He responded that he does not have the head for study. The Rebbe replied, “If I had told you that you do not understand the lumber trade, you would fly into a rage, slam the door, and not wish to speak to me further. But when it comes to Torah, you personally state that you are not up to it – without the slightest shame! The reverse should be the case!”

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Naso 5720 – unedited.*

### Neglect of Mitzvos in the Country

A word of caution about the country: People travel to a place where nobody knows them and they convince themselves that if they are accustomed to wearing a full garment back home, then they can make do with a half in the country, or even a third or quarter.... Back home they are scrupulous to eat only *glatt* kosher meat and drink *chalav Yisrael*, but this is not possible in the country.... In this way, everything about the country smacks of *prikas ol*, casting off the yoke of Heaven.

I once asked someone, “Why do you go to the country? You become absolutely worn out there. You lack the coziness of your own home. It is challenging to find appropriate foods. At home, you own a color television whereas only an ordinary television is available in the country – and one cannot begin to compare a colored to a plain.... [Editor’s note: See Likutei Sichos vol. 18 p. 459 (& more) about the severity of having a TV at home, chas veshalom.]

At home, you review the newspapers before morning prayers; you don't have that luxury in the bungalow." I asked him if he really felt it was worth spending a thousand dollars for this.

He replied, "Oh, you are truly a *batlan* [inexperienced]!" He explained that the entire point in going to the country was precisely that – *prikas ol!* Back home, he feels ashamed [to act as he wishes because] of the rabbi, the spiritual leader, and his neighbors. When he travels to the country – why, the rabbi remains in the city, his neighbors remain in the city, and he meets his wife only for Shabbos. For him, it is worth spending *two* thousand dollars for that!

–*Sichas Yom Beis D'Chag HaShavuos 5728* – *unedited.*

### Exiled to the Country

When the summer season arrives and one abandons his home on a self-imposed exile, he must ensure that his destination is a place of Torah [reflecting the *mishnah's* directive, "Exile yourself to a place of Torah"].

He voluntarily subjects himself to exile. Nor is he exactly happy about it. He is forced to squander considerable finances. All this, for the sake of traveling "*from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house*" and journeying to the country!

What a peculiar phenomenon! It is readily observable that a person can enjoy all the conveniences specifically in his own home. Nevertheless, he travels away to the country. (Back in Russia, it was known simply as *datche*, but here it is given all kinds of fancy names....) And he makes a grand parade out of the whole thing! But what is this parade truly about? It is about *not* having the household help he enjoys at home. It is about *not* having all the conveniences associated with his food, drink, and sleep that he enjoys at home. As long as he can languish in a place of exile!

This is a prime example of the extent to which a person's will can turn matters on their head. Here we are, discussing an experience of exile (which, as *Sefer HaChinuch* explains, is worse than all other penalties). Nevertheless, he convinces himself that this exile will bring him all wonderful things – physical and spiritual, and both at once! As a result, not only is not distressed from this exile, but he actually derives pleasure from it.

He even spends more for the few weeks that he remains in the country than he would spend in the same period on his own home where he has every available convenience.

Whatever the explanation for this phenomenon may be, we readily observe the *ma'aseh rav* (proven experience) that hundreds, thousands, and myriads of Jews are doing precisely this.

I do not wish to employ the language of *Rambam* by stating that "this practice has been adopted by the wider Jewish community," because that would make it a positive command and a negative command to travel to the country.... In fact, it is not a *mitzvas aseï*, it is not a *mitzvas lo sa'aseï*, nor is it *mi-divrei sofrim* (introduced by the sages). And I have set the example. I will not elaborate any further...

### Exile Yourself to a Place of Torah

As mentioned, myriads of Jews spend the summer in the country. They insist that their bodies will grow healthier (an experience that will in turn improve the state of their souls, because whatever a Jew is involved must eventually lead to some benefit for his soul). Out of desire to improve their bodily health, they must force themselves to travel [away from home] and to make their way to a place where all of their affairs, their food, drink, sleep, and exercise will not be as it should (because they are not in their own homes). Most importantly, goes the claim, they must alter their usual habits because after all, they are now in the country....

This can be compared to the *halachah* regarding fasting on Shabbos due to a disturbing dream (*ta'anis chalom*). The law is that because this particular person desperately wishes to fast, it cannot be considered something painful. In fact, for him it is sheer pleasure! (This is the fact; no clever interpretations of the law hold sway in this case, because on Shabbos one must fulfill the command, "*You must call Shabbos a pleasure.*")

The same applies to our case. A person goes off to the country where he wears himself out in every way. Nevertheless, upon his return we notice that he looks fresher, livelier, he has put on some weight, and so on.

When he is then approached and asked to give a greater donation to *tzedakah* or to increase in his Torah study, he is more readily agreeable – because he is more

relaxed, fresh, and happy, in body and soul all at once.

At the same time, we cannot claim that he was at home. He spent his time in exile. That is not his permanent place of residence.

There are those who are so taken by the country experience that they own a home there throughout the year. Nevertheless, that home is considered a temporary residence (although he pays for the home throughout the year), because they spend the majority of the year in the city and they stay in their country home only from time to time (during the summer or more often). We must therefore consider such an arrangement as suiting the words of the *Mishnah – hevei golah* “Exile yourself...”

As a result, if one’s summer destination is not already considered a place of Torah [“Exile yourself to a place of Torah”], then he must transform it into a place of Torah.

The meaning of “a place of Torah” can be appreciated by comparison to an area regarding which it is said, “This is place of King So-and-so.” We do not mean that the place is significant for another reason and that incidentally the king happens to live there. To the contrary, [the significance of the place is entirely attributed to the king’s presence. Similarly, a place of Torah is a place primarily defined by the Torah that exists there].

Practically speaking, whoever exiles themselves to the country must see to it that they fulfill the dictum, “Exile yourself to a place of Torah.” If it is not a place of Torah, G-d forbid, it should be made into one through establishing fixed schedules of Torah study there. If it is already a place of Torah, the study there should now be increased.

We previously discussed the fact that one might have every convenience in the country. He may have all he needs regarding food, drink, sleep, business, and everything else on Rambam’s list [of basic human activities]. These may even be present in great abundance, “As the feast of Shlomo!” and to a greater degree than in his primary home. He is nevertheless in exile which is considered the greatest affliction, as quoted earlier from *Sefer HaChinuch*. And because it is an exile, one must have the will to transform the pain into pleasure.

True, it is not necessary to live in a physically disastrous state while in the country. I am simply repeating what has been the actual common experience up until the most recent summer. Nevertheless, even if one has everything he needs in abundance, it is still a state of exile.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Korach 5738 – unedited.*

### Vacationing for the Sake of Heaven

One of the reasons for reading *Pirkei Avos* on Shabbos throughout the summer months, starting from the Shabbos immediately following Pesach (i.e., Shabbos *mevarchim* Iyar), is because around this time of year (the month of Iyar), the trees begin to bud. At this time, a current of renewal and invigoration runs through every aspect of Nature. Included in this surge of power are the bodily desires. One must therefore fortify himself to a greater extent in matter of ethical conduct and positive character traits. This is the purpose of reading *Pirkei Avos*, which discusses *milei d’chassidusa*, “matters of pious conduct.”

We see the above in actual practice in this country. No sooner has Pesach concluded then people begin thinking and worrying about going on vacation (to their *datche*) for the duration of summer.

Quite a number of weeks remain [after Pesach] in which business must be conducted as usual, as is indeed done each year. Nevertheless, one is aware that the time in which he must relax is approaching. And for some reason, he has decided that he cannot relax unless he travels to a destination that is specifically beyond the city, wasting a huge amount of money to accomplish that. Therefore, [immediately after Pesach] he begins thinking and worrying about finding a place to spend the approaching summer. He begins discussing it with this person and the other, until he finally settles on the location, the price, and so on.

Due to Hashem’s kindness, we find ourselves in a country of abundance and it therefore possible to vacation. One must remember that the abundance is not to be used simply in order to benefit from this physical world. It must be used *le-sheim shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven, bearing in mind the example of Rabbeinu HaKadosh (who was given the title *kadosh* because he sanctified himself by removing himself from the affairs of this world), regarding whom our Sages declared,

“He did not derive benefit from this world all his life.” The Gemara states that “at the time of his passing ... he raised his ten fingers heavenwards and said, ‘I did not even benefit with one small finger!’” Therefore, despite the fact that “his table never lacked horseradish, *etc.*, neither in the summer nor in the winter,” nevertheless, he did not do anything for the sake of the physical pleasure it could provide, but rather, so that he would be strong enough to serve his Creator appropriately.

Therefore, the blessing that is imparted during the month of Nissan, on Shabbos *mevarchim chodesh Iyar*, generates a source of empowerment not only for the month of Iyar itself, but also for the summer months in general. For that is the period in which the main spiritual descent begins to effect the world to the point that the physical waxes powerful. Even in such a state, a person is empowered to create for himself a state of *redemption*.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5747 – unedited.*

### Tznius in the Country

It is now necessary to emphasize the following timely consideration:

Some people permit themselves to be lenient in many aspects of *tznius* during the summer, and especially while they are in temporarily homes outside the city. Some even declare *echta va'ashuv* [“I will sin and then I will repent”], meaning [I will lower my standards while on vacation and then return to my former standards] when *ashuv*, “I will return” to the city.

This applies to the conduct of men as well, and especially to women. For each woman is considered *akeress habayis*, the mainstay of the home. Much more deserves to be said about this issue.

–*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 13, p. 84, fn. 34 – edited and placed by the Rebbe in large font and in bold type.*

### Tznius for Men on Vacation – Not to Wear Shorts

There are matters that we need to address that relate specifically to the summer months.

True, there is still quite some time until the summer begins, but now is the time to call attention to these issues, particularly as some people tend to begin their

summers even before being directed by their calendars.

The main issue we need to address at present is that of *tznius*.

This is not a burning issue in the winter season, because people are garbed appropriately regardless. If any part of the body is uncovered, it is affected by the rain, the cold, the frost, etc. In the summer, by contrast, this definitely becomes an issue.

In truth, *tznius* needs to be reinforced during the winter months as well. For *tznius* applies even within one’s home. There is the famous case of Kimchis, the mother of Rabbi Yishmael, who proclaimed, “In all my life, the rafters of my house have not seen my locks of hair!” Wooden rafters are merely derivatives of the vegetable kingdom that have now become inanimate objects. Nevertheless, Kimchis made certain that even the rafters of her home would not see the hair of her head.

In the home, there is no rain, frost, and the like. Therefore, one must be carefully regarding *tznius* regardless of the seasons. Nevertheless, nothing can compare to the summer vacation season, when people are outdoors and there is a strong need to encourage *tznius*.

There is a misconception that *tznius* applies only to women, for “*all the glory of a woman is within*,” and not to men. In truth, it applied to men as well, as set forth in *Shulchan Aruch*. The need to reinforce men’s *tznius* is acute in the summer months.

The summer arrives, and one of the *shpitz* Chabad [those who consider themselves the “Chabad elite”] travels to a bungalow colony and dresses himself exactly the way the Kohanim used to dress.... and this is written in Torah - so he also wants to dress the same way! It seems (and this is a way to judge him positively) that he has no idea that there is a law in *Shulchan Aruch* regarding men’s *tznius*. He claims, this is precisely how the Kohanim would dress! However the Kohanim wore other clothing as well, which covered all parts of the body; but he is wearing only pants “*from the hips until the [end of the] thighs*,” whereas below the “thighs” [the knees] – nothing at all! And above the “thighs” – also nothing!

Furthermore, the Kohanim did not pride themselves with this. He, however, displays himself with pride!

A photo was even sent to me showing someone who was dressed this way. Alright, you wish to go around like that, but why do you need someone to take a picture of you in such a situation, so that it should remain as an eternal souvenir, and so that your grandchild can see how you are dressed in pants “*from the hips until the [end of the] thighs*”?! He made such a publicity of himself that a picture even made its way to me.

It is not that someone decided to inform on him. Quite the opposite! He wished to show how the *mitzvos* were being kept there *be'hiddur*. *Mezuzos* on each doorway, men and women separately, as is truly appropriate for those who are in fact Chabad “elite.” I took a look at the pictures and I noticed that so-and-so the son of so-and-so, from the *shpitz* Chabad, sits the way I just described. And I have no doubt at all that it is indeed him!

That’s how he dressed under the open skies. Naturally, it was not where women were present. He would never dress that way in a place where women are to be found. Certainly, he would not dress that way if his own wife was present, because the *baale bosta* would give to him with a plate over his head!

When he is not at home, however, he dresses this way simply because he is unaware that *tznius* applies to men as well. There are indeed specific *halachos* regarding *tznius* conduct, such as not to expose more than a basic minimum [even in a bathroom] and how to conduct oneself before and afterwards.... In his case, however, much more than that was exposed, because the height of a human is approximately three *amos*, while the distance “*from the hips until the [end of the] thighs*” is barely one *amah*. So two entire *amos* remained exposed!

It is obvious from the picture that the photographer did not catch him by surprise. He knew the picture was being taken and he appeared to derive pleasure from that fact. It was therefore done willingly, as per [the confession prayer, *al cheit*], “For the sin with which we sinned before You willingly...” Not merely willingly, but with pleasure!

All of the above is a parenthetical note regarding men. But my main point of caution due to the approaching summer is regarding women. This coincides with an overarching theme of *tznius* – men and women are to remain separate....

[The Rebbe then devoted the remainder of the *sichah* to *tznius*. See original.]

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Terumah 5741 – unedited.*

### Vacation – Not from Torah and Mitzvos

Viewed in a positive and sacred light, vacation is not a respite from matters of goodness and holiness, G-d forbid, but a vacation from bodily work. Its purpose is to relax the body from work so that it can rejuvenate. This will facilitate greater positive and sacred accomplishments with the body, with Judaism, and with G-dliness.

In *Hilchos Dei'os*, Rambam states as law that Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos* can be accomplished with greater gusto and with greater success when the body does not interfere because it is not hungry, thirsty, or tired. Certainly, then, the health of the body must be maintained.

In fact, Rambam states that “maintaining a whole and healthy body is one of the ways of Hashem” – to quote the precise language that appears in current editions. Apparently, this phrase is meant to read “one of the ways of *servicing* Hashem.”

This consideration comes in addition to the general command, “*You must guard yourselves,*” which means that one must protect his body. As is known, the Radbaz stated that the body is Hashem’s property. We have no permission to cause it harm, G-d forbid.

Moreover, each individual must ensure that his body does not distract him from Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos*.

This then is the intent of vacation viewed from a sacred viewpoint. It is a time for the body to relax.

However, the need to relax the body for spiritual purposes [opened the door for eventual misuse of this relaxation] ... Some people began looking for loopholes. Although one may be scrupulous in all *mitzvos* while at home, nevertheless, when he goes on vacation and is no longer in his own home, then he considers himself no longer obligated in all of the same *hiddurim*. At home it is easy, but he finds it difficult in unfamiliar territory. His solution therefore is to permit himself a bit of freedom – so that when he returns home he can be

even more meticulous than during the previous year....

Wait – there’s a nagging question. Can he consider *mitzvos* and *aveiros* a business? Can he purchase a small *aveirah* in order to earn a great *mitzvah*? Hashem told us to observe *mitzvos* and to avoid *aveiros*, and He gave no man permission to calculate what is a greater loss and what is a greater gain in order to make his own calculations and business deals!

Nevertheless, as described earlier, from the concept of vacation to relax the body from its strenuous work load, things have deteriorated to the point that people vacation to relax their standards of *mitzvos*.

At home he is scrupulous to eat *glatt* kosher meat and to drink *chalav Yisrael, pas Yisrael*, and so on. Then comes vacation time and he is forced to travel around in a trailer. Who knows where he will end up? He will forgo insisting on *chalav Yisrael*, all for the ideal of “*You must guard yourselves very well.*”

One would assume that he has the option of remaining in his own home. He would fulfill the precept “*You must guard yourselves very well*” to a far greater degree. He will even be spared the rigors of travel.

However, he invokes [the Talmudic proverb] “Go to a city, follow its ways.” In this country, it is common practice to leave home when the fourth of July arrives. He must therefore leave his home as well. He has no strength to travel, no money to vacation, he has no destination, but he must not remain at home. It will damage his credit with the bank. They will notice that everyone else travels while he remains at home.

Since he is already *anus al pi ha-dibbur* [“compelled by divine decree” – as our Sages describe Yaakov’s reluctant departure to Egypt], leaving him with no choice by to leave home, he cannot take along a second set of dishes and he is forced to eat in places where nobody knows him – as a result, he cannot observe all of his *hiddurim*.

In His abundant mercy, Hashem orchestrated matters so that he can accomplish his duty of fleeing home and wearing himself down, but at least he can do it together with other Jews.

Many *minyanim* of Jews set out together, taking the cow with them so that they will have *chalav Yisrael*, and

they will have their own *minyans* [for prayers].

[At this point, the Rebbe smiled and continued:] But here the *yetzer hara* comes up with an alternative approach, [telling a person]: When you are at home, you must dress yourself in a tie with a hard collar two pairs of shoes, green socks.... But now that you are already in a bungalow, you do not need a tie, nor a hat – certainly not two head coverings, nor a pair of shoes, and you can remove the yarmulke as well, and why do you need a pair of wool *tzitzis* – an ordinary pair is fine, in fact what difference whether you wear *tzitzis* altogether, the main thing is to walk around in the manner of the Kohanim, wearing shorts “*from the hips until [the end of] the thighs*” – it does not matter if everything else is exposed...

He is asked, “But there is a law in *Shulchan Aruch* that prevents you from going around like this!” He replied, “But I’m on vacation!” What is vacation? He claims it means *prikas ol*, casting off the yoke of Heaven! Since this country now casts off its yoke of work, it makes no difference if he simultaneously casts off the yoke of Heaven...

### **Do Not Devolve in Matters of Tzniyus – Men Included**

The above described conditions devolve further. The *yetzer hara* hits on another strategy. He tells a person that the laws of *tznius* apply only to women and girls, whereas men and boys have absolutely no restrictions whatsoever.

This reasoning contradicts *Shulchan Aruch*. In fact the laws of *tznius* begin with arising in the morning, and they make no distinction between men and women.

He further claims that he has conducted himself this way for years already, and that his brother, his friend, and so on, conduct themselves this way; he cannot “separate himself from the community”!

This is the appropriate time and place to remind everybody that there is a *Shulchan Aruch*. It was published many years ago. It begins by describing how a Jew is supposed to awaken from sleep. It then begins immediately, in its initial paragraphs, in the Rema, and quoted in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, to state that a Jew must contemplate the fact that wherever he finds himself he is in the presence of the King of Kings.

Even a person with limited intellect appreciates that one cannot compare the way a person conducts himself while he is all alone at home behind closed doors to his conduct in a place when is visible to others. Who in this case can see him? The *Ani Havayah* ["I am Hashem"], the *Eibishter*, the *Melech malchei ha-melachim ha-Kodesh baruch Hu!*

Therefore the laws of *tznius* are exactly the same in the dead of winter and in the heat of summer. By the same token, all the *hiddurim* one observes during the winter apply even more so during the summer. The reasoning is simple. During the winter season, he may be able to claim that he needs to earn a livelihood and according to *halachah* he must support his wife and children. He is exhausted and needs to look after his health. By contrast, during the summer he is on vacation and does nothing at all. And why would he even think of studying....

[In reply to this attitude, I ask:] why is it so critical to eat specifically five times a day and to drink a specific number of glasses of milk a day, and on and on.... While it is true that "*You must guard yourselves*" is also a *mitzvah*, it does not imply that one must be *mehader* in it! And certainly not *mehadrin min ha-mehadrin*.

Where is there truly a need for a *hiddur*? When his performance of *mitzvos* and his daily study sessions are weakened, when his going to Shul three times a day is weakened...

Here he come with an excuse that he is in the country, where there is not always a *minyán*. Then, he does not enjoy the *chazzan*, then he does not appreciate the *gabbai*, then he is not happy with the *aliyah* he received the previous Shabbos. So he lets all that go, along with *kedushah* and *barchu*. He can pray alone without *kedushah* and *barchu*.

So, he finds no reason to be *mehader* in food, drink, and the like. Certainly there is no need to follow the laws of *tznius*. So he leaves that behind him at home together with the *Shulchan Aruch*. He secures it at home with two locks, and sets off for the country without the *Shulchan Aruch*.

### **Influence Others to Conduct Themselves Appropriately**

It has been proven from actual experience that one who

truly desires can travel on vacation while ensuring that it a vacation only from activities that wear down the body in a literal sense, and that the vacation brings greater power to matters that are necessary for strengthening the soul.

This is not mere talk. Do not think that we needed to share a joke and therefore began with a discussion on *tznius*. Rather, this is a matter of timely concern. Just as we observed that from the same discussion we held at this time last year, one or two people were in fact positively influenced, it could well be that our present discussion will cause more than just two or perhaps even three people to be positively influenced. Especially if those present now will give this message over to others. They should first review the law in *Shulchan Aruch* and then explain to others that the Rema states such-and-such in *Shulchan Aruch*. They should emphasize that these laws carry the same weight nowadays as they did in the times of the Rema, and they apply equally to a large city as to a small city and even when one is alone in a field.

"Words that come from the heart enter the heart [of the audience] and achieve their desired effect." May the summer therefore be spiritually clean, and as a result, physically kosher and pure as well. May it serve to increase bodily healthy and the health of the soul, bringing new strengths. May the vacation be used to increase Torah study and *mitzvos* due to fewer pressures of earning a livelihood. The return from vacation should be met with an increase in *shiurim* of *nigleh* and *chassidus*, observance of *mitzvos be'hiddur*, and with joy and gladness of heart. *L'chaim!*

–*Sichas Yud Beis Tammuz 5724 – unedited*

### **"Let non-Jews rave about the experience and let Jews enjoy the experience!"**

The month of Tammuz is one of the summer months. In summer, people tend to relax. In America, people tend to go to the country – and "when you go to a city, follow its ways."

People come to me, inquiring about travelling to the county. They tell me that their wives wish to travel. It is inappropriate to say that they themselves wish to leave, so instead they tell me that their wives wish to go....

Going to the country by no means guarantees that one will be able to relax. It is highly likely that life is more tedious there than in New York. There is no *chalav Yisrael*, homes are expensive there and he therefore languishes in some run-down place. All this for the sake of fulfilling the maxim, “When you go to a city, follow its ways,” that when the fourth of July rolls around, one goes to the country.

There was once a *melamed* whose doctors advised him to visit the forest. Since he needed to earn a livelihood, he slaved away with young children all day. Once his work was done, he still lacked the funds for a ride to the forest, so he set off on foot. This took him a few hours. By then, night fell and he wished to join a *minyan* for *maariv*. He immediately turned and made his way back to the city where he prayed with a *minyan*. So each day, he schlepped himself back and forth in this manner, completely wearing himself down – all for the sake of following the doctor’s recommendation to spend some time in the forest.

In the country there are expensive and cheaper areas. He cannot go to a cheaper area; he finds it necessary to specifically choose an expensive area. But he has no money, he will therefore settle for a dilapidated apartment and wear himself out. But that does not matter to him, as long as he is among people who pay hefty income taxes.

When he later returns home from the country, he will still be worn out because while he was there he lacked the strength to stroll through the hillsides. He spent the whole day in bed and put on weight. But he has his doctor, and his doctor recommends that he fast every Monday and Thursday in order to lose weight.

The end result from all this is that he wears himself out while he is there and continues to do so upon his return. All for the sake of being among people who are mentioned in “Who’s Who” and to fulfill the aphorism, “When you go to a city, follow its ways,” that when the fourth of July arrives, one travels away from home to relax.

After all that, he is truly caught up in the whole thing and he raves about the wonder of his experience. He thanks Hashem for the fact that in..., they allow a Jew with a beard and a child wearing *tzitzis*.

Certainly, it is indeed a great marvel. It is truly a wonder that a Jew finds himself in such a place, when a Jew’s true place is not there but in a *beis midrash!* On the other hand, there are no grounds for describing as a marvel Hashem’s kindness in allowing him to end up in a place like that....

The Gemara relates that Rabbi Elazar ben Arach visited a place that had good wine and hot springs. He was drawn after these amenities, and as a result he forgot all his learning. It was not the water or the wine themselves that caused him such a loss. Rather, it was the fact that he was “drawn after them.”

So the fact that a person goes to the country is one thing. But why must he get overly excited about the experience? Let non-Jews rave about the experience and let Jews merely benefit from the experience!

If one is already going, let him not be taken by the experience. While he is there, he must continue to carry out his mission. And since he is going only for the sake of fulfilling his mission, his “wife” will no longer be interested in going to the country, because he himself will not be interested!

–*Sichas Yud Beis Tammuz 5714- unedited.*

### Hashem Directs the Steps of Man

Those who travels to the county must recite *tefilas ha’derech* along the way. Therefore, the concept of “Hashem directs the steps of man” applied to them as well – despite the fact that they think they are simply travelling to get some fresh air. They should know that the Alter Rebbe’s teaching on the verse “Hashem directs the steps of man” applies to them.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5723 – unedited.*

### “Those who go, need not go; those who need, cannot afford to go.”

There are those who travel to the country. In this regard, reality has become confused. The majority of those who travel do not actually need to go. And those who need to go cannot afford to go. May they have a healthy summer, as the Rebbe would wish people – *ah gezunten zummer!*

They should use their time there to increase in strengthening Judaism among the people they meet

there. It is stated that one of the ways of the Baal Shem Tov is that when a Jew passes through a particular place he refines the place by his very presence, even if he does nothing there. And he certainly refines the place if he adds something in Torah and *mitzvos* while in that location.

He must act. Whether his actions lead to a desired accomplishment or not is not his concern. He simply has to act. This can be compared to *bedikas chametz*. All he must do is to search for *chametz*. As long as he looks, even if he finds nothing, he has fulfilled the *mitzvah*. The same is true in this case. He must act. As long as he acts, he has made himself fit for Moshiach to bring him close to himself ... and to truly see his accomplishments.

Now that so many people travel away to the country, New York has itself become a country! Those who remain behind in this local “country” must do what is needed right here.

*Ah gezunter zummer!* May we meet for *chassidische farbrengens!*

*Sichas Yud Gimmel Tammuz 5715 – unedited.*

### A Great Mitzvah to Publicize

There is an explicit law in *Shulchan Aruch* that is also recorded in numerous *sefarim*. It is of timely concern, especially among this large gathering of Jews, who will undoubtedly publicize it further:

Since it is now the summer and people travel to the country, it is a great *mitzvah* to publicize in the vacation spots that the *Shulchan Aruch*'s laws of *tznius* are not only for the winter season. They apply during the summer as well. Nor are they only for the city. They apply in the country as well. They are not only for children, but also for adults – and not just adults but also for the advanced of age.

May Hashem help that it be a healthy summer, a kosher summer, and a healthy and joyful summer!

*–Sichas Yud Beis Tammuz 5717 – unedited.*

### Vacation is a Bizarre Ploy

To our pain and grief, the bizarre ploy of the *yetzer hara* that is known as vacation is now a common practice even among those who carefully heed the words of Hashem the rest of the year. They claim that vacation

time is different, and that there is no need for effort or toil [in spiritual matters while on vacation].

They do not sense that this runs in contradiction to the Torah, which states, “*Man is born to toil,*” and, “*One who claims to have invested no effort but nevertheless achieved is not to be believed,*” and, “*Days have been formed and one of them is His.*”

The latter verse means that not a single day or hour is superfluous because they were issued according to exact measure, not a moment longer than necessary for a person to complete his inner mission, the theme of which is expressed in the Mishnah, “I was created to serve my Creator.” There is not a moment extra, because every moment to which the above theme does not apply is an irretrievable loss – “days without any clothing [meaningful activities]”, to quote the Zohar. There is no need to elaborate on what is understood by every normal person.

*–Michtav Chaf Hei Tammuz 4716.*

### Spiritual Surge to Match Physical Progress

In reply to your letter dated Iyar 24, in which you mention establishing schedules of study Torah – *nigleh* and *chassidus*. You mention that after Shavuot, many members of Anash travel to the countryside.

You will undoubtedly begin – well ahead of time – discussing and encouraging those who go on vacation to establish times for Torah study in the country as well, and in fact, to increase their study.

“*For Hashem created one versus the other.*” When the body busies itself in self-invigoration via physical matters in the literal sense, increasing its food intake, exercise, and so on (and not always with the intention to serve Hashem, at least not overtly), a corresponding increase of the soul is needed.

[Spiritual increase is necessary] to a greater extent that the bodily invigoration. For the vacation environment naturally pulls a person to these basic things that I have mentioned to a greater extent than while he is in the city. At the very least, the increase in the spiritual must match the increase in the physical.

It is stated that the above consideration is one of the purposes of reading *Pirkei Avos* as soon as the summer

season begins. For then nature is invigorated, the trees bud, and so on.

Certainly, this in no way contradicts the Baal Shem Tov's teaching on the verse, "You shall surely assist him" [meaning that one should assist his body in drawing closer to Hashem's service via positive methods] and not via fasting, afflicting oneself, and the like.

For the body's natural power of craving is to be redirected towards spiritual matters and so on, until the fulfillment of the longed for prophecy [regarding the final redemption], that not only will the body cease distracting a person from the service of Hashem, and not only will it assist a person in his service, but to the contrary – "The female will envelope the male" [meaning that the body will enliven the soul]!

With blessings, as per the words of the Rebbe [Rayatz], "A healthy and happy summer!" May it be so physically and spiritual at once!

–*Michtav Chaf Vav Iyar 5715.*

### Freedom Cannot be Taken

It seems that is customary for a person to change location at this time of year. Or, as per common parlance, one "takes a *chofeish* (vacation)."

Obviously, this phrase is self-contradictory. *Chofeish* [literally meaning "freedom"] cannot be taken. It can only be granted. One who is able to take a *chofeish* on his own is already free! More importantly, such a notion contradicts the concept of "They are My servants" [in which sense, a Jew is never free].

Anyhow, the intent of this expression is clear, and since [vacation] is undertaken for healthy purposes, it is fine according to the Torah.

May Hashem grant success, so that the *chofeish* is utilized to increase in the truest freedom, [as our Sages state,] "There is none as free as he who toils in Torah."

–*Michtav Yud Gimmel Menachem Av 5719.*

### The True Purpose of Vacation

May Hashem grant that while you and your family are

in the country, the intended benefit should materialize in the literal sense, in the health and invigoration of the body. To quote a saying of that the Rebbe [Rayatz] repeated in the name of his father the Rebbe [Rashab], "How precious is [the body] that so much Torah has been poured on its behalf!"

See Rambam (*Hilchos Dei'os*, beg. ch. 4), "Maintaining bodily health is one of the ways in which we serve Hashem."

From this we can appreciate to an infinitely greater degree just how very important it is to maintain the health of the soul. This is a goal we work on around the year. How much more so must we strengthen this effort with increased energy during the time of year in which we are occupied and interested specifically in invigorating the body. [Heightened focus on the soul's health during vacation is critical] to avoid arriving at the state, G-d forbid, of "the strength of the body is the weakness of the soul" (*Zohar*, vol. 1, 180b). Also see *Shabbos* (147b – "the waters of Diomsus," etc.).

I am not here to give a lecture but to inspire a revolution in approach: Utilize the time and focus that is being given to bodily health for strengthening the soul!

Accomplish this through adding a regular Torah study session specifically for the summer months, and through seeking opportunities to encourage others who have arrived for vacation in your location and its environs to increase in Torah study, in prayer, and in acts of kindness – each according to his ability.

It is sometimes worth explaining to them that one cannot begin to fathom the workings of Divine Providence. Perhaps the very reason why all of you were brought together to this specific location is to use the opportunity to add precious gems to the crown of the King of kings, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

*Michtav Chaf Alef Tammuz 5710. This letter was sent to quite a few members of Anash between Tammuz 21 and Menachem Av 4.*



# Practical Guide for a Safe and Chassidish Summer

Including Halochos and Minhagei Chabad relevant to traveling, trips, and in the Country

The following points were distilled from a series of public shiurim that were delivered by Horav **Yosef Yeshaya Braun** shlita, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights.\*

For a more complete compendium, additional information, and extensive references, please see the Hebrew version.

It is important for those who spend the summer in the country to learn the laws that are especially relevant to their situation. It is also important to contact a Rav should any queries arise. The Badatz can be reached on 718.604.8000, extensions 2 and 3.

## Travelling to the Country

### When to Travel

Many laws come into play when going to the country, from the moment one embarks on his journey. Some of these considerations are presented below:

1. Chazal teach us that “one should always set out on a trip at a good hour,” meaning that he should invest considerable effort into leaving during daylight hours. Although there may be justification for leniency in this matter in modern society, the darkened country roads and added difficulty in reading signs make this particularly relevant for those traveling to the country.

2. One who plans to set off early in the morning must first pray if the time for *Shacharis* has arrived. This law appears unique to *Shacharis*, not to *Minchah* or to *Ma'ariv*. There seems to be justification for leaving before praying if the alternative would entail sitting in heavy traffic, provided one has already recited *birchos hashachar*.

If there is no *minyan* at one's present location but there will be a *minyan* at his destination, he should delay praying if he is certain to arrive in time for *Shacharis*.

If one has already set out on his trip and will arrive at his destination before the time for *Shacharis* expires, it

is preferable that he delay praying until he arrives rather than praying while seated in a vehicle.

One should not plan to spend his vacation in a location where no *minyan* exists, unless it is required for health reasons or similar significant concerns.

3. When setting out on a Friday one must leave plenty of time to arrive well in advance of Shabbos, bearing in mind the possibility of considerable traffic delays. This is the case only if his Shabbos requirements will be prepared for him by others at his destination. If, however, he will have to make his own preparations upon arrival, he must leave with plenty of time to arrive and to prepare.

### How to Travel

1. Out of *ahavas yisrael* and as an act of kindness, one should inform others of his travel plans to and from the country so that others can join him if they share the same destination. (He is not obligated to do so if it will cause him financial loss.)

2. In consideration of the Torah obligation to protect oneself from harm, he should take all standard precautionary measures. For example, the vehicle should be fit for travel and contain sufficient gas for the trip. Both driver and passengers should wear their seatbelts. A map or GPS should be brought along for trips through unfamiliar territory.

\*) This is in addition to THE SUMMER BUTTERFLY: *It's In Our Hands* 5771, From the Desk of Badatz Vol. 3, Summer 5772 and Summer Halachos & Minhagim 5773.

A driver has an obligation to drive safely and to ensure that he remains alert on long trips. The Rebbe advised stopping once an hour on long trips to refresh oneself and remain alert. The Rebbe repeatedly advised placing *seforim* such as a *chitas* in the car, as well as a *tzedakah* box, for added protection.

3. One must avoid potential situations of *yichud* while travelling. This is especially important while travelling at night or alongside country roads that do not have pedestrian traffic.

General laws of *yichud*: It is forbidden for a woman or girl over the age of *bas mitzvah* to remain alone in a state of *yichud* with a man or boy over the age of nine. Similarly, it is forbidden for a man or teenager over the age of *bar mitzvah* to remain in a state of *yichud* with a girl over the age of three. *Yichud* applies even there is one man and two or more women. The reverse, when there are two or more men and one woman is not necessarily *yichud*, depending on circumstances. The laws of *yichud* are extensive, and one is advised to consult a *Rav* regarding any situation that may involve *yichud*.

In *Sefer Ha-Sichos* 5751, the Rebbe advised: “A Jewish woman or girl must be careful about traveling in a car or taxi driven by a male where the issue of *yichud* may apply. There is much halachic debate on this topic and in cases such as these one should clarify the relevant details with a *Rav*.”

## While Travelling

1. When travelling beyond city limits, one must recite *tefillas ha-derech*. If easily achievable he should stand to recite the blessing. The obligation to stand depends on circumstance, as illustrated by the fact that when the Rebbe Rashab would travel in a horse drawn carriage he would pray while seated. In such a setting, the obligation is to stop moving rather than to actually stand. While traveling by train, however, the Rebbe Rashab would pray while standing.

*Tefillas ha-derech* should be recited during the actual journey, but not before exiting the city limits. People say that on the Rebbe’s trip to Camp Gan Israel he recited the blessing after exiting the Tappan Zee Bridge, which crosses the Hudson River. According to some

authorities, when headed upstate one should recite the blessing after exiting the George Washington Bridge.

2. If for some reason one is forced to stop and pray (*Shacharis*, *Minchah*, or *Ma’ariv*) along the roadside he should preferably avoid praying in the open. Rather, he should pray among trees, next to a wall, beside his vehicle, and the like. He should also make certain that the location in which he prays is suitable from a standpoint of *tzni’us*. He should dress appropriately for prayer, wearing a hat and jacket and a *gartel*, and so on, as required by *halachah*.

3. If one encounters a fellow Jew whose car is stuck or broken down it is an important *mitzvah* to stop and do everything possible to assist him, and not to leave him alone on the roadside.

## Vacation Destinations

1. One must plan a vacation in a location that is in keeping with the spirit of Judaism and Chassidus. Rather than finding a place that is suitable for his body, he must find a place that is also (and more importantly) suitable for his soul. This includes determining in advance the identities of those with whom he will be vacationing. As the Rambam writes, “By man’s very nature his outlook and actions will be influenced by his friends and acquaintances.”

## In the Country

### Matters of Timing

1. There is usually a difference in the *halachic* times between New York City and Upstate New York. One must be careful to rely on a calendar or device that is accurate for his current location. It is important to know the precise times of sunrise, sunset, nightfall, etc., for the sake of Shabbos and many other laws.

2. One must be vigilant to recite the *Shema* by the proper time each morning. This is especially pertinent while on vacation when many are accustomed to rising later than usual.

One who notices a fellow Jew asleep when the deadline for reciting the *Shema* is coming close, is obligated to wake him up to recite the *Shema*.

## Prayer and its Preparations

1. One should try to immerse in a *mikveh* before praying *Shacharis*.

A *mikveh* of *mayin she'uvim* (such as a pool) can be used for this purpose as long as its waters are stationary, not flowing, and they are not contained in some form of vessel, but in a pool that is permanently set in the earth. Therefore, one should confirm that the filter is off while immersing.

If neither a *mikveh* nor a pool is available, one may make do with pouring nine *kabim* of water over himself in a continuous stream that reaches every part of his body. The definition of nine *kabim* varies greatly, ranging from 2.8 gallons to 4 gallons. Up to three water containers may be used, as long as the stream is truly continuous. A shower may be used for this purpose (some estimate that at least a three minute shower is necessary). If one has used either of the above methods, but later has access to a proper *mikveh*, he should immerse in the *mikveh*.

2. If there is a *minyan* available within the distance of one *mil* from where one is vacationing he must travel that distance to join the *minyan*. A *mil* is approximately an 18 minute journey. (Some authorities estimate this as a 24 minute journey. There is also some debate over whether this applies to travel by foot or by vehicle. Some say that there is no limit at all if the *minyan* is in his city.)

3. When one is traveling and has his *tallis* and *tefillin* in the car he should keep them out of direct sunlight so that they are not damaged by the heat.

## Torah Study

1. Each person is obligated to establish times for studying Torah during the day and in the evening, as required by *Shulchan Aruch*. The precise extent of the obligation varies, as explained in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*. One who maintains a fixed study session throughout the year is required to continue it during vacation. In fact, the vacation is an opportune time to greatly increase his Torah study.

One also has a Torah obligation (*mitzvas aseï d'oraïsa*) to teach Torah to his children. The Torah study of young children may not be interrupted even for the sake of building the *Beis HaMikdash*. In his *sichos* the Rebbe

repeatedly insisted that Torah schools should not close during summer months, using the term "G-d forbid." It is therefore extremely important to maintain a regular schedule of study with one's children. In fact, doing so while on vacation will impress upon the children the true importance of Torah study.

2. In addition, for the sake of *tzni'us* and *kedusha*, one should avoid books (or websites) with mundane or lowly material. Similarly, it is extremely important to avoid places such as theaters.

## Things to Note

1. One must avoid placing himself in danger by wandering along roads and paths that are not adequately lit where passing drivers may not clearly see the pedestrians. He should take all necessary precautions, such as wearing light colored or reflective clothing.

2. One should not forget the *mitzvah* of *kibud av va-eim* while vacationing. He should make it a point of contacting his parents periodically to inquire about their wellbeing, etc.

3. Serious issues of *yichud* may occur in vacation settings. One should study the appropriate laws in advance and also bear in mind the warning in *Avos* against a man and a woman engaging in excessive chatter with each other.

4. The laws of *tzni'us* apply to men as well. The Rebbe placed great emphasis on this obligation and took the unusual step of including a **bold typed warning** in *Likkutei Sichos* regarding this issue (see vol. 13, page 84).

## Purchasing Food

### The Vendor

1. One should try, wherever possible, to buy food products from a Jewish storeowner. This law applies throughout the year, but has become especially relevant in vacation spots, where although Jewish food stores exist, people prefer to patronize larger, brand name stores.

This requirement applies even if the Jewish store is slightly further away than the non-Jewish store, and even if it is slightly more expensive. However, if the difference is significant there is no obligation to shop in the Jewish store.

## Kashrus

1. One should make certain that the *kashrus* meets the standards which our community adheres to throughout the year. He must check whether each product has an appropriate *hechsher*. Often an unsuitable product will be packaged in a manner similar to a familiar product. Some goods are marketed with a *hechsher* only in particular areas, such as in the religious sections of Brooklyn, while these identical products appear elsewhere without a *hechsher* because they were not produced on the company's *kosher* production lines.

2. One must be especially cautious when patronizing a restaurant. He must check whether the establishment carries a *mehudar'dige hechsher*. This is even more critical when purchasing milk, meat, or fish products, or wine. Ensure that the restaurant's certificate of *kashrus* has been issued for that particular location and has not expired. In addition, one should ensure that the *mashgiach* is supervising as necessary and is alert to check vegetable leaves for bugs, and so on.

## Additional Precautions

1. In a kosher hotel, milk-based foods are sometimes served within six hours of having served meat-based dishes. A hotel relies on its customers to keep track of their own *kashrus* obligations. One must keep this in mind and maintain the appropriate time between meat and milk.

2. Bread that was on the table during a meat-based meal may not be eaten during a subsequent milk-based meal, and vice versa.

3. Before choosing a hotel or restaurant one must determine whether the standards of *tzni'us* in those locations are appropriate.

## Trips

*One should prepare everything that is required in advance of a trip or hike to ensure compliance with halachah. This applies to the overall choice of destination as well as the details of the trip. The following should be taken into consideration:*

## Eating

1. One must prepare in advance a *kosher* utensil for washing the hands, a towel, bread, salt, a text from which to recite *birchas ha-mazon*, and so on.

2. One should not wash his hands from a disposable cup or container unless there is nothing else available. If that is the case one should designate a particular disposable cup for hand washing, giving it a semblance of permanency in this regard.

If there is no water available for washing one's hands he should travel to find water. If this requires him to backtrack, he must travel at least as far as 18 minutes (or 24 minutes according to some authorities). If he is required to advance along his intended route in order to find water he must travel at least 72 minutes until he finds water.

One may immerse his hands in the sea for this purpose. However, he may not remove water from the sea and wash his hands with a basin containing sea water, because its salty water is not considered fit for even a dog to drink. He may use rainwater that has gathered directly in the ground provided that it contains a measure of 40 *sa'ah* and that the water is stationary, not flowing. A spring or river is kosher for immersing one's hands, even though the water isn't stationary. It does not require 40 *sa'ah*, and it is sufficient if there is enough water in one place to completely cover his hands. He may not immerse his hands in a pond or puddle that was filled with water

It is necessary to immerse one's hands only one time. He must examine his hands first to ensure that there is nothing on his hands that would prevent the water from fully reaching his hands. He does not have to dry his hands, nor raise them. He should recite the blessing for immersion, "*Baruch .....al shtifas yadayim.*" If he has already recited *al netilas yadayim* or *al tevilas yadayim*, he need not recite another blessing.

One should not use liquids other than water for this purpose (this is particularly important according to Kabbalah). If water cannot be found at all, he may use liquids that are primary comprised of water, such as tea, coffee, or soft drinks. It would seem that soda may be considered actual water for this purpose. However, he may not use natural fruit juices, milk or wine.

If one does not have a towel, he may not dry his hands on his clothing (an act that is considered to cause forgetfulness). Any material that dries may be used. He may not wait until his hands dry by themselves; he needs to find something with which to wipe them dry.

Some prefer to wash their hands and eat some bread before setting out on a trip, avoiding the difficulty of finding water during the trip. This works only as long as one remembers to keep his hands away from unclean places or objects. The best prevention against this is to wear gloves. He must also remember to recite *birchas ha-mazon* within the time it takes for the bread to be digested, i.e., before he again feels significantly hungry, since after that he may not recite *birchas ha-mazon*.

3. When eating outdoors one should take care not to leave containers or plates uncovered to prevent flies and insects from getting into the food. Before he eats something he should check that nothing has fallen into it.

4. Rambam states that one can discern a wise person from his actions—from his eating and drinking and other activities. One must continue acting thus even while on vacation. This is especially important if the absence of such behavior will cause a *chillul Hashem*.

## Animal Attractions

1. While visiting an animal attraction such as a petting zoo, and also when encountering animals in their natural habitat in the countryside, one must take care to avoid causing harm or pain to any creature—the Torah prohibition of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*.

2. One should not go fishing for fun, but only if he intends to eat the fish he catches (as long as they turn out to be kosher). There is some debate as to whether one is permitted to catch fish and kill them immediately. Certainly, he should not choose to do so in the first place.

3. One is permitted to kill creatures that cause him pain, such as mosquitoes. Even so, he should not go out of his way to find them in order to kill them for no reason.

The Alter Rebbe writes that one should personally trouble himself to rescue any living creature that is in distress. Indeed, some *tzaddikim* would not harm a creature even if it caused them pain. The Rebbe records that the Rebbe Rashab would gently wave away mosquitoes but

he would never kill them. The Rebbe Rayatz records the now familiar story of a boy named Yitzchak Shaul, which teaches us the great importance of avoiding causing harm to any living creature.

## Swimming

1. Every pool, well, pit, and other potentially hazardous place must be adequately and securely fenced in from all sides so that no one falls in or is harmed, G-d forbid. This is included in the Torah obligation (*mitzvas aseil d'oraisa*) to erect a fence around an accessible roof.

2. A child or adult who cannot swim well should not enter deep water under circumstances that may put him in danger. No child may be left in or beside a pool or any other place of potential danger without a lifeguard or an adequate adult supervisor.

3. Swimming is good for one's health. Nevertheless, one should not indulge excessively in swimming for pleasure's sake. This is reflected in the story in the Gemara about Rabbi Elazar ben Arach who indulged in swimming and other pleasures in excess and lost his vast Torah knowledge. The Rebbe repeatedly refers to this story as a lesson that if something like that could happen to one of the greatest sages, then common people such as ourselves must surely avoid indulging excessively in bodily pleasures, even healthy ones.

4. Needless to say, *halachah* applies even to an indoor swimming pool. It is more than obvious that girls and boys should not swim together at the same time in a pool. It is forbidden in the strictest terms for a boy over the age of nine and a girl over the age of three to swim in a pool at the same time. It is prudent to avoid having girls over the age of three and boys over the age of five swim together. In fact, it is correct to avoid having even younger boys and girls swim together or even to stand and watch while the others swim. It is therefore preferable to maintain separate swimming hours.

5. Men and boys should be supervised by a male lifeguard, and women and girls should be supervised by a female lifeguard. There is no *heter* for a man to serve as a lifeguard for girls. Under **extremely** pressing circumstances and when there is no other option, a *Rav* should be consulted as precisely how to proceed. The same applies for a woman lifeguard overseeing boys—a

*Rav* should be consulted for guidance if this is necessary under pressing circumstances.

## Laws for Shabbos

### Erev Shabbos

1. Spider webs such as those found upon entering a vacation bungalow at the start of a summer should be removed before—and not during—Shabbos.

### Beginning Shabbos Early for Children

1. Many children find it difficult to remain awake until their fathers come home from *shul* on Friday nights during the summer. If they have already reached the age of *chinuch* they should recite their own *kiddush* early, even during daylight hours, then wash for *ha-motzi* and eat their meal. This applies to children in overnight camps as well. The only limitation is not to have them recite *kiddush* before *plag ha-minchah*, according to the times posted on the calendars for their particular location.

If they must go to sleep before *plag ha-minchah*, they should not recite *kiddush* at night at all. They should recite the night-time *kiddush* before eating their meal the following morning (without the “*yom hashishi*” paragraph).

2. If they go to sleep before Shabbos ends, they should recite *havdalah* on Sunday morning.

### Location of Shabbos Meals

1. During Shabbos it is preferable to avoid eating in a garden or in a grassy or wooded area, especially if liquids are involved. Due to a number of *halachic* concerns, it is better to eat the Shabbos meals indoors.

If it is necessary to eat outdoors because of oppressive indoor heat, because there is no room for everyone indoors, or similar considerations, care must be taken to avoid actions that are prohibited on Shabbos. For example, one should wash his hands before or after the meal indoors. Although *halachah* differentiates between water and other liquids, care should be taken to avoid

spilling any liquid outdoors.

2. If the place for eating happens to be under or near a tree, one must be careful to avoid climbing the tree on Shabbos or using it in any way, or even standing on its roots if they protrude three *tefachim* from the ground. He may not hang his hat or jacket on a tree or bush, nor touch any vegetation with his hands. However, he may sit on the grass on Shabbos.

### Carrying

1. In oppressive heat one may drape his jacket over his shoulders without placing his hands in the sleeves, even while walking.

2. One must not walk beyond the area contained by an *eiruv* while wearing sunglasses. This is permitted, however, for someone who always wears sunglasses outdoors due to the sensitivity or fragility of his eyes.

3. According to the laws of *eiruwei chatzeiros* established by *Chazal*, if a number of homes open into a common yard, one may not carry in that yard unless an *eiruv chatzeiros* has been prepared. Each home must contribute bread towards the joint *eiruv chatzeiros*. Alternatively, one homeowner can donate the *eiruv* on behalf of all the others. It is preferable to use bread that lasts a long time, such as *matzos*, for the *eiruv*.

One must determine that the homeowner in whose house the *eiruv* is placed will in fact spend Shabbos at home. Alternatively, the homeowner may leave the key of his home with one of his neighbors who participates in the *eiruv*. He may also make alternative arrangements to ensure that it is theoretically possible for those who participate in the *eiruv* to enter his home while he is away and access the *eiruv* during Shabbos.

If the owner of the home in which the *eiruv* is placed travels elsewhere for Shabbos and his neighbors cannot access the *eiruv* without performing a *melachah d'oraisa* such as breaking down his front door, they must arrange a new *eiruv* in another home before Shabbos.

If one of the neighbors in such a situation is not Jewish, the *eiruv* cannot be made with his participation. The solution in such a case is to rent the non-Jew's share in the joint yard.

## Spreading Out a Wet Garment

1. A wet item of clothing or cloth may not be spread out to dry on Shabbos because it may appear as if one is laundering it on Shabbos. Therefore, he must avoid spreading out the towel he used after the *mikveh* on Shabbos morning on a floor, over a wall, or the like. However, he may place it somewhere without spreading it out entirely. Some permit spreading it fully beside a *mikveh* or a pool, since it is obvious to all that he is not laundering clothing on Shabbos, but has merely used the towel to dry himself after immersion.

## Air Conditioning

1. If one forgot to turn on the air conditioner before Shabbos he may not instruct a non-Jew to turn it on for him. However, if the heat is truly oppressive to an unbearable degree and is causing extreme discomfort, he may be lenient and ask a non-Jew to turn on the air conditioner. This certainly applies if there are children present who will suffer greatly from the heat.

If the heat is not extreme, but rather a matter of personal comfort, it is forbidden to even hint to a non-Jew to turn on the air conditioner.

2. If the air conditioner was running from before Shabbos, but during Shabbos the outside temperature plunged and it became unbearably freezing inside the home, one may ask a non-Jew to switch it off. The *halachah* considers everyone as ill in the face of extreme cold. A non-Jew may be asked to turn off the air conditioner even when the discomfort caused by the cold air has not reached extreme severity.

3. In general, one must avoid asking a non-Jew to perform any activity that is forbidden for a Jew to perform on Shabbos, even *miderabanan*. There are multiple laws involved in such a request, and one must be well versed in them in order to employ the assistance of a non-Jew on Shabbos.

## Laws of Reciting Blessings

1. The bracha on ice cream is *shehakol*. If one ate a *kezayis* within the timeframe of *k'dei achilas p'ras*, he

must recite a *berachah acharonah*.

If the ice cream is served in a plain cone that is made from a species of grain, then it serves primarily to hold the ice cream and to prevent the ice cream from melting over one's fingers. It is secondary to the ice cream and requires no separate blessing. However, if the cone is sweetened and intended as a treat in itself, the ice cream is considered secondary to the cone, and *mezonos* is recited over the entire ice cream cone. Whenever a *mezonos* is necessary one should endeavor to eat a *kezayis* of the cone enabling him to recite *al ha-michiyah* afterwards.

2. For a number of halachic considerations one should avoid eating *mezonos* rolls outside the context of a meal for which he washed for *ha-motzi* and ate a *kezayis* of real bread. Alternatively, he may eat *k'dei sevi'a* of these rolls, meaning the size of four eggs, provided that it is sufficient to make him feel full. (For this purpose, we also consider the feeling of satiation derived from other food eaten with the bread.) In such a case, he must wash for *ha-motzi* beforehand and recite *birchas ha-mazon* afterwards.

3. One may not leave the location of a meal for which he washed for *ha-motzi* without reciting *birchas ha-mazon*.

If he forgot and has already left, he must return and recite the blessing. However, if he has other food prepared for him in a second location and he leaves the first to continue eating in the second—something that he is not supposed to do—he is not obligated to return to the first location. Instead, he may eat some bread in the second location and then recite the *birchas ha-mazon* once he has finished eating.

This does not apply if one had in mind while reciting *ha-motzi* that he intends to go elsewhere for the remainder of his meal. Therefore, those going on a trip are who are accustomed to washing and eating some bread beforehand, with the intention of completing their meal elsewhere, are permitted to recite *birchas ha-mazon* wherever they complete their meal.





Among the halachic matters discussed at the meeting during "Welcome Farbrengen" for visiting Rabbonim, the Rabbonim of the Badatz initiated a special discussion on the method of allowing the use of new technological devices, such as refrigerators, on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

In this context, and at the request of many, we hereby publish the words that were written by the *Mara Dasra* and Chaver Habdatz, Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, *shlita*.

בין העניינים ההלכתיים עליהם דובר באסיפת 'קבלת-הפנים לרבנים האורחים', יזמו הרבנים חברי הבד"צ דיון מיוחד בכל הקשור לאופן היתר ההשתמשות, בשבת וימים-טובים, במכשירים טכנולוגיים חדשים, כמקררים.

בהקשר זה, ולפי בקשת רבים, הננו לפרסם כאן את הדברים שכתב בנידון המרא-דאתרא וחבר הבד"צ הרב יוסף ישעי' ברוין שליט"א.

## HOT DEBATE: KEEPING FOOD COLD ON SHABBOS

For nearly a century, as long as electronic cold-storage for home use has been around, refrigerator use on Shabbos and Yom Tov has been a topic of intense discussion by halachic authorities. Originally, the debate centered on how operating the refrigerator door affects the thermostat, compressor, motor—and as refrigerator mechanics advanced, timed defrost, inverter, condenser and evaporator fan and other apparatus—and the permissibility of engaging these electronic components.

Modern refrigerators with computer power are much more complex and continue getting "smarter": Opening or closing the fridge may engage door sensors, alarms or even cameras, activate sensitive monitoring of temperature (and the weight

of food on the shelves!), trigger built-in LED lighting modules and more.

There was no halachic consensus back then, and there is none now. So how do we access our cold food and drink on Shabbos?

Any action in fridge operation that directly activates the motor or another automatic component is *assur* (forbidden), but if the activity of the fridge mechanism is somewhat delayed, it has been deemed permissible by many mainstream *poskim*.\*

As refrigerators have introduced new computerized functions that also work independently, the various ways to circumvent them on Shabbos have changed accordingly.

**An old-style, purely mechanical fridge and freezer which**

is thermostat-controlled needs its light deactivated (preferably the switch, but even the bulb itself) before Shabbos. Opening and closing the mechanical fridge hence would only have an indirect effect (according to mainstream opinion) on the thermostat, compressor, motor and fan.

However, many modern refrigerators with electronic circuit boards (similar to a computer) have a door switch that affects the defrost settings and/or other intricate functions. **The door switch on any fridge and freezer model of the last decade or so must therefore be taped up or otherwise deactivated before Shabbos.** A tight seal is important, because if the switch is able to move even slightly, though perhaps not enough to engage the lights, it may still directly affect other automatic functions. (A “ShabbosSwitch Slider” is a small plastic gadget that is secured next to the refrigerator tripper switch that needs only to be slid into place to secure the switch before Shabbos. It is recommended to draw back the slider—or strip a taped-up switch—after Shabbos, as extended deactivation can ruin the operation of the fridge long-term.)

As the refrigerator becomes more high-tech, it may introduce more issues with operation on Shabbos: A heavily calibrated signal system can count door openings, register temperature to the tenth degree, deactivate the evaporator fan (which circulates cold air; in some models, there is one only in the freezer that affects all air flow) and trigger all sorts of digital displays, alarms and lights. This type of model might also have a (hidden) sensor in the door instead of—or in addition to—the integrated switch. **A magnetic door sensor would have to be disabled before Shabbos with a counter-magnet or other deactivator** (technicians can sometimes move these sensors to another part of the fridge so they are not activated directly by door function).

A lot of successive fridge-door openings may still have an effect on the thermostat, compressor, motor fan, defrost and other electronic components of the computerized refrigerator even when the switches and sensors are deactivated. (The most serious of these involve an automatic defrost system that uses thermal coils; activating glowing hot wires directly is an *issur d'oraisa*—a Torah prohibition, and it may be problematic to affect such a system even semi-directly.) Some authorities therefore recommend only refrigerators that can have the whole circuit system deactivated for Shabbos. To take these issues into account **it is suggested to open the refrigerator door while the motor is running, or with a *shinui* (modification) to normal use when the motor is not engaged** in combination with switch and/or sensor deactivation.

However, there are contemporary *poskim* who permit usage of a deactivated fridge even in this case. They state that the unobserved data recorded by the fridge circuit board (computer) due to temperature change is not a clear violation of *boneh* (building) or *mav'ir* (lighting a fire), the usual issues with using electricity on Shabbos, since there is only a small amount of added current with each signal. (Another concern with using electronics is *k'sivah*—writing—but this is also not presented by refrigerator circuit boards when the display is disabled.) Since this action is in the category of *issur d'Rabbanan* (forbidden by Rabbinic decree) it is combined with other factors to result in a *heter*.\*\*

**New technologies have been developed by religious Jewish engineers that can circumvent even these indirect effects of fridge-door operation.** “If technology offers solutions to halachic issues it has created,” their halachic proponents say, “it is incumbent upon us to utilize them.” These systems can act as a switch to turn refrigerator circuits on and off every few minutes (such as the “Smart Control” gadget), notifying the user when the fridge is “off” and can be opened. It is recommended to use them when available.

Some refrigerators have a Shabbos mode function, an integrated circuit board equipped with the ability to override computer function. The consumer should be aware that there are some fridge models which ostensibly include a “Shabbos mode” status but lack Rabbinic oversight. In addition, Shabbos mode operation generally does not suffice for those that rule that even initial electronic signaling poses an issue on Shabbos; most of these computer chips neutralize the temperature-controlled functions of the fridge and adjust them automatically, but do not evade the original impulses.

\* Some authorities permit opening the door of a mechanical fridge only when the motor is running to avoid the possibility of a rush of warm air activating it right when it is opened. They consider all electrical function caused by door operation *assur* and therefore rule even more stringently for a non-mechanical fridge because of all the additional functions activated even while the motor runs: automatic defrost, inverters, electronic signals, and more.

\*\* Some of these additional *sevaros* (theories) supporting leniency are: The non-immediate aspect of operating the fridge is deemed *grama* (indirect action), a common halachic designation where there is no clear cause/effect operation initiated by the user. Some halachic authors claim it as a *grama d'grama* (even more indirect effect). In addition, without sensor or switch, the electronics engaged when opening the door are a halachic *safek* (doubt) on a *d'Rabbanan*—the user does not know which particular door-opening operation will have the unintentional cumulative effect on the system, even though it is inevitable (called *safek psik reisha*). They also cite the concept of *koach kocho* (human action that spurs further action [that effectuates a prohibited act])—perhaps the warm air that prompts the computer signals is not actually considered human intervention.

## REMOVING ITEMS FROM A CAR ON SHABBOS

A frequently asked *shailah* is: if one has left an item in the car before Shabbos, is it permissible to take it out on Shabbos? According to halachah, if the car is parked within the *eruv* (where one is permitted to carry on Shabbos), no lights go on when one opens the car doors or the trunk, and nothing electronic is activated, then they may use their car keys to open the doors and trunk and take out the needed items—but only those items that are needed on Shabbos. Of course, using the remote control to unlock the doors or trunk, or the buttons that unlock the doors and trunk electronically from the car's interior, are not permitted; but the door key may be used to open the door mechanically, even if the door key also contains a remote, or an ignition key. Closing the door or trunk presents a halachic problem though, since the

purpose of closing them is not for Shabbos; one may close them—and the manual button on the door may be depressed to lock the door—only if the purpose is to safeguard non-*muktzah* items left inside (but not to safeguard the car). Alternatively, if the open car door or trunk would get in the way of others they may be closed, since it is considered *letzorech mekomo* (the place is needed on Shabbos). Finally, if the car keys are in one key bunch with the key used to turn on the ignition or the remote key, the bunch of keys is considered *muktzah* (unless they are being used for an activity permitted on Shabbos, as above). Therefore, one may carry the keys back into the house only as continuation of the act of taking them out to the car by making sure not to put them down or drop them at any point.

## WHO GETS PRIORITY—THE ONE WHO WANTS THE WINDOW OPEN, OR THE ONE WHO WANTS IT CLOSED?

If people in the same room disagree over opening or closing the window, or turning the air conditioning on or off, they should abide by the following guidelines:

In the winter, a single individual can prevail to have the window or the air conditioning closed or have the heat turned up. The same principle applies in reverse: in the summer, the one who wishes to open the window or turn on the air conditioning prevails, even if someone might catch a cold.

In the spring or fall, when it's not very cold or very hot, those present should either come to a consensus—since

both groups have equal say—or follow whatever is customary for that climate.

If one of those present is already unwell, their needs take priority, regardless of the season.

If the person who is cold has the option of wearing a sweater or coat, they should do so before making any demands; if they're still cold, then the above rules should be followed.

Even if the halachah is on their side, one should strive to be *mevater* (yield to others), since making peace is the vehicle for receiving Hashem's blessings.

## SPENDING SHABBOS AT A HOTEL

Due to the widespread use of technology, there are quite a number of issues that have to be addressed prior to spending Shabbos at a hotel. All the doors we go through have to be manual, not electronic; if we must use an electronic door, we should wait until a non-Jew walks through the door, and then walk through together with them. If the door to our hotel room is equipped with an electronic key, we may not open the door, nor may we handle the keys, as they're considered to be *muktzeh*. However, it's permissible to ask a non-Jew, perhaps a member of the staff, to unlock the door for us. Some doors to hotel rooms are equipped with sensors, and each time we walk through the door, a light is activated, as well as possibly the air conditioning; even the flushometer in the bathroom might be activated by a sensor. In some hotels, opening the door to the balcony might affect the air conditioning in a direct manner. Therefore,

we must neutralize all of these sensors before Shabbos. The refrigerator in the room will light up every time its door is opened unless the light is disabled; sometimes the refrigerator also has a lighted display that needs to be deactivated; taking items stocked by the hotel out of the refrigerator causes the computer to track which items were removed. All of these matters should be addressed before Shabbos in order to avoid *shailos* (halachic issues). Walking past security cameras is permitted if there is no alternative. Many are lenient to carry in the hotel hallways on Shabbos, even in areas where there is no *eruv*. If it's a non-Jewish hotel, and there are other Jews residing at the hotel, there is room to be stringent not to carry unless a *sechiras reshus* and/or *eruv chatzeiros* (without a *brachah*) has been arranged. Nonetheless, there is strong support for the lenient position.

## LO SISGODEDU: CONFLICTING RABBINIC RULINGS WITHIN A COMMUNITY

*Chazal* (our Sages) interpret the mitzvah of “*Lo Sisgodedu*,” to mean “*lo saasu agudos agudos*”, that it is forbidden to divide a community into various factions—to have conflicting groups within one community who follow different halachic rulings. Such a situation creates *machlokos gedolos* (much discord) within Jewish communities. There are *poskim* who say that it is an *issur de’Oraysa* (Biblical prohibition), whereas others say it is an *issur de’Rabbanan* (Rabbinic prohibition). The beginning of the *pasuk* is, “*Banim atem la’Hashem Elokeichem*,”—Jewish people are children to Hashem, and since we are all children of one G-d, we should all act in a unified manner, with no disparity. When members of a community follow rulings that are at variance with each other, it appears *kishteit Toros* (as if there are two Torahs) and *kishteit Elokus, chas v’shalom* (as if there

are two different gods, Heaven forbid). There is a discussion in halachah regarding “*shteit batei dinim be’ir achas*” (two Rabbinic courts in one city), whether that violates the prohibition of *Lo Sisgodedu* or not. In many places nowadays there are various distinct communities living side by side. *Poskim* agree that if they originated elsewhere as separate communities there is no issue of *Lo Sisgodedu*. Certainly, if there is one *Beis Din* in one community, but the *dayanim* are divided, and act as if there were two different *Batei Din*, it is not acceptable. This can potentially result in a situation, mentioned above, where people within the same community follow different halachic rulings. Unquestionably, the Torah way is for the community to be united. The halachah is that in case a halachic decision isn’t unanimous, we are to follow the majority opinion.

## INSIDE AND OUT THE PARAMETERS OF AN ERUV

The *melachah* ([one of 39 types of prohibited] work) of *hotza’ah* (carrying) on Shabbos includes carrying *mereshus l’reshus* (from one [type of halachic] domain to another) or from one place to another within *reshus harabim* (the public domain [within or near a major thoroughfare]). In a *reshus hayachid* (private domain) we may carry unrestricted.

However, Shlomo Hamelech (the king, 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE) instituted the concept of an *eruv chatzeiros* (mixed [ownership of] courtyards) for carrying from one *reshus hayachid* to another or in a common area between neighbors. While the common area is fenced in, and therefore a bona fide *reshus hayachid*, it can be confused with a *reshus harabim*, and would therefore be subject to restriction. Through the *takanah* (institution) of an *eruv*,\* where the neighbors band together by sharing food, they essentially create one inclusive domain out of their individual residences.

There are many intricate laws regarding the parameters of such an *eruv* between neighbors in a single building of separate apartments, those that share a common courtyard and private houses that border each other. In a very general summary, these are the three requirements for establishing an *eruv chatzeros*:

**Fenced In:** *Mechitzos* (partitions)—physical demarcations of at least ten *tefachim* (hand-breadths, a little less than a meter in total) high around the *eruv* zone must be present. In areas where there is a *pirtzah* (breach) in a wall or fence, it is sometimes possible to

bridge the gap with a *tzuras hapesach* (a doorframe) constructed in accordance with specific criteria.

**Mixed Crowd:** If the *eruv* zone includes a non-Jewish resident among two or more Jewish residents, *sechirus reshus* (rental of territory) from the non-Jewish residents must be arranged.

**Honestly Open:** Less known than the other criteria, there is a rule of accessibility on the shared properties of an *eruv* zone. If there is a barrier of ten *tefachim* or higher between courtyards to be included, a door or a window of at least four by four *tefachim* (six feet by six feet) must allow access from one property to the next in order for the *eruv* to be effective.

\*The enclosures of *tzuras hapesach*—consisting of strings or cables hung between posts or poles—that are erected in urban areas categorized as *karmelis* (“semi-private” domain, i.e., a Rabbinically restricted area that is similar to *reshus harabim*) are more accurately termed *mechitzos*, although they are colloquially called “*eruv*” too. The food-shares in urban areas, kept in a central location on behalf of all city residents, are usually referred to as *shitufei mevo’os* (associations of pathways) in contrast to *eruvei chatzeros*—food shares for courtyards. *Shitufei mevo’os* were also instituted by Shlomo Hamelech and have similarities to *eruvei chatzeros*, but their complex rules and parameters, as well as those of *tzuras hapesach*, are beyond the scope of this halachah. (See Halachah #662 about restrictions outside an *eruv* in both a *karmelis* and a *reshus harabim* and some of the workarounds in an emergency.)



Last week, Wednesday, 20 Sivan, marked 17 years since the passing of the unforgettable Rav of our neighborhood, member of the Badatz and Mara-Dasra, Hag'aon **Horav Yehuda Kalman Marlow** OBM. His son, Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchak Marlow**, shlita, Rabbi of the Chabad congregation in Miami, Florida, led the davening in "770" and then made a siyum maseches in memory of his father. The ceremony was attended by members of the Badatz, Morei D'asra, **Horav Aharon Ya'akov Schwei**, shlita, and **Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun**, shlita. In the picture: L'chayim in memory of the Rav on the day of his yahrtzeit.

בשבוע שעבר, יום רביעי כ' סיון, מלאו י"ז שנה לפטירת הרב הבלתי-נשכח דשכונתנו, חבר הבד"צ והמרא-דאתרא, הגאון החסיד הרב יהודה קלמן מארלאוו ז"ל. בנו, יבדלחט"א הרב יוסף יצחק מארלאוו, רב קהילת חב"ד בעיר מיאמי, פלורידא, עבר לפני התיבה ב-770 ולאחר מכן ערך סיום-מסכת לעילוי-נשמת אביו. את המעמד כיבדו בהשתתפותם הרבנים חברי הבד"צ המארי-דאתרא, הרב אהרן יעקב שווי שליט"א והרב יוסף ישעי' ברוין שליט"א. בתמונה: אמירת 'לחיים' לעילוי-נשמת הרב בעל-היארצייט.

## Kashrus Alert

On 28 Iyar this year, the Rabbonim of the Badatz have publicized a Kashrus alert after they have discovered that some of the local residents and visitors have stumbled upon forbidden foods, using products sold in various outlets, under a so-called "hechsher", with what the Rabbonim find many severe issurim. This they found was due to the fault of a private committee of "Kashrus" in Crown Heights which gives on its own behalf a "hechsher" to stores and catering etc. — and they even use the name of Badatz...

Due to legal reasons, since those responsible for the Kashrus neglect have turned to secular courts (instead of Din Torah) and have made a demand to keep matters confidential, the Rabbonim, members of Badatz, have avoided meanwhile revealing all the specifics about this Kashrus scandal and are sufficing with a general notice to the community. At the same time, the Rabbonim bring good tidings about a new kosher l'mhadrin meat store on Troy avenue between Montgomery and Empire Blvd.