

APPENDIX I

WHAT DO TORAH LEADERS MAINTAIN ABOUT ENGAGING IN OUTREACH

There have been many proclamations from the Torah leadership exalting outreach activities and declaring it obligatory for all those who could participate, to do so.

For example, this declaration appeared in Hebrew and English:

Proclamation (Erev Rosh Hashanah 5765)

A public call to all the Jewish People

*“Hear the word of Hashem, you who tremble at His word”
(Yeshayahu 66:5).*

The situation of our brethren in the Land of Israel and the Diaspora is rapidly deteriorating. Inciters from both within and without are doing everything possible to uproot the Holy Torah and pure faith from our fellow Jews, leading them astray through seductive and false ideas. A devastating spiritual holocaust is claiming the souls of millions of Jews, who are assimilating among the non-Jews (may Hashem protect us). We must not be silent at this hour. Rather, we must fortify ourselves, and learn and teach others how to draw hearts closer to Torah. As the Chofetz Chaim wrote, “When one sees people drowning and does not know how to save them, he must hire people who do know how, or learn how himself!”

We therefore proclaim that a holy obligation rests upon each and every Jew to devote his energies and money to kiruv rechokim, through studying, teaching, and financially supporting

those already involved in this holy work. Except for full-time students of Torah, who strengthen the Jewish People and prevent them from falling (God forbid), absolutely no one is exempt. We have personally witnessed the tremendous success of those active in this field who have saved tens of thousands of Jews from spiritual destruction. Most of the Jewish People are still wandering in the darkness, however, and it rests upon us to bring them into the light.

In the merit of this mitzvah, may Hashem hasten our Redemption and our salvation and send us speedily Eliyahu HaNavi. May we see the fulfillment of the verse, "He shall return the heart of parents to children, and the heart of children to their parents." And may we merit to see the coming of Mashiach Tzidkeinu speedily in our days, Amen.

Signed for the honor of the Holy One Blessed Be He and His Torah,

HaRav HaGaon Shmuel Berenbaum

HaRav HaGaon Matisyahu Chaim Solomon

HaRav HaGaon Yaakov Perlow

HaRav HaGaon Aharon Moshe Shechter

I add my voice,

HaRav HaGaon Yosef Shalom Elyashiv

HaRav HaGaon Aharon Leib Steinman

A joint statement was put out by Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Rav Yechiel Michel Feinstein, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner, Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, and Rav Simcha Zissel Broyde. It spoke of the "sacred responsibility" and the "strong obligation" of engaging in *kiruv*; prioritizing this over attending weddings and other joyous events (for which we all find time). It set the minimum obligation at one night a month, (although it also stated that we should be doing our utmost in this regard). It suggested family visits, preferably two *kollel* students together at a time, and to engage families in friendly conversations.

Similarly, Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz, the Steipler Gaon, and Rav Eliezer Shach issued a joint statement asserting that it was a major obligation to teach those who have strayed out of ignorance, and to bring closer to Judaism those who are distant. At an individual level, the statement exhorted everyone to dedicate at least one night during our generation, a period of Divine mercy. However, the proposal called on Roshei Yeshiva and other communal leaders to organize their own communities to be able to do *kiruv*.¹

Likewise, Rav Moshe Feinstein conveyed his position in a meeting sponsored by the P'eylim and the Agudas Yisrael of Boro Park, on 22 Adar, 5733. He stated that under normal circumstances one should only assume responsibility for teaching others after one is fully developed in one's own studying. However, these are not normal times, and therefore they require a different set of priorities. The fact that there are so many *tinokos shenishbu* is exacerbated by the fact that there are so many unqualified teachers of the Torah. Given these circumstances, a Torah devotee must even take time from his own Torah studies to bring others close to Torah. Rav Moshe then went on to issue his famous "tithing your time" ruling. Every Torah devotee should spend ten percent of his time working on behalf of others, bringing them close to Torah. If a person is endowed with greater resources, he should correspondingly spend more of his time teaching others.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe also repeatedly exhorted Torah students to give up one night a week as the minimal contribution to the cause of *kiruv*. He maintained that someone who is not involved in *kiruv* is missing out on a fundamental element of his *avodas Hashem*.

In 2006, Lev L'Achim held its annual conference, which was attended by thousands of *kollel* students. Many Torah leaders addressed the audience; all of them talking about the importance of outreach. Others

1 קריינא דאגרתא (מהדורה חדשה, סימן קעט):

"אי לזאת חוב גדול על כל הצבור שומרי תורה ומצוות אשר כבוד שמים נוגע ללבו לחזק בדקי היהדות ובמיוחד ללמד תועים בינה ולקרב רחוקים לחיק היהדות יארגנו כל קהילות ישראל לצאת באזור הקרוב ולבקר מספר משפחות שהתרחקו מחיי תורה ולשוחח עמם בידידות מתוך אהבה ולהסביר להם יסודות האמונה ועיקרי המצוות כל אחד כפי הבנתו ולעוררם לחזור בתשובה..."

אלעזר מנחם מן שך, יעקב ישראל קנייבסקי, חיים שמואלביץ."

wrote letters for the occasion.² Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv referred to outreach as a great mitzvah and those involved with it as the people who bring merit to the community.³ Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro proclaimed that such efforts were considered a sanctification of Hashem's name. Rav Shmuel Vosner declared that there was no greater mitzvah than this, and that the merit of engaging in *kiruv* brings the end of exile with the coming of the Mashiach.⁴ Rav Chaim Kanievsky wrote that fortunate are those who are involved in strengthening Torah in such a substantial way.⁵

Rav Aharon Leib Steinman, in his address, claimed that the unique power of this generation to bring merit to the masses in this way is a compensation for the lowliness of our generation. He pointed out the urgency of the situation saying that we do not know how much longer we will have this opportunity.⁶

2 כל זה הופיע בידת נאמן (כו ניסן תשנ"ו).

3 ספר כתבוני לדורות מהרב יוסף שלום אלישיב (עמוד פג):

"בס"ד, ניסן תשס"ג, לכבוד משתתפי כינוס פעילים לב לאחים בראשות מעלת כבוד הנאונים הגדולים ראשי הישיבות שליט"א, שלום ורב ברכה, ברכת ה' תלווה את בני התורה המתכנסים לשם שמים לחיזוק וקיום עבודת הקודש של לב לאחים המוסרים נפשם להפצת התורה, חינוך ילדי ישראל, ולקרב הרחוקים לאור תורה ומצוות. ובפרט עתה עת צרה היא ליעקב וממנה יוושע כאשר משנאיך נשאו ראש לגזר גזירות להמעט לומדי תורה ומסכנים הם בזה את יושבי ארצנו הקדושה כאשר מבקשים הם לאבד חס ושלום את כוחה של תורה שהיא מגנט ומצלא ומבקשים להרוס כל חלקה טובה ולפגוע באלפי ילדי ישראל אשר הצטרפו לחרם בית ה'. על כן גדולה עד מאוד זכותכם מזכי הרבים שלוחי דין הפועלים במסגרת לב לאחים להרבות כבוד שמים ולהרבות חיילים למלאכת הקודש אשר יש בה תורה וגמילות חסדים והעמדת הדת על תילה. נאמן הוא בעל הגמול לשלם שכר טוב לכל העושים והמעשים למצוה רבה זו ותהא תורתם משתמרת ויתברכו בבני חיי ומוזני ריחיה בבריות גופא ונהורא מעליא".

4 מכתב מהרב שמואל הלוי ואזנר, נדפס בידת נאמן (מוסף שבת קודש, תשס"ה 36, פרשת אמור עמוד 16):

"אין לך מצוה דרבה ודרבים גדול מזה, וזכות זה מקרב קץ גלותנו עם ביאת משיח צדקינו ברחמים".

5 "אשריכם ואשרי חלקכם שזיכתם להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה באופן גדול ונרחב".

6 "ומה עשה הקב"ה בדור שלנו שהוא כל כך דור ירוד? הקב"ה השאיר לנו אפשרות לזכות על ידי זיכוי הרבים, מה שבדורות הראשונים לא היה כל כך אפשרות... להשתמש בזמן שיש לנו. מי יודע כמה זמן יהיה לנו אפשרות, כל דבר רואים אחר כך שחס ושלום יש הפרעות שהזמן מוגבל, ואי אפשר לדעת כמה זמן אפשר עוד".