

## Some Difficult Questions for Members of Anash on the Eve of Hei Teives

By Menachem Benchemon

*Yom Habohir*, Hei Teives, is coming. We know that one of the messages of Hei Teives was the Rebbe's insistence that a Nosi lives on after his passing and not only that but becomes more active in the world than before.

One need not take this on faith, for it is really quite obvious and apparent to anyone who sees the enormous growth of Lubavitch that has taken place since Gimmel Tammuz.

And yet a difficult and painful question must be asked. If there are more Shluchim and Chabad Houses every year, if the Kinus is bigger and better every year, if central Mosdos launch more innovative programs every year, in other words, if we continue to see how active and alive the Rebbe is in all of these ways... what does it mean when the Shul at 770 Eastern Parkway has year after year become a place where less and less Yidden are comfortable?

In "Bais Chayeinu" which is supposed to be the place of the source of life, we see the opposite of life?!

And how can the Rebbe's children (as the Rebbe emphasized throughout the trial that "Mah Zaroi B'chayim Af Hu B'chayim" refers to us, the Chasidim) how can the Rebbe's children stand by and watch their father be exiled from his own home?!

We, Anash, need to make a real Din V'cheshbon. How much longer must this go on? Twenty-five years of the inmates running the asylum (Halevai that was only a metaphor.) And the primary cause of it all is what? 10-20 mentally unstable teens and twenty-somethings? No. That's not possible. Could these same 10-20 individuals ruin the Kinus HaShluchim or the JLI Retreat? No, they could not. Because we all know they would not be given one inch of a foothold. They would be immediately removed. And yet we are to believe that it is somehow impossible to maintain basic order in our Rebbe's shul? Preposterous. It's simply not true. There could be a Seder immediately if not for the real cause of this problem. It's not the 10-20 sick individuals who are to blame. It is us! We are at fault! All of Anash! We are guilty of harboring the apathy that allows this dysfunction to go on for 25 years.

But no more! We won't stand for it another day. The time of allowing our leaders to sweep problems under the rug is over. We have had enough of the equivocating moderates and centrists who fear taking a stand. We are not going to be told to patiently wait for verdicts in court cases that Shlep for decades. Because, to be honest, we don't even care at this point who is supposedly in charge. The reality is that for the past 25 years it's obvious that NOBODY is in charge.

In case people don't know about the latest developments, let's sum them up quickly. Last Motzoei Shabbos, Tzivos Hashem made an event for children in 770 which included a video of the Rebbe's children's rally. Who could object to such a beautiful event? And yet a few

individuals took it upon themselves to block the video of the Rebbe and disrupt the program all because the video had the logo of JEM, a Mosad that they disapprove of. This is normal? A few Bochorim get to set a policy and act disrupt a children's program? Baruch Hashem, one brave individual stood to them (and was beaten and pepper-sprayed in the process) and was able to remove these hoodlums so that the program could go on.

The following day, the Gabbaim put out a letter that those who disrupted the event were banned from entering 770 for a year. The letter was a breath of fresh air. Finally, someone taking a stand. The day after that, the Beis Din put out a letter backing up the Gabbaim. Another breath of fresh air.

And yet, disappointment was soon to set in as it became clear that the banned individuals were all still openly parading around 770 and flouting authority.

Then just last night, a small group of many of the same individuals made a mockery by setting up a simulation of a "Yechidus Klalis," putting out the Rebbe's chair and cordoning off the back third of the shul. They did this not only without permission of the Gabbaim but expressly against the wishes of the Gabbaim. Baruch Hashem, the same one who stood up on Motzoei Shabbos, was there to stand up again and tell these 10-20 people that they had no right to be doing what they were doing. The event was recorded by multiple people on cellphone video and has been quickly making the rounds so that the world now sees that it is just 10-20 people who are holding all of Anash hostage.

But I ask, is there really only one person who cares for sanity, normalcy, and order? I don't believe that. I believe there are thousands of us who care. And we need to make our voices heard. We demand leadership and accountability in 770. We demand that those who were appointed to lead must lead. And if they cannot lead, they should step down. We demand that there be rules and that the rules be enforced. These are such basic things it's painful that they even need to be said.

**There is a petition (<http://chnq.it/B6kTr2zX>) building momentum right now demanding that there be real leadership in 770. A petition is only a petition. By itself, it's not much. But if thousands of Anash sign and let their collective will be known, then it will be impossible for leadership to ignore.**

This is the call of the hour. Nothing is more important than this. It is time for Anash to take back our father's house. It is time for 770 to live again! It is time for 770 to be a place that attracts Jews of all backgrounds to come learn, pray, and engage in good deeds. 770 should be our crown jewel. Whatever the best and the brightest of Lubavitch have to offer should be offered right here in 770. The whole world is in awe of what the Rebbe's Chasidim do all over the world. Let them be in awe of what the Rebbe's Chasidim do right here in their own home. 770 can be the pride of Lubavitch and of the entire Jewish world. 770 can become revealed again as the center of spiritual life that it truly is. But we must stand up. No more apathy. No more moderate voices browbeating us into inaction. It's 25 years. A quarter century of failure is enough. It's time for change and the time is now. Hei Teives is coming.