

B”H

December 24, 2002

Dear Rabbi Wolf,

I am writing in reply to your letter dated 15 December 2002.

Your description of our situation is somewhat incorrect. I have not “disrupted” my childrens’ education, nor have I “removed” them from the Cheder. What I have done is decide to send my older daughter to Bnos Rabbeinu Girls *High School*, which by some stretch of the imagination you deem a “competing school” with the Cheder Lubavitch *Elementary School*.

My reason for sending her out of town this year was simply that *she herself* did not want to be involved in the local political scene. After three months, she made *her own* decision to come home, entirely based on the quality of the education she was receiving compared to what Bnos Rabbeinu could give her. When a 15 year old makes such a difficult decision based on *quality of education*, how can any parent refuse to comply?

My choice for my other children was to continue to have them attend Cheder Lubavitch, which I believe is their best option at the moment. You warned me in a phone conversation not to send my children to the Cheder as of the day my daughter goes to Bnos Rabbeinu. Since the last time a parent ignored such a warning you confined their children alone in your office for hours, I decided to keep them home. I have asked twice for a letter stating formally that my children are expelled from attending the Cheder, including the effective date and specific reason. I still do not have such a letter, so I suppose I could consider them still registered. As such, I may decide to send them back one day – however, if I do, I will make sure that a member of the press accompanies them, to duly record how they are treated.

To date, I have not registered my daughter in Bnos Rabbeinu, although she is attending as a trial, with the intention of registering soon. Some of my other children are attending the Tzemach Tzedek School, also as a trial, yet they too have not yet been registered.

In short, three of my children (a 10-year old girl, a 12-year old boy, and a 14-year old boy) have been kicked out of your school for no other reason than that I have chosen to send my 15-year old daughter to the school that provides her the best education. This means that you have punished innocent children because their parents chose to fulfill their Torah obligation to provide their daughter what they judge to be the best possible education. Is this the message of *chinuch* that you should be sending to the children in your school, and to the community?

Of course you will argue that we were aware of the “policy” defined this year in response to Rabbi Moscovitz’s fear of a competing girls high school. You have publicly and privately stated that you disagree with this policy, but that you have been given no choice in the matter. Yet the school stationary lists your name as the “Dean”, and does not mention Rabbi Moscovitz. As the head of the *mossad*, you do have the choice to *refuse to implement* an unfair and incorrect policy. Sometimes people have to do what they know is right and take a stand against injustice. Since you do not, I must assume that regardless of your statements to the contrary, you actually concur with this absurd policy.

As a result, you and Rabbi Moscowitz have forced the creation of yet another “competing” school. What else are parents to do when over 40 children have been kicked out of school (to date), but start a school for their children? How many more families will be forced out of your school, or will choose to leave because of such acts of *sinas chinum*?

A recent pronouncement, declaring that the high school girls attending Bnos Rabbeinu are no longer permitted to daven on Shabbos in F.R.E.E., is yet the latest shameful act against innocent children perpetuated by Rabbi Moscowitz. More and more of the Lubavitch Community are being alienated by such horrendous disregard of *halacha* and decency. How anyone can dare to perpetuate such acts in the name of the Rebbe is beyond understanding!

By your complicity in these policies, you are declaring your agreement with them. I believe this makes a statement that defines your attitudes towards the community and, sadly, of your values in *Yiddishe Chinuch*.

Finally, you have the nerve to send me an invoice for FULL tuition for the FULL school year. As you are well aware, we had an agreement, based on PSAS, that our tuition bill would be greatly reduced this year due to my being out of work since last February. I deliberately delayed my PSAS submission in the hopes that I would have found work by the start of the school year, and would be able to pay more. (Over the past 9 years I estimate that we have paid well over \$125,000 in tuition to your school, in addition to obtained donations.) At the start of the year, I gave you a “placeholder” check for the full tuition (less \$2,109 which had already been paid), *with a clear understanding that this was not cashable*, and would be returned when we settled with PSAS. After the PSAS assessment, I received a call from your accounting office notifying me that the total for this year was reduced to \$7,500 (plus sundry charges). I was awaiting an updated invoice reflecting this total in light of the amount already paid, at which time I promised to bring in a new set of head checks in exchange for the “placeholder”. Such an adjusted invoice has not yet been received. Unfortunately I remain unemployed at this time.

Attempting to cash my “placeholder” check for \$21,306, when my full year’s tuition bill is \$7,500 (plus sundries), is in my view an act of attempted *geneiva*! Yet another sad example of intimidation, designed to prevent me from helping your “competition”.

When I receive an adjusted invoice as previously agreed to, I will prorate it for the 3.5 months that my children attended Cheder before you broke our contract by expelling them, and make any resulting payment due to you immediately.

Should you decide to abandon this path of *sinas chinum*, community intimidation, and harassment of innocent children, please let me know. Although it may be too late, I would much rather be using my considerable energies and abilities to try to rebuild what your policies are systematically destroying.

Sincerely,

Hershel Belkin

cc. Rabbi Daniel Moscowitz
Rabbi Dr. Harvey Well