

OPERATION JEWISH EDUCATION/THE 5% MANDATE

From: NATIONAL JEWISH DAY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

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HISTORIC JEWISH EDUCATION KEHILLAH TAX REINSTATED IN CHICAGO

Congregation Or Torah, Skokie, Illinois, the largest Orthodox synagogue in the midwest, in an historic action, adopts Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate.

George Hanus, Chairman of the National Jewish Day School Scholarship Committee announced that on the 5th day of Tevas, 5760, the Board of Directors of Congregation Or Torah passed a historic resolution that re-affirms the concept of Kol Yisrael Areyvim Zu La Zu by requiring its membership to participate in and require each individual to participate in OPERATION JEWISH EDUCATION/THE 5% MANDATE. Gary Ashman, president of the synagogue, stated that the implementation of the Or Torah declaration is conditioned on the adoption of comparable resolutions by at least two-thirds of the Orthodox synagogues in Chicago. Every Orthodox synagogue in Chicago is now being asked to pass such a resolution. Rabbi Harvey Well, the Rabbi of Or Torah, stated in a strongly worded letter that it is the congregation's and the entire community's obligation to pass this resolution. The goal is to create a standard of normative behavior under which every Jew feels obligated to share a portion of the bounty of the present to secure our Jewish children of the future. Every Jew is being asked to designate 5% of their estate either by will or during their lifetime to any Jewish day school/yeshiva endowment fund of their choice.

These extraordinary actions are being taken to avert a continuity crisis facing the Jewish community, which has resulted from the prohibitively high cost of day school education. Not only does the high cost of day school prevent many children from obtaining a Jewish education, but it is a major source of strife within the basic Jewish family unit, severely straining Shalom Bayit (domestic tranquility). This situation even imposes a perverse form of birth control that forces some couples committed to intensive Jewish education to limit their family size. This is intolerable. The high cost of intensive Jewish education and low pay of teachers in the system has become the Amalek of the 21st Century. The Jewish community has an affirmative religious obligation to provide affordable (or better yet free) Torah education for all Jewish children, irrespective of the families' financial resources. Torah education is not a luxury to be afforded only to a fortunate few. It is a Jewish societal necessity that must be available to all who seek it. The issue of affordable Jewish day school availability is a community wide problem. The synagogue represents the focus of communities. If the synagogue leadership does not stand for the principle of availability of Jewish education for all families who seek it, what does this state about communal prioritization? We are calling upon every Orthodox synagogue in the Diaspora to stand up and be counted among Jewish leadership who have attempted to solve this seemingly insurmountable problem.

Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate is a national initiative that has been endorsed by Rabbis and lay leaders of every stream representing many thousands of Jewish constituents. Its goal is quite simple. Every day school, yeshiva and central communal organization must have its own endowment fund, and these endowments must generate sufficient earnings to fund day school/yeshiva education (K through 12) throughout the community. We must make the 5% Mandate become a standard of normative behavior. Every Jew must feel a personal responsibility to fulfill their 5% obligation. Every Jew must share 5% of their bounty with any Jewish educational institution of their choice. Everyone must give somewhere. Each of the 14 Chicagoland day schools has now created its own endowment fund controlled by its own board of directors to provide the mechanism to fulfill its goals. A separate and distinct umbrella fund, entitled the Jewish Day School Guaranty Trust Fund of Chicago, is managed by the Finance Committee of the Chicago Jewish Federation, which will distribute earned income to all day schools pro rata. The underlying premise is that only a portion of the interest accrued will be distributed and the principal will never be invaded. The stated goal for the Chicagoland initiative is to raise \$300 million within the next 7-10 years. (If 300 individuals designated \$1 million life insurance policies or 3,000 individuals designated \$100,000 life insurance policies, this alone would fulfill the \$300 million goal.) The income from these investments would be sufficient to fund day school education in Chicago in perpetuity. Hundreds of billboards have been erected in front of synagogues and day schools advertising Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate. We are seeking to utilize the Chicago structure as a model that will be implemented across the Diaspora. There is considerable precedent for the 5% Mandate in Jewish history and tradition. Throughout our existence as a people, Jewish leadership has boldly risen to the challenges of crises that threaten our communal well-being or survival by mandating and implementing defensive measures. In our day, our leaders are again acting in this time-honored tradition by implementing the 5% Mandate and declaring every Jew equally responsible to participate in the mitzvah of saving our people. Jewish religious and lay leaders representing organizations with tens of thousands of constituents from around the country have signed the Declaration of Leadership endorsing "Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate". This display of unity and concerted action is extraordinarily rare in our time. We are currently in crisis. We must now act. If we don't, we only have ourselves to blame for the consequences.

EDUCATION/THE 5% MANDATE

OPERATION JEWISH

Please Distribute To Your Board of Directors, Local Rabbis & Community Leadership.

November 24, 1999 PRESS RELEASE The high cost of funding intensive Jewish education is a communal crisis. The cost of day school education has become an economic barrier of entry for all families except the wealthiest and most committed. Some of our young families are irreverently calling day school tuition an effective form of birth control. Our Jewish community can no longer tolerate this situation. Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate, if universally accepted, will begin to bring financial stability to the day school movement. The Jewish community is obligated to provide high quality affordable (better yet, free) day school/yeshiva education for all children who seek it. Our goals are quite simple.

1. Every day school and yeshiva and synagogue in the Diaspora should immediately open its own savings endowment fund.
2. Every Jew must feel compelled and obligated to donate 5% of their Will or during their lifetime into any of these endowment funds. It is a very real possibility that we will be able to have enough money in each endowment fund that the interest generated will be sufficient to cover each school's budget, and day school could become tuition free.

We must seize the moment for Klal Yisrael and devote our utmost efforts to promote the funding of these endowments and fulfillment of the obligation of v'shinantam l'vanecha (diligently teaching our children). We must assume our responsibility and not squander this singular opportunity.

George Hanus, Chairman of the National Jewish Day School Scholarship Committee has announced that a New York office will be opened in January, 2000. This office will be the first of several regional offices to be opened around the country. (Attached hereto are the implementation goals for the New York office. Each regional office will have similar obligations.) Responses to the national mandate of Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate have been extraordinary. Rabbinic leadership has enthusiastically embraced our initiative. Rabbi Yackov Perlow, the Rosh Yeshiva of Novominsk, in Brooklyn, has added his personal endorsement to the long list of honorable and esteemed Rabbis, Roshei Yeshivot and Rosh Kollels. November 24, 1999 Page 2

The Chicago billboard campaign is proving to be highly successful in informing the local community about our initiative. These billboards have been placed in front of most schools and synagogues and along major commercial thoroughfares. Ads featuring these billboards are being placed in the major Chicago newspapers. Leaders, rabbis and individuals representing thousands of Jews have signed individual Letters of Intent pledging their donation of 5% of their estate into one of the 14 endowment funds in Chicago.

Each of the 14 Chicagoland day schools has now created its own endowment fund to provide the mechanism to fulfill its goals. A separate umbrella fund, entitled the Jewish Day School Guaranty Trust Fund of Chicago, is managed by the Finance Committee of the Chicago Jewish Federation which income will be distributed to all day schools pro rata. The underlying premise is that only a portion of the interest accrued will be distributed and the principal will never be invaded. The stated goal for the Chicagoland initiative is to raise \$300 million within the next 7-10 years. (This can be achieved with 300 \$1 million life insurance policies or 3,000 \$100,000 life insurance policies) The income from the investments alone will fund day school education in Chicago in perpetuity. Millions have already been raised in Chicago and THE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL GUARANTY TRUST FUND OF CHICAGO HAS JUST RECEIVED AN ADDITIONAL \$1 MILLION FUNDING COMMITMENT FROM AN ANONYMOUS DONOR.

Using the Chicago model as a prototype, we hope to duplicate our initiative across the continent. Our message is resonating across the Diaspora, with rabbinic and lay leadership in communities throughout North America endorsing The 5% Mandate. The national day school constituency is

an extraordinarily powerful political force. There are approximately 200,000 children and one million adults in the system. Each day school has its own organizational hierarchy with a president and board of directors. The mailing list of each organizational constituency is the base for a national grass roots contact list. Our intent is to mobilize all of these like-minded individuals in order to change the course of events in the Diaspora. If sufficient individuals say often enough that there is a 5% Mandate, it will become a reality. We must make the 5% Mandate become a standard of normative behavior. Every Jew must feel a personal responsibility to fulfill their 5% obligation. Every Jew must share 5% of their bounty with a Jewish educational institution. Everyone must give somewhere.

The leadership of our institutions have the ability to solve the problem of funding Jewish education. Day school tuitions will double every seven years and the high cost should no longer be considered like the weather, something to just talk about without any hope of changing its outcome.

In the tradition of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla, our leaders have declared that it is every Jew's obligation to act now for Jewish education and fulfill the obligation of this new concept OPERATION JEWISH EDUCATION/THE 5% MANDATE in financial support for day schools, "Iest Torah be lost to Klal Yisrael" (Bava Basra 21a).

WHY DO MEN WEAR NECKTIES? WHY DO WE BUY \$3.00 BIRTHDAY CARDS FOR CHILDREN WHO CANNOT READ? WHY DO WE BUY FLOWERS ON MOTHER'S DAY? IT IS BECAUSE THESE HAVE BECOME SOCIETAL STANDARDS OF NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR. IT IS OUR GOAL TO MAKE IT A STANDARD OF NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR THAT EVERY JEW DEDICATE 5% OF HIS OR HER ESTATE TO ENDOW A JEWISH DAY SCHOOL ENDOWMENT FUND OF HIS OR HER CHOICE.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS OF OPERATION JEWISH EDUCATION/THE 5% MANDATE
NEW YORK REGIONAL OFFICE

1. EVERY DAY SCHOOL AND YESHIVA MUST IMMEDIATELY OPEN THEIR OWN ENDOWMENT FUND. Contact each day school and Yeshiva (K-12) in the New York, New Jersey metro area so that each institution establishes its own endowment fund with an independent money manager and a Board of Directors. A data base should be compiled that includes the names of each endowment fund and its Board of Directors, with their contact information.

2. Inculcate in all of these communities that Operation Jewish Education/The 5% Mandate is a "Mitzvas Aseh" - an affirmative obligation of every member of the community; the rich and the poor and the young and the elderly. This is the "machtzit hashekel" (half shekel tax) for our age. It is every Jew's obligation to provide for the education of the next generation of young people.

A. Have community rabbis and lay leaders sign the Declaration of Leadership.

B. Start a public relations campaign which includes: 1. Establishment parent calling committees; 2. Frequent mailings to parents and general community; 3. Placement of billboards (sample

layout available) in front of every synagogue and school in the community and placement of ads in general circulation newspapers; 4. Ask every community rabbi to speak week after week from the pulpit about the 5% Initiative.

C. Assist each day school in circulating Letters of Intent and obtaining signatures from every member of the community.

The initial drive should start among the parents, and proceed to the grandparents, then the aunts and uncles and extended families, and then friends. (This utilizes the concept of concentric spheres of contact starting with the most committed and gaining critical mass which then will bring in non-affiliated and less committed).

D. Publish quarterly in the Anglo-Jewish press the list of names of everyone who has signed Letters of Intent and fulfilled their communal responsibility. The publication of this list will be an effective vehicle for creating communal accountability.