



Jan. 16, 2005

### URGENT APPEAL FOR FUNDING

*Please read our appeal below after you have read the following essay.  
Thank you.*

## Doing The Right Thing

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok.  
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Long ago one of the Sages of authentic Kabbalah very nicely summed up the difference between Adam, the first man, prior to the Fall in Eden, and we mankind, his descendants afterwards. In brief the Sage said that prior to the Fall evil existed as a state outside of man, foreign, repugnant and distant from his experience. Adam was actually able to intuit evil and thus know instinctually to stay away from that which would harm him.

In his original state where heart and mind were merged as one Adam was naturally disgusted by evil. He was repelled by it as a modern-day dog would be repelled from a terrible smelling piece of foul bad meat. As the animal today knows well to stay away from that which harms it so did Adam know then to stay away from that which would harm him. This ability to distinguish between what is good for us and what is not has been lost as a result of eating of the forbidden fruit in Eden. This was the cause of the breach of union between heart and mind. This loss of human inner integration is what we refer to metaphorically as “the Fall.”

When our Sages speak about the need for collective Tikun (rectification), a point they always make clear from the start is that **THE HEALING OF THE COLLECTIVE MUST ALWAYS BEGIN WITH THE REPAIR OF THE INDIVIDUAL.**

We humans do not like to think of ourselves of having a need to be repaired. Yet, if we be honest and look at the failures in our lives (which may be few or many, but we all have them), we see the need for improvements. Yes, as we have physical needs for our physical survival, so too do we have other needs. We all have the need for inner healing in order to emotionally and psychologically survive our stay on the planet.

Repair of the individual means the healing of the inner self. Only once when one is complete inside can one be fulfilled on the outside. True healing, real repair is that of the soul, the mind and the heart. Alas, this is why so many of us go through life as the “walking wounded.” How many of us are willing to invest the necessary time and effort to heal the true source of our true problems?



Indeed, we are a lazy bunch! If we have a headache or similar ailment, we take a pill and expect the bothersome condition to go away. We do not want to be bothered with too much effort to make an inconvenience go away. Yet, we all know the limitations of this. When, G-d forbid, someone gets awfully sick with a life-threatening serious disease, we make all efforts necessary to save our mortal lives. Yet, when healed we go back to our mundane lives, ever so rarely having learned the lessons about the true values in life and need for inner healing that could have and should have been learned.

Alas, how lazy we are, how distracted we allow ourselves to become. To heal the inner self requires of us to regain an aspect of that which we lost when our souls were still part of collective Adam. We need to be able to naturally distinguish between good and evil, between what is healthy and best for us and what is really a poison that can harm and kill our souls. For indeed, many of us are dead in our souls all the while we live in our bodies. In other words, numerous are those whose emotions are deadened and whose inner self and truths are so buried and denied that one has no sense of self-worth and no sense of inner peace or contentment. This is a living death, an exile from self, a fate worse than Hell itself. Yet, countless are those who live this way everyday, with only the rare few even having the slightest insight that there is even something wrong.

**INNER PAIN IS ONLY REMOVED BY INNER HEALING. INNER HEALING IS ONLY ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH INNER WORK. INNER WORK REQUIRES EFFORT, DISCIPLINE AND SACRIFICE.** As our Sages in Avot say, "In accordance to the effort, so is the reward." If one wishes to truly experience healing and thus come to know, experience and embrace the fullness in life for which one was created, one must make the efforts to accomplish this.

While observance of the mitzvot rectifies the outside, it is the observance of the midot that rectifies the inside. Midot means proper character, discipline, living the Torah code of honor; these are what heal the heart and the mind. By doing what is right and honorable according to Torah one builds and makes strong that which is within and weak. As with body building, so is it with soul building, "no pain, no gain." This is why G-d sends trials and tribulations into our lives. Daily troubles beset us not to tear us down, but on the contrary, to teach us character in order to build us up.

Recently in news reports<sup>1</sup> from various places in the Jewish world we have been informed of the growing problems facing Orthodox youth. Drug abuse, alcoholism and sexual promiscuity are spreading amongst yeshiva trained Orthodox youth at an alarming speed. While Rabbis and Jewish leaders get up on their proverbial soap boxes

<sup>1</sup> The Jerusalem Post (jewishworld.jpost.com). Orthodox leaders tackle drug abuse. Jan. 14, 2005 22:42; Updated Jan. 16, 2005 12:18 <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1105673144510&p=1008596975996>

**SEE THE END OF THIS ESSAY FOR NEWS REPORTS OF DRUG DEATHS AND DRUG DEALING IN THE YESHIVA WORLD.**



and give speeches condemning this trend, no one apparently is willing to address the real causes to this very real problem.

Problems do not blossom overnight. Problems begin while small and grow over extended amounts of time. In other words, the epidemics facing Orthodox youth today are nothing new; they did not start just recently. We are only now seeing just how wide spread is a problem that for so long was overlooked, if not out right ignored.

Well, we cannot ignore the problem anymore! When yeshiva students, sons of great Rabbis are arrested not just for drug use, but for drug selling, when ultra-Orthodox high school girls allow themselves to become pregnant and then marry their gentile boyfriends, we have to address the real issues. We must ask ourselves, are our children just "bad apples" that should be discarded, or have they somehow been misled, and if so, by whom? To answer this question, it is best to ask our children themselves, what inspired them to go in the direction that they have chosen. You might very well not like their answer!

The real problem is not our children; the real problem is the education our children have received. Our yeshivot have for the most part failed an entire generation of young Orthodox. The misguided over-emphasis on academic achievement as opposed to heart-felt embrace of Torah (musar & midot) has led our youth to close off their hearts to Torah and not hear its healing message of character transformation.

Indeed, many yeshiva students, most proficient at memorizing pages of Gemara are at the same time not taking to heart the Torah lessons of moral character, musar, discipline, self honor and self respect.

Why do they not take these things to heart? The answer is very simple, the yeshiva teachers, for both our young men and women never ever teach these lessons to our youth, and worse, the teachers themselves seldom live by the Torah code of honor. Many are poor role models who teach poor moral lessons. As such our children walk through yeshivas and seminars packing their heads with all kinds of academia, whereas at the same time, their hearts are miles away in the malls and music stores of our gentile neighbors.

Physical separation from temptations has shown itself over centuries not to be a successful way of keeping foreign elements out of the Jewish heart. The only way to keep the Jewish heart pure and strong is to strengthen it with exercises of character building. Only when the heart has no desire for foreign interests will the heart be immune to their influences. Addressing matters of the heart, therefore, is of paramount importance in yeshiva learning today. But alas, these words will fall mostly upon deaf ears.



THE BLIND ARE LEADING THE BLIND AS OUR TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS OVER AND OVER AGAIN PROCLAIM THE VALUE OF CRAMMING MORE KNOWLEDGE INTO THE HEAD AS THE ONLY ANSWER TO STOP A WOUNDED AND BLEEDING HEART.

These misguided educators just do not get the message. You do not heal the heart with the head. You heal the heart with the heart! Torah learning was never meant to be exclusively academic. Torah learning from the days the Temple stood was first addressed to the heart and only after many years of touching and strengthening the heart were lessons addressed to the head and thus academia.

It is clearly stated in Pirkei Avot that for at least ten years Jewish youth were supposed to study the lessons of the Prophets (Neviim) and the Sacred Writings (Ketuvim, i.e., the NaKh) before they ever began the study of Talmud and Gemara. Today, Gemara study is emphasized as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, whereas TaNaKh study flies out the window soon thereafter.

In the yeshiva world today, there are practically none who have daily classes in Mishlei or Kohelet teaching the wise ways of Shlomo HaMelekh and how he learned and taught the strengthening of heart.

No one today holds daily classes in the words of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Yet, because we heard not their words of heart-felt admonishment when they originally were spoken were we eventually exiled from our Holy Land and our Temple and nationality destroyed.

TO HEAL A WOUND ONE MUST GO TO ITS SOURCE, WE WERE SENT INTO EXILE BECAUSE WE FAILED TO HEED THE ADMONISHMENT OF THE PROPHETS, SO LET US RETURN TO THEIR WORDS, WITHOUT COMMENTARIES AND ACADEMIC APPLICATIONS AND SIMPLY TAKE TO HEART WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY. Once their words have been taken to heart, then we can turn to commentaries to explain concepts and ideas that we might not have understood during our first readings.

Matters of the heart, Torah for the heart, this is what heals the broken heart, mending it, strengthening it and enabling it to withstand the onslaught of foreign temptations that face our children and us on a daily basis.

I do not blame our children for succumbing to temptations that we have not properly prepared them to stand against. I blame ourselves, specifically our teachers who make Torah study so dry and boring that our young seek excitement elsewhere.



Our Torah teachers need to be the first ones to do teshuva, not just in word but also in deed and comprehensively change the curriculum of how Torah is taught in schools from elementary all the way through high schools and beyond. Emphasis must be placed on training the heart, on building personal moral character, self respect, individual discipline and the taking on and embracing of responsibility.

When our children learn these basic fundamental Torah concepts and see how their teachers and parents live by them, then they too will embrace these things because they will see how living by the Torah code of honor actually does work to make one a better human being and does provide one with the inner happiness, contentment and fulfillment that we all seek.

So, who today is willing to take the first step? Which yeshiva will be bold enough to change the course of their curriculum and start educating the hearts of our youth alongside their heads? Forgive my pessimism, but I do not foresee many rising up to meet the challenge. I do not see many (if any) of our leaders and educators rising up to make and lead the necessary changes. As such, I see no long term change coming for our children. They will walk in the ways of their educators and parents, expressing outward lip-service token respect for Torah and mitzvot, and at the same time acting in ways which are immoral even by gentile standards.

Woe to us that the blind lead the blind. Who today will be a real leader? Who will stand up and be the first to be counted, and at the same time, to be ridiculed, outcast, mocked and scorned. Only such a courageous leader will succeed in addressing the real problems. Only such a sincere, heart-felt and heart-led Torah teacher will succeed in reaching our lost youth (and adults). Such a Torah educator is bound to be successful simply because there are so many who need such direction and down-to-earth practical, simple day to day Torah advice.

We need to do the right thing and address the heart. When the heart is strong, then like Adam of old we will begin to instinctually and intuitively know the difference between right and wrong, good and bad. We will instinctually choose the right and good because we will know what is best for us and wouldn't dream to do anything less.

I wait for this day, and devote my teaching of Torah to this cause. Will you join me?

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## URGENT APPEAL FOR FUNDING

Our Yeshiva is on the move. We have so many projects to materialize, so many plans we have to help better the Jewish community at large and your life personally.



Yet, as with all things, as our Sages have said, "if there is no flour, there is no Torah." In other words, in order for us to meet the emotional, academic and spiritual needs of our student body world-wide we need your financial support.

At this time, we need to soon raise \$36,000 so that we can meet our monthly budget needs and materialize the many programs we have waiting for your support.

Please give what you can, however little or great. You can make an online donation on our website [www.koshertorah.com](http://www.koshertorah.com) by clicking on our online store, and then click where it says donations. We also have a direct link right on the bottom of our front page in blue...

Checks are also especially welcome... Please send what you can made out to Yeshivat Benei N'vi'im (or YBN). Mail them to:

YBN  
P.O. Box 59700  
Chicago, IL. 60659 USA

We can also take your credit card donation over the phone. Call us during office hours at 773-761-3777.

We sincerely need your support at this time. We need to raise the necessary \$36,000 over the next few weeks.

Please help us so that we can continue to serve you. Please make your generous contribution to KosherTorah right now!

Thank you in advance and tizku l'mitzvot...

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B"H  
KosherTorah.com  
Jan. 18th, 2005  
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I TOLD YOU SO ----

If you did not yet have the opportunity to read my recent essay entitled "DOING THE RIGHT THING" here is the reason why you should.

The following story from the Online Jerusalem Post angers and pains me so...

This should never ever have to happen!



WE, that means you and me, WE have to do something about this!!

Please read my essay DOING THE RIGHT THING - AN URGENT APPEAL.

It is online at [www.kosherTorah.com/PDF/right-thing.pdf](http://www.kosherTorah.com/PDF/right-thing.pdf)

We can make a difference, but we can only do it together----

Read this and decide---

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**YESHIVA STUDENT DIES OF DRUG OVERDOSE**

Etgar Lefkovits, THE JERUSALEM POST Jan. 18, 2005

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPostArticle/Printer&cid=1106018362602&p=1078027574097>

A 19 year old American student studying at a yeshiva on the outskirts of Jerusalem was found dead Tuesday, police and yeshiva officials said.

The Jewish teen's body was discovered in the 'Neveh' institution in the Jerusalem suburb of Tellstone in what police said was an apparent drug overdose.

The name of the victim was not immediately released pending notification of next of kin.

A teacher at the post-high school institution, which has 60 mostly American students, said Tuesday night in a telephone interview that school officials were unaware that the victim, who was an orphan, had a "hard drug" problem.

The instructor, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that a lot of the non-religious students at what he called a "pre-yeshiva institution" for overseas students take light drugs "like most young kids of our generation."

He added that when teens are found to be on hard drugs they are sent to drug rehab programs.

The victim, who was trying to get interested in religion, was a new student at the institution's one-year program, he said.

Police said that they were investigating the cause of death.

It was not immediately clear Tuesday what type of drug the teen took or where he got it from, police



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Jan. 19, 2005  
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MORE I TOLD YOU SO ----

If you did not yet have the opportunity to read my recent essay entitled "DOING THE RIGHT THING" here is yet another reason why you should.

This now second news story from the Online Jerusalem Post angers and pains me so...

This should not be happening!

WE, that means you and me, WE have to do something about this!!

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We can make a difference, but we can only do it together----

Read this and decide---

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### 5 YESHIVA STUDENTS ARRESTED FOR DRUGS

Etgar Lefkovits, THE JERUSALEM POST Jan. 19, 2005

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/Printer&cid=1106104798643&p=1078027574097>

Jerusalem police arrested five American yeshiva students on Wednesday who are studying in the city. The arrests are for suspected selling of drugs to dozens of American yeshiva students in the Jerusalem area over the last several months, police said.

The arrests came in the wake of a several-month-old undercover police investigation during which two police officers repeatedly purchased drugs from the suspects.

During the initial interrogation, two of the suspects confessed to the charges against them, Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said.

The police investigation follows an amalgamation of intelligence information that dozens of American yeshiva students were dealing in drugs.

The five suspects will be remanded in a Jerusalem court later Wednesday, and police said that more arrests are expected in the case as their investigation continues.

The arrests come just one day after a 19-year-old American studying at a yeshiva on the outskirts of





Jerusalem was found dead as a result of an apparent drug overdose.

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Jan. 19, 2005

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A Response I Received...

Although the information herein is not new to me, I believe it is essential for the sake of our children that these truths be known.

We cannot address a problem and heal a wound by making believe it is not there and hoping that it will magically disappear.

We also cannot rely upon those methods that worked 100 years ago in ancient far-away Europe and expect them to work today amongst our sophisticated youth.

Read this email I recently received from a parent in Queens, NY. I know from personal experience what is said here is true. This all the more so emphasizes why the steps I outlined in my recent DOING THE RIGHT THING essay are so important, and I might add why your support for our way of doing this is now so vital.

If you have not yet read DOING THE RIGHT THING – AN URGENT APPEAL, please take the few minutes to do so. [www.kosherTorah.com/PDF/right-thing.pdf](http://www.kosherTorah.com/PDF/right-thing.pdf).

Thanks...

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Shalom Rabbi:

I'm sorry to tell you that there are **thousands** of ex and current Yeshiva students in the US and in Israel that are using drugs, alcohol and other substances and are on the edge of life itself.

Any Motzoei Shabbat in Brooklyn, in Lawrence, in LA, in Emek Rephaim and the Kikar Zion in Jerusalem, etc., thousands of them congregate around Pizza stores, restaurants, street corners, etc. and get into trouble. The Yeshiva Dormitories are plagued with these substances and the Rabbis cannot control them. There is an organization in Jerusalem called "The Center" that claims there are over 1,000 English speaking kids sleeping on the streets of Jerusalem many with a drug problem. Most are kids sent to Yeshivas by their parents from abroad. Boys and Girls.

The "Teens-At-Risk" phenomenon is at a critical stage.

EVERY Yeshiva - black hat or not, US or Israel is affected. Boys and Girls. And the girls have the added dimension of Anorexia and bulimia and other issues. Recently, the daughter of a very famous Rabbi & Rebbetzin died from Anorexia.

You have no idea what these parents are going through! And what it does to the communities?



All over these communities, therapy and parental help groups are sprouting up. But the kids go through stages, some of which last for years in which they are uncontrollable. But the therapy groups can hardly cope with the numbers of kids or with the kids' challenges. And many of the kids do not relate to the therapists and therefore don't get the help they need.

But the Bottom Line is - for these kids, **Judaism is not Exciting!** There are no longer ideals, ideologies, goals, etc. to work for or to identify with. Part of it is the affluence in these communities and the focus on Gashmiut. Part is the lack of the Yeshivas to provide excitement and a reason for a religion that is shoved down their throats.

But the problem is getting worse.

Our son has been through all these Yeshivas and therapies as have we, his parents.

The Rabbis are divided over this. Most refuse to recognize the problem. Some only take drastic steps and wish for an immediate change in these children. Some still focus on the lack of Yiddishket and forget that we have to stabilize these kids before we even deal with Yiddishkeit. Some throw the kids into Rehab Centers in order to make life at home for the rest of the family bearable, which only make the situation worse. Last week a teen from Brooklyn who was "Clean" for a year, came out of Rehab, relapsed and died from an overdose.

How can we create an ideal to fight for in a Judaism that is exciting and gives them a reason to live for? I firmly believe that ALL of these kids are extremely high Neshamot - that's why it's them that are grabbed away into this "underworld".

How do we get them back?

We are all to Blame!

Best wishes and Kol Tuv!

Name withheld for sake of privacy.

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