



NO MORE CEASEFIRES

What should I do now?

On Simchas Torah 5784 (2023), over a thousand of our brothers and sisters were brutally murdered. At this very moment, young men and women are risking their lives to protect the Jewish people and defend our homeland.

Every single Jew who was killed in the vicious pogrom, and every soldier who was slain on the battlefield, is a *kadosh*—the holiest Jew that could be. It doesn't matter how they lived their lives. They were killed simply for being the Aibershter's children. The *Gemara* tells us that such souls fly up to the highest realms of Gan Eden, where others cannot even come close.

The burning question we are all asking ourselves is: What should I do now?

A former student of mine texted me: "I'll give anyone \$10,000 if they can get me a gun and put me on the front line."

I forwarded his message to someone I know in Israel who I thought might be able to help with this kind of thing. I received a torrent of insults in response. To paraphrase, in nicer words, he said: "Stay in your lane."

Everyone has a job to do in this war. Our jobs are not identical. You have to figure out what your job is—how you can contribute to the victory of the Jewish people—and do it. Don't try to be somebody else. The task that you are able to



The children of Rabbi Yossi and Mrs. Chani Friedman, *shluchim* in Ashdod, making Friday afternoon *neshek* deliveries to our fellow Jews in Eretz Yisroel.



The Friedman children find a grateful customer.

do right now is the task you are meant to do and must do.

I am going to share seven key points that the Rebbe made to the Israeli government and military leadership over the years. The Rebbe’s words are timeless—each of these directives is as applicable to the war effort today as it was back then. On a deeper level, and more importantly for us, they are also relevant to each one of us in the spiritual battle we are waging.

1. Do not risk the life of a single Jewish soldier for political considerations.
2. All decisions regarding starting a war, continuing a war, and finishing a war should be made only by military leadership, not by politicians.
3. Finish what you start. Israel has never won a single war, not in ‘48, ‘56, ‘67, ‘73, ‘82 and on. Every war ended in a ceasefire, which is basically just the enemy saying, “We are taking a break until we can rearm and hit you harder.” Winning means finishing the job! If we win one time completely, we won’t have to fight them again.
4. We are fighting with an enemy that doesn’t mind dying. What they really hate is being humiliated. It’s worse to embarrass our enemy than to kill them, so we must embarrass them.
5. Fighting this war, and winning this war, is not just good for the Jewish people. It’s good for the Arab world, too.
6. Don’t ask anybody’s permission to live in Eretz Yisroel, and never apologize for living in the land Hashem gave to us.

7. All of Eretz Yisroel is ours although it’s not all in our hands. However, if our enemy starts a war, and we win another piece of land, we should never give it back.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR US?

Do not compromise any aspect of Yiddishkeit for “political considerations,” i.e., to make it more palatable. The only way the Jewish nation has lasted as long as it has is through unwavering commitment to Torah. When the Rebbe started outreach, many people became full-on *baalei teshuvah*—without relying on *heterim* to wear pants or eat *chalav akum*. Outsiders asked the Rebbe what the secret to Chabad’s success was. The Rebbe responded, “No compromise! People don’t like doing things halfway.” The world is thirsting for genuine, unfiltered Judaism. We have to give it to them.

All decisions regarding how to live as a Jew should be decided by *Rabbanim* and *mashpim*, not by our friends, not by what everybody else is doing, and certainly not by social media. Just like it’s a terrible idea for politicians to be making military decisions, it’s a terrible idea for us to get our ideas on how to be *chassidish* from sources other than our teachers.

Finish what you started. The inspiration that we feel now won’t last, unless we ground it in sustainable action. We each know what changes and improvements we need to make in our own *avodas Hashem*. No more ceasefires with the *yetzer hara*, we have to finish it off.

The *yetzer hara* doesn’t mind dying, but it hates being humiliated. We live in highly sensitive times, and as a

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society, we have become extremely accepting and understanding. We must associate what the *yetzer hara* stands for as shameful in our own minds. We should feel embarrassed to behave in a compromised way!

This is an opportunity to benefit the whole world and teach non-Jews about the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*. Jews are in the spotlight right now. If we exemplify the virtues of righteousness and morality, as laid out by the Torah, we can truly be a “light unto the nations.” (*V’etencha livris am l’or goyim* [Yeshayahu 42:6])

Wherever possible, we must tell the world the truth of Torah. They *will* listen.

Don’t ask anybody’s permission to be who you are. Never apologize for looking different or acting different. Being a Jew is something to be proud of.

Whatever spiritual fortitude you gain through this war—whatever *hachlatos* you take on or inner growth you achieve—don’t let it slip away.

As a *bachur*, when I heard the Rebbe clearly and passionately articulate the above-mentioned directives to the Israeli leadership, I asked my friends, “How can they *not* listen to the Rebbe?!”

An older *chossid* overheard us and said, “Do *you* always listen to the Rebbe? When you listen to your instructions the way you expect them to listen to the Rebbe, so will they.”

This is something to contemplate seriously.

Something is happening right now, and I think we all can feel it. Since Simchas Torah, there has been an awakening of the Jewish people, comparable only to what happened with the Jewish people during the Six-Day War in 1967. Then, like now, every Jewish soul in the world was aroused. Then, like now, the terror and fear didn’t cripple us, it mobilized us. Jews were searching—we just needed to provide the answers.

Then, the Rebbe passionately exclaimed that this was a moment we should use to turn the world upside down.

Now, as we live through a similar moment in history, our job is to turn the world upside down.

Rabbi Chaim Gutnik, from Melbourne, Australia,



Mrs. Rivka Schildkraut (L), *shlucha* in Haifa, with Mrs. Sara Glauber, bringing *neshek*, reading material, food, and other helpful items to the wounded.

had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe after the Six-Day War. He had just returned from a visit to Eretz Yisroel and was feeling inspired and enthralled by what he had experienced there. The Rebbe told him, “Rabbi Gutnik, go back to Melbourne. Get up on the *bimah* and scream as loudly as you can: Every Yid should keep Shabbos! Every Yid should keep *taharas hamishpachah*! Now is the opportunity: You can say whatever you want and people will listen.”

The same is true today.

The Jewish people are more united, inspired, and committed to Hashem than ever before. It’s up to us to make it last. Let’s translate these feelings into long-term sustainable action and bring Moshiach once and for all! ❄️

This article was transcribed and edited by Musia Kaplan from Rabbi Paltiel’s talk to Bais Rivkah Seminary. Women are invited to learn Chassidus with Rabbi Yossi Paltiel in person. Rabbi Paltiel gives two Chassidus classes Sunday mornings in the 770 women’s section, one beginning at 11 a.m. (Tanya) and one beginning at 11:50 a.m. (Hayom Yom). To check on these classes or for any other information, email info@insidechassidus.org.