

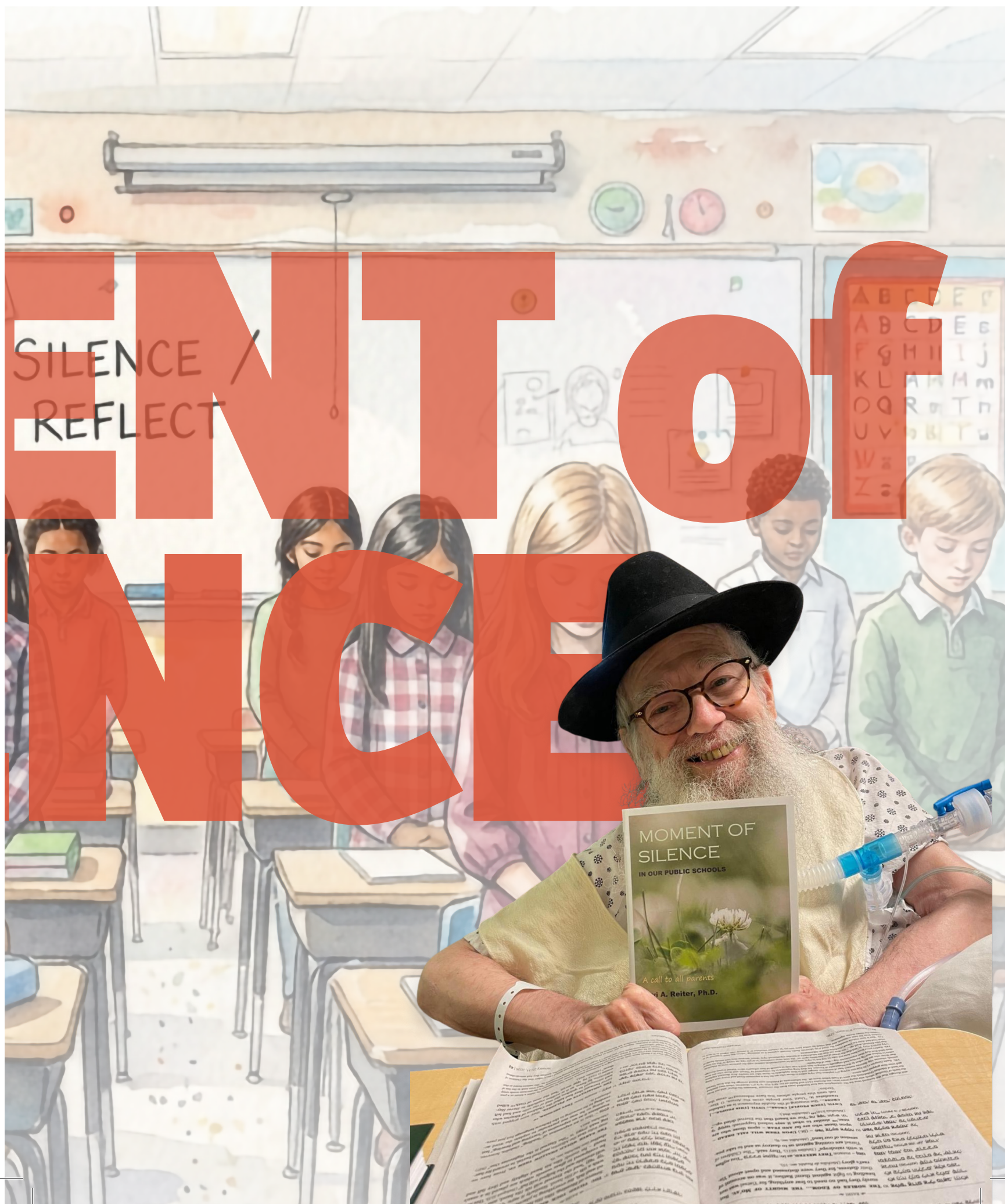
An illustration of a classroom scene. Several students of diverse backgrounds are seated at their desks, looking down at their papers or books. The room has a brick wall, a clock, and various educational posters and a globe on the wall. The overall tone is quiet and studious.

Launching Mivtza

MOM SILE

From My Hospital Bed

DR. LEVI A. REITER



Starting from the end of the story, thank G-d I'm home now after being hospitalized for five months.

THE LAST DAY THAT I SAW MY AUDIOLOGY PATIENTS in my home office on Montgomery Street was September 2, 2025. You see, the next morning at 6:30 a.m. my lungs suddenly stopped breathing. I turned blue, was unconscious, and near death.

Baruch Hashem for the speedy life-saving work of the Crown Heights Hatzalah (Hashem's *shluchim*) which enabled me to wake up in an ICU with a tube down my throat and a ventilator pumping air into my lungs.

I then underwent surgery to install a trach which allowed a ventilator to pump air into my lungs, enabling me to breathe once again, *baruch Hashem*.

Today, as I type this story from my home, I am still with a trach and ventilator, but still busy writing research articles and consulting with patients. *Baruch Hashem*, all is good.

Imagine what it's like, lying in a hospital bed for months, without speaking, because of trach issues, without eating or drinking normally for fear of aspiration, and having to communicate with my wife, doctors, and staff by having them lip-read my words—of which only about 33% can be understood by the listener.

My initial communications to Hashem, besides expressing my gratitude for life, were a series of complaints. Why can't I express myself so that people can hear me? Why can't I *daven* out loud? Why do I have to scramble each day to find a Yid before *shkiah* to help me wrap *tefillin* (never mind wrapping by Lubavitcher *minhag*)?

And there were more complaints...

Then, *baruch Hashem*, I recalled the story of the Alter Rebbe who told a complainer to stop thinking only about his own problems and needs. Instead, he should try thinking about what he alone is needed for. The Alter Rebbe helped him to think: *What can I do given my particular place in life that can justify why Hashem placed me here?*

It worked. Following the Alter Rebbe's advice, the complainer worked to discover his mission. He found it. The dark perception of his life's difficulties brightened as he learned what he was needed for—his singular purpose in life—and he became successful and even happy.

My question then became: What can I possibly do here in a hospital environment immersed in an unfamiliar culture of which 99% of my day-to-day contacts, i.e., nurses, aides, respiratory therapists are immigrants from Haiti?

Hashgachah pratis is a phenomenon that simply cannot be fathomed without the teachings of Chassidus. Nothing happens in this world by chance or coincidence. All is planned by Hashem.

Back in 2019, I became fascinated with the Rebbe's Moment of Silence initiative. In 1983, the Rebbe revealed the incalculable benefits to society of having public-school children start off their school day with a Moment of Silence. During this quiet time, they are allowed and encouraged to contemplate good ideas and values that their parents suggested to them. Examples could be: being thankful to G-d for all the good in one's life, respecting the value of human life, respecting the property of others, to name a few. The Rebbe suggests that the simple act of children thinking about why they should be grateful to G-d has the potential to promote a healthier civilization.

Two years later, in 2021, I published a 24-page booklet entitled *Moment of Silence in Our Public Schools: A Call to all Parents*. The booklet was discussed and advertised in the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter*, 200 were dispensed to *shluchim*, and a good number were given out by ladies on *mitvza'im*. But what about the hundreds of booklets in my possession that have not yet found their homes?

Just as I was pondering what my singular *tachlis* could possibly be in a hospital populated entirely by people from a totally foreign, non-Jewish culture, it happened. It struck me why I still had in my possession many of these booklets.

Now, I could use these booklets to inspire the many nurses, respiratory therapists, nurse's aides and other staff members to participate in the Rebbe's Moment of Silence campaign! Although the booklets were printed in 2021, for *shluchim* and *anash*, suddenly in 2026 by *hashgachah pratis* a new purpose presented itself, i.e., to distribute a booklet

to each one of the Haitian staff members.

Baruch Hashem, by now I had learned to speak clearly with the trach, so that I was able to explain what the Moment of Silence could accomplish for their children, and how to go about getting the program into their public schools.

The *mivtza* of Moment of Silence from my hospital bed begins!

Although very few hospital staff had the ability to get involved with their public school's administration, they re-purposed the booklet, and began reading it to their children instead, but with surprisingly positive results.

For example, one respiratory therapist to whom I gave and explained the booklet described her 14-year-old son as being all "wired up" (her words) and fresh and disruptive, whenever he came home from public school. She decided to read the booklet together with him as a nightly activity. A few days later at my next appointment with her, she told me that she was in total shock and disbelief when her son

went to the library for the first time. He goes to the library often now, just to have that peace and quiet which he gets in the library. She also noticed that he is gaining more mindfulness, contemplating the values that they discuss together.

Here's another example of the inspiration provided by the booklet in general and the Moment of Silence concept in particular. I had an occupational therapist (OT) to whom I gave the book, and I explained how the Moment of Silence could be of benefit to the children she worked with in a public-school setting. She recognized the value of the program immediately and presented the booklet to the school principal. We are still working on logistics, however, the potential of bringing the project to fruition in his public school seems very promising.

The story continues. After a five-month stint in the hospital, I was finally going home, *baruch Hashem*. Yet, my great joy was overshadowed by having to abandon my unique *mivtza* which Hashem so generously placed

ABOUT THE BOOKLET:

A MOMENT OF SILENCE IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A CALL TO ALL PARENTS

Written by Dr. Levi Reiter

This colorful 24-page booklet is written for parents of children enrolled in public schools. Its aim is to get the parents excited about participating in a program that is guaranteed to benefit their children. The booklet is easy for parents to read, and it makes it easy for them to understand the Rebbe's vision. It depicts realistic scenarios of negative behaviors found in many public schools and reveals how the Rebbe's Moment of Silence serves to replace the negative behaviors and

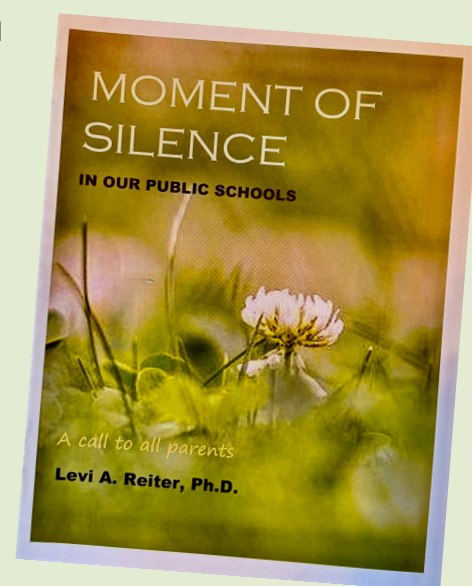
attitudes with wholesome ones.

This transformation, as the booklet reveals, will occur if the children are given quiet time, i.e., a Moment of Silence, during which they have an opportunity to unwind, calm down, and reflect on wholesome ideas that their own parents have suggested to them. Some examples of these ideas are mentioned above.

One of the key points that the Rebbe stresses is that the Moment of Silence should take place before classes begin. Of course, this would require the cooperation of the school administration. For help with this, the book includes the website and contact

information of Rabbi Avrohom Frank who is well experienced in dealing effectively with public school administrators regarding Moment of Silence.

For states that have officially adopted the Moment of Silence initiative, this booklet is a very useful asset. In particular, it gives parents incentives to get personally involved in their own school's Moment of Silence. According to the Rebbe, parental involvement is essential, and it can be easily accomplished by having the parents suggest their own ideas that they wish their child to reflect on during their Moment of



Silence. To obtain the booklet, please visit shlichusmarket.com or call 929.401.4521.

The more serious and shocking problems will be solved as well as the less serious problems, some of which leave children permanently hurt and scarred due to their negative experiences in the school world. Now is the time to work on this matter as we are soon approaching the start of the new school year. -The Rebbe

in my hand. I definitely did not want to lose this rare opportunity to bring the Rebbe's message to a population that would be virtually inaccessible to anyone but a Lubavitcher hospital patient like me. Yet, somehow, I knew that *hashgachah pratis* would show itself once again. Knowing the Rebbe's take on someone abandoning a project in the middle was almost an assurance that the *mitvza* would somehow continue unabated.

If my *mitvza* was to continue, I realized, it had to somehow be able to continue in my home.

Since I still have a trach and ventilator which require professional adjustment and care, I am constantly being visited by highly trained personnel. And, by *hashgachah pratis*, the majority are Haitian—a culture with which I have already gained some

familiarity. Other nurses come from Trinidad, the Philippines, and Jamaica. *Baruch Hashem*, my *mitvza* continues without interruption.

One nurse in particular is 44 years old and highly trained. She is also childless. I wasn't sure what connection she could possibly have with a booklet entitled *A Moment of Silence in Our Public Schools: A Call to All Parents*.

Out of sensitivity for her feelings, I intentionally refrained from showing the booklet to a woman who did not have children. Yet, her eye "just happened" to catch the beautiful cover of the booklet which had inadvertently been left on the table. She asked if she could borrow it, and the next morning she reported that after leafing through the pages, she had meditated on the Rebbe's message inherent in the attractively illustrated text.

In her own words, "It made me appreciate the benefits of silence as a medium for thinking of G-d and having virtuous thoughts."

And she continued, "Also, I find that in this noisy world, silence clears my mind. It's refreshing. I feel lighter, less stressed. I more clearly feel the connection to higher values and to G-d."

In conclusion, this whole story, wild as it is, demonstrates that with the Rebbe and *hashgachah pratis* in your life, there is apparently no challenge or difficulty that can interfere with doing a Divine *mitvza*. ❧

Dedicated to our beloved daughter-in-law Devorah Leah a"h bas Yaakov Eliezer, a true soldier of the Rebbe. May her neshamah feel joy from her shver's article.

You may email Dr. Levi Reiter at auddoc770@gmail.com or text or call 917.854.9055.

The background of the page is a colorful illustration of a classroom. In the foreground, the lower legs and feet of several children are visible, standing on a floor covered with colorful confetti. One child on the left wears pink shoes and blue pants, while another on the right wears white sneakers and dark pants. In the background, a boy with dark hair is seated at a desk, looking down. A teacher or older student is partially visible next to him. The classroom has a globe on a shelf, a chalkboard with drawings, and a window with a view of a bright sky.

Quotes From the Rebbe on Moment of Silence

Source: Chabad.org

...one must do everything possible to enact implementation of a Moment of Silence in all schools. At the present, a child can go through weeks and months without hearing, or even *thinking*, about the Creator of the world.

(Sichah the Rebbe said at the Convention of N'shei Ubnos Chabad, 25 Iyar 5743/1983)

Together with the blessing and prayer for the peace of the city, the following request to the government is made. This country is a benevolent one, and especially recently, there have been some changes for the good in giving aid to those who wish to study in religious schools. It is therefore our hope that steps will be taken to ensure that parents of children who attend religious schools will no longer be faced with double taxation (taxed to pay for public schooling, and then also having to pay for sending their children to religious schools). Also, to ensure that a law be passed for a Moment of Silence in school.

(Sichah the Rebbe said at his 82nd birthday, Yud Aleph Nissan 5744/1984)

Non-Jewish children must be educated and trained, as they grow up, to observe the Seven Noahide Laws. To this end it is very important that in public schools the children be granted the opportunity for a

Moment of Silence.

This means that the teachers will have no influence over the context of the Moment of Silence, rather, the child will ask his/her parent what to meditate on during the Moment of Silence. The parents will tell their children to think about the Creator, that He is the Master of the world and is concerned with the actions and deeds of every person and that He stands over this child and directs his life, as well as the lives of his friends and his parents.

When the child contemplates these thoughts, his regular conduct and behavior will improve and will be compatible with a habitable world, so that when he grows up, he will continue to act properly.

As a result of instituting this Moment of Silence in the public-school systems, the authorities will save steps in their search for ways of dealing with all the serious problems in the schools. The more serious and shocking problems will be solved as well as the less serious problems, some of which leave children permanently hurt and scarred due to their negative experiences in the school world. Now is the time to work on this matter as we are soon approaching the start of the new school year.

(Sichah the Rebbe said in the summer of 1986, as published by Sichos in English)