



# Divrei Pesicha

As we enthusiastically showcase our newest Musmakhim on the occasion of the 5784 RIETS Chag HaSemikhah, we commemorate their outstanding achievement this year in a manner which is markedly different than in many years past. Our great pride in their accomplishments in reaching this major milestone is as heartfelt as ever, but due to the horrific events of this past Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, on the now infamous calendar date of October 7, our happiness is significantly mitigated, as Klal Yisrael as a whole continues to suffer and our dear brethren in Eretz Yisrael continue to endure terrible personal and familial tragedies and calamities.

This Chag HaSemikhah was originally scheduled for just a few weeks after the war began; it was for that event that this published collection of Divrei Torah was initially prepared. It was decided then that due to the extraordinary magnitude of the catastrophe we all sensed at that time, holding a festive Chag HaSemikhah would be most inappropriate. But given that unfortunately, the hardships and adversities facing us are far from over, one may legitimately wonder how and why we can celebrate even today.

One answer may perhaps be found in a lesson learned from Megillas Esther. After the plot to destroy the Jewish people was exposed, Esther and Mordechai, having received authorization to do so, informed the Jews that they have official permission

to organize, to defend themselves, and to eliminate anyone who threatens them (Esther 8:11). The reaction of the Jews to this good news was celebratory: They experienced *orah vesimchah vesasson vy'kar* – light, gladness, joy, and honor (passuk 16). They were jubilant.

But why? The Jews were still in grave danger. The actual battle was yet to be waged. The potential loss of many lives remained a very serious possibility. Why were they so exuberant already then?

One answer may be that they then discovered a new-found confidence built on a renewed sense of *emunah* and *bitachon*. They became truly convinced that Hashem would see to it that all would work out well in the end, in spite of various undeniable hardships along the way. What gave them this conviction? A newly invigorated commitment to Torah.

Indeed, the Gemara in Megillah (16b) states that the “*orah*” identified in the aforementioned passuk refers to the light of Torah; they were rejoicing in their rediscovered respect for Torah and for learning, which gave them the sense of assurance, of trust in the future, and of courage. An earlier Gemara there (14a) teaches that the initial decree against the Jews inspired a greater return to the ways of Torah than all of the prophets were able to generate. And it was this new feeling of determination that boosted their overall morale, even in the face of on-going challenges.



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In a similar vein, it may be suggested that in our current crisis as well, we too should be stirred and motivated towards a renewed commitment to Torah. And we can be exhilarated, despite the very real difficulties lying before us, by witnessing – and indeed celebrating – the successes in Torah attained by another generation of ordained rabbis, of devoted students of Torah, of the next leaders of Klal Yisrael. It is in that spirit that we rejoice, together with our new Musmakhim and their families, in Torah learning, Torah teaching, and Torah leadership, with feelings not just of hope, but of certainty, that we too will ultimately merit the kinds of personal and communal yeshuos which were bestowed upon our ancestors.

On behalf of the entire RIETS hanhalah, I extend my warmest Mazal Tov wishes to all of our new Musmakhim and my sincerest tefillah that we will see much nachas from each of them in the years to come.