

READERS COMMENTS

BH

Dear Bochorim List Moderator,

I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Rabbi -----, and I am a shliach at the University of -----. My wife and I moved out here a while ago, and we have been working with the 3000 Jewish students here on campus. I read what you wrote about Matisyahu, and I want to set the record straight.

I hosted Matisyahu at my Chabad House for a program. The program brought many new faces, and was a Baruch Hashem a success. But the truth is, that's not important. What is important is the fact that Matisyahu connected to these students on a very deep level, taught them Chassidus in an easy to accept manner, and showed that he is an emeser, ehrlicher yid with strong convictions and deep feelings of attachment to the Rebbe and Lubavitch. Everyone walked away from the program so deeply touched that you could see it on their faces. (You're welcome to look at the pictures on my website.)

I'll take it a step further – he performed at a club here in (and I know that you think that es past nisht, but please do me the honor of reading until the end), and I personally saw how he gave over divrei Torah in between songs, spoke about how we are the generation that will be redeemed, had the crowd singing Shema Yisrael with him, and mentioned the Rebbe with less busha than I've seen some shluchim mention. After the concert, a few of the students I was with told me that not only did they have a great time, but they were deeply touched by his message. "You know," one girl told me, "I really connected with what he said about the redemption thing." Is that not what we want?

His program is NOT for frum chevra. He does NOT want frum Yidden to come to his programs. His program is for the not-yet-frum, to whom he has been VERY successful. He told Rabbi – who was anti-Matisyahu before he met him – that the worst thing that he sees is when frum chevra come to his show and say, "You know, it's so long since I've been in a bar! This is great!" It disgusts him. Again, he's out there for the not-yet-frum. I have no doubt whatsoever that this is his shlichus, and he does it with the proper balance of understanding who he is and what he is doing. He crowd surfs – ONLY WITH MEN. He runs into the crowd and dances, ONLY WITH MEN. I saw that as soon as a girl tried to jump into the circle, he ran back on stage. He does not shake hands with women, and he apologizes in an aideleh, but firm way. His music may be considered grub to us Lubavitchers, but to the fremder, this is as holy as it's going to get. You denigrate him for being touched by Bob Marley – tachlis, that's how he became frum! He is not condoning Marley's life; he is saying that Marley said certain things that resonated within him, which he later found out were translated verses of Tehillim.

For you to curse him out is totally uncalled for, true Lashon Hara and absolute Motzi Shem Ra. You have not seen the work that he's done, and I highly doubt you have ever tried to work on mekareving the types of Jews that he has opened up. If you would work with this age and type

of Jew, you would understand that this is one of the best things that has ever occurred in our line of work; it has opened countless Yidden up to learning Chassidus, and it has brought thousands of Jews to Chabad Houses to continue the inspiration and learning. To me, this is clearly one of the simanei hageulah. As for you cursing him out, it reminds me of similar techniques practiced by the Satmarer and the Misnagdim.

I am bringing him to University of For another concert, and I could not be happier about it. Baruch Hashem, students are excited about it, and it's causing a kol yotzei on campus. I know that afterwards, hundreds of students will leave inspired, touched, and want to connect more with their Judaism through Chabad. I'll be glad to send you pictures and testimonials afterwards so you can see takeh what a Kiddush Hashem he has and is continuing to cause.

I wish you much hatzlocha, and I wish you that you should always be able to look at everything through a more pnimiusdikeh magnifying glass, one in which you will not be so quick to condemn your fellow Jews, fellow Chassidim, and fellow Shluchim.

Rabbi -----
Chabad at University -----

AND OUR RESPONSE

Hi

I'm not sure we are talking about the same person but since you seem to be discussing the person I mentioned on my site I must conclude you are smoking the same stuff the people at his concerts smoke.

"Matisyahu does NOT dance with women."

<http://www.jumu.fr/matisyahuconcertbis.html>

The very first clip on the page shows him dancing with a very poorly dressed WOMAN. Maybe you do not know what a woman looks like. I suggest you do a google image search where you may be introduced to the picture of a female.

Then I posted some pictures where we see him dancing in a mixed crowd (at a Chabad (!) function).

<http://www.geocities.com/bochrilist/kidushhashem.html>

Again, for people who are not familiar with the difference between men and women it might not be clear but in general those long haired creatures that do not have to shave their beards daily (smooth skin indicates that) are women. In the pictures you will find some VERY close to matisyahu.

Crowd surfing is another thing he doesn't do in mixed crowds....

One of the most well known Matisyahu video clips is the one on MTV

Why don't you take a look yourself when you're sober.

<http://www.mtv.com/bands/az/matisyahu/artist.jhtml>

Again, those long haired smooth skinned faces are WOMEN. Those things are found in the crowd he repeatedly jumps into.

” He is not meant for the frum crowd.”

Well here we go.

<http://www.mostlymusic.com/album-landing.aspx?a=28041>

That's a store on 13th ave. in boro park. They actually do not distribute this cd. Their competition Sameach does that. Another frum company. Nevertheless they sell this cd and even have it on the listening station.

<http://www.judaica-world.com/product.asp?dept=0&Product=T1351CD>

Another non-Jewish store in a non- frum neighborhood ?
Kingston ave!

He really hates it when frum people come to his concerts.

That's why he went to HASC.

http://www.hasconcert.com/photos/Hasc2005_0142.jpg

A few days after the concert I happened to be in Boro Park. The first thing my Satmar acquaintances asked me was if its true that that disgusting goyshishe singer who killed the entire evening with his shvartze acts is really a Lubavitcher. I explained that he is a recent Baal teshuva who never really learned in a Lubavitch yeshiva other than a few months in a baal teshuva school. They sighed a sigh of relief and said We KNEW he was a ger!. They subsequently went over to the phone to inform their friends who had been just as shocked and appalled that matisyahu is a ger (The concept of a baal teshuva is not known to them) Unfortunately that concert caused a major Chilul Lubavitch and even more unfortunate is that it also gave a hechsher to this type of music and sales started going up. IN FRUM STORES.

Recently I was in a store in CH that sells Pimentas heavenly rock cd. This cd contains music by Jimmy Hendrix and is played mainly by non-Jewish band members.

I happened to know from reliable sources that Avi Pimenta from Kfar Chabad does not allow this cd (made by his brother and nephews) to be played in his house. As hashgocha protis would have it he walked in just when I was there. I asked him if it was true that he won't listen to it himself and he said yes of course and that's why it is not being sold here or in any other frum neighbourhood. It was made for goyim.

When I showed him the cd on the listening station he became furious ran to his care where his nephew Moni was waiting and told him what was going on. Moni became even more furious than his uncle and stormed into the store. Screaming that he had told the distributor many times not to give it to any frum store and had even called the store a few times to remove it and that now he had no other options but taking out a court order against them.

That's the way to make sure it won't be sold in a Jewish store!

The storeowner agreed with me that he shouldn't be selling it but, in his words "whatever goes we sell. As soon as there will be a demand for crosses we will start selling crosses"

You are accusing me of cursing him out. I can't find anything I wrote to curse him out. All I do is calling him a Kidush Hashem objectively accompanied by some video clips and pictures readily available online for all to see.

Someone offered me some clips of him before he became frum. I did not post them because there is no point in that other than being mevayesh someone for his deeds he did BEFORE he became frum. Now this person is going around in the name of Lubavitch doing this garbage. THAT is what I have a problem with.

Matisyahu supposedly performs to be mekarev Jews.

In nightclubs?

In Idaho where there is a tiny Jewish population? No, he wasn't brought out by the shliach there. He went to entertain a non-Jewish crowd with his non-Jewish music to make a few dollars for his Jewish pocket.

Now as to the Kiruv issue.

A shliach is someone representing the Rebbe. Not someone who 'works for the Chabad organization'.

Therefore a shliach always dresses in traditional Hassidic garb consisting of a black fedora hat dark suit and white shirt. Black shoes, not brown.

Just take a look at the most successful shluchim out there.

France has the most balei teshuva in the world. Rabbi Azimov (1000's of BTs) and Rabbis Pewzner (sinai schools 2000 kids back in 1992 already) and Rabbi Kalmanson (shneor schools presently 500 kids) all dress in kapotas, speak French with a heavy Yiddish accent and act as if they're in Russia or 770.

Rabbi Lazaroff in Texas has an empire. So does Rabbi Korf in FL. People only come to them because they're RABBIS.

The Shluchim preparation center recently flew down a senior rabbi/counsellor. He begged the young future shluchim to give him some rest and start acting like rabbis instead of friends who play baseball with their balebatim. It is fun to do that but then, when the person needs a rabbi he has to look elsewhere. He said that he has countless of cases referred to him of ppl who have a local shliach who doesn't act like a rabbi so they can't share their problems with him.

(A few days after hearing this a college student told me that he has the exact same problem with his campus shliach)

Music as Kiruv tool is not new in Lubavitch.

In the days when the Rebbe still had a say in the matter, there used to be Lubavitch concerts for fremde. Not only for fremde who used to be frum but also fro fremde who were born on anti religious Kibbutzim in Israel. Guess what they played there? Nichoach songs! Yup, original Lubavitch songs. This happened at a time when there was 'modern' stuff available too.

(Obviously not as goyish as today's stuff but def. more modern than old fashioned chasidische nigunim.)

Maybe the Rebbe didn't know how to do Kiruv!

Some Shluchim have a 'myth and fact' section on their website. They claim there that Lubavitch is not out to make you frum.

The Rebbe has a different opinion though.

The Rebbe made it clear that a Shliach is there to create an atmosphere just like in Tomchei Temimim. That means study of Chasidus and Nigleh and tehilim shabbos mevorchim. A Seder Nigunim shabbos afternoon followed by a mamar etc. (A Seder nigunim I have personally seen at a shliach in a completely secular city. One of the attending boys is today a Lubavitch youngster)

The way to achieve this is, as the Rebbe said many times, to be mekorvan laTorah and not chas vesholom being mekarev (=lower) the Torah to the level of the people. (Which anyway is not what they're looking for)

When someone wants to hear non-Jewish music they don't need US to give it to them. They have it already and much better than what we have.

An example of mekorvan laTorah would be to make a lunch and learn program. The lunch is the mekarev part and the learn is the Torah part.

To serve cheeseburgers 'because that's what they like and eat anyway' at such a meeting would be dragging the Torah down into Kelipah.

Eating non-Kosher food is not as bad as idol worship though.

Before I posted the Bob Marley link I did some research helped by our good friend google. Reggae music, I found out, is the official music of the Rastafarians. A little more research revealed that this is pure 100 % idol worship.

Using music of idol worship to bring people close to Torah is worse than serving cheeseburgers at a lunch and learn program.

How about another innovation I heard was done on a college campus in order to bring the students closer to the Rebbe?

This shliach supposedly hired some immodestly dressed good-looking shikshas to hand out invitations for a shabbos meal in the Chabad house. The male students expecting to see the same girls at the meal came in great numbers. I only hope the shliach didn't keep the girls there to be mekarev the guys for the next time.

What people say.

I guess you didn't follow the link. Here is just one little quote.

“One of the Chabad organizers came up to me in the middle of one song (I don't know how he recognized me in that dark hall) and said: "These guys are mamash shkutzim (really non-Jews). “

I wish you good luck and tons of success in your shlichus. In case you would like to share some jewish music with your mekuravim, simply send them this link where you will be able to hear the entire nichoach series.

<http://www.Chabad.org/multimedia/media.asp?AID=140669>

Btw I once met a shliach in a city/state with a small Jewish population who told me he only sells Nichoach in his gift shop. THAT is the Jewish music that's available on the market.

May your efforts in spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus chutzpah bear fruit and bring about the coming of Moshiach NOW!

AND HIS RESPONSE

BH

I will answer your taanos to the best of my knowledge. Unlike the sarcastic tone I which you deem appropriate, I will continue to write in a respectful tone. However, I definitely will say that you are continuously proving yourself to be an insensitive, disgusting cad.

1. Women: This is something that might boggle your mind, but actually, people to consult

Rabbonim before doing things like this. I take it you've never heard of a "Hetter". A Hetter is used when a circumstance is more detailed than typically, and in which the situation differs slightly from the typical one. You've obviously never stepped out of New York, and you are obviously a fachnyoked'a gezhe'nik. So you obviously would not be able to comprehend the fact that Yiddishkeit is not black and white. And based on the childish way you wrote your email, you would highly disrespect the Rabbonim who give hetterim to campus shluchim, so I will not mention their names. But I will say that on shlichus in general, and on campus bifrat, there are many situations that come up that need special Halachic consideration, and this is one of them. I spoke to my mashpia, a campus shliach for over 20 years and a very chassidisher person about it. He has had Matisyahu down two or three times. His response: If you'd put a mechitza in, not a single student would show up. The "jiving", for this situation, is not considered dancing; and what he does is have people stationed around the room, so if people do actually start dancing (in a circle, or whatever), a boy can break into dancing with boys, and a girls will dance with the girls. I spoke to Matisyahu about these things, and his mashpia is a very distinguished member of the Crown Heights community, and he consults with him about these things. Crowd surfing was brought up, and he was told that if there is a group of men, he can do it.

S'iz nisht azoy poshut!

2. He is NOT meant for the frum crowd. And Mostly Music sells Yanni and Kenny G - dunno if you know who they are, but they are GOYIM. The fact that he came to the HASC concert is no raaya - as a performer, he'll go where people pay him. But if you ask him, he'll tell you, JUST LIKE AVI PIAMENTA, that his music is for the not-yet-frum. The fact that it's sold in Jewish stores doesn't answer anything - that's their problem, not his! And you yourself answered that with the distasteful comment about crosses.

3. Yes, he mekarevs Jews in nightclubs and in Idaho - being that you obviously are pretty clueless about shlichus work, I would like to inform you that there are a) Jews in Idaho, and b) Jews attend nightclubs. And it is precisely those Jews that I, as a Rabbi, will rarely get to see, because they don't want to see me - they want to go out and have a good time every night. Rabbi Tuvia Bolton, one of the Roshei Yeshiva of the Baal Teshiva yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, does the exact same thing. What can I tell you? How else will we reach these people - stone their cars on shabbos? By putting up signs that say - "YIDDEN! TZNIUS! DON'T WALK AROUND LIKE A SLUT! DON'T GO TO (feh!) BARS!" I'm sorry, but you have no clue as to the realities of shlichus.

4. Surprisingly enough, I agree with you about the issue of the shluchim not realizing that they are Rabbonim. But if you think that you can go onto campus, and be successful mekareving Yidden just by talking with a Russian accent and not realizing what's going on in the world, you are sorely mistaken. A shliach needs to understand where his mushpa'im are coming from, in order that he talks their language. This is the simple metziyus.

5. Music - you're so out of touch, it's unreal. The Rebbe gave the Piamentas, Moshe Yess, Yitzchak Bitton, and Menachem Schmidt - and others - brachos that they should use a GOYISH type of music to mekarev Yidd'n. If you think you can mekarev Yidd'n nowadays with Nichoach, you're just out of touch with reality. Nichoach was great for when it was

made – in the 50's, 60's and 70's. I have successfully used Piamenta's music as a kiruv tool in 5 different countries, and 6 different camps for not-yet-religious kids. Music gives a common bond between the religious person and the irreligious person – the irreligious person says, "I like that! What does it mean?" and gets into the whole thing, listens to pesukkim, and learns Torah. I'm sorry to burst your bubble, and I know your great uncle played the doorbell on the Nichoach Vol. 1, but the thought of playing Nichoach for young mekurovim at this point in history is utterly ridiculous.

6. I also want to say that I do not condone everything that every other shliach says/does. So don't bring me examples from a shliach who uses a slimy tactic to get kids to his shabbos table. Just accept the FACT that things are not as simple as they may seem, sitting in your little close-minded, sheltered ghetto.

I would suggest maybe you go for a shabbos or two out to a campus, where you experience it yourself. Although I would beg you not to speak to any of the students – because with your haughty, uninformed opinions, you would definitely turn people off...

If you were interested in emes, you could call someone as well. Please do not call me, as I have no interest in talking to you. In fact, at this point, I am closing all conversation with you, and I will not respond to anything you write back.

Have a great life, and I wish you success in learning how to dan es KOL adam lekaf zchus. May it be Hashem's will that you have a refuah shlaima, and your hatred of other people, negative overtones, misconceptions and other horrible parts of your personality that come out in your letter should all be healed. Moshiach now!