

A LITTLE GEULA GAME

Now, boys and girls, since Purim is coming, we are going to play a little game. Or for now, call it a thought experiment.

As an introduction, please take five minutes to study the [Invitation](#).

Now for the game. The rules are as follows (for the rationale for each rule and a few elaborations, see the endnotes).

First of all, you are going to form groups of ten.¹

Second, you are all going to commit yourselves to meet at least ten times, for the next ten motsaei Shabbat.²

Third, you will sit in a circle.³ (If the meeting has to be virtual, you will have a program that simulates this.) You will have an hourglass that measures five minutes.⁴

Fourth, you will read the poem "Invitation" together. Each person will read one line, going around the circle clockwise, until the poem is finished.⁵

The person who reads the last line ("but each shall bring a thread") will turn the hourglass over and speak (or, if they can't think of anything to say, be silent) for five minutes.⁶ When the five minutes are up, this person turns the hourglass again and hands it to the next person round the circle, who will speak for five minutes, and so on for at least two rounds.⁷

No one may pass. No one may speak for more or less than five minutes at a time. No one may speak out of turn. No one may interrupt.⁸

Participants are to say whatever comes to mind, keeping in mind the intention of the "Invitation." One exception: no one is to express skepticism about the usefulness of the game or objections to its rules. You have 166 hours in the week to be skeptical about this game. If another participant breaks this rule, do not respond.

The fourth meeting will be devoted to the selection of the group's Emissary – the one best qualified to represent the group to a larger organization.⁹ This should be the person best able to listen to others, remember their statements, and make connections among them. Speaking in turn as in previous meetings, each person will give their impressions and judgments on this matter. After the second round a vote is taken. The person with the second largest number of votes becomes the Deputy Emissary. If the first vote is unanimous, a second vote is taken for the deputy.

Every second week, the group will meet without the Emissary, who will be meeting with the emissaries of nine other groups, in the same format. The Deputy Emissary will describe the meeting afterward to the Emissary. After three meetings the Emissaries will in turn select an Emissary for 100 and a Deputy Emissary. The Emissaries for 100 will meet every fourth week, and so on: the Emissaries for 1000 will meet every eighth week, the Emissaries for 10,000 every sixteenth week, and the Emissaries for 100,000 every thirty-second week.¹⁰

To support the network, a new social medium will be invented,¹¹ in which each group, at every level, will have its own page. Only members of the group may post documents on its

page, but members of other groups may read and comment. The Emissary of the group is also the administrator of the page, who will choose what to post on the page of the next level.

The network (would someone like to propose a name?)¹² is not a decisionmaking body. It is a system of vessels and channels for the incubation and exchange of ideas and the crystallization of common perceptions, which will have an influence on all secular fields and institutions.

The ultimate Object of the Game is the identification of Maschiach ben Yosef, who, it is said, is always present among us but requires the support of kindred spirits in order to be revealed.¹³ The Maschiach ben Yosef, who comes by natural means (hidden miracles) is the first stage of GEULA!!!

It is my fervent prayer that this idea may at last find favor. I have presented it this time as a "game," because it is often in a spirit of play that creative ideas are generated and developed, and because Purim is coming. The necessity is serious, but to regard the proposed solution in the light of a game may help to break the grip of fear and inertia that produces paralysis in the face of urgency. So please – have fun with it!

Purim sameach!

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¹ Ten, the classical number for a minyan, seems a good number to ensure both that the discussion will be enriched by multiple perspectives, and that each person will have a chance to be heard.

² It is extremely important that the meetings be held in the spirit of Shabbat, when a truce is called in the struggle for existence and a light shines by which the world can be seen from one end to the other, so that that individuals can see their particular concerns in the light of the general picture. To meet on Shabbat is not practical for several reasons: the schedule of prayers and family meals, the prohibitions against travel and use of electronic media, and the holiness of Shabbat which discourages discussion of secular matters. Motsaei Shabbat is a time when some of the spirit of Shabbat lingers and the workaday world has not yet taken hold. It is also a time when few events are scheduled regularly.

The commitment to these meetings must take precedence over all other meetings, including simchas and chalilah funerals. Saying, "I am sorry I cannot attend, because I am doing something for klal Israel on that night" sends the message that something significant is going on. The initial commitment to ten meetings ensures that the game will be given a fair trial. After ten meetings, hopefully the commitment will be made permanent.

³ The circle is the timehonored symbol of wholeness.

⁴ The hourglass is the preferred form of timer because it measures time visibly, and watching the sands flow may promote the relaxation which is essential to this form of communication.

⁵ The group is thus reminded at the outset of the intent of the meetings, and each person has a part in expressing it.

⁶ It is important that the length of time be fixed and the same for all participants. This avoids a pitfall of group discussions, where some persons tend to speak at excessive length while the rest do not want to offend by asking them to cut it short, and while others out of modesty or lack of confidence speak little or not at all. Five minutes gives a person time to develop a thought in a reasonably concise manner. If a person cannot or does not want to fill five minutes, then the resulting silence can be a time for reflection.

The fixed length of time operates like a poetic form. Poets know that the necessity of writing in lines of five beats, for instance, compels them to an inventiveness which is found less readily when writing prose, and in the course of this invention unexpected thoughts often surface.

⁷ In the second round, each person may respond to what others have said in the first.

⁸ It is absolutely imperative that this rule be strictly observed, not only for the reasons stated in note iv but also in order to avoid debates (in which participants seek to demolish others' positions rather than to develop their own ideas). Participants may want to respond immediately so as not to forget what they meant to say, but the necessity of waiting is a way of training memory. Knowing that one may speak only in turn avoids tensions over who will speak next and promotes the relaxation in which creative thinking takes place.

⁹ Hopefully the form of the meetings has promoted an objectivity in which there will be no competition for group "leadership," but rather each person will consider their choice in the light of what is best for the group (i.e. with humility).

¹⁰ This structure is based on the plan proposed by Jethro to Moses in Exodus 18. However, since Moses is not revealed among us at present, the structure needs to form from the bottom up (it'aruta diletata).

¹¹ The initial purpose of this plan was to combat the influence of the commercial media, which I perceived as a perversion of the word and a distortion of the very essence of human being – a perception that has not changed with the years. To combat this influence, a discipline of communication is needed.

¹² Long ago, when I first thought of this plan, I called it the "Small World," or the "Olam Katan." But I fear English version has become trite, while the Hebrew name is already taken. A possibility that occurs to me now is "Micromacrocism," meant to convey the idea of "the little that contains much."

¹³ A basis for this idea can be found in the teachings of the Gaon of Vilna, as summarized by his student Hillel Rivlin of Shklov, in *Kol HaTor*, which I have been studying with Mrs. Atarah C. Gur. Mashiach ben Yosef comes "as 'awakening from beneath' by natural means" and with the help of "anshei amanah" (reliable people). While many people focus today on awaiting Mashiach ben David, according to Kol HaTor it is a *duty* to think about Mashiach ben Yosef. It is sometimes said that Mashiach ben Yosef will be appointed by the Sanhedrin, which at present does not exist despite some attempts to call it into being. However, it is also said that if the sages of the generation do not call the Sanhedrin, ordinary people have a duty to urge them to do so (Rabbi Israel Ariel head of Makhon HaMikdash, in his book HaSanhedrin HaGedolah). Thus there is room for ordinary people to assume responsibility.