

Are We in End Times? Orthodox Children Prophecy Great Worldwide Turmoil

For many years, a small group of autistic children has been consulted by rabbis who believe that the gift of prophecy rests within them. But as the gift becomes rarer, the message becomes clearer: The Messiah is already here and the final, painful stages are about to commence.

Rabbi Eldad Shmuel, one of the rabbis who organizes and attends a group of autistic children, explained that it is accepted in the ultra-Orthodox community that these children have a certain level of prophecy. He cited the source for this opinion as the Talmud (Baba Batra 12:b) which states, "Since the Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to *shotim* and children."

Rabbi Samuel emphasized that the prophecies are warning the world to prepare for a great change.

"They have been saying more and more that the *geula* (redemption) is very close," Rabbi Samuel said. "But before it comes, there will be a horrible war—the likes of which has never been seen. Entire cities, huge, urban centers, will be destroyed. The United States will be unrecognizable after the war."

"The children are frustrated that we cannot see this even though the beginnings are already here," he said. "They tell me they are tired of telling people that the *geula* is close when people refuse to listen, refuse to change their actions."

The Hebrew word *shotim* is usually translated as "fools," but in rabbinic literature, it refers to a person with a distinctive lack of social functioning. This does not refer to

their level of intelligence and is not used as a derogatory expression. In the framework of Jewish law, *shotim* is understood to be a classification that includes autistic people. This special prophetic ability of *shotim* was also stated in the Zohar, the basis for Jewish mysticism.

Rabbi Shmuel explained why this might be so, quoting a verse in Psalms:

I praise You, for I am awesomely, wondrously made; Your work is wonderful; I know it very well. Psalm 139:14

He cited Rabbi Shmuel Zalman Auerbach, one of the most prominent Jerusalem rabbis of this generation who passed away last February.

"Our minds are wondrous things but sometimes the intellect interferes with our understanding God," Rabbi Shmuel told *Breaking Israel News*. "On one hand, autistic children are handicapped in their understanding of the world. On the other hand, they have a clear and unclouded vision of things which are hidden to the rest of us. Their souls connect directly to the world without the mind getting in the way."

This was also explained by Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, one of the greatest Jewish philosophers of the 20th century. Rabbi Dessler believed that prophecy, requiring a high spiritual awareness, could come as a result of what is considered a developmental disorder.

"Prophecy was given to *shotim* since the screen, the intellect is not so strong. The brains of *shotim* are different and one can peek within the world of the soul without any physical concealment or cover. When the brain is thus different, the soul is freed. It is unlimited and sees all. The brain is what limits and conceals the soul."

The children are aware of their special ability for prophecy.

"You would think they would be depressed that people look down on them as being handicapped," Rabbi Samuel said. "But they tell us that they can't believe how much we don't see things they see so clearly."

Rabbi Shmuel believes that this diminished form of prophecy is particularly suited to our generation.

"A generation that merits it will receive a higher form of prophecy that comes through holy men," Rabbi Shmuel said. "Our generation does not merit this higher form of prophecy and cannot handle such a direct connection to God. These children are not all holy men or women. The lesser form of prophecy is more about who we are, a difficult generation, than who *they* are, simple souls."

Unlike prophecy which came to only a few gifted people who lived austere and holy lives, Rabbi Samuel believes that every autistic child has this ability.

"As the *geula* (redemption) approaches, autism is becoming more common," Rabbi Shmuel said. The statistics support his claim. The Autism Society reported that in 2016, one out of 68 children were living with an autism diagnosis. Today's incidence rate shows the rate has increased to one out of every 59 8-year-olds.

Despite more children being diagnosed with autism, prophetic statements from autistic children are becoming rarer. Rabbi Samuel noted that 20 years ago, there was a group of 10 autistic children gathered to Jerusalem from all around Israel who were consulted on a regular basis.

"This number is growing smaller all the time," the rabbi lamented. "Even though there are more autistic children, their ability to transmit the messages is becoming more rare."

Rabbi Samuel related that one of the more gifted autistic children passed away last month—a young lady named Esther. The

group with whom he works has now shrunk to two young men named Daniel and Binyamin.

The people who communicate with the autistic children use facilitated communication (FC), a technique that has been in use since at least 1985 as a way of communicating with those who cannot speak normally. Proponents of the technique claim that people with debilitating autism or severe mental retardation actually can communicate if given the physical support of pointing at letters on an alphabet board or by typing on a keyboard.

Though controversial and not universally accepted, FC has been accepted by the Autism National Committee, an autism advocacy organization. FC's policy approving of facilitated communication reads, "Facilitated Communication is one accepted and valid way in which individuals with autism can exercise their right to say what they have to say."

Many of the autistic children are aware of previous lifetimes. Rabbi Samuel related how one girl knew that in a previous lifetime, she was born a Jew but rejected her faith when she married a non-Jew.

"She needed to return to this world just to repair this blemish in her faith," Rabbi Samuel explained. "For that, being autistic was just enough since it allowed her to have the most simple and clear faith in the God of Israel."

Rabbi Samuel was approached by the mother of an autistic child who recently passed away. The woman had a phobia of closed spaces. In her final days, her daughter told her that in her previous lifetime, she had died in the gas chamber of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. It was due to this past-life experience that the mother feared such places.

"Daniel frequently describes a large star that will approach the Earth and though it will not hit the planet, it will cause great damage," Rabbi Samuel said. "Scientists have never seen

anything like this so they don't know what to expect. But it is coming closer, which is why we are seeing more earthquakes, volcanoes, and hurricanes than ever before. As it comes closer, this will only increase." {eo}

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