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Dear Federation leaders,

I hope you'll take a few minutes to **watch the video above** from my trip to Minsk earlier this year as part of a Federation leadership mission with our partner agency, the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee). I met wonderful people who demonstrated a deep commitment to both taking care of the needy in their community and exploring their Jewish heritage and values. I returned home feeling a renewed sense of optimism in the future of the Jewish people in the Former Soviet Union and pride in knowing that our dollars support their efforts. To learn more, you can read my [blog post](#) about an inspiring righteous rescuer I met there and my [article](#) about the trip in this week's *New Jersey Jewish News*.

Second - take a good look at the (frequently misquoted) sentence here: **“There isn't a single blade of grass without a corresponding angel in the sky which strikes it and tells it to grow.”** (Midrash Rabba, Bereshit 10:6) אמר רבי ... סימון אין לך כל עשב ועשב שאין לו מזל ברקיע שמכה אותו ואומר לו גדל

Everything has an angel. Even a blade of grass. Many scholars mistranslate this phrase to say something along the lines of “behind every blade of grass is an angel whispering lovingly, grow.” But it doesn't say that the angel ('mazal' - a constellation of stars) stands behind the blade of grass. Nor does it say anything about the angel whispering lovingly. It says it strikes it, מכה. True, striking is a whole lot starker than tenderly whispering. But growth is hard, and

sometimes it hurts. Sometimes it's tough love that nurtures growth and success.

For whom are you the angel? If there's something you truly believe in, truly stand for, uphold and support – what are *you* doing to be that angel? Are you standing to the side, complaining? Or are you showing true support, tough love. If you believe that every Holocaust survivor deserves to live his or her life in dignity, every Jewish kid deserves a welcoming community, every person with disabilities deserves to be welcomed and included ... If you believe that Israel deserves support and that our principles deserve to be upheld there ... If you believe that tomorrow, when a disaster strikes, a rescue operation should be immediately implemented to help those in need, because that's what a Jewish response should look like ... then today, you need to be that angel.

Today.

Today you need to protect your blade of grass.

Angels are the ones who nurture and support the things they love. They don't stand to one side.

If you go to [our main website](#) you'll see that we've activated a counter to the closing of the UJA Campaign. 66 days left to make sure that all these blades of grass are cared for. 66 days for you to make a difference.

[Click here to strike now and make them grow](#). Thank you so much and *moadim lesimcha*, a happy and healthy end to Pesach and a peaceful weekend to us all.

Warmly,

Dov

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