

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

Shabbos Chazak

25th of Adar

The Month of Nissan

The 2/3rd of Nissan

Studying the Laws of Pesach

Ma'os Chitim

**PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752**

**A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar**

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Shabbos Chazak

INTRODUCTION

It is the Jewish custom that upon completing any of the five books of the Torah in our cycle of weekly readings, the entire congregation calls out: ‘Chazak, Chazak, v’Nischazek – Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!’¹

EVERYONE’S CALL

- ‘Chazak, Chazak, v’Nischazek’ is called out by everyone present in the synagogue, including men, women, and children.²

LOUD AND JOYFUL

- We call out with a loud, joyous, voice, which reflects on the strength and steadfastness of the Jewish people in all Torah matters.³

THRICE STRENGTHENED

1. The sources given for this custom in Likutei Sichos, Vol.25 p.474, are: “*Avudraham*, Seder Hatzta’os Sefer Torah; *Responsa of Maharam Mintz*, Chapter 85; *Aruch Hashulchan*, Orech Chayim, 39:15; *Keser Shem Tov* (Gagin) Vol.1, 38.”
2. “We call out – *everyone* present in Shul, both those in the men’s section and those in the women’s section and even including young children - ‘*Chazak, Chazak, v’Nischazek*’, using the word *chazak* three times.” (Parshas Vayechi 5752 – Sichos Kodosh p.505)

[In Jewish Law, something done three times constitutes a *chazakah* (lit. a strength) i.e. a legally valid continuity and power. In this case, the word *chazak* i.e. the strengthening, is *itself* given a *chazakah* (legal strength) by being repeated three times over – Ed.]

3. Parshas Matos-Masei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.68.
See there, footnote 4: “Note that the source for this custom is from the fact that “When Hashem told Yehoshuah upon the completion of the Torah, ‘*Chazak v’Ematz – Be strong and fortified!*’ [See footnote 1 above for sources]. The innovation in this custom is that although ‘strength’ is mentioned only twice in the verse, ‘Be strong and fortified’, Jewish custom has nevertheless added a third ‘strength’.

Now, in addition to an established Jewish custom being ‘a part of Torah itself’, it even bears an advantage of a kind, over the Written and Oral Torah (See Likutei Torah, Derushei Sukos, 80c and in many other location, for an explanation of this advantage). Moreover, this custom carries the advantage and complete state of ‘something done three times assumes a legal strength, a *chazakah*’ [See previous footnote].”

- This strength is itself further bolstered by our tripled expression of strength, *‘Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!’*³

IMPLEMENTING THE CALL

- During Shabbos Chazak, each and every Jewish person should strengthen themselves, their family, and all around them (the word *‘nischazek – may we be strengthened’* is plural), in all matters pertaining to Judaism, Torah, and Mitzvos.⁴

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4. [The name of every Parshah, in addition to its content, serves as a lesson and instructed that we should implement. This is included in the directive from the Alter Rebbe to ‘live with the Parshah of the week’ by implementing its lessons. Moreover, since our Parshah is also the conclusion of the entire book of Breishis - and ‘everything follows its conclusion’ (Brachos12a) - this Parshah’s name (Vayechi) must certainly contain a powerful lesson.

However, since we are already alive (and can therefore ‘live with the Parshah’) – the life of Jewry being *true* life since it stems from the Torah of Life (Avos d’Rabbi Nasan 34) – then what instruction can we take from the name Vayechi, which means ‘life’?! How do we ‘live’ with ‘living’?

The explanation, in brief, is that a person generally does not feel his life-force and certainly not its source i.e. the essence of his soul. He merely feels the individual powers that stem from this life-force e.g. sight, hearing, etc. Our general and essential life-force remains undetected by our senses. The instruction of Vayechi, then, is to take the expression of our soul’s essential life-force i.e. our essential faith in Hashem, and ‘live with it’ by expressing it within the particulars of our divine service and details of our daily affairs.

Insofar as Torah is concerned, instead of merely living with (and sensing the vivifying force we receive from) the individual Parshah of each week, ‘Vayechi’ instructs us to live with and sense the general vivifying force of Torah itself, ‘for it is our lives and the length of our days’. This awareness should then be likewise brought to bear in the particular of our daily ‘living’.

And since the life of the entire creation comes from the Torah, Vayechi teaches us to view the world in context of its true general life-force, so that we fully interact with the world based on the awareness that there is nothing besides Hashem. (Editor’s synopsis of Sichas Vayechi 5750 – Hisv. p137)]

“It is now Shabbos Parshas Vayechi, Shabbos Chazak, when we conclude the first book of Torah [i.e. Breishis, also known as] ‘Sefer Hayashar’ [i.e. the Book of the Upright – our forefathers Avraham, Yitchak and Yaakov. The name Breishis comes from the word *rosh* – a head or beginning, which indicates that this book is loftier than the other four books. See there, footnote 1]. Each and every Jewish person should therefore strengthen... [See main text above for continuation] ... in a manner whereby it becomes clearly discernable that he lives in the true sense of the word ‘living’ i.e. with the individual as well as general life-force of the Jewish people and the Torah, as it permeates every last detail of our day-to-day lives.

GREAT KIDDUSH / FARBRENGEN

- We should connect this custom with the holding of a special *farbrenge* in addition to the weekly *farbrenge* (that are held in fulfillment of the custom ‘to gather congregations each Shabbos’). Indeed, many congregations have the custom to hold a *Kidushah Rabbah* – a ‘Great Kiddush’ on Shabbos Chazak.⁵

RE-INSTALL THE CUSTOM

- We should re-establish and bolster this custom everywhere, so that all may add in reciting words of Torah - along with – and they may add in their rejoicing upon the completion of an entire book of Torah.⁶

(Parshas Vayechi 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.137)

5. Ibid. See also there, p.142: “We should therefore hold an extra *farbrenge* in honor of this Shabbos Chazak [upon completing the book of Breishis], as well on the Shabbos Chazak’s for completing the remaining four books of the Torah. Certainly, then, we should hold an extra *farbrenge* on the Shabbos Chazak for completing the entire Chumash – although there is no need to encourage a celebration for that completion, since we already celebrate the completion of the entire Torah with the festival of Simchas Torah.

This practice should be further required in this Shul and study hall, since those present have not fulfilled their ‘obligation’ with the current *farbrenge*. For that reason I found it necessary to promote and encourage this practice now. After all, I don’t want people to attribute the fact that that the Gabbaim haven’t arranged an additional *farbrenge*, to the fact that this *farbrenge* is being held! [Rather, they should go ahead and make another *farbrenge* –Ed]

There is plenty of time to hold a second *farbrenge* following this one, and even after all that we have discussed in this *farbrenge*, there still remains plenty that could – and should – be discussed. Particularly, as there are Torah scholars present amongst the audience, and especially as there are students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim who are expected to fulfill everything in the most perfect manner [‘temimim’ means ‘perfect ones’ –Ed].

The most important thing is not merely the discussion, rather that the message should even transcend speech altogether, so that it will be openly and clearly discernable that this is our very life-force – [as alluded to in the name of the Parsha,] ‘Vayechi’ [lit. ‘he *lived*’]!”

See also Parshas Bamidbar 5750, footnote 137 – Hisvaduyos p.153: “It is for this reason that Kiddush on the day of Shabbos is called *kidushah rabah*, the ‘Great Kiddush’, since it is held amongst a multitude of Jewish people [i.e. in Shul]” See there in the subnote: “This explanation is in addition to its basic euphemistic meaning, seeing that it is shorter than the Kiddush for Friday night (*Magid Mishnah* to the Rambam, Shabbos 29:10).”

6. “In a similar manner to the rejoicing over the completion of the entire Torah that is celebrated on Simchas Torah. The gathering of a large number of Jewish people

- This should include the acceptance of good resolutions to increase in Torah study and the embellished performance of Mitzvos.⁶

for the sake of rejoicing over completing the Torah further emphasizes the indivisible unity of the general life-force of the Jewish people and the Torah. The final purpose, however, is for this life-force to be drawn down until it permeates our actual service, including its very finest details.” (Parshas Vayechi 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.137) [See previous two footnotes for further clarification]

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25TH OF ADAR

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The 25th of Adar

Birthday of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka

INTRODUCTION

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, wife of the Rebbe and daughter of the Previous Rebbe, was born on the 25th of Adar, 5661 (1901), in Babinovitch, a city in what is now Belarus, near the town of Lubavitch, Russia.²⁹

The 25th of Adar is a highly significant date:

In the *Talmud*,³⁰ the Sages dispute the month in which the universe was created: Was it Nissan or Tishrei? According to Rabbi Eliezer, Rosh Hashanah (the day of man's creation) was the 1st of Tishrei; according to Rabbi Yehoshua, it was the 1st of Nissan.

But man was created on the *Sixth* Day of Creation. Accordingly, the First Day of Creation was five days earlier, and, depending on which of the above opinions are followed, that would fall on either the 25th of Elul or the 25th of Adar.

29. [For more information on the life of the Rebbetzin, see *A Call to Action*, the 22nd of Shevat (the date of her *yartzeit*).]

30. *Rosh Hashanah* 11a.

As explained in *Tosefos*³¹ and elaborated upon in many Chassidic discourses, although we actually celebrate Rosh Hashanah in Tishrei, both opinions are nonetheless correct. Indeed, the Sages were not disagreeing; they were merely referring to two different stages — thought and action — in Creation.

In the realm of Divine Thought, so to speak, Creation occurred in Nissan; in the realm of Divine Action, it took place in Tishrei.

So while the external aspect of the universe — i.e., how it exists in actuality — was created in Tishrei, its “inner” aspect; i.e., its ultimate purpose (as it arose in G-d’s Thought), was created in Nissan.

This explains why so much emphasis is placed on the 25th of Elul and the 1st of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah), yet there are no special customs pertaining to the 25th of Adar and the 1st of Nissan. For, being “the beginning of Your works [of Creation]” in the realm of Divine Thought, the day’s influence remains a concealed, inner matter that is not reflected in action or in established customs.

Nevertheless, the Rebbe explains, the 25th of Adar is “a foundational day that pertains to the entire year.”³²

31. *Rosh Hashanah* 27a, *Tosefos s.v. Keman Matzlinan*. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 483, fn. 20.

32. 25 Adar, 5750 (*Hisvaaduyos*, p. 444) and *Parshas Shemini*, 5749, fn. 15 (*ibid.*, p. 501).

Relevant for all Jews

Whatever happens to each particular Jew is also relevant to all Jews, and indeed, the entire world; as our Sages teach (*Sanhedrin* 37a): “Each and every person is obliged to say, ‘The world was created for my sake [alone].’”

When was the world created?

[In tractate *Rosh Hashanah* (11a),] Rabbi Yehoshuah states that the world was created in Nissan (the month of miraculous salvation; note that the name “Yehoshuah” means “salvation”).

[The *Talmud* is not discussing the First Day of Creation, but rather, the Sixth Day,

CONTEMPLATE AND ACT

- [The profound significance of] the 25th of Adar should motivate every person to improve his or her thoughts and inner selves. Moreover, we should immediately implement these positive resolutions on a practical level: our thoughts should produce action.³³

when man (the ultimate purpose of Creation) was created.] According to Rabbi Yehoshuah, the Sixth Day of Creation, the day that Adam was created, was the 1st of Nissan. Clearly, then, Rabbi Yehoshua is of the opinion that the First Day of Creation must have been the 25th of Adar.

Six in one

[As *Rashi* writes in *Bereishis* (1:14):] “Everything which would ultimately comprise heaven and earth was created on the First Day [in an all-inclusive manner]; later, each individual creation was subsequently established [as a distinct and actual existence] on the day that [G-d] decreed it to be revealed; [e.g., the skies and seas on the Second Day; land and vegetation on the Third Day, etc.]”

So the 25th of Adar is actually the Birthday of all Creation: heaven and earth, as well as all the spiritual counterparts to the heavens and the earth. In other words, the entire *Seder Hishtalshelus* (spiritual and physical cosmos) was first created on the 25th of Adar.

Nissan and Tishrei: Thought and Action

[If this is the case, then why do we celebrate Rosh Hashanah in Tishrei instead of in Nissan?] There is a well-known explanation (based on *Tosefos, Rosh Hashanah* 27a, and expounded on in *Shaar HaKavanos* and *Pri Etz Chaim*) that reconciles the two opinions [of Rabbi Yehoshua (that the world was created in Nissan) and Rabbi Eliezer (that the world was created in Tishrei)].

... According to this explanation, in Nissan, it first arose in Divine Thought to create the universe, yet G-d did not actually create it until Tishrei.

Superiority of thought

Accordingly, there is a higher quality to the stage of Creation that occurred in Nissan (or more precisely, on the 25th of Adar) over the final stage which took place in Tishrei (i.e., on the 25th of Elul). This higher quality is the superiority of thought over action.

Month of the Mishkan

... A further quality in the aspect of Creation that occurred in Nissan (and began on the 25th of Adar) was the fact that many years later, the *Mishkan* was first erected in Nissan. [What does this have to do with the Creation of the Universe?] Our Sages state (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:11), “From the beginning of Creation until the *Mishkan* was erected [by Moshe in the desert], the universe was unstable. Upon its erection, the universe was [finally] solidified [as an enduring existence]” (25 Adar, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 460).

33. **It’s not the thought that counts**

This is the instruction for every Jew: ... Just as the Divine realm of Thought is

INTROSPECTION

- Since the 25th of Adar is connected with a Rosh Hashanah – the Rosh Hashanah in thought – it is an auspicious time to conduct a review of our spiritual strengths and weaknesses (*cheshbon nefesh*). We should not only make a true stock-taking of our speech and actions, but also of our thoughts.³⁴

IMPROVING ONE’S THOUGHTS AND INNER QUALITIES

- In our present generation, the need to regularly take stock of our spiritual standing and improve our thoughts and inner qualities is all the more imperative. For it is specifically in our times that we have merited an incomparable increase in the dissemination of *Chassidus* – far beyond any former generation – and this study of the inner dimensions of Torah further empowers us to serve G-d with our thoughts and inner being.³⁵

WITH JOY

- All matters of Divine service should be performed with joy

completely united with the Divine realm of Action (to the extent that G-d created all existence [on the 25th of Adar] from His Thought), so too, every Jew should work to unite his [positive resolutions in the realm of thought] with [their actual implementation] in action. After all, Jews in particular “are called Adam (man),” since they are “compared (from the word ‘*domeh*’) to the Most High” (25 Adar, 5750; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 444).

Thinking the universe into existence

Despite the fact that the Creation in Nissan only took place in the realm of thought, it was, nevertheless, a thought that had practical ramifications: it resulted in no less than the literal creation of the universe, the most important aspect of which being mankind. As a consequence of this “mere” thought, the actual observance of Torah and *mitvos* was the result....

Practice what you plan

We should apply this concept to our Divine service: It is not enough merely to make resolutions in Nissan; rather, we should immediately begin their actual implementation, as our Sages taught, “The main thing is the deed” (*Parshas Shemini*, 25 Adar, 5749, fn. 101; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 511).

34. *Ibid.*, p. 445.

35. **Free access for all**

... Many Chassidic discourses from the previous Rebbeim of Chabad that, until recently, had been the exclusive possession of a few individuals, have now been published [for the benefit and accessibility of all] (*ibid.*, p. 444).

and gladness, and how much more so when we are in the month of Adar and are instructed to abound in joy, as it is said:³⁶ “When Adar enters, we increase in joy.” Therefore, this self-accounting should be made with enthusiasm and joy.³⁷

Birthdays

In honor of the 25th of Adar, 5748 (1988), the first occurrence of the Rebbetzin’s birthday after her passing, the Rebbe launched the Birthday Campaign, encouraging us to celebrate and observe a set of birthday customs. What does the 25th of Adar have to do with birthdays?

BIRTHDAY OF SOULS

The Alter Rebbe³⁸ explains that the soul of Adam *HaRishon* is renewed on each anniversary of his creation; and with it, the souls of all mankind.

But as explained earlier, there were two stages to the creation of man: the first took place on the 1st of Nissan in the realm of Divine Thought, and the second occurred in actuality on the 1st of Tishrei.

Thought is an inner, spiritual faculty, while action is an external, physical manifestation. So although all of existence – including souls – actually went through both of these stages of Creation, it is specifically the 1st of Nissan (Creation in Thought) that bears an intrinsic connection with the birth of souls – man’s spiritual and inner essence.

36 *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, beg. *Hilchos Megillah*.

37. **In full swing**

... The directive to increase in joy goes into force immediately with the onset of the month of Adar. Certainly now that it is the 25th of the month – having steadily increased our rejoicing from day to day for these past twenty-five days – we can readily appreciate the immense joy that should now be felt (*ibid.*, p. 445).

38 *Likkutei Torah, Parshas Nitzavim*, p. 47a.

We also explained that the universe was brought into existence five days before the creation of man.³⁹ In the realm of Thought, that would be the 25th of Adar.

The entire Creation was made for the sake of the soul's service, so that when the soul arrived on the Sixth Day of Creation, it would find everything ready and waiting. Hence, the first five Days of Creation are simply part of the soul's creation, enabling it to fulfill its Divine mission.

Consequently, the 25th of Adar must be considered the initial stage of the birth of souls.⁴⁰

TAKE YOUR DIVINE SERVICE TO A HIGHER RUNG

- The 25th of Adar is a kind of “birthday of souls.”⁴¹ Therefore,

39. Two beginnings

The celebration of Rosh Hashanah in Tishrei shows us that the universe – and mankind – actually has two “beginnings”:

1) In our Rosh Hashanah prayers (on the 1st of Tishrei), we proclaim, “Today is the beginning of Your works [of Creation].” This “beginning” refers to the creation of man, the ultimate purpose of all existence. Since man is the justification and purpose for the entire Creation, we refer to the day of his formation as “the beginning of [all] Your works.”

2) The reverse is also true: Since the actual beginning of Creation on the 25th of Elul only occurred for the sake of man, we can consider that date “the beginning of man's creation.”

These two “beginnings” are certainly present in Nissan as well: The 1st of Nissan is the Birth of Souls, and the 25th of Adar, the beginning of man's creation in Thought, is the initial stage of the birth of souls (see *Parshas Shemini*, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, pp. 502-503).

40. *Parshas Shemini*, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, pp. 502-503.

41. Birth of new service

...We can therefore appreciate that each and every Jew should introduce a great innovation in their Divine service on the 25th of Adar. Our efforts should reflect the concept of birth; i.e., even after the perfection in Divine service that we have already attained via our observance of Torah and *mitzvos* throughout the preceding days (and years); and even reaching the level of “*ba bayamim*,” [i.e., spiritually “advanced in days” as stated regarding Avraham *Avinu*, whose every day was fully and perfectly utilized in Divine service and could truly be referred to as having] “complete days”; nevertheless, we should now bring our service to an entirely innovative rung, as if we had just been born anew.

it is an auspicious time to introduce new energy and initiatives into every aspect of our Divine service: our service relating to mundane endeavors, as well as our efforts in Torah and *mitzvos*. These innovations should raise our service to an incomparably higher rung, so that from the perspective of our new level of service, it is as if we had just been born anew...⁴²

AS A PREPARATION FOR YOUR OWN BIRTHDAY

- This fresh approach to Divine service, which we initiate on the 25th of Adar, pertains to all Jews, even those born on any other day of the year.⁴³ It certainly applies to those born (in the literal sense)

In a physical Gan Eden

... Further, this innovation in Divine service should be taken to its ultimate, most perfect extent, reflecting the original status of Adam *HaRishon*, who was [already] created within Gan Eden (the place where every Jew truly belongs; i.e., in the physical Gan Eden on this earth, with our souls encloded within physical bodies, living long and good years).

Mazal tov

... This is all the more imperative when we consider the immense superiority of a birthday; the day when the *mazal* (supernal source) of the person's soul is predominant (*mazalo gover*). Similarly, on the 25th of Adar, the collective *mazal* of all Jewry is predominant.

Double mazal

Although this factor comes into effect on the 25th of both Adar and Elul, nevertheless, it is emphasized to a far greater extent on the 25th of Adar. This is because the collective *mazal* of Jewry is "predominant, healthy and strong" during the *entire* month of Adar. So the predominance of our *mazal* [on our collective "birthday"] is all the stronger, coming as it does on the backdrop of an already healthy and robust *mazal* [caused by the general month of Adar] (*Parshas Shemini*, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, pp. 502-503).

42. A new you

... even when compared to the innovation of last year's 25th of Adar. ... [Furthermore,] within the innovation itself, we should climb from one level to the next, to infinity beyond infinity! We should not merely continue performing the same service, improving [the old service] in an infinite way; rather, we should begin afresh in a brand new manner of service, [i.e., a whole new approach] (*Parshas Shemini*, 25 Adar, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 511).

43. As a preparation for your own birthday

This pertains to each and every Jew: The 25th of Adar is "the beginning of Your works" of Creation (in the realm of Divine Thought), and the initial stage in the "birth of souls." This is the date on which all the souls of Israel are renewed. Therefore, this day also serves as a preparation for the literal birthday (i.e., of the body) of each Jew, whenever that occurs during the year.

close to the 25th of Adar, and even more so to those born on the actual day itself. This effort should influence both them and their families...⁴⁴

OBSERVE BIRTHDAY CUSTOMS

- In connection with the 25th of Adar,⁴⁵ the Rebbe instituted the practice of observing several “Birthday Customs” (listed in the footnote below).⁴⁶ Requesting that they be observed and

[The 25th of Adar serves as a preparation] for us to properly utilize our own individual birthday – when our individual *mazal* is predominant – to further increase in all matters of Torah and *mitzvos*, with ever-increasing strength, and in an innovative manner (*ibid.*, p. 503).

44. Mainstay of all Israel

... whether this influence comes via the man or woman. Actually, this fresh approach to Divine service receives further emphasis when brought about by the woman, since she is the “mainstay of the household” (*akeres habayis*). This applies to both the literal women of Israel, who are the mainstay of the individual Jewish household, as well the collective “woman of Israel,” i.e., the souls of all Jewry, who are referred to as a “wife”; G-d being described as our “Husband.”

Birth of a Jewish woman

... We can therefore appreciate how the birthday of a woman, particularly a righteous woman, carries even greater significance for the “Birth of the Souls” of all Israel (*ibid.*, p. 503).

Note, then, that the 25th of Adar is the birthday of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka (*ibid.*, see Publisher’s Note in fn. 29).

45. Birthdays after a person’s passing

The concept of a birthday continues to apply even after a person’s passing. ... Indeed, one’s birthday is connected, and is relevant, to their day of passing. ... In fact, [as our Sages state concerning Moshe *Rabbeinu*.] “The day of his birth is worthy enough to atone for the day of his passing” (25 Adar, 5748; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 460).

46. Giving birth to Geulah

May our positive resolutions made in connection with birthdays hasten the birth of the Jewish people in the fullest sense – which will be accomplished with the coming of the true and complete Redemption. As is known, exile is compared to pregnancy, and Redemption to childbirth.

Tzedakah for a quick birth

We particularly hasten this “birth” through distributing *tzedakah*, for “*Tzedakah* hastens the Redemption” (*Bava Basra* 10a); (25 Adar, 5748; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 462).

The detailed list of **Birthday Customs** is printed in *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, p. 406. They include: Being called to the Torah on the Shabbos before one’s birthday (and on the actual birthday if the Torah is read on that day); increasing in *tzedakah* before *Shacharis* and *Minchah* on the birthday (on a birthday that falls on

publicized, he also added that these customs “should be followed, for those who so wish, in memory and for the elevation of the Rebbetzin.”⁴⁷

מוקדש

לב"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לעילוי נשמת

ר' אברהם יצחק ב"ר משה חיים קארענבליט

נפטר ח"י אדר תנש"א תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה

זוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

בניהם ובנותיהם:

יוסף יצחק, משה, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא

שיחיו גודמאן



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

Shabbos, giving extra *tzedakah* before and after Shabbos); spending longer and concentrating harder on prayers (and *Tehillim*); meditating on the greatness of the Creator; if possible, reciting at least one book of *Tehillim*; studying the chapter of *Tehillim* corresponding to the new age; studying extra Torah (both *Chassidus* and *Nigleh*); studying all or part of a Chassidic discourse by heart and reviewing it in a group (either on the birthday or the following Shabbos); spending time on outreach; spending some private time reviewing the past year's conduct (repenting and resolving to improve deficiencies); making resolutions for coming year; accepting a new act of enhanced observance, etc.; celebrating with family and friends; giving praise to G-d and thanking Him; reciting "*Shehecheyanu*" on a new fruit.

47. *Ibid.*, first fn. (*Hisvaadyos*, p. 460ff.).

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

THE MONTH OF NISSAN
THE 2/3RD OF NISSAN

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

The Month of Nissan

The Month of Redemption

INTRODUCTION

Nissan is the “head” and first of all the months of the year, as the Torah instructs:¹ “This month [of Nissan] shall be for you as a ‘Head of Months’; it is the first month of the year for you.”

Clearly, Nissan must contain a unique and foundational instruction for our coming year’s Divine service.

One such lesson is derived by examining the name of the month, for a Hebrew name generally indicates the essential theme:

“Nissan” comes from the word “*neis*,” “a miracle.” In addition, the *Talmud*² states that a name in which the letter “*nun*” is repeated represents an abundance of “extraordinary miracles” (*nisei nissim*). This is clearly seen in Nissan, the month in which G-d took us from Egypt with earth-shattering wonders, causing the month to be designated as “the month of redemption.”³

Moreover, the word “month” (*chodesh*) is etymologically related to the word *chidush*,

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1. *Shemos* 12:2.
 2. *Berachos* 57a.
 3. *Shemos Rabbah* 15:11.

Nature and beyond

This, then, is the distinction between Tishrei and Nissan:

1) Legally, the year begins on Rosh Hashanah, the 1st of Tishrei, the “Head of the Year”; while the months are counted from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the “Head of all Months.”

2) Spiritually, Tishrei is the head as far as the world’s natural conduct is concerned, while Nissan, being the “Month of Miracles,” is the source of G-d’s miraculous relationship with the Jewish people (See *Parshas Tazria*, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 523ff.).

“innovation.” So when combined, *chodesh* Nissan (the month of Nissan) indicates “something new in the realm of the miraculous;” i.e., we are now granted the ability to introduce a higher, miraculous element [than was introduced in the previous year] in our Divine service, breaking free of our natural restrictions and fulfilling our mission unimpeded.

As its Hebrew name suggests, nature (“*teva*”) is simply G-dliness that has been so “submerged” (“*tavah*”) within the framework of Creation that it no longer appears G-dly.

The term “miracle” (*neis*), on the other hand, also means a raised banner or pole, for a miracle is undisguised G-dliness “placed high” so that all can view its supernatural dimension with clarity.

During this “month of redemption,” we have the heightened ability to free ourselves from the restrictions of nature and serve G-d in a miraculous manner. This means stepping beyond our own innate abilities and habitual (i.e., natural) efforts.⁴

NO BARRIERS IN DIVINE SERVICE

- A fresh year begins on the first day of Nissan. Immediately, then, every Jew should “shout out loud” (Yiddish: *ois'shrai'en*) for the entire world to hear – not only proclaiming verbally,⁵ but

4. *Ibid.*, p. 523.

5. *Ibid.*

He gave it to you for use in His service

... for each of us is expected to fully utilize the abilities G-d has given us, including the power of speech. ... The main point is that we should express (our ability to speak, along with the rest of) our abilities, in actuality (*ibid.*, fn. 61).

Don't repeat; do better

... Seeing that with each successive day [of Nissan] the power for miraculous conduct steadily increases, we can no longer make do with yesterday's “announcement.” Rather, we should now make a new announcement regarding our even more miraculous conduct of today!

Then, when asked why we are repeating ourselves by shouting the same message as yesterday, we should reply, “This is *not* the same message as yesterday! The

also announcing via actual conduct – that from now on, he will conduct himself in a supernatural manner on a daily basis!⁶

miraculous conduct that we proclaimed yesterday has already become natural compared to the far superior conduct of today!” (*Ibid.*, p. 533.)

We are ready

The main thing is to announce openly and publicly – to the non-Jewish world as well – that we stand prepared to offer the Pesach sacrifice in actuality, in the Third *Beis HaMikdash*; for we are literally about to exit this final exile and enter the true and complete Redemption, led by Moshiach (*Parshas Tzav, Shabbos HaGadol, 5748; Hisvaadyos*, pp. 516-517).

The work is done

After all, as far as practical service is concerned, we have already completed all that is required of us, including “polishing the buttons”; [i.e., we have reached the historic point where we have completed putting the “finishing touches” on the collective service of Jewry in exile]. *So the main thing now is to announce that we are ready for the Redemption (ibid., fn. 81. See also 2 Nissan, 5748, sec. 12; Hisvaadyos, pp. 501-502).* [Note that this was one of the very first times the Rebbe made this historic announcement.]

6. **Do whatever it takes, on a regular basis**

... so that everyone on earth will literally see and be amazed that here is a Jew whose natural conduct is beyond the realm of (their) laws of nature! Moreover, the Jew himself is not fazed in the slightest by his own conduct; for him it is the perfectly natural thing to do. Such “miraculous” conduct is (to use a common phrase) “normal behavior” for him, or to borrow a colloquialism, “it just couldn’t be otherwise”... (*Parshas Tazria, 5749; Hisvaadyos, p. 527).*

Don’t let the world get in your way

A Jew should demonstrate how nature is in fact miraculous by performing whatever is required of him in his Divine service ... [showing that] he accomplishes [this] successfully, despite his soul being housed within a corporeal body and a physical world; a body and a world that are bound by the rules of nature, to the extent that they consider a miracle to be a novelty and a wonder.

A Jew, nevertheless, shows that he does not take the rules of nature into account when it comes to performing his Divine service. Instead, he conducts himself in a supernatural manner. Moreover, it does not come as an innovation or wonder to him to act this way, since such conduct quickly becomes his natural way of behaving, to the extent that he now relies and bases his conduct on miracles in the first place. Being a Jew, after all, miracles are *natural*.

Aren’t we told *not* to rely on miracles?!

True, “we are not meant to rely on miracles” (*Pesachim 64b*); however, that is only if the matter is considered miraculous to *us*. Once the miracle has become natural – as is the case with Jewry (particularly during Nissan), insofar as goodly and holy matters and our Divine service of Torah and *mitzvos* are concerned – then such conduct is considered “miraculous” only in the eyes of the non-Jewish world (which judges according to the rules of nature). That being the case, we are able, and indeed should, “rely on ‘miracles.’” And we should rely (*someich*) on them all the way – just like the law regarding *kodshim*, [animal sacrifices requiring the one

- Simply put, this means [having] a change of attitude towards all those things that, until now, we shied away from taking upon ourselves, thinking that we lacked the natural ability to accomplish them. These include matters pertaining to our regular Torah study, donations to *tzedakah*, prayers, conducting our daily and mundane affairs for the sake of Heaven, and “knowing Him in all your ways.”⁷
- Being the start of a new year,⁸ now is the most appropriate time to take on new activities that we possibly lacked the ability to carry out until now and would have required a “miracle” to enable us to accomplish them.
- Now, however, we will certainly succeed in these matters – and succeed in a natural manner.⁹

bringing a sacrifice to rest his hands on the animal’s head (*semichah*) and pressing down with all his might, immediately before it is slaughtered. In other words, we should do whatever it takes to accomplish our mission, relying on miracles as a matter of course]. Jews, after all, are a holy nation by their very nature....

However, we should not make do with becoming accustomed to this mode of conduct. For once miraculous conduct becomes second nature, we should raise ourselves to an even higher level (than our newfound standing), and subsequently make that level part of our nature as well. We should climb to ever-superior levels of “miraculous conduct”... (*ibid.*, pp. 526-527).

7. *Ibid.*, p. 529.

8. **Superior each year**

During Nissan of each subsequent year ... the power for an ever-superior innovation is introduced ... in the “super-miracles” that are done – which in turn, are integrated into a Jew’s nature (*ibid.*, p. 527).

9. *Ibid.*, p. 529.

We’re only human, aren’t we?!

When a Jew is asked, “How is a human being, with a corporeal body that is bound by the rules of nature, able to conduct himself in a supernatural manner, to the extent that such conduct becomes his natural conduct?!” he answers:

Member of the Holy Nation

I was born a Jew (though not through my own choosing) and was given a *neshamah* (soul) that is an actual part of G-d. I belong to the Jewish people, who are *mamleches kohanim vegoy kadosh* (a kingdom of priests and a holy nation), and have been that way for thousands of years, from the time of the Giving of the Torah.

This is not a mere historical fact; rather, it is perpetuated via the constant, eternal and true link that every Jew shares with *Matan Torah* and with all Jews of every previous generation.

TRAIN OTHERS AS WELL

- In accordance with the “major principle of the Torah” to “love your fellow Jew as yourself,” we should not only conduct ourselves in the above fashion, but also influence other Jews to act likewise.¹⁰

For that reason, each Jew, in each era and location, is part of the “kingdom of priests” and the “holy nation” ... and since, [by virtue of their G-dly souls,] the Jews are absolutely one with G-d, I have the ability to make my nature supernatural, to the extent that it comes as no wonder at all!

[This is particularly since: a) the soul of every Jew was present at Mount Sinai; and b) the attribute of truth (which is the attribute of Yaakov *Avinu*, whose soul includes the souls of all Jewry) is the “central shaft that stretches from one extreme to the other” (see *Tanya*, ch. 3); i.e., it exists at every level and runs through every single generation (*ibid.*, fns. 51-52).]

Aren't we restricted by exile?

Yes, it is true that we are presently in the Diaspora and in exile, and (unlike the Temple era, when we witnessed open miracles on a regular basis), nowadays, we no longer witness the miracles [that were commonplace in the *Beis Hamikdash*].

However, [it is a basic principle that] the very lowest spiritual levels are directly linked to the very highest of levels. In our case, this means that the miracles that occur nowadays (as well as the ability for a Jew to conduct himself in a miraculous fashion) during exile – when “the person on whose behalf a miracle is being performed does not even recognize that a miracle is taking place altogether” – are in fact extremely superior forms of miracles, even beyond those that occurred during Temple times.

Each Jew a powerhouse

We should therefore appreciate the amazing powers that are given to each Jew in exile, and certainly during the [final and harshest period, known as the] “footsteps of Moshiach.” For in this latter time, even according to nature ... all of the predicted due-dates (auspicious times) for the Redemption have long passed [without the Redemption materializing]. We now find ourselves *just a fraction of time before the actual Redemption*.

All of Jewish history stands behind you

... Our ability to conduct ourselves in this manner is all the more understandable in light of the vast cumulative buildup of spiritual service that has been performed by Jewry throughout the many generations ... amidst self-sacrifice that was entirely supernatural. ... Through this, the Jews have purified and refined the world's physicality (its coarseness certainly having been nullified via our granting predominance to spirit over matter), thus transforming physicality into something spiritual.

It is absolutely certain that a Jew nowadays finds it far easier to perform his Divine service in a supernatural manner, and even outdo the performance of all previous generations (*ibid.*, p. 528).

10. Seeing it done

The power of a congregation helps each individual: If someone has been unable to openly [conduct himself in a miraculous manner] up until now, then witnessing the fact that other Jews have already achieved this serves to empower and embolden him to follow suit (*ibid.*, p. 529).

Reciting the Nasi

INTRODUCTION

The *Mishkan* built by the Jews in the desert was inaugurated on the 1st of Nissan. Over the course of the next twelve days, the *Nesiim* (leaders) of the twelve tribes of Israel¹¹ took turns at supplying the inauguration offerings on behalf of their tribes; one *Nasi* per day.

As stated in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*,¹² it is customary for each individual to recite the Torah section describing the offering brought by that day's *Nasi* – from the 1st through the 12th of Nissan.

This is followed by a short prayer (*Yehi ratzon*), as printed in the *Siddur* (*Tehillat HaShem*, pp. 470-473).

On the 13th of Nissan, an additional portion is read, representing the tribe of Levi.¹³

RE-INTRODUCE AND STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOM

- Unfortunately, there has been widespread neglect of the custom to recite the daily “*Nasi*” (and even more so regarding the subsequent *Yehi ratzon* prayer). *It is a mitzvah*¹³ *to bolster this custom.*¹⁴

11. [Counting the descendants of the two sons of Yosef (Menasheh and Ephraim) as two tribes, and excluding the priestly tribe of Levi, whose duty it was to perform the actual services in the *Mishkan*.]

12. *Orach Chayim* 429:15.

13. **How did reciting the Nasi fall into neglect?**

Note that the Alter Rebbe does not mention this custom in his *Siddur*. (There are, of course, additional matters that the Alter Rebbe omits from his *Siddur*, despite the fact that they are indeed our custom.) However, even when this custom was [subsequently] added to *Siddur Torah Or* and *Tehillat HaShem*, it was merely appended to the end of the *Siddur*, following all the other prayers. Further, it was merely mentioned in a footnote to the Torah reading for Chanukah (for that reading was likewise belatedly appended to the *Siddur*), which is also followed by the *Yehi ratzon* prayer recited after the [daily] *Nasi*.

The 2nd/3rd of Nissan

Yahrtzeit of the Rebbe Rashab and the Beginning of Previous Rebbe's Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe) passed away in Rostov on the 2nd of Nissan, 5680 (1920).

One of his most significant achievements was the founding of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah, and for that reason, the Rebbe explains, “The 2nd of Nissan is an auspicious day¹⁵ regarding everything that is associated with the Yeshivah.”¹⁶

On the 3rd of Nissan, one day after the Rebbe Rashab's passing, his son, the Previous Rebbe, assumed the leadership of Chabad. Under his direction, the network

This, perhaps, is the reason for the unfortunate neglect of the custom to recite the *Nasi*, and even greater neglect of the *Yehi ratzon* (which, although mentioned in works of foremost Torah authorities is not mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch's* discussion on reciting the *Nasi* ...).

It is a mitzvah to bolster this custom (Parshas Tazria 5749, fn. 76; Hisvaadyos, p. 530).

Reminders are essential

On Chanukah, these same portions are read to the congregation from the Torah and therefore do not require further promoting. Conversely, during Nissan, each person reads the *Nasi* to themselves, which is why we need to actively promote and remind everyone to recite it.

The essential point is that through [promoting and observing] this custom, we hasten the dedication of the Third *Beis HaMikdash* (*ibid.*, p. 534).

14. A Jewish custom is precious

It is a *mitzvah* to bolster this custom, and to do so in a manner befitting the activity [of carrying out a custom] described [by G-d] as “the practices instituted by the Sages [that] are more important and cherished to Me [than My own commandments]” i.e., as befits the preciousness of a custom established by Jewry. (In this regard, reciting the *Nasi* may be compared to the custom of *Hakafos* on Simchas Torah) (*ibid.*, fn. 76; p. 530).

15. ... In addition to similar propitious dates, e.g., the 18th of Elul, when the Yeshivah officially opened for study (*Parshas Tazria*, 3 Nissan, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 534).

16. *Ibid.*

of Tomchei Temimim Yeshivahs was greatly expanded.¹⁷

TAKE A MOMENT TO CONTEMPLATE THE YESHIVAH'S EFFECT

- All past or present students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, or a branch with a variation of this title¹⁷ – along with their families, and all who have been influenced [to advance in Torah and *mitzvos*] by them – should dedicate at least a moment today to contemplate the ways in which the Yeshivah positively influenced them, and indeed, should continue influencing them in the future.¹⁸
- On the 2nd of Nissan, one should take some time to dwell on the Yeshivah's success at bolstering Torah study – of both the inner and revealed dimensions of Torah – the enhanced observance of *mitzvos*, heightened mode of prayer, further utilization of every day affairs for the sake of Heaven, and promotion of the service of “knowing G-d in all your ways.”¹⁸

EXTENDED INFLUENCE

- This contemplation is also for those who, for reasons beyond

17. Worldwide network

One of the fundamental achievements of the Rebbe Rashab was the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. He first established the Yeshivah in just one location, but later, following the various “exiles of Tomchei Temimim” [where, due to Soviet persecution, its students and teachers were forced to flee from one place to the next, eventually going underground completely,] branches of the Yeshivah were opened across the entire globe (*ibid.*, p. 531).

Many of these branches have been given variant titles; nevertheless, their themes, mode of conduct, and study methods are in the spirit of Tomchei Temimim (*ibid.*, fn. 85).

18. *Ibid.*, p. 531.

Far-reaching effect of Nigleh with Chassidus

As we can see for ourselves, a curriculum that combines the study of both *Nigleh* and *Chassidus* has a disproportionately positive effect on the students. The influence extends through them to their families (after marriage), and to all who fall under their range of influence. It enhances all areas of their Divine service, continuing to do so even after they leave the Yeshivah ... the main enhancement being that they now perform these matters with the self-sacrifice of “all who go forth in battle for the House of David,” i.e., in a supernatural manner (*ibid.*).

their control, were unable to personally attend a Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah, but nevertheless sent their sons or grandsons to study there.¹⁹

THE GOALS OF TOMCHEI TEMIMIM

- It is unnecessary to launch into a lengthy explanation, describing exactly what one should contemplate; anyone with the slightest idea of the objective of Tomchei Temimim should understand this on his own.

And if he nevertheless requires additional elaboration, he should approach another former or current student who will surely enlighten him.²⁰

19. ... especially now, [in the year 5749,] the beginning of the 70th anniversary of the 2nd and 3rd of Nissan, 5680 (1920) – the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe Rashab and the assumption of leadership by the Previous Rebbe. It is also the 40th anniversary of [the year of the Previous Rebbe's passing on *Yud Shevat*,] 5710 (*ibid.*, p. 532). See *A Call to Action*, 20 Cheshvan.

20. **Free to flourish**

... Maintaining the Yeshivah once involved many hardships and difficulties, particularly under Soviet rule, although in truth, these matters were mainly trials [to be overcome] that lacked real substance [other than to call forth greater energy by those who had to overcome them]. ...

Nowadays, however, it is far easier to fulfill the will of the [Rebbe Rashab and the Previous Rebbe] who [respectively] founded and conducted the Yeshivah, without having to face any hardship or problem at all.

We can now increase (beyond the significant additional achievements to date) in all of those matters that the Yeshivah was designed to achieve. In a general sense, this means the dissemination of Judaism, with particular focus on the dissemination of *Chassidus* (*ibid.*, p. 531-532).

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

STUDYING THE LAWS OF PESACH
MA'OS CHITIM

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

Studying the Laws of Pesach

INTRODUCTION

In his *Shulchan Aruch*, the Alter Rebbe begins the laws of Pesach with the following:

In the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Sages instituted the practice of publicly teaching and explaining the laws of each festival thirty days in advance; hence, from Purim onward we study the laws of Pesach.

... This is to remind the people about the upcoming festival, giving them thirty days advance notice so as not to forget to select animals that are kosher for the festival sacrifice.

... Even after the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, this practice [of learning the laws thirty days prior to the holiday] was not annulled. Rather, each Rabbi teaches his students the laws of the festival thirty days in advance.

... In these generations ... since all [the laws] have been printed in books, it is incumbent upon each individual to personally study the laws before each festival until he is fluent in them and knows exactly what he must do.

TEACH PESACH LAWS THIRTY DAYS IN ADVANCE

- We should teach and explain the laws of Pesach well in advance so that everyone will have enough time to purchase kosher-for-Pesach *matzos*, *shemurah matzos*, new utensils (or *kasher* their old ones), and so on.¹

1. 26 Adar, 5751 (*Hisvaadyos*, p. 402), to the *shluchim*, after addressing “Friends of

EXPLAIN THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PESACH

- We should also explain the concept of eradicating our spiritual *chametz* (lit., “leaven”),² and the need to free ourselves from our [evil inclination], which our Sages refer to as *chametz*.¹

PESACH EDUCATION

- We should educate children (those who are young in years, as well as those who are “young” in Torah knowledge) in all aspects of Pesach so they will know how to ask the “Four Questions,” and so on.³

SELF-EDUCATION

- We should begin by educating the “children” within ourselves; i.e., those aspects of our Divine service which are presently underdeveloped. We should nurture these areas of service so that they do not “fall asleep”⁴ altogether, developing them until they are fully functioning.³

INCREASE FROM ROSH CHODESH

- From Rosh Chodesh Nissan and onward, i.e., two weeks

Machane Yisrael.”

2. **Remove all chametz**

[For example, it states in *Berachos* 17a: “Master of the Universe! It is revealed and known to You that we want to perform Your Will. What, then, prevents us? The yeast in the dough and our subjugation to foreign kingdoms. May it be Your Will that You save us from their hands and then we will return to keep Your commandments with a complete heart!”

As *Rashi* explains there, “the yeast in the dough” refers to the evil inclination in our hearts, which incites and agitates us to act against G-d’s Will.]

3. **A wise nation**

... As we are instructed, regarding the child who does not even know enough to ask of his own accord, “you should take the initiative [of telling him about Pesach (“*at p’sach lo*” – from the *Haggadah*)].” The goal is to begin teaching him in such a manner that the child will be able to continue progressing on his own studying Torah and Judaism and eventually reach the level of the “Wise Son” (*Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 444).

4. [Mirroring the custom of giving children nuts and the like on the *Seder* night, “to prevent the children from falling asleep” (*Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, beg. of 472).]

before Pesach, we should increase our study of the laws of Pesach, taking our studies to a far superior level than existed previously.⁵

- We should spend more time studying, increasing the quality of our study as well. Our efforts should reflect the miraculous character of Rosh Chodesh Nissan, [the head of “the Month of Miracles”].⁵

5. **When do we begin?**

[In tractate *Pesachim* (6a), two opinions are presented as to the set time to begin teaching the Pesach laws in public. According to the first opinion, whose view is accepted as law, we begin thirty days in advance; i.e., from Purim. Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel differs, saying we begin just two weeks before Pesach, from Rosh Chodesh Nissan.]

Take both

Although the law [follows the first opinion, that] “we study the laws of Pesach thirty days in advance,” and [does not follow the opinion of] Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel; nevertheless, a) our Sages state that regarding all *Talmudic* disputes, “both opinions are the [correct] words of G-d”; and b) in this case, we are able to fulfill both opinions in actuality.

Simply put, we should begin studying the laws of Pesach thirty days in advance, and then, “two weeks before the festival,” we should increase our study ...

Moshe began two weeks before Pesach

... Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel’s reasoning is that ... it was on Rosh Chodesh [Nissan] that Moshe *Rabbeinu* taught the Jews about the requirements of the upcoming Pesach sacrifice. This is clear from the fact that the Torah [couples] the chapter dealing with the Pesach sacrifice [with the law of Rosh Chodesh], stating: “This month [of Nissan] should be for you the Head of Months,” [i.e., Moshe’s address took place on the first day of Nissan. And just as Moshe publicly discussed the Pesach laws two weeks in advance, so should we].

Adding in a “miraculous” manner

[This explains Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel’s reasoning on the literal level. On a deeper level, however, the fact that the chapter discussing the Pesach laws begins with the law of Rosh Chodesh Nissan] is also an allusion to the fact that “this month [of Nissan] should be to you the Head of Months,” i.e., we are granted the power for conduct that is above nature [in observing the Torah’s laws – “Nissan” meaning “miracles”].

That being the case, we are granted the ability to increase in our study of the laws of Pesach (that we began studying immediately after Purim) from Rosh Chodesh Nissan ... and indeed, to do so on an even higher level than our previous two weeks of study. From then on, we should study in a manner reflecting the supernatural character of Rosh Chodesh Nissan (*Parshas Vayikra*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, pp. 414-415).

STUDY THE LAWS OF KORBAN PESACH

- [We are commanded to bring a lamb or kid-goat to the *Beis HaMikdash* on *erev* Pesach as a Pesach sacrifice; an activity that entails advance preparation. In anticipation of the Third *Beis HaMikdash*,] we should begin our preparations for the Pesach sacrifice by studying its laws.
- For a start, we should study the *Seder Korban Pesach* (Order of Offering the Pesach Sacrifice) that is printed in [*Tehillat HaShem*], the *Siddur* designed to be used by every Jew.⁶

6. *Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, pp. 444-448.

Offering a spiritual Korban Pesach

We also express the theme of the Pesach sacrifice in our spiritual service:

1) In detailing the process of selecting the Pesach sacrifice, the Torah commands: “Draw and take for yourselves [a lamb or kid-goat for the Pesach sacrifice].” On this, our Sages explain, “‘Draw’ your hands away from idol-worship, ‘and take for yourselves’ a lamb for a *mitzvah*, [i.e., the worship of G-d].

[In terms of our Divine service,] this means that we should “draw” ourselves away, turn aside, and shake ourselves off from anything that smacks of *avodah zarah* [“a foreign service”] – anything that is “foreign” to [our service of observing] Torah and *mitzvos*; “and take” upon ourselves matters of Torah and *mitzvos* in greater abundance and depth [than observed previously].

2) Similarly, in our Divine service, we should apply the message alluded to in the method of offering the Pesach sacrifice:

[The Torah commands that the Pesach sacrifice be] “roasted over fire, its head with its knees and innards.” [In relation to our Divine service, this means] that we should engage all of our various faculties, from our very highest faculty, i.e., our intellect, [represented by the *korban*’s “head,” down to and including all our lower faculties, represented by the *korban*’s “knees and innards”]. We should transform all of these faculties into “a sacrifice for G-d,” so they are permeated with the fire of holiness and the “love of G-d that burns as a raging fire within his heart, like leaping flames” that blaze throughout our entire being (*Shabbos HaGadol*, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 516).

Maos Chitim

Pesach Fund

INTRODUCTION

In his *Shulchan Aruch*,⁷ the Alter Rebbe states: “It is a universal Jewish practice for each community to arrange a levy on its people for the sake of providing wheat for Pesach; i.e., to purchase and distribute it among the needy, [thus enabling them to bake matzos for the Seder nights].”

Nowadays, this practice has been expanded, and *Maos Chitim* (lit., “money for wheat”) now includes all other Pesach requirements as well. The Rebbe devoted an extraordinary amount of attention to this annual pre-Pesach drive.

PURIM TO PESACH

- We should begin organizing and publicizing *Maos Chitim* well in advance; i.e., immediately following Purim.⁸ Our donations towards [providing] the Pesach requirements should steadily increase, adding more and more the closer we get to Pesach.⁹

ALL PESACH NECESSITIES

- *Maos Chitim* includes supplying *all* Pesach requirements for all seven days of Pesach (within the Land of Israel; and eight days

7. Beg. of *Hilchos Pesach, Orach Chayim* 429:5.

8. *Motzo'ei Shushan Purim*, 5749; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 464.

Couple learning with action

It is a *mitzvah* for each individual to study the laws of the upcoming festival [thirty days in advance], so that he will be fluent in them and know what he must do [to properly observe the festival]. Moreover, “Great is study since it leads to action” ... It is customary to begin donating well ahead of Pesach, beginning [this, too,] thirty days beforehand; i.e., from Purim (*Taanis Esther and Purim*, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 411).

9. *Erev Pesach*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 51.

in the Diaspora).⁸ It includes the needs for the Seder nights – matzos, four cups of wine, and so on – as well as general *yom tov* requirements, such as [new] festive clothing, meals, and the like.¹⁰

WITH HIDDURIM

- After providing an individual with all his Pesach requirements, we should strive to raise the person to a higher standard of Torah observance. Then, due to his new and enhanced level of observance, we will need to furnish additional Pesach supplies appropriate to his new level.¹¹

TURN RECIPIENTS INTO DONORS

- We should put immense effort into ensuring that every single Jew – including even the very “smallest” in either a physical or spiritual sense¹² – has all that he or she needs for Pesach.
- We should supply not only all they need for themselves, but enough to allow them, in turn, to announce [at the start of the Seder]: “*Kol Dichfin...* All who are hungry come in and eat! All who are needy come in and make the Pesach [Seder]!”¹³

LIKE YOUR OWN PESACH SUPPLIES

- In keeping with the Torah’s commandment to “Love your fellow Jew as yourself,” we should make sure that our fellow Jews have all their Pesach needs prepared and set out before them, just as we do.
- Furthermore, we should supply the Pesach requirements for

10. *Parshas Tzav*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 443.

11. *Parshas Shemini*, 5749, fn. 116; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 512.

The same applies to the one who brought about this rise in another’s spiritual standing: he should first raise his own spiritual standing to an incomparably higher level than the elevation he wishes to cause in the recipient... (*ibid.*, subnote).

12. 16 Adar, 5750, during a *yechidus*, fn. 80; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 399.

13. **A free invitation**

... so that others who are needy can come and have their Pesach meal, the meal of freedom, at his table (*ibid.*, p. 399). See also *Parshas Ki Sisa*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 417.

our fellow Jews even before we arrange our own.¹⁴

BEST QUALITY

- We should supply “from the best and sweetest foods on our table, since the Torah commands us to give from the best we have to Hashem.”¹⁵ This requirement is reflected in the traditional name for the pre-Pesach drive, *Maos Chitim*, “money for *wheat*”: wheat being the choicest of the five species of grain acceptable for baking matzos...¹⁶

PROACTIVE DONATING

- We should not wait until the official *tzedakah* collector comes to [you], requesting donations to help provide Pesach needs [for others]. Rather, we should be proactively running and seeking any possible way to donate *Maos Chitim*.
- Then, when the *tzedakah* collector comes around, we will give him a donation in addition to those contributions we gave without having to be asked.¹⁷

DO EVEN BETTER THAN THAT

- Even if we have actively concerned ourselves with *Maos Chitim* for some time, we should never consider our obligation complete. Rather, each of us should take time to consider and determine – with an honest self-accounting – whether we have truly given *Maos Chitim* in a manner that befits our particular position. Quite possibly, there may be room (and a need) to add yet further in this regard....¹⁸

14. To the extent that *Maos Chitim*, which includes all Pesach needs, begins thirty days before Pesach (*Erev Pesach*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 51).

15. *Rambam*, end of “*Hilchos Isurei Mizbeiach*”; *Vayikra* 3:16.

16. **Only the best will do**

... although one could technically fulfill his obligation to eat matzah made from any of the five grains (*Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 444).

17. *Parshas Ki Sisa*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 417.

18. *Parshas Vayikra*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, pp. 414-415.

... Therefore, even after having resolved to give *Maos Chitim* in the proper

REVISE YOUR BALANCE REPEATEDLY

- Further, even after having provided *Maos Chitim* in a manner that truly befits our particular position – donating a tenth or even a fifth of our earnings¹⁹ – we should calculate the additional wealth gained as a result of G-d’s blessings in the interim.
- Based on this new calculation, we will realize that our earnings have increased, [and with it, the “tenth” or “fifth” that we had previously calculated]. Naturally, we will then need to provide an additional contribution to *Maos Chitim*.²⁰

BECOME WEALTHY FROM GIVING TZEDAKAH

- According to the principle: “Tithe [your earnings] so that you will become wealthy, [via an increase in G-d’s reciprocal blessings,]” we are able, and therefore should, increase our donations towards *Maos Chitim*; doing so even before G-d increases our blessings.
- The more we increase our donations, the greater will be G-d’s blessings; even bestowing enormous wealth upon us [in “return” for our substantial donations].⁹

TENTH, FIFTH OR MORE

- From Rosh Chodesh Nissan – two weeks²¹ before Pesach – we

measure, we should once again consider to give even more... (*Parshas Ki Sisa*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 421).

19. Giving a fifth is considered “*Mitzvah min hamuvchar*,” the best way of fulfilling the *mitzvah* (*Parshas Vayikra*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 415).
20. *Parshas Vayikra*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 415.
21. **From Purim and Rosh Chodesh**

[As explained earlier, there are two opinions as to when we are obliged to begin studying the laws of Pesach and teaching them to the public. According to one view, we begin thirty days in advance; according to the second view, we begin from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, just two weeks before Pesach.

The Rebbe explained that although the law follows the first viewpoint, we should nevertheless take the second opinion into account as well and greatly increase the quantity and quality of our study upon reaching Rosh Chodesh.]

Just as there are two opinions expressed concerning [the time to begin] studying the laws of Pesach, [and in practice, we should follow both of them,] so should we apply both views to our providing *Maos Chitim* and all the other requirements for

should step up [our efforts] in supplying *Maos Chitim*. Moreover, in keeping with the ability granted on Rosh Chodesh Nissan for miraculous conduct (i.e., to go beyond our natural or habitual efforts), we should even give more than a tenth of our earnings, or even more than a fifth during this time, giving to an unlimited extent (*bli gevul*).²²

Pesach to the needy: We should a) begin to provide these requirements thirty days in advance; and b) greatly increase our donations and activities two weeks before Pesach (*ibid.*, p. 414).

No needy Jews in Nissan

... In addition to our *Maos Chitim* activities that began thirty days before Pesach, we should make proper preparations in the latter days of Adar, particularly during the week before Rosh Chodesh, so that we will be able to amplify our efforts from Rosh Chodesh Nissan and onward. Ideally, though, by the time Rosh Chodesh Nissan arrives, every Jew should already have everything they need for Pesach (*Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 386).

22. **Super-donations**

... All of this applies to the days prior to Rosh Chodesh Nissan as well. Certainly, then, it applies following Rosh Chodesh, when the innovation (*chidush*) of miraculous conduct enters our Divine service (*Parshas Vayikra*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, pp. 416-415).

An elevated service

It is now thirty days before Pesach ... we should fulfill our obligation to provide our fellow Jews with their Pesach needs in an “elevated” manner [reflecting the name of this week’s *Parshah*, “*Ki Sisa*”]: “When you count (lit., “elevate”) the ‘head’ of [each of the Children of Israel] ... in both quantity and quality:

For a start, we should donate in a generous manner (i.e., giving in an “elevated” manner), not only donating a tenth or a fifth [of our earnings], but even more than that.

Aren’t we told not to give more than a fifth?!

True, our Sages teach that “one should not give extravagantly; [i.e.] more than a fifth [of his wealth on *tzedakah*].” Nevertheless, as the Alter Rebbe explains, nowadays “we should greatly increase our giving of *tzedakah*,” telling us, “Do not be concerned with [the teaching] ‘Do not give [extravagantly; i.e.] more than a fifth.’” [Now, if the restriction no longer applied in the Alter Rebbe’s era,] then [we] certainly [should not be concerned with this restriction] in our own generation, many generations after that of the Alter Rebbe.

Give more, gladly

Moreover, [the Previous Rebbe,] the Leader of this Generation and a successor of the Alter Rebbe, bears the name [“Yosef Yitzchak”]: “Yosef,” meaning “addition,” which includes an addition in *tzedakah*, and “Yitzchak,” [“laughter” and “joy”], which indicates the giving of *tzedakah* joyfully, with a glad heart and a friendly attitude.

Thus we should donate in a manner that also elevates the spirits of recipient, i.e.,

CREATE A LAST MINUTE RUSH

- The concept of alacrity is emphasized throughout the themes of Pesach, starting with the rushed baking of *shemurah matzos*. So just before Pesach, we should again increase, and complete, our efforts at providing all the needs of Pesach [for others], and doing so with alacrity.²³

MAKE EVERY JEW WEALTHY

- In the final hours before Pesach,²⁴ we should promote the need to complete supplying [the funds] for *Maos Chitim*. Everyone can, and should, complete and perfect his or her efforts at

through donating in a friendly manner. This, in fact, is the predominant aspect of giving *tzedakah* (*Parshas Ki Sisa*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 417).

23. ... so that it should not become *chametz*, Heaven forbid (*Yud-Alef Nissan*, 5748; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 50).

Hurry

We will now conclude [this gathering] by distributing dollars for *tzedakah* to all who are present. Those who [are not here now, but] are listening [via live hookup,] should also give *tzedakah* in their respective locations now – each person making another into his agent [to give *tzedakah* on his own] towards a timely cause: *Maos Chitim*. The sooner this is done – and the quicker – the better! (*Ibid.*, p. 51.)

Like your own Pesach

We should utilize the remaining time before Pesach to increase in and complete the supplying of *Maos Chitim* and all other Pesach requirements to all who need them; not only providing “whatever he is lacking,” but also donating amply, even to the extent of “making him wealthy.” We should do this in the same way that we try to insure that our own affairs are arranged in an ample and affluent manner.

“All who are needy” – Who’s that?

We should continue this drive until not a single Jew remains in a state of hunger and need.

[Do not be concerned with rendering the opening passage of the *Haggadah* superfluous, for] even in such a situation; [i.e., that there would no longer be any poor Jews], we will nevertheless be able to continue reciting; “All who are hungry come in and eat! All who are needy come in and perform the *Seder*!” Rather [than referring to actual paupers, we will in effect be declaring, “Were it possible for such a prospect [of a Jew who is hungry or needy, then we would certainly invite him now to join us in the Pesach *Seder*]...!”] (*Parshas Tzav*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 29, with fns. 139 and 140)

24. **Grab the last minutes of a mitzvah**

... In the final hours before Pesach – while it is still permissible to handle money, and indeed, when it is still a *mitzvah* to handle money for the sake of Torah and *mitzvos*... (*Erev Pesach*, 5750; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 52).

eliminating poverty from among one's fellow Jews. Indeed, we should even strive to make each individual Jew literally wealthy.²⁵

CLOTHES AND ADORNMENTS FOR WOMEN

- The needs of the festival include making sure that husbands are able to fulfill their obligation to make their wives joyful during the festivals, through purchasing clothes and adornments for them.²⁶

WOMEN'S DONATION – A HIGHER FORM OF TZEDAKAH

- We should emphasize the role of *women* in giving *tzedakah*, for, in fact, the *tzedakah* of a woman can often surpass that of a man.²⁷

25. Attain perfection

Practically speaking, since action is the main thing: Undoubtedly, everyone has already fulfilled his obligation to provide Pesach requirements [for the needy], in addition to his general obligation to give *tzedakah*. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that some still need to complete (“*lehashlim*,” as in “*mashlim*,” to make up for any lack in) their donations of *Maos Chitim*. Furthermore, everyone is able, and should, perfect (“*lehashlim*,” as in “*shleimus*,” reach a state of perfection in) their contributions ...

For that reason, we will now make everyone here an agent for *tzedakah* (as is customary), [but this time, the *tzedakah* should specifically be given] to funding *Maos Chitim*, in preparation for our announcement [at the opening of the *Seder*.] “All who are hungry ... needy ... come in and make the *Seder*” (*ibid.*).

26. *Parshas Tzav*, 5750, fn. 138; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 29.

27. He can't eat a coin

As the *Talmud* states, “A woman is commonly found in her home. There, she gives a [ready-to-eat] piece of bread to a pauper [who goes from house to house]. Thus, his benefit [from her *tzedakah*] is immediate.” [This is not the case with the monetary *tzedakah* that a man usually donates; he is normally away from home during the day, and when he meets a pauper, he simply gives him a coin – which the hungry pauper must first convert into food in order to benefit from the donation.]

It was for this very reason that women and girls participated in the special gathering ... for *tzedakah*-donors, which was [recently] held [in 770] in order to promote and encourage additional donations and much greater energy in giving *tzedakah* (*Parshas Vayikra*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 419).

SUPPLY SHEMURAH MATZAH

- [When an announcement was made regarding the “Mitzvah Tanks” that would be circulating in various locations around New York in honor of *Yud-Alef* (the 11th of) Nissan (the Rebbe’s birthday), promoting Judaism in general and Pesach observance in particular, the Rebbe instructed that an additional announcement be made: to specifically distribute *shemurah matzah*.]²⁸

28. *Parshas Tazria*, 5749; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 419.

... The preparations for Pesach include studying the laws of Pesach, providing *Maos Chitim*, distributing *shemurah matzah*, and so on (*Parshas Shemini*, 5749; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 512).

מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לעילוי נשמת

ר' אברהם יצחק ב"ר משה חיים קארענבליט

נפטר ח"י אדר תנש"א תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה

וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

בניהם ובנותיהם:

יוסף יצחק, משה, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא

שיחיו גודמאן



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד