

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

THE THREE WEEKS

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

a CALL to ACTION

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“HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar”

280 Troy Av, Brooklyn, NY 11213

Tel: (718) 363-3448 • Fax: (718) 467-6919

e-mail: act-now@juno.com

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Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly published edition of *a Call to Action* in anticipation of the Three Weeks. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's *sichos* pertaining to our conduct during the Three Weeks.

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of *hora'os* culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources (*muga* and *bilti muga*). Great effort has been extended to remain faithful to the Rebbe's calculated and instructive nuance. This English translation was rendered by **Rabbi Yaakov Paley**.

At this time, when Moshiach's arrival is imminent, the Rebbe, *Melech HaMoshiach*, has emphasized the primacy of action. We are now beginning to experience the era when we will fully appreciate "the superiority of deed" above scholarship. May it happen now, completely and speedily!

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu Halkar
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The Three Weeks

INTRODUCTION – RELEASING HIDDEN TREASURES

The twenty-one days between the Fast of the 17th of Tammuz and the Fast of the 9th of Av are known as “the Three Weeks” of mourning for the loss of both Holy Temples.

However, now that we are so very near to the final Redemption (when “these days will be transformed into gladness, rejoicing and festivals”) it is time to emphasize the truer, deeper and essential aspect of this period.

Not only are the events and results of the Three Weeks a necessary part of a process that culminates with Redemption – but rather, they are all part of the positive “building” of the Third Beis Hamikdash (See below, “Shabbos within the Three Weeks”).

As the Rebbe describes it:

The Three Weeks are compared to a locked treasure-chest filled with gems and pearls. The chest, along with the key to it, has been given over to every Jew. He need merely place the key inside the lock and open the chest, to reveal the immense treasure hidden within.¹

It is entirely dependant upon the Jew to determine whether the Three Weeks will be an undesirable experience, G-d forbid, or a positive one. He has not been unwittingly entrusted with the property of another, whereby his wrongful use of the treasure would implicate the Giver under “Do not place a stumbling block” [i.e. cause someone to err]... Rather, seeing as the Jew has been informed of his ability to open the

1. Parshas Pinchas 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.57.

*chest and make use of its treasure, he is obviously **meant** to make use of it!*²

In the following directives the Rebbe gives us “tools” with which to reveal the positive essence of the Three Weeks.

UNLOCKING THE WORLD’S TREASURE

- The revelation of the long-concealed inner aspect of the Three Weeks is achieved when we fulfill the very purpose for which we were created: to turn this world into a dwelling for Hashem, by revealing the G-dliness (the “treasure”) hidden within. Then not only will the world not conceal G-dliness, but it will openly express it.²

USING OUR PHYSICAL FOR SERVICE OF HASHEM

- We should begin by unlocking our true selves – by revealing how our body and ‘animalistic’ soul (which seemingly conceal and oppose G-dliness) are truly vessels for Yiddishkeit; we should serve Hashem with our very body and physicality too, utilizing every physical function (such as consumption) and all our property for the sake of Heaven – “In all your ways know Him.”³

THREE WEEKS OF TORAH STUDY

- Yeshaya prophesied (1:27) “Tziyon shall be redeemed through justice [Mishpat]”, i.e., that the redemption from Exile comes via justice – which refers to *Torah*.⁴ During the Three Weeks, we should increase and lend greater intensity to our study of Torah.

2. “Further, being that this matter is within his capacity, he *must* reveal the treasure – for “The Holy One did not create anything in vain!” (ibid p.63 and 59)

3. “Doing so also reveals how “even their bodies are *holy!*”(Zohar)” (ibid at length)

4. Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750 – Hisvadyos p.51-52.

HALACHAH AND RAMBAM

- We should specifically increase our study of Halachah – the laws which comprise the ‘judicial’ aspect within the Torah itself – and the study of Rambam in particular, whose work arranges the laws of the *entire* Torah.⁵

TEACH TORAH

- We should likewise increase our dissemination of Torah to fellow Jews – “establish many students” – which is to be done out of love for our fellow Jews.⁶

STUDY (AND BUILD) THE BEIS HAMIKDASH

- Our additional Torah-study should purposely incorporate subjects that concern the Redemption and the *construction of the Beis Hamikdash*. Our Sages have stated that such study is as great as the actual erection of the Mikdash, and that Hashem equates our study with the actual construction!⁷

5. Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.54. See also *ibid*, footnote 148 – Hisvaduyos p.52, which brings the following quote from Likkutei Torah (beg. of Parshas Devarim): “The phrase “Tziyon will be redeemed through *Mishpat* (justice)” refers to the Halachos (laws), as per the translation of the Targum to the verse “K’*mishpat* Harishon”: “K’*hilchasa* Kadmaisa”, the original *Law*.”

See also *ibid*, footnote 177 – Hisvaduyos p.54, which brings the above quote and its continuation (also written in Likkutei Torah, Parshas Maasei, 83c), that our Sages have said, “The exiles shall only return in the merit of the Mishnah”, which are clear Halachic decisions.

6. *Ibid* 5750, p.54-55.

7. “Hashem said to Yechezkel, “Just because My sons have been placed into Exile, should the construction of My building therefore be neglected? ...Great is the study [of the laws concerning the Mikdash] as is its [actual] construction...” More importantly, the “construction of My House” has **not** been ‘neglected’! (Parshas Matos-Maasei 5749 – Hisvaduyos P.73-74)

“At this juncture, it is proper to raise the issue of the matters that specifically concern the Three Weeks – as has been explained in numerous books (and as has been discussed at great length over the past years), and “one need not encourage the eager” to double and redouble their activities, both regarding oneself and regarding others.” (*Ibid*. p.73)

“To once again raise the issue regarding the addition in establishing fixed times for Torah-study (both in quantity and in quality) of topics connected to the

TOPICS TO STUDY

- We should begin our study with Scripture, i.e. the verses in Yechezkel that concern the “Future Structure”⁸; then proceed to the relevant Mishnah and Gemorah of Tractate Midos; and then, most importantly, the laws of the Beis Habechirah [Mikdash] in the Rambam’s book of clearly-arranged laws.⁹

BEIS HAMIKDASH IN THE LIGHT OF CHASSIDUS

- We should, in addition, study the explanations found in Chassidus¹⁰ that relate to the Beis Hamikdash, and specifically the teachings of the Tzemach Tzedek – who expounded on verses from Yechezkel and likewise wrote on the Mishnayos of Tractate Midos and the like.¹¹

TRACTATE TAMID

- We should also add the study of the Mishnah and Gemorah¹² of Tractate Tamid – which deals with the Beis Hamikdash¹³ and explains the regular services therein.¹⁴

construction of the Beis Hamikdash.” (Motze Tammuz 15, 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.37)

8. “From which we learn also regarding the construction of the 2nd Mikdash, as is stated in Rambam (Laws of the Beis Habechirah, Ch.1, Law 4).” (Parshas Pinchas 5750, footnote 185 – Hisvaduyos p.55)
9. Parshas Balak, Tammuz 17, 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.34. See also Parshas Devarim, Shabbos Chazon 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.108: “An increase in Mishpat (justice) and Torah-study (specifically the Halachos of the Torah) ... and within the study of Torah (Halacha) itself, it is worthwhile to study the parts of Torah that concern the *Beis Hamikdash* (during the Three Weeks).”
10. “Not only those found in the books of Chakira and the like, such as the explanation in Toras Haolah by the Rema”. (Ibid, footnote 50)
11. “After we have merited the outward dissemination of Chassidus, we must now add ... with greater emphasis during *this* year – the 200th year from the birth of the Tzemach Tzedek and also being a leap-year, which is referred to as a “complete year” for containing a harmony between the solar and lunar years. The parallel theme in Torah is the harmony between the revealed parts of Torah with Chassidus, creating a “complete Torah” – as was the unique way of the Tzemach Tzedek”. (Motze Tammuz 15, 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.38)
12. Parshas Balak, Tammuz 17, 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.34.

BUILD THE TEMPLE EVERYWHERE AND IN JERUSALEM

- We should study in a manner that leads to action, namely, the transformation of every Jewish home into a ‘mini-Beis Hamikdash’ wherein the presence of Hashem dwells in a visibly recognizable manner – and primarily, study that will lead to the *physical construction of the actual Beis Hamikdash!*¹⁵

-
13. “Furthermore, the contents of this tractate concern the Beis Hamikdash and are uniquely relevant to the Three Weeks – when we increase in study that pertains to the Beis Hamikdash.

The relevance to the Three Weeks is alluded to in the very beginning of tractate Tamid, “In *three* locations the priests are to guard...”, which alludes to the *Three Weeks*”. This allusion is further underscored in the following (continuing) tractate, “In *three* locations the priests are to guard... and the Levites in *twenty one* locations,” which reflects on the Three Weeks... that are comprised of twenty one days... The number twenty one is alluded to in the verse [in the Haftora taken from Yirmiya, recited at the onset of the Three Weeks], “I see a *Makal Sha’ked* – a staff blossoming with almonds” [and our Sages state], “Just as the almond... from the time of its planting until the completion of its ripening takes but twenty one days, likewise the number of days between the 17th of Tammuz... and the 9th of Av”; the intention in this is to transform all of these twenty one days (the ‘Three Weeks’) into ‘*goodly* almonds’”. (Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.86-87)

14. “On the contrary, since “the future Mikdash is already completely built, it will be revealed and descend from the Heavens”, therefore the study concerning the **services** in the Beis Hamikdash are even *more* relevant to actual practice than the study concerning the *construction* of the Mikdash!” (Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.55)

“...That Midos [lit. “measurements”] represents limitation, whereas Tamid [lit. “constant”] represents eternity, unlimited. Their being placed together represents the drawing G-dliness from the unlimited into the realm of limitations – an accomplishment which is similar and comparable to the quality of the Third Mikdash.” (Parshas Devarim 5750, footnote 88 – Hisvaduyos p. 97) See below concerning holding a Siyum on tractate Tamid.

15. “Not only is it visible that this particular house is occupied by a *Jew* – for the doorpost sports a Mezuzah – but rather that *many* sections of the house should undergo a change: the rooms that belong to the kids or to the lady of the house, and even the sections that are visible from the non-Jewish street... It should be clearly visible that the house has become a sanctuary for Hashem!

Furthermore, and most importantly, we should study in a way that leads to action – the action in this case being the *literal construction of the Beis Hamikdash!*

Why, when such a result is achieved our personal Torah-study will be greatly enhance – for when, after studying the verses in Yechezkal’s prophecy regarding the future Beis Hamikdash and then Tractate Midos and the Laws of Beis Hamikdash in Rambam, we are still left with unsolved queries or disputes – we will simply go along together to the examine and measure the Third Beis

PUBLICIZE THE ABOVE EVERYWHERE

- We should certainly publicize these instructions and promote their fulfillment in each and every location on the globe.¹⁶

FOR KIDS TOO

- It is obvious that the children attending summer camps should also add the “timely topic” of the laws of the Beis Hamikdash to their Torah-study.¹⁷

STUDY WITH GREAT HOPE AND LONGING FOR GEULAH

- We should not study amidst powerful pangs of mourning or striving to make up our loss...¹⁸ Rather, putting the destruction aside, we should study amidst yearning and hopeful longing for the extreme *greatness and perfection of the Third Beis Hamikdash* – which will be of unprecedented magnitude!¹⁹

SUBJECT IS IMMINENTLY APPLICABLE

- We should study with an absolutely certain awareness that these topics are not merely matters that apply to the “future” – but rather that they are *physically applicable laws that will go into effect in just a moment from now!* The Third Beis Hamikdash for which we long is already – at present –

Hamikdash; we will see the subject of our study with our own eyes! (ibid, Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5749)

16. 18 Tammuz, 5748 - Hisvaduyos p.50
17. Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.55
18. “In this year in particular – in addition to the general unique emphasis in our generation – only the “*positive*” dimension of the 17th of Tammuz and the Three Weeks is highlighted. For we are standing on the threshold of *extremely immanent* Redemption. Naturally then, our study of the Laws of the Beis Hamikdash this year should assume a completely different perspective!
For a start, we should not study amidst... [See main text above for continuation]” (Parshas Balak 5751 - Hisvaduyos p.40)
19. “Concerning which it is written, “Great will be the honor of this latter House over the first one” – a greatness which is totally unprecedented!” (ibid)

completely constructed and will imminently descend from Heaven. It will take but a solitary moment to appear!¹⁹

LAWS OF CONDUCT DURING THREE WEEKS

- Our foremost study of ‘timely’ Torah-topics must be the *Laws of the Three Weeks*. We should give precedence to the study of the laws over the laws of the Beis Hamikdash. [In the words of the Rebbe, “It’s amazing... They make a great fuss over additional Torah-study and the Laws of the Mikdash in particular, yet they make no mention of the *Laws of the Three Weeks...*!”]²⁰

TZEDAKAH BRINGS REDEMPTION

- “Tziyon will be redeemed through justice, and those who return to her – with Tzedakah” (Yeshaya 1:27). We should therefore increase in giving Tzedakah,²¹ and include the aspect of ‘justice’ within Tzedakah distribution, namely, to ‘judge’ ourselves and determine the amount we require for our personal needs – so we could distribute the rest to Tzedakah!²²

MAKE SIYUMIM

- We should organize Siyumim (ceremonies held upon completing a book or tractate of Torah) for each of the Nine Days – beginning with and including the 1st until the 9th of Av.²³

20. “According to the principle, “The main thing is the deed”, we should now promote timely concerns that require *literal action* ... These include for a start, the fine details spelled out in Shulchan Aruch regarding our conduct during the Nine Days [that culminate with the 9th of Av] (in addition to the laws concerning the Three Weeks) ... Obviously, we are obligated to *study* these laws from the Shulchan Aruch. It’s amazing... [See main text above for continuation]” (Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5748 - Hisvaduyos p.78)

21. Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750, footnote 176 – Hisvaduyos p.54. See also Parshas Balak 5748 – the fast of 17th Tammuz being postponed – Hisvaduyos p.34.

22. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748, footnote 130 - Hisvaduyos p. 96

23. Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.55

- Ideally, we should begin holding Siyumim even *before* that period!²⁴

Shabbos within the Three Weeks

INTRODUCTION – OUR CURE

Chassidus explains that the Shabbosim which fall within the Three Weeks are the “cure” with which Hashem provided us even before the onset of our “illness”. The cure works by revealing how in truth there was not really an “illness” to begin with.

This is accomplished by the Shabbosim within the Three Weeks, since Shabbos (a day when the innermost levels shine forth with clarity) reveals the inner truth of the state of “exile” (i.e., that Exile is a preparation for the future Redemption); Shabbos does not merely stand ‘above’ the Destruction and Exile (which is why the laws of mourning do not apply on Shabbos) – but rather it transforms the Three Weeks by revealing their inner, extremely-positive purpose.²⁵

A ruling that illustrates the above theme:

The Rebbe’s father (the renowned scholar and Kabbalist Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson) once issued a Halachic decision to an individual who was in his week of mourning (Shivah).

This man was accustomed to wear canvas shoes – even on Shabbos. However, Reb Levi Yitzchok instructed him to purposely wear leather shoes on the Shabbos of his Shiva-week, lest anyone misinterpret his canvas shoes to be a sign of mourning - sadness being forbidden on Shabbos!

24. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5749 - Hisvaduyos p.74

25. Parshas Pinchas 5749.

*The Rebbe applied the same reasoning to those Shabbosim that occur within the Three Weeks...*²⁶

SHABBOSIM OF GREATER JOY

- We should not allow any trace of sadness and the like to mar the joy of these particular Shabbosim. Quite the contrary: arriving against a backdrop of the Three Weeks when weeklong restrictions on our joy exist, these Shabbosim should contain a *far greater* joy and pleasure – even *more* than that of a regular Shabbos – in order to dispel any interpretation of sadness!²⁷

TORAH AND TZEDAKAH ON SHABBOS

- These Shabbosim are like a ‘cure’ that has been prepared even prior to the onset of the ‘illness’ – for the days (of the Three Weeks) which coincide with Shabbos are transformed into days of festive gladness; on these Shabbosim, we should increase in both aspects: ‘Justice’ (meaning Torah-study²⁸) and ‘Tzedakah’ – in a manner that is permissible on Shabbos, such as sharing meals with guests, dispensing spiritual charity, and the like.²⁹

26. Parshas Beshalach, 10 Shvat 5744 - Hisvaduyos p.873. See also Likutei Sichos Vol.4 p.1091.

27. “The Torah refers to the Shabbos as “U’veyom Simchas’chem - וביום שמחתכם” meaning “on [specifically] *your* day of rejoicing”; the joy of Shabbos comes through *our* efforts and “belongs” to us. (This is unlike the joy “which is wholly Hashem’s joy” such as on Shevi’i Shel Pesach, or “the day of *our* rejoicing” whereby the joy is attributed to *both* Hashem and the Jews – such as on Yom Tov (and especially on Sukkos).) Rather, on Shabbos the joy is of our own making.

This aspect applies to every Shabbos, yet is greatly amplified on the Shabbosim that occur during the Three Weeks – for then we are required to extend greater effort and work harder in increasing our joy – in order to dispel any doubt concerning negative feelings due to the Three Weeks. Our joy should contain the quality of sudden light that emerges from the dark!” (Parshas Pinchas 5749, footnote 39 - Hisvaduyos p.49)

28. “In addition to the custom (instituted by Moshe) to gather Jews and teach them Torah on *every* Shabbos.” (Parshas Pinchas, Tammuz 17 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.54)

29. “And we should *certainly* do all this during the weekday – when we can utilize *all* possible methods of giving Tzedakah...” (Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748, footnote 127 - Hisvaduyos p. 96)

SPECIAL MELAVEH MALKAH

- We should make a point of holding a Melaveh Malkah meal upon the conclusion of this Shabbos (the 17th of Tammuz) too.³⁰ Perhaps this is even *more* important than on other Motza'e Shabbosim – for being “the meal of Dovid, King Moshiach”, it further highlights the connection of this time with Moshiach (who will nullify the fast-days).³¹

EDITOR'S NOTE

The following points are taken from the Preface to “Chidushim U'bi'urim L'hilchos Beis Habechirah”:

TORAH AND TZEDAKAH IN THE THREE WEEKS

- In accordance with the verse, “Tziyon will be redeemed with justice (Mishpat) and those who return to her – with Tzedakah”, we should increase in both Torah study (Mishpat) and Tzedakah during the Three Weeks.

FIVE PERIODS OF INCREASED ACTIVITY

- The Three Weeks are subdivided into five periods of increasing intensity: From the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av; from Rosh Chodesh until the week of the 9th of Av; the week of the 9th of Av itself; the day before the Fast; and the actual Fast Day. We should intensify our Torah and Tzedakah at each ensuing phase of the Three Weeks.

EREV ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM-AV

- On the day before Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av, we should especially amplify our Torah study, prayer and Tzedakah. We

30. “Since the Melaveh Malkah meal on Motze Shabbos concerns the honor of Shabbos (its function being “to escort the Shabbos in honorable fashion as it departs, just as we accept it with honor when it enters”), we should therefore be scrupulous in this meal.” (ibid, 5751 p.33-34)

31. “And they will be transformed into days of gladness, rejoicing and festivals!” (ibid)

should at least distribute the monetary equivalent of two meals to Tzedakah – and ideally, the equivalent of *three* meals.

PRE-EMPT THREE WEEKS WITH POSITIVE RESOLUTIONS

- We should resolve to fulfill the above directive *before* the Three Weeks commence.
- Those who have not yet made such a resolution should do so *at their very first opportunity* – and the sooner (even by a moment) the better!³²

MAKE IT UP LATER

- Obviously, one who failed to accomplish any of the above directives on the applicable dates should make it up afterwards.

MIVTZOIM CAMPAIGNS

- During the Three Weeks, we should put special effort into the Mitzvah Campaigns: Ahavas Yisrael, Kosher Education, Torah-Study, Torah Books, Tefilin, Mezuzah, Shabbos Candles, Kosher Diet and Family Purity.

32. “According to the Halachic ruling in Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 571:3”

The editors of *HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar* seek dedicated individuals who would like to sponsor future editions of a CALL to ACTION. Please contact Levi at 347-268-3299. Thank you.

*Translated in the memory and merit of
Yitzchok Yosef ben Yaakov Mordechai.*

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