

a CALL to ACTION

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Foreword

This third edition of *a CALL to ACTION* is brought to publication in honor of the forthcoming *Yom Tov of Shavuos*. Translated from *HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar*, it is a collection of instruction from the Rebbe's *sichos*.

HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar 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*). This English translation is rendered by Rabbi Shais Taub, who has made it available in pamphlet format for the first time.

As the season of the "Giving of the Torah", when the Jewish Nation stood at the foot of Sinai with a cry of "*Na'aseh Ve'nishmah*", Shavuos fosters within us the ability to proceed with action as the banner of today.

The Rebbe, *Melech HaMoshiach*, has emphasized the primacy of action at this time, when Moshiach's arrival is imminent. 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, and let us commence with the *Torah Chadashah* of Moshiach.

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

Preparatory Days of *Shavuos*, 5761

Preparing to Receive the Torah

In our festival prayers, we refer to the holiday of Shavuos as the Time of the Giving of the Torah. For it was on this day – the sixth of Sivan – in the year 2448 since Creation, that G-d gave the Torah to Moshe and the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. Every year at this time, the Jewish people renew their commitment to the Torah and prepare to receive G-d's gift anew as they did for the first time. – Editor

LEARNING

- Preparations for Shavuos begin on the last Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Sivan and primarily entail involvement in Torah study. It is understood that the best way to prepare to receive the Torah is by learning the Torah.¹
- This learning should encompass both the revealed and mystical aspects of Torah, marking an increase in the quantity as well as quality of learning, in particular, 'learning which brings to action.'²
- Specifically, we should learn the laws dealing with the upcoming Festival, including the study of those sources in Torah which explain the greatness and wonder of the Giving of the Torah. For this will intensify our desire and longing to receive the Torah.³
- For example, one may learn the section in Tractate Shabbos that deals with the Giving of the Torah.³
- On Rosh Chodesh Sivan, we learn the discourse "*B'Chodesh HaShlishi*" in *Torah Ohr*, found at the beginning of *Parashas Yisro*. For if we begin right away on Rosh Chodesh we may then increase throughout the days leading up to Shavuos.⁴

MAKING GATHERINGS

- The Shabbos before Shavuos, Jews should gather in synagogues and yeshivas and learn Torah.⁵

1. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukoisai 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 352): "Besides the general preparation that takes place throughout the counting of the Omer."*
2. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 215).*
3. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukoisai 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 352).*
4. *Sichas Rosh Chodesh Sivan, The Night Following 3 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 380).*
5. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 253).*

- Ideally, these gatherings should be attended by at least ten men. For "G-d's Presence rests among every group of ten who sit and occupy themselves with Torah."⁵

- These gatherings should also be spent arousing everyone there to begin preparing for Shavuot —the first preparation for which may already have been simply bringing another Jew to the gathering.⁶

LOVE YOUR FELLOW JEW

- In preparation for receiving the Torah, we must increase in our love for our fellow Jew. As it is related in the Torah, when the Jews arrived in the Wilderness of Sinai on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the Jewish nation stood together in complete unity —'as one man with one heart.' Thus, every year, on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, we should begin to increase in our feelings of love and unity among Jews.⁷

YEARNING FOR THE FINAL REDEMPTION

- So great is our desire to receive the Torah on Shavuot that we count down the days —the *Sefiras HaOmer* —leading up to it. This same desire and longing should be coupled with our yearning for the Final Redemption for which we are also counting down the days, and years and generations of our exile and cry out "Ad Masai?! Until When?!"⁸

EREV SHAVUOS

- The day before Shavuot, there should be a special increase in giving *tzedakah*.⁹

- The day before Shavuot, we should think deeply throughout the day about the Jews' answer to G-d when He offered them the Torah — that they answered first "we will do," and then "we will hear."¹⁰

- This contemplation should be one that brings us to action. For in all matters of Divine service, action

is foremost —*we will do*, and understanding with one's own intellect comes after —*we will hear*.¹⁰

Customs of Shavuot

SHAVUOS BLESSING

- Men bless men, women bless women, and children bless other children¹¹ with the following words of the Previous Rebbe, not adding and certainly not subtracting a word —"*Kabbalas HaTorah B'Simcha U'B'Pnimius*. May you receive the Torah with joy and inner depth."¹²

- We should start increasing in this joy and inner depth even several days before Shavuot so that by the time we receive the Torah on Shavuot, these qualities will have already become second nature to every Jew.¹³

THE TIKUN

Our Sages tell us that the entire Jewish nation overslept on the morning of Shavuot — the very morning that G-d was to give them the Torah. Today, and for generations, Jewish people seek to rectify this fact by staying awake all Shavuot night reciting a digest of holy writings. These collected verses and teachings are referred to colloquially as the 'Tikun' — literally the 'Rectification.' - Editor.

- As indicated by its name, the *Tikun* repairs all that needs rectification.¹⁴

- Everyone should be encouraged to complete the reading of the entire *Tikun*.¹⁵

- Even those who were not particular to do so in years past out of preference for more in-depth Torah study¹⁶ should from now on say the entire *Tikun* from

6. *Ibid.* p. 254: "As is the famous teaching of the Previous Rebbe that "Whenever two Jews meet, it should bring about the benefit of a third Jew."

7. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 226).*

8. *Sichas 24 Iyar, to the Lubavitch Women's Organization 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 229):* "This is by way of increased study in topics of Redemption and the Holy Temple, for such learning actually hastens these things to come about in reality.)

9. *Maamar – Anochi Hashem Elokecha 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 255).*

10. *Ibid.* p. 254

11. *Sichas 24 Iyar, to the Lubavitch Women's Organization 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 229).*

12. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 5 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 410).*

13. *Sichas 24 Iyar, to the Lubavitch Women's Organization 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 229).*

14. *Roshei D'varim from Farbrengen of the Second Day of Shavuot 5751.*

15. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 409).*

16. *Ibid:* "We must refute those who claim that reciting the *Tikun* is a waste of their time.' These people are of the opinion that they could make better use of their time learning Torah in depth or learning deep *Chasidus* like '*Hemshech Ayin Beis*' instead of saying the *Tikun*. Or they claim that they could at least be learning the *Rambam's 'Minyan HaMitzvos*.' The truth is, by the time they finally start the '*Minyan HaMitzvos*,' they land up just

beginning to end—as this is the true preparation for receiving the Torah.¹⁷

- During the time available for reciting the *Tikun*, we should spend every spare moment influencing all that will listen that the *Tikun* must be recited properly; that is, with awe and fear, as if one were at that very moment receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai.¹⁸

- We should also explain in a way that will be understood that one does not show awe and fear by shaking back and forth or other such superficial displays. Rather, one must intellectually generate a sincere feeling in his heart that at that very moment G-d literally sits opposite him and recites the same words of Torah along with him.¹⁹

- We must act swiftly in attempting to influence others to recite the *Tikun*. For if not, we may be unable to sway these people before the time for saying the *Tikun* has finished. And even if we do convince them to say the *Tikun*, if we do not act with haste, there may not be enough time left for them to finish it in its entirety.¹⁹

- It should be noted that errors were located at the end of the excerpt from *Sefer Yetzira* in the *Tikun* and that a table of corrections has since been printed.²⁰

Resolutions

A PROPITIOUS TIME

- The Previous Rebbe was wont to remark that Shavuot is a special time granted from Above for the undertaking of all achievements in Torah study, for on that day, G-d distracts the Satan from posing any hindrance.²¹

- On the day of Shavuot, each one of us receives special abilities to make unprecedented advances in ensuring that the coming year, and every year, should

be a 'Torah Year' in a manner far exceeding any year before.²²

- Indeed, we already have set times for learning. But since every year the Giving of the Torah is relived with increasing intensity, so too must we dedicate ourselves anew according to our present standing and situation and take on more and more Torah learning in a manner far greater than that to which we have previously been accustomed.²³

HOW MUCH TORAH STUDY?

- We must set aside times for Torah study so much as to even surpass our own abilities. That is, besides dedicating every spare moment to learning Torah, we should also take from the time we have for tending to personal matters and instead use this time to learn Torah.²⁴

- Furthermore, we should take away from the time in which we are involved in other holy matters and mitzvos and devote even this time to the study of Torah, for the mitzvah of Torah study exceeds all. This refers of course to mitzvos whose time will not pass and which may be performed by others.²⁵

- Every man, woman and child who is able to learn Torah with understanding and comprehension is equally obligated to study the practical laws of every non-time-related positive commandment as well as every negative prohibition both Biblical and Rabbinic—each person according to his or her intellectual ability.²⁶

BENEFITS OF TORAH STUDY

- "Great is learning for it leads to action." All of this increase in Torah learning will in turn increase our meticulousness in the observance of mitzvos and aid us in our daily service of G-d, to live day-to-day life in a holier manner—especially concerning the giving of tzedakah.²⁷

- G-d grants long life and health, removing all disturbances that might detract from our physical and

counting them off at the very end of the night, when they are already thinking about going to the *mikveh* and preparing for *davening* and hearing the Ten Commandments. They're already tired and they are unable to concentrate or reflect upon the content of the mitzvos, and how much more so, the spiritual content of the mitzvos.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 5 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 404).*

19. *Ibid.* p. 405.

20. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 409).*

21. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuot 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 270).*

22. *Ibid.* p. 280.

23. *Ibid.* p. 281.

24. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuot 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 274-5).*

25. *Ibid.* p. 275.

26. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuot 5749 (Hisva'aduyos. p. 281).*

27. *Ibid.* p. 282.

spiritual peace, just to enable us to be completely dedicated to learning Torah and performing mitzvos properly without distraction. We therefore should make use of this time of Shavuot to increase in our Torah learning, for the very commitment to do so will directly increase G-d's blessings for us in all areas of children, health and livelihood.²⁸

UNDERSTANDING AND COMPREHENSION

- Everyone should take time to reflect upon the set times for Torah study they already have and make new resolutions for taking on additional times of study. And especially, we should resolve to increase in understanding and comprehension in our Torah learning.²⁸

LEARNING A NEW SUBJECT IN TORAH

- We must all intensify in both the quantity and quality of our current Torah learning and also take on new subjects that we have yet to learn before. For it is when we study an area of Torah that is new to us that we derive the most pleasure.²⁹

LEARNING IN GROUPS

- In addition to each individual's commitment to maintaining that amount of Torah study required of him by Jewish Law, we must also strengthen and increase in group Torah learning as well.³⁰

- Besides each individual's personal commitments to Torah learning, we must also fulfill the teaching of the mishnah in *Pirke Avos* to "raise up many students"—that is by organizing classes to teach others, ideally in groups of ten or more.³¹

- As a way of bringing out a sense of urgency in the above matter, it would be good if everyone would let their rabbi know about his or her progress in establishing classes for group learning.³²

- Those who wish to do so may also send a written report of their accomplishments here to 770, the 'four cubits' of the Previous Rebbe. These letters will then

be taken to his holy resting-place and left there whereupon they will cause great pleasure on High.³²

CHITAS AND RAMBAM

At the behest of the Previous Rebbe and the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, it has become the widespread custom of Lubavitcher Chasidim to learn a fixed portion of the three volumes of Chumash (Five Books of Moses), Tehillim (Psalms) and Tanya (the Alter Rebbe's canonical text of Chabad Chasidic thought) each day. This daily learning is referred to by the acronym CHiTaS. More recently, the Rebbe has added that all Jews should learn each day a portion of Mishneh Torah by the Rambam (Maimonides.) - Editor.

- Shavuot is a propitious time for reaffirming and strengthening our commitment to the learning of *Chitas*.³³ This is emphasized even more so by the special connection between Shavuot and the three shepherds of the Jewish people, Moshe Rabeinu, David HaMelech and the Baal Shem Tov. Moshe received the Torah at Mount Sinai on Shavuot and David HaMelech and the Baal Shem Tov both passed away on Shavuot. Each of these three *tzadikim* are in turn connected with one of the three books of *Chitas*. *Chumash*—The Five Books of Moses. *Tehillim*—the psalms of David HaMelech. *Tanya*—the written scripture of Chasidic thought founded by the Baal Shem Tov.³⁴

- More than all other resolutions, we must strengthen our commitment to the learning of *Chitas*, an obligation that is incumbent upon every single Jew equally. And we must also learn the daily portion of the *Rambam*, as it has now become the widely-held practice to learn three chapters—or another fixed amount—of the *Rambam's Mishneh Torah* each day.³⁵

- If by learning three chapters of *Mishneh Torah*, it will not be possible to retain proper concentration the entire time one should nonetheless continue to do so

28. *Ibid.* p. 281.

29. *Ibid.* pp. 280-1.

30. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuot 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 274-5).*

31. *Ibid.* p. 275.

32. *Ibid.* p. 277.

33. *Ibid.* p. 292.

34. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuot 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 281).*

35. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuot 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 274).*

and then take one *halacha* or more to learn carefully and in depth.³⁶

- Besides just being diligent to keep up with the daily *Chitas* and being more energetic and lively about this learning, we should also improve our understanding and comprehension therein, taking care to apply our intellectual faculties to understand and comprehend the *Chitas* we learn.³⁷
- Even those, who for whatever reason, are not particular to learn *Chitas* and even those who never even knew about *Chitas* and its great importance, should also begin learning *Chitas* everyday starting this Shavuos.³⁸

Women and Children

WOMEN PREPARE TO RECEIVE THE TORAH

- Women must also specially prepare for the Giving of the Torah. It is therefore proper that they should make women's gatherings for this purpose of readying themselves for Shavuos.³⁹
- The importance of preparing for Shavuos takes on even greater emphasis for women than it does for men. For indeed, G-d instructed Moshe to prepare the Jewish people at Mount Sinai by speaking with the women first and then afterwards the men.³⁹

TEACHING OTHERS

- Organizing group Torah learning is relevant to all Jews —men and women alike. For the obligation to learn Torah is also relevant to women, as they are obligated to study the practical laws of those mitzvos which are commanded to them. Consequently, this must also include the learning of Chassidus, for this strengthens one's belief in G-d and the love and fear of Him, all of which are mitzvos incumbent upon everyone at all times.⁴⁰
- Each woman should make an effort to organize classes at which she can teach other women,⁴¹ ideally

ten women. For although the quorum of ten applying to prayer includes only adult men, nonetheless, there is still a concept of assembling groups of ten women or of ten children since the very number ten has special significance. 'The tenth shall be holy,' the ten *sefiros* and so forth."⁴²

- Every little boy and girl should also strive to set up classes where they will teach Torah to other children. Since it is the nature of a child to love to tell other children what to do, this nature should be capitalized for the teaching of Torah.⁴³

TORAH OHR⁴⁴

- We should publicize the fact that learning the discourse "*B'Chodesh HaShlishi*" in *Torah Ohr* on Rosh Chodesh is one that should be adopted in all places. And we must emphasize that this is something relevant to every single Jew —man, woman and child —for this discourse can be taught and explained to all Jews, each individual in a manner appropriate to his or her level.⁴⁵

CHILDREN AND READING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- In all places,⁴⁶ all Jewish children —boys, girls⁴⁷ and even infants⁴⁸ — should be brought to the synagogue to hear the public reading of the Ten Commandments on Shavuos.⁴⁹

The great importance of receiving the Torah should be explained to children. They should be told that this is something for which we Jews must prepare, for although G-d chooses to give the Torah of His own generosity, nonetheless, He wants that the Jewish people should do their part and make themselves ready to accept the Torah.⁵⁰

how this affects the women themselves, and the women's effect that they have on the rest of the family."

42. *Ibid.* See also footnote 97 there.

43. *Ibid.* p. 276.

44. See "Learning," Last Entry .

45. *Sichas Rosh Chodesh Sivan, Evening after 3 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyosp. 380)*. "For the Torah was given to all of the Jews, including small children."

46. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5751 (Hisva'aduyosp. 241)*.

47. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5750 (Hisva'aduyosp. 216)*.

48. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5751 (Hisva'aduyosp. 241)*.

49. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5748 (Hisva'aduyosp. 353)*.

50. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5750 (Hisva'aduyosp. 252)*.

36. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuos 5749 (Hisva'aduyosp. 296)*.

37. *Ibid.* p. 270.

38. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuos 5750 (Hisva'aduyosp. 291)*.

39. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 5 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyosp. 410)*.

40. *Sichas Second Day of Shavuos 5750 (Hisva'aduyosp. 275)*.

41. *Ibid.*: "Jewish women have already become accustomed in previous generations, and especially in this generation, to gather together and learn Torah. We see clearly the great success yielded by these groups —both in