

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

PARSHAS SHEKALIM

PURIM



PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's Sichos pertaining to Parshas Shekalim and Purim.

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of Hora'os ("directives") culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources ("Muga" and "Bilti Muga"); we have expended great effort in our attempt to capture some of the Rebbe's carefully calculated and instructive phrasing. This edition's English translation was provided 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 this take place completely and immediately!

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a CALL to ACTION

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Parshas Shekalim

INTRODUCTION

Our Sages instituted four special Torah readings for the month of Adar.¹ During a leap-year, when the month of Adar is repeated, these portions are read during the *second* Adar (“Adar Sheini”).

The first reading is “Parshas Shekalim,” which comes to commemorate the annual monetary donations (the “Shekalim”) that the Jewish people were commanded to donate towards the communal sacrifices. The annual reminder to donate Shekalim was issued on the 1st of Adar – thirty days before the new cycle of communal sacrifices began, on the 1st of Nissan. We therefore read the relevant Torah portion on the closest Shabbos to the 1st of Adar.

More recently, this Parshah has assumed additional significance: The last address that we thus far merited to hear from the Rebbe was the Farbrengen of Parshas Vayakhel-Shekalim. There, he explained that the theme of Shekalim – especially during Exile, when the Beis HaMikdash has yet to be rebuilt and the communal sacrifices renewed – is giving Tzedakah.

This message is all the more pressing at the present time, when we are expected to do all we can to bring the complete Redemption; for our Sages tell us: Great is Tzedakah, for it hastens the Redemption.

1. [They are: 1) “Parshas **Shekalim**”; recalling the half-shekel coin that every Jew donated annually for the sake of purchasing the coming year’s communal sacrifices. A reminder was issued on Rosh Chodesh Adar. 2) “Parshas **Zachor**” (lit., “remember”); recalling our obligation to eradicate the descendants of Amalek. This is read before Purim, when we celebrate the downfall of Haman, an Amalekite. 3) “Parshas **Parah**” (lit., “cow”); the Parah Adumah (red heifer) is necessary for ritual purification. This reading comes before the month of Nissan, for only the ritually-pure may partake of the Pesach sacrifice. 4) “Parshas **HaChodesh**” (lit., “the month”); read on or just before Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the “Head of all months,” it details the laws of the Pesach sacrifice.]

MORE TZEDAKAH

- We should implement the lesson of Parshas Shekalim – to give more Tzedakah.²

MONEY FOR YOUR SOULS

- There are various levels within the Mitzvah of Tzedakah, e.g., merely giving the required tenth [of our earnings], the charitable fifth, or even more – in the spirit of the verse, “All that one has, he would give for his soul!”³ After all, the Shekalim were donated towards the purchase of sacrifices that brought “atonement to your souls.”⁴

HOW TO GIVE TZEDAKAH

- Parshas Shekalim even provides us with a lesson regarding our *manner* of donation:⁵

2. Parshas Tzedakah

As our Sages explain in numerous places, *donating Shekalim is the concept of Tzedakah* ... This is especially true in the current era, when the actual donation of Shekalim [to the Temple] no longer applies – instead, the very concept of “Shekalim” has become that of Tzedakah.

As is known, it is our custom that “before Purim, we give [to Tzedakah] a coin that is a ‘half’ of the established currency in our present location and era [e.g., a half-dollar coin in America]. This is to recall the half-shekel that used to be donated in the month of Adar [while the Temple existed].” Now, this custom is *literally* Tzedakah. (Parshas Mishpatim / Shekalim 5751; Hisva’aduyos p.278-279)

3. From an edited segment of Sichas Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752 (Sefer Sichos p.441) – the last Sichah edited by the Rebbe.

4. Sacrifice your money

... This instruction [to give Tzedakah] is specifically derived from the donating of Shekalim, the purpose of which was to cover the expenses of offering sacrifices “*to atone for your souls.*” It is understood that the instruction should reflect its source of derivation: We should give Tzedakah in the spirit of the verse, “*All that one has, he would give for his soul!*” (Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752; Sichos Kodosh p.805)

5. [On this occasion, the Rebbe distributed Mashkeh and Reb Levik’s Nigun was sung, indicating the close of the Farbrengen. Then, unexpectedly, the Rebbe delivered another (4th) Sichah.]

Tzedakah with Mesiras Nefesh

Since it is currently Parshas Shekalim, the practical lesson that we should derive from this Shabbos is to increase in giving Tzedakah. Moreover, we should give Tzedakah in the same manner that sacrifices are to be offered – “One who offers from *yourself* a sacrifice to Hashem,” in accordance with the explanation of the Alter Rebbe on this verse. (This is a concept similar to “Our lips will take the

The half-shekel was donated in order to fund the communal sacrifices. Concerning this, there is a well-known teaching of the Alter Rebbe that is based on the literal reading of the verse, “One who offers from *yourselves* a sacrifice to Hashem.” He explained that in order to draw closer to Hashem [the Hebrew “Yakriv” (“offer”), also means to “draw close”], one must offer *himself*, his entire being, to Hashem. We should take a practical lesson from this teaching:

We should put all ten powers of our soul into giving Tzedakah and performing acts of kindness – so that in addition to the action, we should also *think* and *speak* about Ahavas Yisrael.⁶

TZEDAKAH RESOLUTIONS

- On Shabbos Shekalim, *during* Shabbos itself, we should make resolutions regarding giving Tzedakah.

BE SPECIFIC

- Our resolutions should include precise details.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

- We should make novel commitments that demand greater energy.⁷

place of [the sacrifice of] bulls.” [I.e., in Exile, our prayers accomplish what Temple sacrifices would have accomplished.] (Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.804)

6. Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.441.

Ahavas Yisrael – think, say and do

Regarding thought: We should work on ourselves so that all of our thoughts throughout the entire day should be permeated with – and *only* with – Ahavas Yisrael, love for our fellow Jews.

Regarding speech: As per the ruling of the Alter Rebbe that “It is fitting to *say* [each morning] before prayers, “Hareini Mekabel, etc.,” “I hereby accept upon myself the positive commandment to ‘Love your fellow Jew as yourself.’” This commitment is specifically to be stated verbally. (Needless to say, this also includes having in mind the implication of our declaration – at least of its most basic meaning...)

Regarding action – which is the *main* thing: “All that a person has, he would give for his soul!” (Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.805)

7. **Imitate Hashem’s Tzedakah**

The main thing is for us to immediately make positive resolutions regarding all

START NOW – PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

- We should begin implementing these resolutions while it is yet Shabbos; both physically, by providing food and drink to fellow Jews, and spiritually, by proffering sound advice or studying Torah with them⁸ and the like.⁹

that we have discussed, and we should specifically make resolutions that contain precise details – brand new resolutions, demanding novel energies. After all, the existence of all Creation, including each and every Jew, is created anew each moment in an entirely and literally innovative manner... [And Hashem’s constant creation of all that exists is absolute, and *perpetual*, Tzedakah on His part. Our own Tzedakah should reflect this fact:]

We could readily appreciate that our resolutions regarding giving Tzedakah should likewise be in an entirely innovative manner.

Extend free-loans

This includes the aspects of Tzedakah that share the description of “Gemilas Chasadim” [lit., “kind deeds”; when abbreviated as “GeMaCH,” the term is synonymous with money loaning]. In fact, “Gemilas Chasadim” is even superior to the ordinary distribution of Tzedakah – as we have discussed many times. (Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.805-806)

8. **Purim and Shekalim**

The essential theme of Shabbos Parshas Shekalim and Shabbos Mevarchim Adar [the Shabbos prior Rosh Chodesh Adar] – is *Purim*. And Purim is closely associated with giving Tzedakah: Out of Purim’s four Mitzvos, one of them is Mishloach Manos, sending food-portions to our fellow Jews, and another is Ma’atanos LaEvyonim, distribution monetary gifts to the poor.

Physical and spiritual

Each of us should push themselves to give more Tzedakah – both physically, sharing physical money and physical food and drink and the like, and also spiritually, offering sound advice, studying Torah with others and so on.

Chassidus – central gem in the King’s crown

Further, and most importantly, we should concern ourselves with utilizing Hashem’s Tzedakah, which includes His revealing to us the inner dimensions of His Torah – the inner dimension of the Torah being, after all, the “precious gem that forms the centerpiece of the Crown of the King of all Kings”...

Study and teach Chassidus

In other words: In addition to our increase in general Torah study, we should increase our study of the inner dimensions of the Torah that are clearly explained in the teachings of Chassidus – or more precisely, in the teachings of *Chabad* Chassidus. These teachings facilitate proper comprehension of the Torah’s inner dimensions, to the extent that the subject matter penetrates to the very core of the person studying it – and even serves to unite him with the innermost dimension of the Torah.

In addition to our personal study, we should also inspire others to study the inner dimension of Torah, i.e., the teachings of Chassidus. Better yet, we should actually go and study with them ourselves... (Parshas Mishpatim / Shekalim 5751;

PUR!M

THE ETERNAL FESTIVAL

Our Sages tell us that the festival of Purim will never be “nullified” – not even in the future era of Redemption, when all other festivals *will* be “nullified.”

Chassidus explains that since the Torah and its commandments are eternal, *all* festivals will continue to be observed in the future. However, the spiritual luminance that now accompanies each festival will then seem greatly diminished (“nullified”) before the intense G-dly revelations of that era.

Purim, conversely, generates spiritual revelation of such magnitude that its light and joy will stand out even among the revelations of the future.

The Megilah states (9:27), “Ki’mu VeKibelu HaYehudim” (קִיְמוּ וְקִבְלוּ הַיְהוּדִים) – “The Jews *established* and *accepted* upon themselves and upon their descendants” to annually observe Purim. Surely “established” and “accepted” is a needless repetition? Rather, our Sages explain, in the times of Mordechai and Esther, the Jews firmly “established” their loyalty to the Torah and its laws – which they had previously merely “accepted” at Sinai:

At the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the Jews accepted the Torah on a background of astonishing miracles, a display of overwhelming Divine love and the ultimate revelation of G-dliness known to history. No wonder they “agreed” to accept the Torah!

Conversely, “in the days of Achashveirosh,” all the Jews – for the first time – willingly faced *total annihilation*

Hisva’aduyos p.287)

9. Parshas Vayakhel / Shekalim 5752 – Sichos Kodesh p.441.

for continuing to observe the Torah with all its laws. If they preferred to save their physical lives, “all” they had to do was abandon Judaism, G-d forbid. By choosing physical death over spiritual demise, they confirmed, re-established and demonstrated – for the *entire year* during which the peril lasted – their total commitment to the Torah.

That, in a way, was a greater demonstration of acceptance than at the Giving of the Torah at Sinai (See footnote 13).

The result of this self-sacrifice for the Torah was the miracle of Purim and its intense G-dly revelation. Further, as stated in the Megilah (9:28), HaYamim HaEileh Nizkarim VeNa’asim (הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה נִזְכָּרִים וְנֶאֱסָמִים) – “These days are commemorated and celebrated in each generation, by each family, in each province and city” – meaning that our appropriate observance of Purim elicits the spiritual influences that were then manifested, and they radiate anew each year. In fact, due to Jewry’s perpetual progression in divine service, *superior* levels of Purim’s light are revealed annually.

PROPER STUDY OF PURIM LAWS AND INNER MEANING

- We should thoroughly study the laws and the Chassidic discourses concerning Purim¹⁰ – so that we fully comprehend the

10. **Within a wall or without**

[The first Mishnah in tractate Megilah states that the inhabitants of cities that were fortified with a wall during the era of Yehoshua (who first led the Jews into Eretz Yisrael) read the Megilah on the 15th of Adar. In unwalled cities, large towns and villages, it is read on the 14th of Adar. This law reflects the miracle of Purim, where the Jews of Shushan (a “walled” city) were given an extra day to eradicate their enemies. The Rebbe explains the spiritual significance of the law.]

Familiarity with royalty

This is the content of our Purim service, in ascending order:

At the outset of our service, we find ourselves spiritually in “unwalled cities,” i.e., a state of relative spiritual “poverty” – this state is represented by the [“lesser” date, the] *14th* of Adar ... We may then be compared to “a *villager* who beholds the king” [who, being unaccustomed to such “revelations,” is thoroughly overwhelmed], similar to the celestial vision that was seen by the Prophet

material and take it to heart, thus influencing both our study and our actions.¹¹

HIGH PROFILE PURIM CAMPAIGN – REACH ALL JEWS

- We should gather all Jewry, including Jews from the most farflung corners of the globe.¹² We should create a “Ra’ash DeKedushah,” a holy “storm,” and “Ah Moradiken Shturem,” an awesome commotion concerning all aspects of Purim – so that all Jews will be able to fully observe Purim, with all that it entails.
- Needless to say, we should conduct this campaign in a pleasant and peaceful manner, amid love for our fellow Jews and

Yechezkel [who was tremendously excited by the revelation].

Following that, we ascend to the spiritual level of a “walled city,” i.e., a state of spiritual “affluence” – this is represented by the *15th* of Adar ... We are then compared to a dweller of the royal capital who beholds the king [and being more familiar with royalty, is not completely overawed], similar to the [same] celestial vision that was seen by Yeshayah [but, being more familiar with those Heavenly realms, took it in his stride].

Touring the Heavenly capital

... The instruction we are to take from this – as it pertains to the divine service of each Jew – concerns the study of Chassidus:

Chassidus speaks of the sublime Sefiros and similar topics, through which we literally fulfill the instruction to “Know the G-d of your fathers.” In truth, we are all really “dwellers of the royal capital who behold the King” – so that when discussing topics such as the Ten Sefiros [Divine Attributes] (and not only those of the [lowest] world of Asiyah, but even the Ten Sefiros [of the highest world] of *Atzilus*), we should not feel it to be an overly unique or unfamiliar discussion.

[Having attained this familiarity with the Heaven capital] we need not make any great fuss over discussing such topics; we can save our excitement for other matters... Certainly, a Jew should be excited about G-dliness – after all, that is a fundamental requirement of divine service; however, our excitement should be directed towards what *transcends* Atzilus... (Motzei Shushan Purim 5749, p. 462-463)

11. Know the law

It is now the second month of Adar, less than two weeks before Purim. We should make all of the proper preparations for Purim – including studying all the laws of Purim... (Parshas Pikudei 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 410)

12. Reach each of the King’s subjects

[To paraphrase the Megilah:] “Gather all the Jews,” “who are in all the countries of the king,” i.e., [in this case, all the Jews in the kingdom of] the King of the Universe – both those who are “near and distant”... (Parshas Vayakhel, Shabbos Mevarchim Adar II 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 387)

with great joy.¹³

- In order to accomplish this, we should prepare well in advance – starting with Shabbos Mevarchim Adar.¹⁴

PROVIDE EVERY JEW WITH ALL PURIM MITZVOS

- We should ensure that every Jew, in even the far ends of the globe – in the physical and/or spiritual sense – will have everything necessary to fulfill all the Mitzvos of Purim:

Hearing the Megilah reading (Mikrah Megilah); sending food portions to a fellow Jew (Mishlo'ach Manos); distributing charity to paupers (Ma'atanos LaEvyonim); enjoying a festive meal (Se'udas Purim); rejoicing on Purim (Simchas Purim) and so on.¹⁵

EREV PURIM NEEDS

- We should also ensure that all have whatever is necessary for their Purim *preparations* – such as the customary Erev Purim donation to Tzedakah of “Machatzis HaShekel” (three half-shekalim)¹⁶ [explained below].¹⁷

13. Great joy like Matan Torah

... Just like the great joy that was experienced at the Giving of the Torah [See below, Intro. to Purim] – where, together with the whole commotion that caused “fear, awe, trembling and perspiration,” there was also the fact that Hashem “suspended the mountain above [and around] them.”

[Seemingly, this means that Hashem “forced” the Jews to accept the Torah by threatening to drop the mountain on them. However, Chassidus understands this as a parable, meaning that He “forced” them to accept the Torah] via a revelation of Ahavah Rabah, immense love, which encompassed their entire being [giving them “no other choice”; the overpowering revelation of G-dliness caused them to be drawn to the Torah with irresistible love and devotion].

Obviously, then, the Giving of the Torah was accompanied with *great joy*... (Ibid., footnote 105)

- 14. ... And certainly from Rosh Chodesh Adar *Sheni* [during a leap-year]. (Ibid.)
- 15. Parshas Pekudei 5749, *ibid.*, p. 480.
- 16. [Three coins are given, as stated in Rema (Orah Chayim, beg. of 694).]

Why three?

There is a surprising fact concerning the custom to donate half-shekalim on Ta'anis Esther:

The half-shekel given by the Jews [in Temple times] during the month of Adar, and which was donated to provide for the communal sacrifices whose annual cycle

PROMOTE TZEDAKAH

- We should make a point of promoting the giving of Tzedakah in general. After all, Tzedakah is the theme of many of the Mitzvos of Purim [i.e., distributing food portions and charity].
- We should increase in giving Tzedakah throughout the month of Adar.¹⁸

would begin again on the 1st of Nissan, consisted of just one solitary half-shekel coin. Nevertheless, we have the custom to donate *three* such coins on Ta'anis Esther!

[In explanation:] It is possible that the three half-shekalim donated on Ta'anis Esther also commemorate the *three days of fasting* that were decreed by Queen Esther; as stated in the Megilah, "Fast for *three* days on my behalf."

This explanation comes in addition to our desire to attain the superiority of a Chazakah [lit., "[legal] strength"; something that is done three times consecutively is becomes a presumed fact]. By performing this act [of giving half-shekalim] three times, we add "[legal] strength" to the concept of "they established (in the times of Mordechai) that which they had previously accepted (at Sinai)" [See Intro. to Purim, below] (Ta'anis Ester 5749; Hisva'aduyos p. 439-440)

Food for three

We could suggest that there is an allusion to the three days of fasting [mentioned in the Megilah] in the one day fast of Ta'anis Esther that we currently observe – that is, our custom to donate *three* half-shekalim:

It is mentioned in Kaf HaChayim, Orach Chayim 566 and 115, and elsewhere, that we should donate the equivalent of a meal to charity on the day of a fast. Accordingly, the *three* half-shekalim that we give to Tzedakah are a result [and represent the meals] of *three* fast-days. (Motzei Shushan Purim 5749; Hisva'aduyos p. 460)

We do not fast to save money!

One of the reasons for this practice is that it is not fitting for the money saved via our abstaining from food and drink on the fast day to remain in our wallets and subsequently be spent on mundane matters... True, we are dealing with the mundane affairs of a *Jew*, which are undoubtedly in full accord with the Torah and so on – yet that simply cannot begin to compare to the superiority of being spent on Tzedakah... (Ibid., footnote 35)

17. Parshas Vayakhel 5749, *ibid.*, footnote 106.
18. Parshas Pekudei 5749, *ibid.*, p. 410.

Purim in advance

We should begin the effort to supply all who are needy with their Purim requirements well in advance (certainly by Rosh Chodesh Adar, two weeks before Purim).

We should begin with those in our immediate proximity and continue to include even those found in distant locations – even reaching out to those in a remote corner of the globe. We should ensure that *all* Jews will be able to celebrate Purim

MACHATZIS HASHEKEL

- On Ta'anis Esther [the fast day immediately preceding Purim], it is customary to donate three coins that are halves in the local (current) currency [e.g., a half-dollar in America].¹⁹

FOR EACH MEMBER OF HOUSHOLD

- This practice, known as “Machatzis HaShekel,” commemorates the half-shekel that all Jews donated [to the Temple] annually, in the month of Adar. The widespread custom is for the head of a household to give additional Machatzis HaShekel on behalf of each member of his household.¹⁹

NOTE:

The following instruction was the last (new) directive that we merited to receive from the Rebbe.

TRAIN CHILDREN IN MACHATZIS HASHEKEL

- It would be a very good and fitting practice to train our young children in the donation of Machatzis HaShekel, by having them donate from their “own” money; their parents should aid them, ensuring that they have plenty to give – and even enough surplus for their other “needs.” After all, we do not want to cause them any sort of financial “loss” by having them

in the proper manner and with “light, gladness, rejoicing and honor” – in the literal sense ... and in a manner of “feasting and rejoicing” (Mishteh VeSimchah) – even attaining an unlimited degree of joy.

A poor Jew?!

Hashem repays us “Midah Keneged Midah” [in direct commensuration with our efforts and deeds], and His reciprocation is in fact *many times more* than our input. When we strive to provide the needy with their Purim requirements, Hashem [likewise] increases by providing His blessings – with vast abundance – to each and every Jew, during these two weeks before Purim – to the extent that we will need to really *search* for a destitute Jew in order to fulfill the Mitzvah of Ma'atanos LaEvyonim (donations to the poor) on Purim... We can readily appreciate the great joy that each Jew will then have, this coming Purim. (Parshas Mishpatim 5750; Hisva'aduyos p. 317-318)

There is room for research to clarify how exactly we will be able to fulfill the Mitzvah of Ma'atanos LaEvyonim [when Moshiach comes – for his arrival will bring about] the fulfillment of the Torah's tiding that “there will not be a destitute person among you.” (Ibid., footnote 114)

19. Ta'anis Esther 5749; Hisva'aduyos, p. 439.

observe this annual custom...²⁰

PURIM OBJECTIVE: REACH EVERY JEW

- We should begin – and indeed, *complete* – the necessary preparations for conducting the worldwide “Purim Campaign.”
- This campaign should not leave out even a solitary Jew in the furthest spot on earth. Rather, it should embrace all Jews – or as the Megilah puts it, “From their greatest to their smallest” and “from youth to elderly, [both] infants and women.”²¹

INVOLVE CHILDREN IN PURIM MITZVOS

- We should utilize Purim to further our children’s education and have them participate in the Mitzvos of Purim – by sending Mishlo’ach Manos through them and other such activities.²²

After all, it was specifically via the Jewish *children* that Haman’s decree of annihilation was annulled.²³

20. 24th Adar I 5752; Sichos Kodesh, p. 788.

21. **Inspire full observance**

... Our campaign should yield results that continue throughout the rest of the year; in the spirit of “the Jews [then] established that which they had [only formally] accepted beforehand” – accompanied by a complete state of divine service, Torah and Mitzvos. [See below, Intro. to Purim.] (Parshas Terumah 5751; Hisva’aduyos p. 310-311)

22. **Stoning Haman**

See Avudraham, Tefilas Purim: It is customary for children to take smooth stones upon which they inscribe the name “Haman.” Then, when the one reading the Megilah reaches Haman’s name, they bang the stones against each other to erase the name [written upon the stones]. (Ta’anis Esther and Purim 5748; Hisva’aduyos p. 410, footnote 114)

23. *Ibid.*, p. 410.

Bedrock of Jewry

[Haman said, “I will begin [my campaign against the Jews] by striking at these children” (Midrash Rabah 7:13). In order to carry out his wicked designs to destroy the Jewish people, Heaven forbid, he specifically choose to begin by attacking “Tinokos Shel Beis Raban,” the very young children who study Torah – for these children are the foundation of the Jewish people.

Indestructible bond with Torah

The Midrash further (9:4) relates that Mordechai gathered together 22,000 children to study Torah. When they were approached by the wicked tyrant Haman, they felt no fear whatsoever – but rather declared that “whether [their fate be] life or death,” they would remain bound to the Torah. They were willing to accept any punishment, to the point of ultimate self-sacrifice, so long as they would not be

KIDS PROGRAM

- In addition to having children participate in our (adult) Purim activities, we should also ensure that they have their *own* Purim activities that are especially geared for their needs. This way, the adults' celebration of Purim will be also be greatly enhanced...²⁴

KIDS: BANGING AT HAMAN AND DRESSING UP

- Not only is it customary to involve the children in all aspects of Purim – but in certain aspects, the *primary* commotion is accomplished by children. For example, it is mainly children who bang at the mention of Haman's name [during the Megilah reading], and swing “Graggers” or other noisemaking devices.²⁵
- The same applies to wearing masks and costumes on Purim – for the purpose of which the Shulchan Aruch made certain

separated from the Holy Torah.

Children soldiers

On this basis, we can understand the verse, “Out of the mouths of babies and nursing infants, You established strength... to silence the enemy and avenger” (Tehilim 8:3). On the surface, the verse is problematic: Combating an enemy, and certainly one who seeks revenge, requires men of great strength and courage who are trained in the tactics of war.

However, it is written, “‘Not by might, nor by power – but with My spirit,’ says the L-rd of Hosts.” [“My spirit”] refers to the Divine Name “Havayah” that is revealed within each member of Jewry. Thus it is specifically “from the mouths of babies and nursing infants,” i.e., from the [pure] breath of “Tinokos Shel Beis Raban,” the very young children who sit and study Torah, that “You established strength” – for “There is no strength other than Torah.” And it is precisely this strength that can negate an enemy, and even an avenger. (Adapted from *Defiance and Devotion* by Sichos In English, based on VeKibel HaYehudim, Purim Katan 5687 (1927), by the Previous Rebbe.)]

24. Parshas Terumah 5751; Hisva'aduyos p. 310, footnote 118.

25. Ta'anis Esther 5748; Hisva'aduyos p. 438.

Studying the Megilah

... Hearing the Megilah reading also constitutes Torah study. Moreover, it is considered studying in a *comprehensible* manner. This is clear from the fact that we specifically make a noise by booing and stamping our feet and the like at the mention of “Haman” [i.e., our precision indicates an awareness of the Megilah's meaning].

This is certainly so according to the Chabad custom to limit the banging to those instances where Haman's name is mentioned along with an appended title – which reflects on “Haman” as he is manifested in this world. (Roshei Devarim, Parshas Yisro 5751)

“concessions” (see end of footnote 31); this, as well, is primarily performed by children.²⁶

ADULTS: SPIRITUAL/PHYSICAL BANGING

- Adults, both men and women, perform the traditional “banging” at the mention of Haman’s name mainly within the realms of thought or speech.
- Some also participate in the *active* commotion – as we saw when the Megilah was read in the presence of the Previous Rebbe, who would bang and stamp his feet whenever he heard the name of Haman that was accompanied by a title (e.g., “Haman HaAgagi” or “Haman HaRashah” and so on).²⁵

THREE FARBRENGENS

- In order to give the joy of Purim the [legal] strength of a “Chazakah,”²⁷ it would be fitting to arrange (at least) three Farbrengens on Purim²⁸ – excluding the festive Purim meal.²⁹

26. Ta’anis Esther 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 439.

Purim crowns

During Purim ... it is customary for young children to wear “crowns” – may they be blessed. (Parshas Vayikra 5748; Hisva’aduyos p. 484)

27. [In Jewish Law, something that is repeated three times is considered a presumed “fact.”]

28. **Farbrengens**

... This is not limited to the festive Purim meal – which is necessarily restricted to a particular time, and concerning which Rambam rules that “we are obligated to eat meat during this meal” (and not to only drink wine). Rather, this also applies to the Farbrengens that are held within the twenty-four hours of Purim. (Parshas Tetzaveh, Shabbos Zachor 5750; Hisva’aduyos p. 372)

29. **Birthdays and more**

... So as to continue this rejoicing throughout the coming year – our joy stemming from Torah and Mitzvos, as well as Chassidishe Farbrengens held on numerous joyous occasions (not merely at an engagement, wedding, Bris, Pidyon HaBen and so on – for that would be stating the obvious – but rather, also on birthdays and the like).

Positive results

The immense positive influence of a Chassidishe Farbengen that is held amidst Ahavas Yisrael and Achdus Yisrael, is well known ...

Further, it results in positive resolutions concerning all matters of Torah and Mitzvos (and the beginning of their actual implementation during the actual Farbengen itself). (Parshas Tetzaveh, Erev Purim, and Motzei Purim, 5750; Hisva’aduyos p. 368)

STRUCTURED UNRESTRAINT

- We should farbreng with unbridled joy (“Ad DeLo Yadah” –see footnote). At the same time, we should retain those restrictions that must be in place, as required by Chassidus and so on.³⁰ This extends to all Jewry, and is especially true for students.³¹

A distraction?!

This is also the response to the person who wrote [to the Rebbe in complaint] concerning the plethora of Farbrengens. He wrote that since we are being asked to hold Farbrengens on birthdays and the like, in addition to the Farbrengens on other special occasions – then when will there be time to study Torah...?! He added, in his letter, that he had spoken about this matter with elder Chassidim and Mashpi'im – and that they agreed with him that there was room for such “concern”...

Many and lively

... Practically speaking, we should seek many opportunities to hold Farbrengens, including, and especially, on birthdays. ... And most importantly: The three Purim Farbrengens, as well as all other Farbrengens, should specifically be held with energy and enthusiasm – as opposed to Kerirus, “frigidly,” [i.e., uninspired passive indifference]... (Ibid., p. 372)

30. Not more than four

[The Rebbe is referring to his “Gezeirah” (enactment), according to which anyone under the age of forty should not take more than four small shot-glasses of strong drink – and even then, provided that four shot-glasses will not “go to his head.” Occasionally, the Rebbe would request a specific individual to fulfill the “obligation” to drink excessively on “behalf” of all present.]

31. You know...

There is no need to elaborate, since these matters are well known, well publicized, and have been published. (Parshas Tetzaveh, Parshas Zachor 5750; Hisva'adyos p. 372)

Literal Ad DeLo Yadah

See also Purim 5849 [the year **prior** to the above quote] (Hisva'adyos p. 454): ... We should experience unbridled joy [as our Sages state, “On Purim, one is obligated to drink wine *until he can no longer distinguish* (Ad DeLo Yadah) between ‘Cursed is Haman’ and ‘Blessed is Mordechai’”]. And not merely like those who fulfill their obligation of “Ad DeLo Yadah” via sleeping [on Purim, thereby attaining a state where they cannot make the above rational distinction] – as it is indeed written in Shulchan Aruch... Rather, we should seek to fulfill the instruction “to drink ... Ad DeLo Yadah” in the *literal* sense – without seeking legal loopholes (Heterim) and compromises (Pesharos) and the like.

[Although in this case, it is not really a “compromise,” since it is a clear ruling in Shulchan Aruch... (Ibid., footnote 13)]

Fortunate is the portion and great is the merit [of he who fulfills this obligation in its literal sense]! May others see him [doing so] and follow his example!

AHAVAS YISRAEL

- In keeping with the theme of the Mitzvos of Purim, we should increase love and unity between fellow Jews; with this, we nullify the cause for Exile, and bring the Redemption.³²

Don't worry

Moreover, we are guaranteed that nothing undesirable will come from doing so – since we find [a distinction between Purim and other festivals:] Concerning all other festivals, “The Jewish Court is obligated to appoint patrolmen...” to ensure that the joy does not lead to undesirable consequences. Notably, there is *no* such requirement on Purim. Quite the opposite – many matters that are considered undesirable, and even prohibited, throughout the year, are *permitted* on Purim. For example, Remah rules that “There is no prohibited against following the custom to wear face masks on Purim, or for a man to wear women’s clothing [as a costume] and vice versa – since the one who does so has nothing but the joy [of Purim] in mind.”

See also Roshei Devarim, 3rd day of Selichos 5751.

32. 16th Adar 5750, at a Yechidus; Hisva’aduyos p. 394.

Jewish unity, G-dly unity

The main innovation of Purim is that, even while we are in a state of “diversity and separation” (Pizur U’Pirud), nevertheless, through achieving unity among Jews, we so-to-speak achieve and reveal the true unity of Hashem [in Creation].

Scattered and separated

For that reason, this matter is also emphasized in the episode of Purim: It is widely explained that the Haman’s decree of annihilation came about due to the claim [not only by Haman to Achashveirosh, but more importantly, by the prosecution angel on High] that the Jews were *separated* [i.e., disunited], and were [to quote the Megilah] “scattered and separated (Mefuzar U’Meforad) amongst the nations.”

United and caring

[The Jewish response is] therefore, [as reflected in] the theme of the Mitzvos of Purim – *Jewish unity*, beginning with Mishlo’ach Manos (exchange of food portions) and Ma’atanos LaEvyonim (gifts to the poor), which greatly emphasize Jewish unity, and which create a closeness and unity between donor and recipient.

A lonely feast is a fast

The same is true of [the remaining Mitzvos of Purim] Mishteh VeSimchah (feasting and gladness) and Mikrah Megilah (hearing the Megilah reading). Regarding feasting and gladness, Rambam states that, “There is no greater or more glorious joy than to cause the heart of the poor, the orphan, widow, convert and the like, to rejoice.” In other words, by our feasting and gladness on Purim [being shared with the poor], the unity with our poorer brethren is greatly underscored.

Seek a crowd

So too regarding the Megilah reading, where we are required to “seek ten people” [to attend the reading – although the Megilah could just as well be read with less]. Further, not only should we seek *ten* people – but we should seek to gather a *large crowd* (Rov Am), to the extent that “we interrupt Torah study in order to read the

NOTE:

Although there is no requirement to perform the Mitzvos of Purim in a group, nevertheless, for the sake of hastening the Redemption, the Rebbe called for public displays of Jewish love and unity.³³

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE OF PURIM PRACTICES

- We should strongly promote in each and every location (even outside the Holy Land, and certainly within it), that all effort should be extended to ensure that – in addition to each person performing the Mitzvos of Purim individually – every aspect of Purim is performed with a large group of people (“BeRov Am”³⁴).³³

ALL PURIM MITZVOS

- Not only should we ensure the largest possible attendance for the reading of the Megilah (a requirement that is self-obvious), but – despite the lack of precedence in this regard – we should do the same for all of the *other* Mitzvos of Purim.³⁵
- We should do so with Mishloach Manos and Ma’atanos

Megilah” with a [large] congregation. (Parshas Vayikra 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 424)

33. Parshas Vayikra 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 425.

No lonely Jews

When you meet a Jew (to be more precise, not “when you *meet* a Jew,” but rather, “when you succeed in *actively seeking* to meet a fellow Jew...” as you should), then you should positively influence him regarding all matters of Torah and Mitzvos – and *certainly* concerning the observance of Purim. Try your utmost to ensure that every Jew fulfills all the Mitzvos of Purim, and in a manner of “BeRov Am,” amid a large gathering of Jews. (Ta’anis Esther 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 437)

34. [“BeRov Am Hadras Melech,” “The glory of a king is a multitude of subjects”; this is true of a physical monarch, and certainly of the Heavenly King – Whose glory is revealed through large numbers of Jews gathering to do His Will and honor Him.]

35. **Unite – bring the Geulah**

... The standard practice is for each person to perform these Mitzvos alone. Nevertheless, we want, and need, to bring this Exile (and our state of being “scattered amongst the nations”) to an end. This is accomplished through adding in Jewish unity. Therefore, it is extremely worthwhile and fitting that we strive to our fullest extent, to ensure that even these Mitzvos are performed in a large gathering of Jews. (Ibid., p. 245)

LaEvyonim – provided we do not compromise the dignity of the poor³⁶ – as well as with the festive Purim meal.³⁷

MOBILE MINYAN

- We should do our best to comply with the above directive – to the extent that when we hear of a single Jew in a farflung

36. Gabai or Pushkah

Concerning Ma'atanos LaEvyonim (donations to the poor), it is self-understood and evidently obvious that when donating in a large group, we must exercise utmost caution in safeguarding the dignity of the poor. This can be assured by having the group donate to a Gabai Tzedakah (charity trustee) or to a Tzedakah-box. Needless to say, this is all in addition to each person putting money into the Tzedakah-box in their individual homes – they [have no doubt] fixed such boxes [onto the walls of their homes] and [thereby] made it into an actual part of their house; [this is] especially [to be done] in kitchens. (Ibid., p. 425-426)

37. Contagious celebration

Concerning “feasting and gladness”: It is standard practice for each person to celebrate the festive Purim meal in their private home together with their family. Nevertheless, there is also a long-standing custom in various communities, to go from house to house in order to participate in, and add to, the festive meal and the Purim joy of their fellow Jews. (Ibid., p. 245)

Like Simchas Torah

There is a similar practice regarding the Hakafos (circuits) on Simchas Torah. The Alter Rebbe states (in his Siddur, before the order of Hakafos) that “although one may have already performed the Hakafos in his own synagogue, nevertheless, if he later goes to another synagogue where the congregation have *not* yet completed their Hakafos, he should sing and rejoice along with them.” (Ibid., footnote 102)

Open invitation

Obviously, one need not wait until his friend invites him home, nor even request permission to enter his friend’s house – rather, his friend will *certainly* be glad that he entered, and will *thank* him for coming to join in the joy of Purim, thus amplifying his own joy.

Moreover, the affect of the increased joy that this “visit” will bring will remain, and be recognizable, upon all members of that household – men, women and children – even *after* he leaves his friend’s house (to visit another home...). Further, the rewards of his visit will continue by spilling out into the street: even those who merely pass by his friend’s house (without entering it) will nevertheless be positively influenced by the palpable joy of a Purim meal that they can detect being held in that house. They too will be influenced by the extreme joy. This “visit” is akin to planting a seed, through which an entire plant sprouts – although in this case, it will not take much time for the “plant” to sprout, for the affect of such a visit is *immediate*.

Celebrate Purim with a large group

In addition to all this, we are able to *even further* increase the joy of Purim – after having held the Purim meal at home with the family – by celebrating it together with a large group. (Ibid., p. 432-433)

corner of the globe, we should try to bring him another nine Jews, so that even he will be able to perform his Purim obligations with a “congregation.” That is, of course, provided it is impossible to bring *him* to where a congregation is already located.³⁷

REFRESH COMMITMENT TO TORAH AND MITZVOS

- Most importantly, we should promote the central theme of Purim, as expressed in the verse, “The Jews established what they had already accepted [at Sinai]”; we should re-accept all matters of Torah and Mitzvos upon ourselves for the entire coming year, so that [like in the times of the Megilah] these activities will be permeated with faith and self-sacrifice. This should all be done with a spirit of *Achdus Yisrael* (Jewish unity).³⁸

INTEGRATE PURIM INTO SERVICE AND SELVES

- From the festival of Purim, we should draw additional strength and resilience in our Torah study³⁹ and in the service of prayer that *precedes* it – so that our performance is imbued with self-sacrifice and completely permeates even our physical bodies. Our toil in Torah should affect a literal change in our body and conduct.⁴⁰

38. Am Ehad

... So that it will be constantly engraved upon our memory in a manner that makes it impossible to forget or alter – and whereby it will have an actual affect and be expressed in practical divine service ... All this, amidst particular emphasis on love and unity between Jews, so that we bring *all* Jews to this state – not just a “large multitude,” but literally, the *entire* nation, so that we become “One Nation” in a clear and apparent manner. (Ibid., p. 246)

39. Unity in Torah

... Both the inner and “revealed” parts of Torah – and especially as they are studied together, creating one united Torah (i.e., uniting “Nishmasa DeUraisa,” the “soul” of Torah, with “Gufa DeUraisa,” the “body” of Torah).

We should literally increase in our Torah study, both in quantity and quality – “quality” meaning studying with novel enthusiasm and the like.

40. Kabalas HaTorah

It is now Purim, a time when “these days are recalled and performed,” and when the theme [of Purim that is encapsulated in the phrase] “Kimu VeKiblu HaYehudim,” the Jews [fully] established and accepted upon themselves [the

REVEAL YECHIDAH OF EVERY JEW

- In addition to nurturing our own spiritual service, we should strive to reveal the power for self-sacrifice [for Torah and Mitzvos], i.e., the Yechidah [essence of the soul], in other Jews as well.
- We should do so, despite the fact that our fellow Jews are to be found in the condition [described in the Megilah as] “scattered and dispersed amongst the [non-Jewish] nations” [i.e., assimilated].⁴¹

WOMAN AND GIRLS: UNITE THE NATION

- In particular, Jewish women and girls should take a lesson from Queen Esther. Like her, they should intensify – with extra effort and with self-sacrifice – their activities to arouse all Jewry to fulfill the directive [of Esther], “Gather all the Jews!” by promoting Jewish unity.⁴²

ADVANCE TORAH EDUCATION

- Jewish women should further strengthen their main mission –the education of Jewish boys and girls.⁴²

COMING YEAR: UNDER THE INFLUENCE

- We should make sure that the festival of Purim influences⁴³

Torah] which they had previously [merely] accepted at Sinai [see Intro.] is again implemented and renewed.

Therefore, from the festival of Purim, we should draw additional strength ... [See main text above for continuation]. (Ta’anis Esther and Purim 5748; Hisva’aduyos p. 408-409)

41. **The world and its nations**

... The influence of Purim should also be brought to bear in our divine service with the world surrounding us: To gather and unite all of the “sparks” of holiness that are “scattered and dispersed amongst the nations,” and to reveal the “Yechido Shel Olam,” the One G-d, within the actual nature of the world. This we should do in a similar manner to the Purim episode, i.e., whereby it became recognizable how the very workings of nature are carefully orchestrated by Hashem. Indeed, even the mindset of King Achashveirosh was transformed into a positive one ...

Purim also grants us the ability for our entire divine service today, regarding our efforts to influence the nations of the world to observe the Seven Noahide Laws. (Ibid.)

42. Ibid., p. 410.

43. **Real influence**

... With emphasis on the word “LeHashpi’ah,” to “influence” by providing actual

all the subsequent days – so that also they will become permeated with the unity, self-sacrifice and joy of Purim.⁴⁴ They should contain both the spiritual “light” as well as the physical “substance” of Purim.⁴⁵

SHUSHAN PURIM

- There are important cities that were surrounded with a wall [during the times of Yehoshua⁴⁶], and whose inhabitants celebrate Purim in full force on [the 15th of Adar, known as] Shushan Purim.
- The rest of the world is influenced by their spiritual service, and indeed, it holds relevance for each individual.⁴⁷

“substance” (“Shefah”) – and not merely to “illuminate.” After all, illumination has no tangible substance! Rather, Purim should be “Mashpiah” (actively influence) the subsequent days in the literal manner of “Shefah,” a tangible “flow.” (Ibid.)

44. 12 months of Purim

All aspects of Purim and particular the theme of joy are drawn into the entire year, so that they apply not only to the days of Purim, but rather, to the *entire* year. (Purim 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 450)

45. [To quote the Megilah] “These days of Purim will not pass from among the Jews, and the remembrance of them will not cease from their offspring.” (Ta’anis Esther and Purim 5748; Hisva’aduyos p. 410)

46. [According to Jewish Law, the inhabitants of a city that was surrounded by a wall when the Jews, led by Yehoshua, first entered the Land of Israel, celebrate Purim a day *after* regular cities; i.e., on the 15th of Adar, as opposed to the 14th. This is done to commemorate the extra day giving to the Jews of Shushan (a “walled” city) to eradicate their mortal enemies.]

47. Open cities and fortress towns

Note that there are also cities which celebrate *both* of days of Purim – the 14th and the 15th of Adar – as Purim [instead of Purim on the 14th and Shushan Purim on the 15th]. This occurs in those [ancient] cities where it is uncertain whether they were surrounded by a wall in the days of Yehoshuah.

Now, although in all [other] locations no such doubt exists, and Purim is celebrated on only *one* of these two days (either on the 14th [in a city where there was certainly *no* wall] or on the 15th [where there certainly *was* such a wall]). Nevertheless, as far as our spiritual service is concerned, the Jews in each and every location are required to perform *both* forms of spiritual service; both the service that pertains to a “walled city,” as well as the service represented by an “unwalled city.” (Purim 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 454)

In proximity to the King

... To be continued on *Shushan* Purim – which is relevant to all Jewish men, women and children:

The true place of each and every Jew is in “Shushan HaBirah” (“Shushan the

BEGIN PESACH DRIVE – MA’OS CHITIM

• Since “the needs of Your people are many” [i.e., there are many needy Jews], we should begin the extensive promotion and organization needed to supply Ma’os Chitim [the drive to provide Matzos (lit., “money for wheat”) and other Pesach requirements to the needy] well ahead of time.⁴⁸

ACCELERATE FROM PURIM TO PESACH

• We should busy ourselves with Ma’os Chitim immediately after Purim,⁴⁹ and then steadily increase our efforts at supplying all Pesach requirements.⁴⁸ We should increase our efforts with each passing day, the closer we get to Pesach.⁵⁰

מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח

◇

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת אברהם בן לאה שי' היימאן
והכלה דבורה בת יהודית שתחי' גרעלניק

לרגל בואם בקשרי השידוכין ח"י אדר ראשון תשס"ח

יה"ר שיהי' "בנין עדי עד" על יסודי התורה והמצות
חדודרים בשליחות העקרית לקבל פני משיח צדקינו בפועל
ממש

◇

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

Capital”), i.e., the “capital city” of the King of all kings – Hashem, the King of the Universe.

It is there that the soul of each Jew is to be found – and since “their souls are primary while their bodies are secondary,” our physical bodies (wherever we happen to be physically located) are *also* to be found in Shushan HaBirah. Hence, *all* Jewry are referred to as “The Jews who are in Shushan.” (16th of Adar 5750, at a Yechidus; Hisva’aduyos p. 396)

48. Motzei Shushan Purim 5749; Hisva’aduyos p. 464.

49. **Begin Pesach on Purim**

“Great is study since it leads to action!” ... “A Jewish custom is a veritable part of Torah” – we begin to donate [to Ma’os Chitim] a while before Pesach, beginning [at least] from “thirty days prior to the festival,” which means from [and including] Purim. (Ta’anis Esther and Purim 5748; Hisva’aduyos p. 411)

50. Erev Pesach 5750; Hisva’aduyos p. 51.