

a CALL to ACTION

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Foreword

This second edition of *a CALL to ACTION* is brought to publication in honor of the forthcoming month of *Nissan*, the first of two issues on the subject. Translated from *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, it is a collection of instruction from the Rebbe's *sichos*.

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

The month of *Nissan* is the epoch of redemption for our forefathers enslaved in the land of Egypt, and according to our sages, is a most opportune time for the final Redemption. 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.

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu Halkar

Erev Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan, 5761

The Month of Nissan

MONTH OF MIRACLES

- From the outset of the month of Nissan, the beginning of a New Year, every Jew must cry out to the world through his deeds – beyond quite literally crying out in speech¹ – that from now on he is going to conduct his daily life in a miraculous manner.²
- Simply put, everyone has goals that until now they have been hesitant to undertake, estimating that they are lacking the natural strength required, whether in Torah study, tzedakah, prayer or in conducting their daily life in a more holy manner. Now is the time for everyone to undertake these matters that, until now, they quite possibly did not have the strength to accomplish without the aide of a miracle.³
- In the spirit of the great precept of Torah – "Love your fellow as yourself" – not only should we take on new resolutions for ourselves, but also, we must encourage other Jews to do so as well.⁴

1. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Tazria 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 528)* See p. 533 *Ibid.*: "[With each day] he needs to make a new announcement about this exceedingly miraculous conduct. And when people ask him: "Why are you screaming? You already screamed about this yesterday." He will answer: "This is not yesterday's scream. Because the miraculous conduct I was screaming about yesterday is considered natural today!"
2. *Ibid.* p. 527: "Such it should be until all of the inhabitants of the world look at him with their physical eyes and are enthralled to behold this Jew whose "natural" conduct is above nature; while, the Jew himself is quite unimpressed by all of this, as it has become normal for him. ...He even bases his behavior on miracles from the very outset since, being a Jew, these miracles themselves are natural. And although we say in general 'we do not rely upon a miracle' this refers to that which constitutes a miracle for the one relying upon it. But when miracles have become his nature - since we are speaking about a Jew, especially in the month of *Nissan*, and dealing with matters of holiness and Divine service and Torah and mitzvos, and the miracle is only in the eyes of the non-Jews and the context of the world at large – then, quite to the contrary, he should absolutely rely upon a miracle."
3. *Ibid.* p. 529
4. *Ibid.*

SAYING THE NOSI

- There has been a weakening, may the Merciful One protect us, in the reading of the *Nosi*, and specifically the "*Yehi Ratzon*" which follows [in the *siddur*]. It is a mitzvah to strengthen this custom. Furthermore, and this is the main thing, through adherence to this custom we hasten and speed the dedication of the *Bais Hamikdash*.⁵

11 NISSAN – BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE

- The day should be spent in a joyful manner that will increase involvement in Torah and its mitzvos through joyous gatherings of many, many Jewish people – men, women and children (with a *mechitza* as dictated by Jewish Law, it is understood).⁶

- This should include even physical joy connected to the physical body by means of eating and drinking, especially festive food and drink. This is, of course, with the established limit of four small glasses [of strong drink].⁷

- Certainly there are many who have already learned the commentaries based upon the verses of *Tehilim* [of the Rebbe's Kapital].⁸

13 NISSAN – YORTZEIT OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

- Certainly we will spend this propitious day – and the days leading up to and following it – with an increase in learning the teachings of the Tzemach Tzedek both in the revealed and, especially, the mystical aspects of his Torah.⁹

14 NISSAN – BIRTHDAY OF THE RAMBAM

- On the birthday of the Rambam, we must, first and foremost, seize the opportunity to arouse a commitment to the daily learning of the Rambam's *Mishne Torah* – each individual according to his ability: three chapters a day, one chapter a day, or the *Sefer Hamitzvos*.¹⁰

- Being that Erev Pesach is not a time conducive to gathering great numbers of people, gatherings in honor of

the Rambam's birthday should be made during the days leading up to or following that date.¹¹

18 NISSAN – BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE'S FATHER

- It is fitting on this day to arrange a joyous gathering. As of late, we make a *farbrenge* for the birthday of every Jew. How much more so should this be when speaking of a Jew who gave up his life for Torah and mitzvos, to the point where he remained in prison until his last day of life and even after his passing was interred in the very place of his exile.¹²

Learning Before Pesach

LAWS OF PESACH

- On Rosh Chodesh Nissan, "two Shabbosos" before Pesach, we must increase in learning the laws of Pesach. This should be both in the quantity and the quality of learning in such a way befitting the general theme of the month of Nissan – miraculous behavior.¹³

THE PESACH OFFERING

- Preparing for the Pesach offering necessitates that one learn the detailed laws of the *korban* Pesach to be found in any *siddur*. (*Tehilas HaSh-m*, p. 382-383)¹⁴

A SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

- Learning in preparation for Pesach means also that one elucidate the concept of destroying *chometz* on a spiritual level. That is, to be free from the one whom our Sages call *chometz* – the evil inclination.¹⁵

EDUCATING THE CHILDREN

- Children in age as well as those who are children in knowledge should be educated prior to Pesach, not just so

5. *Ibid.* p. 354

6. *Sicha* of 11 Nissan 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 38)

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Sicha* of 13 Nissan 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 48 footnote 77)

9. *Sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 29)

10. *Sicha* of Erev Pesach 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 44)

11. *Sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 518)

12. *Sicha* of 18 Nissan 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 90)

13. *Sicha* Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 414 - 415): "The halacha has been established according to the Mishnaic opinion that we begin reviewing the laws of *Pesach* thirty days beforehand. However, it is possible to uphold the dissenting view of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel who holds that we begin reviewing its laws 'two Shabbosos' before *Pesach*. We begin learning the laws thirty days before *Pesach*, and as the holiday approaches, we intensify two weeks before *Pesach*."

14. *Sicha* Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 448)

15. *Sicha* 26 Adar 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 402)

they will not fall asleep at the Seder, but even more, they themselves will have a great effect on the Seder by their asking the Four Questions.¹⁶

Mo'os Chitim

WHAT DOES ONE GIVE?

- Giving *Mo'os Chitim* includes providing for everything one needs for all eight days of Pesach, all requirements for the Seder (e.g. matzos, wine for the Four Cups), and everything necessary for the Yom Tov in general like new clothes, special foods and all of the like.¹⁷

- *Mo'os Chitim* must be from the best and the "sweetest" of our own possessions as we see by the very name *Mo'os Chitim* – money for **wheat**. Even though one may fulfil the requirement for eating matzah on Pesach by eating matzos made from any of the five species of grain, wheat is the finest of them all.¹⁸

- In keeping with the command "Love your fellow as yourself" we should see to it that our fellow Jew has just as much of what he needs for the Holiday as we have for ourselves.¹⁹

- We must strive to provide for every individual Jew – including children of both the physical and spiritual sense²⁰ – so that not only will their own Yom Tov needs be met, but they themselves should be able to cry out and invite others [in the words of the Hagadah] "*Kol Dichfin!* Whoever is hungry let him come and eat!"²¹

IS THERE A LIMIT?

- After giving away a tenth or even a fifth of our income for holiday needs, we will need to make a new calculation since our earnings will have also increased with the blessings bestowed on behalf of the tzedakah we have already given. Accordingly, the amount equal to a tenth or a fifth will have grown as well and we will need to add on and give even more.²²

- Anyone who increases in providing others with Yom Tov needs, increases for himself G-d's blessing for tremendous wealth.²³

- When Rosh Chodesh Nissan arrives, we must further increase in *Mo'os Chitim* in a manner reflecting the special power granted in the month of Nissan for miraculous behavior exceeding one's nature and habit. This means giving more than a tenth and more than a fifth of one's earnings, even until he gives without any limits.²⁴

WHEN?

- We should start the "*shturm*" – the tumult – about *mo'os Chitim* while there is still ample time. Immediately after Purim²⁵ we should already have begun and from there on out we continue to increase as the holiday draws near.²⁶

- We don't have to wait until the official collector comes asking for money. Instead, each person on his own should be running to find a place where it is possible to give *Mo'os Chitim*. This is in addition to the sum that he will anyway give to the official collector when he comes.²⁷

We provide another Jew with whatever required for his Yom Tov even before arranging for our own needs.²⁸

- Even in the last minutes right before Pesach, we can still keep adding on and finish off our last minute contributions in a speedy manner typified by the Holiday of Pesach for which we speedily bake the matzos before allowing them to rise.²⁹

16. *Sicha Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 444)*

17. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5751 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 443)*

18. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 444)*

19. *Sicha of Erev Pesach 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 51)*

20. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shaman 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 512 footnote 80)*

21. *Sicha of 16 Adar 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 399)*

22. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5751 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 415)*

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.* "And although Our Sages say 'do not squander more than a fifth,' the Alter Rebbe explained 'in these generations we must ever increase in tzedakah without concern for the limit of one fifth.' And how much more so must this be the case in our generation, so many generations after the Alter Rebbe made this statement; and especially in the generation of our *Nosi*, the Alter Rebbe's successor, whose name is *Yosef* – meaning to increase – and *Yitchak* – with happiness and gladness of heart."

25. *Sicha of Motzo'ei Shushan Purim 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 464)*

26. *Sicha of Erev Pesach 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 51)*

27. *Sicha Shabbos Parshas Tisa 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 417)*

28. *Sicha of Erev Pesach 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 51)*

29. *Sicha of 11 Nissan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 50)*

ROLE OF WOMEN

- We must emphasize that women, too, have a role in providing tzedakah for Holiday needs. And even more than this, the tzedakah of women even possesses a special quality even beyond that given by men.³⁰

The Seder

THE HAGADAH

- It is a Jewish custom that the Hagadah be read with a happy tune.³¹

CHILDREN

- It is proper that everyone – especially children – have their own *siddur*, *chumash* and charity box as well as owning other holy books including that which is particularly related to this time of year, a Pesach Hagadah, as this will generate added excitement and enthusiasm to actually use these items.³²
- For the first seven days of Pesach we guard ourselves exceedingly from *gebrokts* – matzos which have become wet. This is to such an extent that we cover the matzos that are on the table so that water will not spill on them and we cover the water so that no crumbs of matzah fall in it.³³ Children, too, should keep this practice since – for the purpose of educating them in the ways of mitzvos – they must also be careful about *gebrokts*.³⁴

COMMUNITY SEDER

- In those places where a community Seder is held but due to lack of funds or for any other reason they are planning on only making a Seder one night, it is most urgent that a Seder be held on both the first *and* second nights. At least, they can spread out the money over both nights. But certainly, they won't even need to resort to this

since G-d will surely bless those involved with the Seder that they will have all they need, and even more.³⁵

KOS SHEL ELIYAHU

- In particular times in the past, Eliyahu's cup was poured before *Birkas Hamazon*. As of late, the custom has become to always pour Eliyahu's cup before *Birkas Hamazon*.³⁶
- At the end of the Seder – after saying, "Next year in Jerusalem!" – we return the wine from Eliyahu's cup to the bottle while everyone at the table sings the melody [composed by the Alter Rebbe] "*Kayli Atoh*."³⁷

Eighth Day of Pesach

PRECIOUS LAST MOMENTS

- Since the eighth day of Pesach is the completion and "seal" for all the days of Pesach, it is understood the greatness and preciousness of this time and the need to use each moment of it repairing and perfecting all aspects of the spiritual service of Pesach.³⁸

GEBROKTS

- On the eighth day of Pesach, not only are we lenient with regards to *gebrokts*, but as it was observed to be the custom of the Previous Rebbe, that he would actually go out of his way to eat *gebrokts* at the meals of the eighth day of Pesach.³⁹
- Such was the Previous Rebbe's custom to dip the matzos not once, not three times, but at each and every opportunity and with each food – fish, meat, and *especially* soup – even foods that all year long we don't eat with bread he would dip the matzos into them.⁴⁰
- The Previous Rebbe also instructed those who sat at his table to do the same. And so they did – not only in his presence but also at the other meals of the eighth day for which they were not in his presence. Consequently, this

30. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5751 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 419):* "As explained in Talmud, *Ta'anis* 23b, 'A woman is the one at home [when the pauper comes to the door]. She gives him his bread and thus benefits him most closely.'"

31. *Sicha of 19 Nissan 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 36)*

32. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 480)*

33. *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 171)*

34. *Sichos of Pesach 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 111, footnote 258)*

35. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5751 (Hisva'aduyos, pp. 443-444)*

36. *Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Metzora 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 8, footnote 79)*

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 64)*

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 171)*

became a directive for the community at large – not just for a select few or just for the Rebbe, but for every man, woman and child.⁴¹

Moshiach's Se'udah

CUSTOM FOR ALL JEWS

- The Previous Rebbe related that the Ba'al Shem Tov would refer to the very last meal of the eighth day of Pesach as "*Moshiach's Se'udah*" because "on the eighth day of Pesach there shines a revelation of the aura of Moshiach." And since The Previous Rebbe revealed this to the people and commanded that it be publicized, it is understood that this is something that is relevant to everyone of the generation.⁴²

- If there are still those who have yet to undertake this custom, then surely they will start to do so from now on – especially those who have yet to practice the custom not because of any opposition, heaven forbid, but just because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of the greatness of it, or because they are used to old habits.⁴³

EVERYONE MUST PARTICIPATE

- Being that this custom of eating *Moshiach's Se'udah* has become widespread, the failure to do so runs counter to the injunction not to separate oneself from the community as well as the injunctions calling for the love of all Jews and the unity of all Jews. This idea of not separating oneself from the community is binding even if a person were to stay in his own home with the community never knowing what he does. It is still revealed to Heaven and his separating from the community even in a single point can bring about ill effects in all of his matters.⁴⁴

- How much more would this be so if he were to *publicly* set himself apart from the community. Since on Yom Tov everybody gathers together in *shul* to pray and to hear the Torah reading and *haftorah* and so on, and it is announced to everybody that at such-and-such a time we

are all going to gather for *Moshiach's Se'udah* – being that all day long he has been seen with the community in *shul* – then through his failure to participate in *Moshiach's Se'udah* he *publicly* separates himself from the community.⁴⁵

FOUR CUPS

- The custom of drinking four cups of wine at *Moshiach's Se'udah* was first revealed by the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab, who initiated the practice exclusively among the students of the yeshiva *Tomchei Temimim*.⁴⁶

- The Previous Rebbe later revealed and even publicized this custom to all Jews and it continues to spread out among all Jewish communities.⁴⁷

EACH CUP MUST BE CONNECTED TO THE REDEMPTION

- Anybody who has a doubt whether he drank the four cups having in mind that this is connected with the coming Redemption will surely make it up.⁴⁸

- The number four is also related to the concept of the coming Redemption. As is stated in the *haftorah* of today (the eighth day of Pesach) that "I will gather the dispersed ones of Israel and the spread out ones of Judah will be gathered from *the four corners of the earth*." Now, anyone who already drank the four cups but was lacking the fitting and appropriate intentions connected to the coming Redemption, should drink again.⁴⁹

41. *ibid.*

42. *Ibid.* p. 142

43. *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 57):* "And even though they have not conducted themselves according to this custom until now, they will begin to do so now. How much more is this so when compared to the overall novelty of the Ba'al Shem Tov's teachings in previous generations as opposed to now when they have been accepted and spread out in their generality to all Jewish communities."

44. *Ibid.* p. 56

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 173)*

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ma'amar "V'hacharim" 5749 (Sefer Hama'marim M'lukat, Vol. 3, footnote 20)* See also *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 62):* "Anybody who has a doubt whether he has had all four cups – whether the question be regarding quantity, or quality, or concerning his having the proper intentions in mind – he should make up those cups in a way to remove himself from any doubt. As it is understood and quite simple, such a lofty matter as this – the four cups connected with the coming Redemption – must be in a manner of certainty and clarity."

49. *Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, pp. 59-60)*