

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

Yud Shevat

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 Yud Shevat, the Yahrtzeit of the Previous Rebbe and the beginning of the Rebbe's leadership.

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**.

There are two additions to this week's *a CALL to ACTION*:

- **Appendix I** – the Rebbe outlines the theme of Yud Shevat, the significance of its date, the Previous Rebbe's name and other fascinating details.
- **Appendix II** – a letter of the Rebbe detailing the customs surrounding Yud Shevat. The English translation of this letter, as it appears in the appendix was first published by *Sichos in English*.

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!

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
 Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 5768

Shabbos prior to Yud Shevat

RECEIVE AN ALIYAH

- It is customary for every male over the age of Bar Mitzvah to receive an Aliyah (being called to the Torah reading) on the Shabbos prior to the Yahrtzait.⁴²

MAKE UP FOR YUD SHEVAT CUSTOMS

- Whereas the custom to have an Aliyah is restricted to the Shabbos prior to the Yahrtzait, the remaining customs associated with the Yahrtzait – such as increasing in Torah study, Tzedakah and the like – should obviously be continued (and can be made up for) during the subsequent week.⁴³

SHABBOS ALIYAH ONLY

- It is highly questionable whether one could make up for failing to receive a Shabbos Aliyah by instead receiving an Aliyah to the Torah readings of the subsequent Monday or Thursday – particularly, as it is a *different* section of Torah that is read on those days.

42. **A complete ascent**

“As is known, when one is summoned to the Torah [Olah LaTorah; lit., “ascends to the Torah,” which is traditionally read on a raised platform or dais], it results in an elevation (Aliyah) in his soul [i.e., it simultaneously rises in holiness as he recites the blessing or reads from the Torah].

This ascent occurs in all levels of his soul [of which there are five general levels: Nefesh, Ru’ach, Neshamah, Chayah and Yechidah], and even in all of his soul’s faculties [such as intellect and emotion], as well as the soul’s “garments” of thought, speech and action. (Parshas Bo 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.217)

43. **The Shabbos before**

This is because the entire following week is blessed from the Shabbos that preceded it. (Parshas Bo 5748, footnote 2; Hisva’aduyos p.268)

The Previous Rebbe’s Yom Hilulah, and the preparations for are customarily observed on the preceding Shabbos, are relevant to each Jew in this generation.

This fact is also the basis of the proposal that *everyone* receive an Aliyah to the Torah on the Shabbos before the 10th of Shevat. (ibid, main text)

Which in turn is based upon the proposal of the Leader of our generation concerning the Yahrtzait of *his* father, the Rebbe Rashab. (ibid, footnote 11)

After all, the Yom Hilulah of a Leader of Jewry is relevant to *every* Jew – “the Leader of a generation is equal to all of the generation.” (ibid, main text)

AN ALIYAH ON SHABBOS MINCHAH?

It might possibly be acceptable to make up the Aliyah during the Shabbos *Minchah* reading. For although the text that is read by Minchah is not the same as the portion read earlier in the day – rather, it is the reading of the upcoming Monday and Thursday – nevertheless, Shabbos Mincha remains part of *Shabbos*, and its Torah reading cannot be considered a mere weekday reading.⁴³

The day of Yud Shevat

BASI LEGANI

The Previous Rebbe would first pen Chassidic discourses and then designate their future release dates. Before his passing in 5710 (1950), he authored a series entitled “Basi LeGani,” and instructed that the first discourse of the series be published on the approaching day of the 10th of Shevat. It subsequently become clear that he had timed its release to coincide exactly with the day of his own passing.

This series is therefore highly significant: Traditionally, each Chabad Rebbe in turn, tailors his final Chassidic discourse to serve as a preparation and cornerstone of his successor’s mission – it specifies the goal of the new generation.

Basi LeGani expounds the central theme of our spiritual service, i.e., to draw the Shechinah (Divine Presence) back into this physical world, so that it be manifested in the Third Beis HaMikdash – and from there, to the entire universe.

However, in order to accomplish this, we need to first draw the Shechinah into ourselves, our homes and our buildings [such as the Chabad Houses that serve as centers for activities that draw the Shechinah into the furthest reaches of the world]. For in fact, every Jew – or his home, etc. – constitutes a mini-Beis HaMikdash.

The Rebbe instituted the practice of studying and focusing particular attention to another of the twenty sections of Basi LeGani each year. Each year, the Rebbe would deliver a discourse explaining the current year’s section (“Ois”) of Basi LeGani. After twenty years elapse, we begin the cycle afresh – but on a higher level.

STUDY THE MA'AMOR

- We should study the teachings of the Previous Rebbe – and in particular, his series entitled *Basi LeGani*.⁴⁴

THIS YEAR'S OIS

- Special emphasis should be placed on the section of *Basi LeGani* that corresponds to the present year.⁴⁵ Despite having studied it in the past, we should again study this section with fresh depth and understanding – in order to fully fathom the very essence of the Previous Rebbe's message.⁴⁶

IN PUBLIC

- Ideally, we should study the discourse in public – or at least with a study partner. Doing so leads to increased success in comprehending the discourse.

TZEDAKAH BEFORE STUDY

- Donating to Tzedakah before studying also adds to the success of the study.⁴⁷

44. Study that day's Torah portion

On the Yom Hilulah, which falls on Monday – a day when the Torah is read in the synagogue – each person should likewise recite words of Torah which are connected with the section of Torah read that day. [Editor's Note: This year too, Yud Shevat occurs on a day on which the Torah is read: Thursday, January 10, 2008]

Basi LeGani and Ma'amor on the Parshah

Likewise, and to a *greater* extent, we should recite from the Torah teachings and Chassidic discourses of the Leader of our generation, particularly from the discourse that was first published (in advance) for the 10th of Shevat 5710 (1950) [entitled *Basi LeGani*], or from his discourses on the weekly Torah portion.

Beshalach, Shabbos Shirah, Geulah

This year, the Torah portion is Parshas Beshalach Paro Ess HaAm ("When Pharaoh sent out the [Jewish] people"), and it is therefore also "Shabbos Shirah" [the Shabbos on which the Song of the Sea (*Az Yashir* – the song sung by the Jews as they crossed the parted sea) is read in the synagogue], all of which is also connected to the true and complete Redemption. (15th of Teves 5750; *Hisva'aduyos* p.127)

45. [This year's (2008) section is section 18 (See *Basi LeGani* 5728, 5748). See the Foreword to the discourse *Basi LeGani* 5728 found in *Sefer HaMa'amorim Meluket*, vol.2, p.238.]

46. See Parshas Bo 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos* p.223), in connection with the 40th year since the first release of *Basi LeGani* – forty years being the amount of time necessary for a student can fully comprehend the depth of his master's meaning.

47. *Ibid.*

Get help by giving help

This is similar to the statement of our Sages (Baba Basra 10a), "He would first

WOMEN INCREASE THEIR AVODAH

- The day of Yud Shevat – as well as its preceding and subsequent days⁴⁸ – is an extremely opportune time for Jewish women to increase, and with far greater energy, all matters that pertain to their divine service.⁴⁹

JOY OF REDEMPTION

- Jewish women should permeate their divine service with joy – resulting from an awareness of the extreme imminence of the final Redemption.⁵⁰

give a coin to a pauper and only then pray; for it is written ‘I will behold Your countenance in righteousness (BeTzedek) [or ‘through Tzedakah’].’” Although that statement was made in Baba Basra in regards to *prayer*, it is nevertheless clear that it also applies to “Beholding Your countenance” by studying Torah. And as is known, Tzedakah affects the donor to the extent that his heart and mind become a thousand times clearer. (ibid, footnote 64)

48. **Rebbetzins Shterna Sarah and Rivkah**

In which are the Yahrzaitz of his mother and grandmother. [Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, wife of the Rebbe Rashab and mother of the Previous Rebbe, passed away on the 13th of Shevat 1942. Rebbetzin Rivkah, wife of the Rebbe Maharash and grandmother of the Previous Rebbe, passed away on the 10th of Shevat 1914.]

49. **Daughters of the Rebbetzins**

... So that their conduct be in the spirit of the saintly Rebbetzins, the wives of the Leaders, who’s Yahrzaitz also occur during these dates. Doing so will extend the life of the saintly Rebbetzins, as our Sages say, “Just as his offspring are alive, so is he alive. [I.e., when the spiritual offspring of the Rebbes and Rebbetzins are spiritually alive via their adherence to the Torah of Life, then the life of the Rebbes and Rebbetzins themselves, who are totally united with, and defined by, the Torah and G-dliness – continue to find expression in this physically world.] (Parshas Bo and Beshalach 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.190)

Bring the Geulah

Since this generation is the final generation of exile and the initial generation of Redemption ... the Leader of our generation strove exceedingly to influence Jewish women – in order to hasten and bring on the Redemption in the merit of the righteous women of our generation. (ibid, p.184)

50. **Miriam and Devorah**

There is a fundamental and unique instruction concerning the concept of “singing” – as is emphasized by the “Song of Miriam” [the brother of Moshe, who led the women in song as they passed through the parted sea] and the “Song of Devorah” [the Prophetess, who led the Jews to a miraculous victory in battle]:

The woman trusted and acted

The Exodus from Egypt came about through the merit of “the righteous women of that generation, who were certain that the Holy One would perform miracles for them; they therefore brought out tambourines from Egypt [to be able to thank Hashem with song and music for the future miracles they were certain He would perform].” The same is true of the [imminent] Redemption from this final exile:

AFTER YUD SHEVAT

- Following Yud Shevat, we should increase (with yet greater energy) in fulfilling the Previous Rebbe's instructions regarding the study and dissemination of Chassidus.⁵¹

CHASSIDUS – EVERY JEW'S LEGACY

- This study and dissemination should be continued until it will be clearly *discernable* upon each and every Jew that they have studied Chassidus, and that its teachings have permeated their entire existence.⁵¹



Appendix I

Yud Shevat – full expression of the soul

1) Paradox of holiness – transcendence and permeation:

“Holiness” means transcendence, something beyond the mundane. Yet, at the same time, holiness infuses mundane objects and makes them “holy.” Both of these qualities are reflected in the shape, symbolism

In the final moments

The righteous women of Jewry need to have absolute trust – *and they certainly do have absolute trust* – that literally, immediately, the True and Complete Redemption will arrive. Their trust should be absolute, to the extent that they begin immediately, in these final seconds of exile, rejoicing with tambourines, and singing and dancing over the imminent True and Complete Redemption.

Cry out the Golus and sing in the Geulah

To be more specific: Together with our request, entreaty and demand that Hashem bring the Redemption literally and immediately – activities that are accompanied by feelings of bitterness and pain ... over the length of this exile, and which are expressed in a cry that escapes from the very deepest recess of our heart, “Ad Masai?! Ad Masai?! Ad Masai?!” – “How much longer?!” ... We are simultaneously – and even *chiefly* – permeated with feelings of *joy*, the very *greatest* joy which is expressed in *song*. This joy comes from our powerful trust that “Hinei Zeh Melech HaMoshiach Bo,” “Here, the King Moshiach is coming!” And indeed, he has already come! (Parshas Bo and Beshalach 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.191-192)

51. **Our mission: Spread Chassidus**

The dissemination of Chassidus is the *main task* of our generation. All other spiritual services are considered “foreign” to us in comparison with our main goal of spreading Chassidus.

The reason for this is due to our being the final generation of exile and the initial generation of Redemption. (Parshas Beshalach 5751; Hisva’aduyos p.226)

and numeric value of the Hebrew letter Yud (י), which has a numerical value of *ten*:

A) Unlike all other Hebrew letters, Yud is a mere point that transcends form and is unaffected by division into particulars. At the same time, Yud represents the *essence* of a matter that *includes* all of its forms and details.

B) Yud is the initial letter of Hashem's Name and therefore represents Hashem, i.e., the Creator Who is *beyond* creation. At the same time, Yud represents the spark of holiness (or Neshamah) that *emanates* from the Creator and animates all existence – down to its finest details.

C) Yud represents the “Pinteleh Yid” (Etezem HaNeshamah) – the quintessential essence of a Jew. Yet the task of a Jew is to elicit his “Pinteleh Yid” and cause it to permeate all of his various soul powers.

D) Yud equals ten – representing Redemption by Moshiach (a fact that is reflected in Moshiach's *ten*-stringed harp, the *tenth* red heifer (Parah Adumah) that will then be used, the *tenth* song of deliverance that will then be sung and so on). True Redemption is accomplished by revealing the indivisible soul or Neshamah that resides within every element of existence (including ourselves), i.e., the G-dly spark (the “Yud”) that animates and pervades all existence.

This, then, is the lesson in divine service that we are to take from the **10th** of Shevat: We should reveal the “tenth” within ourselves (i.e., our Neshamah), and by extension, the “tenth” within creation (i.e., its vivifying G-dly force) – and this revelation should permeate our entire being, all of our affairs and every detail of Creation.

2) Significance of the day, month and year:

“Tenth” represents something that is sanctified. This is seen in the verse (Vayikra 27:32), וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂר בְקָר וּצְאָן כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹר תַּחַת הַשֶּׁבֶט הָעֵשִׂירִי - “Any tithe of cattle or of the flock, all that pass under the staff [“*Shavef*” – a word that is practically identical to the name of the month, “*Shevat*”], the *tenth* one *shall be holy to Hashem.*”

Further, the Torah there continues (v.33) “...If he shall exchange it (i.e., the animal that was sanctified as a tithe), then both it and its substitute shall be holy to Hashem.” The initials of הוּא וְהִיא הוּא - “he shall exchange it, it shall be” spell Hashem's Name. Each month corresponds to another combination of the Divine Name and is to be found in another verse in Torah; this passage in particular, includes the

specific combination for the month of *Shevat*.

In addition, the twelve months represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The month of Shevat corresponds to the tribe of *Yosef* – which is also the Previous Rebbe’s first name [See below, “Significance of the Previous Rebbe’s name”].

Finally, the dual qualities of holiness (the “Yud”) that were discussed earlier, are emphasized in the Hebrew year of his passing – 5710, “Tav Shin *Yud*.”

3) Leader and “soul” of Jewry:

We can now appreciate how the *tenth* (Yud) of the month is the most appropriate date for the Yahrzeit – since as a Leader of Jewry, the Previous Rebbe serves as Jewry’s *collective soul*. On the one hand, he is “removed” and “sanctified” from the rest of Jewry; yet, at the same time, he is the means of eliciting life and all other spiritual and physical needs, to each particular individual.

In addition, the Previous Rebbe greatly amplified the dissemination of Chassidus – bringing its teachings to America, and from there, to the entire world. Chassidus is the “soul” of Torah and it allows the Jew to reveal *his* soul as well as the “soul” of Creation – thus bringing the Redemption.

4) Significance of the Previous Rebbe’s name:

The Previous Rebbe’s name alludes to these concepts: Firstly, both of his names, “Yosef” and “Yitzchak,” begin with the letter *Yud*.

In Bereishis (30:24), the Torah tells us the meaning of the name Yosef, “She called him Yosef, saying, ‘*Yosef* Hashem Li Ben Acher,’” “Hashem *will add* to me another son.” Chassidus explains that this represents the task of transforming an “Acher” – “another,” i.e., a Jew who, due to his actions, does not resemble a member of Hashem’s nation – into a “Ben,” a “son,” i.e., one who is clearly worthy of being called Hashem’s child.

So, “Yosef” means revealing the “Pinteleh Yid” that is buried deep within every Jew (and by extension, revealing the “soul” of the universe).

Earlier in Bereishis (21:3-6), the Torah explains the significance of the second name, “Yitzchak”: “He called his son ... Yitzchak ... all who hear will *laugh with joy* (*Yitzchak*) for my sake.”

A Jew can only serve Hashem with true and complete joy when there are no disturbances posed by his bodily aspects and mundane affairs, i.e., when they, too, have been permeated with the spiritual joy of his soul.

5) Three decades of leadership:

The Previous Rebbe's thirty years of leadership were divided into three periods – each covering another *ten* years. [Each of these decades called for a unique type of spiritual service.

It is explained in many Sichas, that the first decade demanded great self-sacrifice in order to preserve Judaism under Russian Communism; the second decade was characterized by the dissemination of Chassidus in the Poland-Latvia regions; the final decade was focused on the imminent Redemption by Moshiach.

To summarize:] The first decade was spent in Russia, the next in Poland and its neighboring countries, and the final ten years were spent in America.

Notably, during his final ten years, the Previous Rebbe would specifically sign his second name “Yitzchak” with an *enlarged Yud* – and that this letter alone was written [not in Hebrew cursive, but] in the Hebrew “Ashuri” script [that is used to write a Sefer Torah].

(Sichas Parshas Shemos 5750)

Appendix II

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 5711
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To Anash, to the students of Tomchei Temimim, and to those who have a bond or a relationship with my revered father-in-law the saintly Rebbe, of blessed memory:

G-d bless you all.

Greeting and blessings:

In reply to the many questions that have been asked about a detailed schedule for the Tenth of Shevat, the Yahrtzeit of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, I would hereby suggest the following:

1. On the Shabbos before the Yahrzeit [each Chassid] should attempt to be called for an Aliyah to the Torah.
2. If there are not enough Aliyos the Torah should be read [a number of times] in different rooms. However, *no additions* should be made to the number of Aliyos [at each reading].
3. The congregation should see to it that the Maftir should be the most respected congregant, as determined by the majority; alternatively, the choice should be determined by lot.
4. The congregation should choose someone to lead the prayers on the day of the Yahrzeit. It is proper to divide [the honor, choosing] one person to lead Ma'ariv, a second to lead Shacharis, and a third - Minchah. In this way a greater number of Anash will have the privilege.
5. A [Yahrzeit] candle should be lit that will burn throughout the twenty-four hours. If possible, the candle should be of beeswax.
6. Five candles should burn during the prayer services.
7. After each prayer service (and in the morning, [this means] after the reading of Tehilim), the Sheliach Tzibbur should study (or at least conclude the study of) ch.24 of Mishnayos Keilim and ch.7 of Mishnayos Mikvaos. He should then recite the Mishnah beginning "Rabbi Chananyah ben Akashya...", followed silently by a few lines of Tanya, and Kaddish deRabbanan.
8. After Ma'ariv, part of the Ma'amar (Basi LeGani) that was released for the day of the demise should be recited from memory. If there is no one to do this from memory, it should be studied from the text. This should also be done after Shacharis, and the Ma'amar should be concluded after Minchah.
9. Before Shacharis, a chapter of Tanya should be studied. This should also be done after Minchah.
10. In the morning, before prayer, charity should be given to those institutions that are related to our Nasi, my revered father-in-law, of sainted memory. Donations should be made on behalf of oneself and on behalf of each member of one's family. The same should be done before Minchah.
11. After Shacharis and the recitation of the Ma'amar, each individual should read a Pidyon Nefesh. (It goes without saying that a Gartl is worn during the reading.) Those who had the privilege of entering [the saintly Rebbe's study] for Yechidus, or at least of seeing his face, should - while reading the Pidyon Nefesh - picture themselves as standing before him. The Pidyon Nefesh should then

be placed between the pages of a Ma'amar or Kuntreis, etc., of his teachings, and sent, if possible *on the same day*, to be read at his graveside.

12. In the course of the day one should study chapters of Mishnayos that begin with the letters of his name.
13. In the course of the day one should participate in a Farbrengen.
14. In the course of the day one should set aside a time during which to tell one's family about the saintly Rebbe, and about the spiritual tasks at which he toiled throughout all the days of his life.
15. In the course of the day, people (to whom this task is appropriate) should visit synagogues and houses of study in their cities and cite a statement or an adage drawn from the teachings of the saintly Rebbe. They should explain how he loved *every* Jew. [Furthermore,] they should make known and explain the practice that he instituted of reciting Tehilim every day, studying the daily portion of Chumash with the commentary of Rashi, and, where appropriate, studying the Tanya as he divided it into daily readings throughout the year. If possible this should all be done in the course of a Farbrengen.
16. In the course of the day, people (who are fit for the task) should visit centers of observant youth - and, in a neighborly spirit, should make every endeavor to also visit centers for the young people who are not yet observant - in order to explain to them the warm love that the saintly Rebbe constantly had for them. It should be explained to these people what he expected of them; they should be told of the hope and the trust that he placed in them - that they would ultimately fulfill their task of strengthening the observance of Judaism and disseminating the study of Torah with all the energy, warmth and vitality that characterize youth.

If prevailing conditions allow, all the above should of course be continued during the days following the Yahrtzait, and particularly on the following Shabbos.

May G-d hasten the coming of our Redeemer, and then "those who repose in the dust will awaken and sing joyful praises." And our Nasi among them will give us wondrous tidings, and lead us along the path that leads up to the House of G-d.

[Signed:] Menachem Mendel Schneerson