

*a* **CALL** *to*  
**ACTION**

THE NINE DAYS

The Month of Menachem-Av, Holding Siyumim  
The 5<sup>th</sup> of Av, Shabbos Chazak

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 published edition of *a CALL to ACTION* in anticipation of the Month of Menachem-Av. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's *sichos* pertaining to our bolstered ability and paralleled obligations, surrounding the completion of the fourth book of Chumash, the days preceding Tisha B'Av, beginning with Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av.

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

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

Editorial Office of  
*HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar*  
Menachem-Av, 5767

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***a CALL to ACTION***

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# Table of Contents

<b>The Month of Menachem-Av .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction	
<b>The Nine Days .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Counter With Positive Action / Study And Long For / Redemption / Laws Of The Nine Days / Act And Publicize	
<b>Holding Siyumim .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Introduction / Remedy: Joy Of Torah / Tzedakah By The Siyum / For All Jews / All Ages And Genders / A Festive Meal / Without Meat Or Wine / Shabbos Within The Nine Days / Tractate Of Gemarah / Siyum On Set Of Halachos / Topics That Are Easy To Explain / Tractate Tamid / The Rebbe's Siyum / Include Every Jew You Meet	
<b>The 5<sup>th</sup> of Av The Arizal's Yahrtzeit .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Introduction / Spread Chassidus / Siyumim and Moshiach / A General Letter from the Rebbe	
<b>Shabbos Chazak .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Introduction / Everyone's Call / Loud and Joyful / Thrice Strengthened / Implementing The Call - Great Kiddush / Farbrengen / Re-Install The Custom	

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מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח

◇

לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה  
ולזכות אחיו ואחותיו: יוסף יצחק, משה, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא  
שיחיו גודמאן

◇

לזכות יוכבד חי' רחל בת אסתר מלכה לרפואה שלימה תיכף ומיד ממש

**יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד**

# The Month of Menachem-Av

## INTRODUCTION

*Although this month is called 'Av' in the Torah, the Jewish custom is to add the name 'Menachem' and to furthermore prefix the name 'Menachem' to 'Av', making this month 'Menachem-Av'.*

*One of the reasons for this practice is that Menachem means "consolation" and alludes to the consolation of the Jewish people that will occur in the future Redemption.<sup>1</sup> It is this future consolation which constitutes the ultimate purpose behind the "descent" of the month of Av.*

*Furthermore, 'Menachem', i.e. the Redemption, is "the beginning that prefaces every descent." Our Sages explain that the Torah begins with "In the beginning... the spirit of Hashem hovered over the face of the waters" – the "spirit" that it refers to is that of Moshiach.*

*Since the inner purpose and foundation of everything is to eventually lead to the revelation of "the spirit of Moshiach", it therefore appeared immediately – at the very start of Creation. Accordingly, the word 'Av' of 'Menachem-Av,' which means "the father", reflects on the source and origin of everything that exists, including the realm of holiness.<sup>2</sup>*

*All of the above serves as a source of strength and empowers us to reveal, when faced with an - inherently external and temporary - decline, that its entire purpose is the elevation, the Menachem, therein.<sup>3</sup>*

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1. "This is in addition to the fact that the Hebrew letters of the name "Menachem" are the numerical equivalent of the name "Tzemach" which refers to Moshiach - "Ish Tzemach Shmo – his name is Tzemach"; may he sprout forth (Yitzmach) and be revealed in actuality very soon!" (Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5748 – Hisvadiyos p.82)
  2. "As is likewise alluded to in Shabbos Mevarchim [when we bless the coming month of] Menachem-Av. For it is called "Menachem-Av" - and not "Av-Menachem" - although its name in the Torah is simply "Av" (whilst "Menachem" was only added later). The main thing is "Menachem," i.e. the consolation for our Exile; and our consolation comes about through "Av," i.e., the 'Father' and source of Mercy (Av Harachamim). See Likkutei Sichos Vol.23 p.214 and onward." (Parshas Matos-Masei 5750 – Hisvadiyos p.83)
  3. "Its entire existence is (not simply a preparation for a second matter, rather its very

## The Nine Days

### COUNTER WITH POSITIVE ACTION

- Since within the Three Weeks, Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av and the week in which the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av occurs [even in a year when the Fast is postponed<sup>4</sup>] contains *particular* gravity, we should therefore *further increase* in Torah and Tzedakah during those times.<sup>5</sup>

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idea is) to reveal the elevation (the “Menachem”) within. As is well known, the very theme of Geulah (Redemption) is to take “Golah” (Exile) and add an Alef [the difference between the two words in Hebrew is the letter Alef, representing the Master (Aluf) of the Universe]. For by revealing the Master of the Universe within Exile itself, the Exile (Golah) itself becomes Redemption (Geulah.)” (Parshas Pinchas 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.60)

4. “Concerning [this year’s calen dar] where the 9th of Av is postponed until Sunday: When the 9th of Av *itself* falls on a Sunday (as opposed to merely being *postponed* from Shabbos to Sunday), then the laws concerning the week in which the 9th of Av occurs only apply to that very [Sun]day. When, however, the 9th of Av falls out on a *Shabbos* (and it is only the Fast which must be postponed) there is are divided opinions as to whether the entire previous week bears the severity of “a week in which the 9th of Av falls,” or whether the postponement of the Fast to Sunday likewise causes the cancellation of the above severity to the previous week.

...It is nevertheless plainly understood, that regarding our addition in **Torah and Tzedakah** – which are obligatory throughout the entire year – there is certainly no place for such a dispute; according to all opinions there is a need to further increase [Torah and Tzedakah] during the week in which the 9th of Av falls, even in a yearly calendar such as the current year! On the lighter side, one could say [that we are to follow the principle] “Sfeika D’uraisa L’chumra - A doubt regarding a [law from a] Biblical source must be treated with stringency,” which could also be read to mean that when there is ‘a doubt’ concerning the study of *Torah* [‘D’uraisa’] (i.e. whether or not to increase our *Torah*-study etc.) - we are to “act with *stringency*!”” (ibid)

5. Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.79.  
 “Note that within many Jewish communities, engagements are made during the Three Weeks. Yet [even in those communities] they are *not* made during the week in which the 9th of Av occurs.” (ibid, footnote 19.) See Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chaim 551:2 and in the Rema.  
 “To increase in Tzedakah distribution in addition to what is usually given before (weekday) prayers, in keeping with the Alter Rebbe’s statement in his Shulchan Aruch, “It is good to give Tzedakah before prayers, as is written ‘I will behold Your countenance in righteousness [Tzedakah]’” ... with added emphasis during the Three Weeks and specifically from Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av. Since on these days, greater emphasis is placed on the prayers and requests of the Jewish people for Hashem’s Tzedakah, i.e., the arrival of the True and Complete

## STUDY AND LONG FOR REDEMPTION

- We should add in our study of Torah-topics that are related to the Redemption and the design of the Third Beis Hamikdash, along with a strengthening of our expectancy, longing, and demanding of the Redemption.<sup>6</sup>

## LAWS OF THE NINE DAYS

- We should create an awareness of the particular laws in the Shulchan Aruch that concern conduct during the Nine Days, and particularly those details that pertain to the week in which the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av occurs. There is also an obligation to *study* these laws of the Shulchan Aruch.<sup>7</sup>

## ACT AND PUBLICIZE

- “The main thing is the deed.” Therefore, we should act upon all of the above, including the effort to publicize these matters everywhere, so that others may likewise act upon them.<sup>8</sup>

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Redemption, therefore, they we should likewise increase with far greater energy in matters of Tzedakah - through which the Jewish people will be redeemed.” (Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5748 –Hisvaduyos p.79)

6. Parshas Matos-Masei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.95. See also there, p.91: “The crux of the matter is that the nullification of the Destruction and Exile is *primarily* accomplished (not so much through contemplating the gravity of our descent into Exile, rather) by contemplating the *great advantage* of the Redemption ... to arouse longing, yearning and an inner stirring, which in turn automatically produces a request and demand for the Future Redemption. We thereby hasten and accelerate the actual and physical Redemption. Furthermore, we thereby reveal the inner goodness within the Destruction and Exile itself.”
7. “In accordance with the principle “deed is the main thing,” it is necessary to raise the issue ... (in addition to the laws that pertain to the Three Weeks).” (Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.78)  
 “As well as studying the laws of the Three Weeks - both the details that concern the *entire* Three Weeks and also the detailed laws relevant to the Nine Days – in order to know what to actually *do* (as long as Moshiach has not yet arrived).” (Parshas Matos-Masei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.91)  
 “In addition to “Mishpat” ... Torah-study (and specifically the laws) ... And within the study of the laws themselves, it is particularly worthwhile (during the Three Weeks) to study the sections in Torah that cover the Beis Hamikdash.” (Parshas Devarim 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.103)
8. “Practically speaking: All those who are presently hearing these words - both those physically present and those listening via various technological systems that are being harnessed for the service of Hashem – such as in this case, where in but a

# Holding Siyumim

## INTRODUCTION

*One of the reasons for arranging Siyumim (lit. “completions”; celebrations that are held upon completing a section or book of Torah teachings) is that we actively seek every permissible manner to add in positive and joyful matters. Doing so reveals the inner goodness within the decline of the Three Weeks period.*

*It is because “The laws of Hashem are upright; they gladden the heart” (Tehillim 19) that we rejoice by the completion of the entire Torah (on Simchas Torah).<sup>9</sup> We similarly find concerning the completion of a section or tractate within Torah, that the Talmud states “Whenever I see ... completing a Tractate, I arrange a festive day for the Rabbis!” (Shabbos 118b).<sup>10</sup>*

*Additionally, through arranging a “completion” within Torah we cause a “completion” within all other matters in the world, including and most importantly, the completion of Exile.<sup>11</sup> In*

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mere moment the message is carried to every location where there is someone to listen – not only should they *personally* fulfill the above, but rather, they should also strive to publicize the above content to every location within their reach.” (Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5748 – Hisvadiyos p.82)

“Even those places where there is no-one currently listening – the ‘Word of Hashem’ effects that there *will* be a listener. And not simply one who ‘hears’ [the message], but also one who *derher*, ‘absorbs’ [the content] (the Previous Rebbe explains the advantage of *derher* over simply hearing what is said)...” (ibid, footnote 63)

9. Parshas Pinchas 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.64. See also Tur and Rema, Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 769, concerning Simchas Torah.
10. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.79 states the sources: Gemorah Shabbos 118b at the foot of the page, and further. Rema, Yoreh De’ah 246:26.  
See also Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748, footnote 120 – Hisvaduyos p.95: “To note the famous saying that explain the words of our Sages “When Av begins we decrease in joy,” i.e., that we are to “decrease” in the *negative* aspects of the Nine Days, “in joy”, i.e., via *adding* to our joy in a manner that is obviously permitted according to the Shulchan Aruch [Rema, Yoreh Dei’a, 246:26].”
11. “Beginning with the ‘completion’ of the ‘Exile’ within the Torah itself, namely, the doubts and disagreements within Torah (which stem from the side of evil), through which we will complete the literal Exile!” (Parshas Matos-Maasei 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.83)

*fact, the appropriate term truly is the ‘completion’ of Exile and not its nullification – for we are referring to the [positive] conclusion and completeness of the Exile itself, which is wrought by drawing the א (“Alef”) [i.e. Hashem, the Master (Aluf) of the Universe] into the Exile. We thus transform Exile (Golah - גולה) into Redemption (Geulah - גאולה).<sup>12</sup>*

## REMEDY: JOY OF TORAH

- We should focus on the custom of holding Siyumim<sup>13</sup> on each of the Nine Days,<sup>14</sup> in order to add in the joy of Torah in a permissible manner. We thereby nullify those matters that are contrary to joy.<sup>15</sup>

## TZEDAKAH BY THE SIYUM

- We should connect the Siyum (Torah study is referred to as “Mishpat”<sup>16</sup>) with the giving of Tzedakah; as is written, “[the Jews] will be redeemed with justice (“Mishpat”) and those who return to her – through Tzedakah.”<sup>17</sup>

## FOR ALL JEWS

- We should extend effort – out of the unity and love for our

12. Sichas Menachem-Av 5, 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.108.
13. – Hisvaduyos p.108: “Also including the initiation of further tractates and books, as it is written in the ‘Hadran’ [recited at the Siyum immediately following the completion] ‘As You helped me to complete Tractate such-and-such, so may You help me to *begin* other tractates and to complete them!’” (ibid, footnote 51)
14. “This is the juncture to raise the issue afresh, that if Moshiach will G-d forbid be delayed, they should continue amidst renewed energy and encouragement (for “let [The Torah] be new in your eyes each day”) to hold Siyumim over the tractates of the Talmud (‘Mishpat’, Torah-study), during the Nine Days.” (Parshas Devarim 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.95-96)
15. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.95.
16. “Tziyon will be redeemed through justice, and those who return to her – with Tzedakah” (Yeshaya 1:27). One should therefore increase in giving Tzedakah, and include the aspect of ‘justice’ within Tzedakah distribution, namely, to ‘judge’ oneself and determine the amount he requires for his own needs, so he could distribute the rest to Tzedakah!” (Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748, footnote 130 - Hisvaduyos p.96)
17. “As per the custom of recent years, the Siyumim are to be associated with Tzedakah, beginning with ‘spiritual’ Tzedakah this day of Shabbos and physical Tzedakah after Shabbos (“*nit of Shabbos geret* – not to discuss it on Shabbos...”.)” (Roshei Devarim, Sichas Matos-Maasei 5751)

fellow Jews – to ensure that the Siyumim will draw great attendance,<sup>18</sup> and will serve to unite multitudes of Jewish people<sup>19</sup> in the rejoicing upon completing a section of Torah. This is so, regardless of whether or not the participants have personally completed tractates.<sup>20</sup>

### ALL AGES AND GENDERS

- Both men and women should attend these Siyumim – seated separately of course<sup>21</sup> – as well as minors. Both the young in years and the ‘young’ in Torah-knowledge should participate, regardless of their ability to comprehend the material being reviewed.<sup>22</sup>

### A FESTIVE MEAL

- In those places that allow for it, we should accompany the Siyumim with a festive meal and Chassidic gathering [Farbrengem], in the spirit of “A festive day for the Rabbis.” [See intro]<sup>23</sup>

### WITHOUT MEAT OR WINE

- Our custom is to hold Siyumim over tractates of Gemorah on *each day* of the Nine Days – despite the lack of a subsequent meal with meat and wine.<sup>24</sup>

### SHABBOS WITHIN THE NINE DAYS

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18. “In accordance with the principle ‘A *multitude* of people is a king’s glory’...”
  19. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.80.
  20. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.95.
  21. Parshas Devarim 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.108.
  22. “Similar to the Siyum which is held on Erev Pesach, where it is customary to bring along even *minor* first-borns. In fact, the Siyum on Erev Pesach is not merely an example, but rather, it is directly related to the Siyumim of the Three Weeks. For the Siyum on Erev Pesach is a preparation for the future Redemption, which will be “as in the days of your exodus from Egypt (I will show you wonders)”. This theme carries extra emphasis this year, for we are standing on the threshold of the Redemption!” (Parshas Matos-Maasei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.80)
  23. Parshas Devarim 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.96.
  24. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.64. See also Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 551:10, where it is *permissible* to hold a Siyum that is followed by a meal of meat and wine, for the meal is a Seudas Mitzva. The Chabad custom is, as per the main text above, to hold a Siyum and follow it with a meal – yet to refrain from meat and wine nonetheless.

- It is very worthwhile to hold a Siyum on the Shabbos<sup>25</sup> that occurs within the Nine Days and to likewise connect it with a meal.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, we should increase in Tzedakah – which “hastens the Redemption” – in a permissible manner, i.e., through sharing meals and the like.<sup>27</sup>

### TRACTATE OF GEMARAH

- Although according to some opinions a Siyum may be held upon completing a chapter or tractate of *Mishna*, we should preferably hold a Siyum over an entire tractate of *Gemarah*, which would be a qualified Siyum according to all opinions.<sup>28</sup>

### SIYUM ON SET OF HALACHOS

- We should also hold a Siyum upon completing a set of laws learnt in the daily cycle of Rambam.<sup>29</sup>

### TOPICS THAT ARE EASY TO EXPLAIN

- It is worthwhile and fitting to arrange Siyumim over tractates whose subjects are easy to relate and explain to each and every Jew, even the simplest. For example, the four tractates of Brachos, Nazir, Yevamos, and Krisos, whose acronym is BoNaYiCh (“your sons”) and which conclude with the verse

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25. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.64. The reason (increasing joy) is quoted above, in the introduction to ‘Holding Siyumim’.

See also Roshei Devarim, Parshas Pinchas 5751: “Likewise on the holy day of Shabbos; although there is no need to come to such [i.e. there is no need for Siyumim to counter the negativity, for on Shabbos there is already only joy], it is nevertheless good to hold them on Shabbos, too. For according to all opinions, “the Torah was given to the Jewish people on Shabbos”. Siyumim are likewise to be held on subsequent days, even if they cannot be followed with meals and accompanied by all the due commotion.”

26. Parshas Devarim 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.96.

27. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5751 – Hisvaduyos p.79, and in footnote 94.

28. Sichas Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.86.

29. Sichas Tammuz 17 and Parshas Pinchas 5750, footnote 188 – Hisvaduyos p.55. See also Parshas Devarim 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.108: “A unique encouragement in this regard comes from the fact that a set of the laws from Rambam was *completed* this very Erev Shabbos, within which was quoted part of the Braysa of Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair – which is likewise quoted (according to many texts) at the *completion* of Mishna Sotah. There is therefore a unique opportunity to hold a Siyum on Tractate Sotah.”

“All your sons shall be learners of [the Torah of] Hashem.”  
(Yeshaya 54:13)<sup>30</sup>

### TRACTATE TAMID

- It is preferable to hold a Siyum over Tractate Tamid, since a) its contents concern the Beis Hamikdash and thus bears a relevance to the Three Weeks,<sup>31</sup> b) it is the shortest tractate that includes Gemorah,<sup>32</sup> and c) its conclusion is easy to relate and explain: “The song that the Levites used to chant in the Mikdash...”<sup>33</sup>

### THE REBBE’S SIYUM

- [The Gemorah on Tractate Tamid ends after the fourth of the seven chapters; the last three chapters contain only Mishna.] On Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5749, the Rebbe made a Siyum over Tractate Tamid and dwelt upon both the conclusion of the Gemorah (i.e., the end of the *fourth* chapter) and also upon the conclusion of the Mishna (i.e., the end of the *seventh* chapter).<sup>34</sup>

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30. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.95.

31. Parshas Devarim 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.97: “Not only on a tractate that consists entirely of Mishna, but rather, those that include Gemorah – as well as those that are *partially* covered by Gemorah such as Tractate Tamid; *specifically* in the case of Tamid, which deals with service in the Beis Hamikdash and is similar to tractate Midos – which (contains only Mishna and) covers the structure of the Mikdash. For through studying topics concerning the Beis Hamikdash, “I count it as if they are occupied with building” the Beis Hamikdash. Furthermore, through doing so, ‘The construction of My House’ has *not* been ‘abandoned’.”

32. Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av 5749 - Hisvaduyos p.86: “Tractate Tamid is the *shortest* tractate amongst those tractates that include Gemorah. When, therefore, there is a need to hold a Siyum on *each day of the Nine Days* and a short tractate that is *very easy* to complete is sought, the first [choice of] tractate is Tractate Tamid”.

See also Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.95: “The smallest tractate that is able to be learnt and completed within a short period of time”.

See also in footnote 122, there: “To note the connection between the number eight and the Redemption, for the harp [to be used in the Beis Hamikdash] in the Era of Moshiach will consist of [specifically] eight strings (Eiruchin 13b). The number of chapters in the Ramban’s laws of the Beis Habechirah [Mikdash] is [likewise specifically] eight.”

33. Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.95.

34. “...At the conclusion of Tractate Tamid in the Gemorah – i.e. the conclusion of the

## INCLUDE EVERY JEW YOU MEET

- We should include even a Jew we merely encounter on the street or in the course of business etc. in these Siyumim. We could accomplish his participation by informing him that a public Siyum was held over a particular tractate, and then relating the tractate's conclusion to him – which should be a saying of our Sages that is easily comprehensible to every Jew. Why, even if he is not informed that he is currently hearing the conclusion of a tractate and thus participating in the Siyum, he has been included nonetheless!<sup>35</sup>

## The 5<sup>th</sup> of Av The Arizal's Yahrtzeit

### INTRODUCTION

*The 5<sup>th</sup> of Menachem-Av is the anniversary of the Arizal's passing. The Arizal is often referred to as Arizal [or Ari]*

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*fourth* chapter of Tamid – it is stated 'Torah scholars increase peace in the world, as is written "All of your sons are learners of [the Torah of] Hashem" ... Accordingly, the conclusion of the *fourth* chapter of Tamid is particularly relevant to Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av of this year, which occurs on the *fourth* day of the week (Wednesday). For the seven chapters of Tractate Tamid correspond to the seven days of the week, and the conclusion of the fourth chapter is bound with the conclusion of the fourth day (i.e. this very moment in time).

Once the fourth chapter has been concluded, we come to the completion of the *entire* Tractate Tamid. To preface: Although the Gemorah on Tamid ends with the fourth chapter, it is understood that the Siyum on Tamid ought to include the latter chapters too, which have no Gemorah [but only Mishna]. Particularly according to the above explanation – that the seven chapters correspond to the seven days of the week which express the continuity of time ['Tamid' means continuous], the completion of Tamid requires all seven chapters, to correspond to a complete week – the [complete representation of the] continuity of time.

This concept is further emphasized at the conclusion of Tractate Tamid: 'The song that the Levites chanted in the Beis Hamikdash; on the first day of the week they would say... On the second day... etc.' It continues through each day until [and including] Shabbos, 'On Shabbos they would say...'

Therefore, in accordance with the above, it is fitting to also dwell upon the conclusion of the *entire* Tractate Tamid." (Wednesday Night 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.87 and onwards)

35. "(Even without his knowledge) for 'One may make a positive acquisition for a person ["*Zachin l'odom*" literally means 'we cause *merit* to a person'] even when he is not present.'" (Parshas Matos-Maasei 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.96)

*Hachai*, “the Living Arizal”.<sup>36</sup>

*Such a description is not to be found concerning any other Torah giant – including those about whom it was declared that “they died only due to the effect of the snake” [of Breishis, who caused Adam to sin and thereby introduced death into the world; were it not for this sin affecting nature, these special individuals would have lived forever]. Nor has such a title been bestowed upon those about whom it is stated “they did not die” altogether [such as Yaakov and Moshe]. Why, such a title befits the future revelation of “eternal life”!*<sup>37</sup>

*Arizal’s unique theme is the revelation of the innermost aspects of the Torah – as the Alter Rebbe states in Igeres Hakodesh, “The Arizal writes... in these latter generations it is permitted and is indeed a Mitzvah to reveal this wisdom [of Kabala]!” This includes the concealed sections of the Torah and its very innermost secrets; they should all be brought forth and revealed.*<sup>38</sup>

*That is also the connection to ‘life’ (“Arizal Hachai”), for the Torah is “our life and length of days” – all the more so regarding the inner aspects of Torah, the “wellsprings of living waters.”*<sup>39</sup>

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36. **Arizal – Life after passing**

“The title “Ha’arizal Hachai” ties in with the *theme* of the day of his passing: The addition of “zal” to the name of the Ari [rendering it “Arizal”] stand for “Zichrono Livracha – May his memory be a blessing,” and was given due to his *passing*.

The name Arizal however, is immediately followed by “Hachai,” which means “the *living*”! In fact, since “Hachai” *follows* “Arizal,” it obviously receives *greater* emphasis and reflects on an increase and strengthening in the aspect of ‘life’ – which primarily includes the Arizal’s continued accomplishment via activities in matters that are physically visible.” (Night of and following 5<sup>th</sup> Menachem-Av 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.103)

“...Which means that the Arizal’s ‘life’ carries the greatest of force. And this aspect continuously increases from year to year on the anniversary of his passing in an innovative manner [i.e. with new and improved revelation], for the obvious and visible good.” (ibid)

37. Parshas Devarim 5749, footnote 79 – Hisvaduyos p.109.

38. Ibid 5748, p.103.

39. **Study of inner dimension reveals Torah’s ‘life-force’**

“Additionally, on a deeper perspective, regarding the revelation of the inner aspects of Torah via the teachings of Chabad Chassidus ... in the revelation of the inner aspects of Torah (through the Arizal and specifically through Chabad Chassidus) the “life” of the Torah receives greater emphasis. Not only the

*The dissemination of these wellsprings is therefore an extremely timely concern, for the unique service of these days (between Rosh Chodesh and the 9th of Av) is to transform them into “days of joy, gladness and festivals,” through the true and complete Redemption by Moshiach. Moreover, this dissemination<sup>40</sup> bears a particular ability to hasten the coming of Moshiach.*

*Redemption is even reflected in the name of the Arizal: “Yitzchak” – for “in the future [Redemption] we shall declare to Yitzchak ‘You are our father!’” and “Ben Shlomo” – for only in the times of Shlomo Hamelech did the Jewish nation enjoy<sup>41</sup> a peace and tranquility that resembled the future Redemption.*

### SPREAD CHASSIDUS

- It is *obvious* that the day of the Arizal’s passing<sup>42</sup> should arouse us, in addition to a general increase in “Mishpat” (Torah-study) and “Tzedakah” which were both particularly emphasized by the Arizal<sup>43</sup>, to add in our activities to disseminate the

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revelation of “the living waters” (the “wellspring” of Torah), but rather also the revelation and issuing forth of the “Source of the living waters” – which raises the aspect of ‘life’ to a far loftier level.” (Ibid p.104-105)

40. Ibid. p.105.

41. Parshas Devarim 5749, footnote 79 – Hisvaduyos p.109.

#### **Fifth of Av**

“This is additionally alluded to in the very *date* of his passing, the 5<sup>th</sup> of Av. For the ‘fifth’ alludes to the fifth level of the soul – the highest of the “five names by which she (the soul) is called,” i.e., the level of Yechidah ... the level of Moshiach.” (ibid 5748 p.106)

42. **Disseminating Torah’s inner dimension brings Moshiach**

“...All of “his service that he performed all the days of his life” are openly revealed, and they “effect salvations in the midst of the earth.” For his theme was to reveal the innermost parts of Torah – to the extent that it was he who stated, “Specifically in these latter generations it is permissible and is indeed a Mitzvah to reveal this wisdom [of Kabala]!” The dissemination of this study was subsequently increased (through the Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbes of Chabad), in compliance with [Moshiach’s] command and instruction to “disseminate the wellsprings outward,” thereby bringing “the master,” i.e., Moshiach.”

43. **Outstanding in Tzedakah**

“...Likewise regarding the increase in Tzedakah, which also underscores the connection to the day of the Arizal’s passing. For amongst the unique matters of his ways and paths that he revealed or that were revealed by his disciples – and were subsequently publicized throughout the community of Israel [in order that they should learn to follow in these same paths of his, and particularly on the anniversary of his passing...] – is his unique conduct regarding distributing

wellsprings of "this Wisdom" (i.e., Kabala) – especially its elucidation in Chabad Chassidus.<sup>44</sup>

### SIYUMIM AND MOSHIACH

- This day is an extremely auspicious time for the Redemption through Moshiach to occur,<sup>45</sup> particularly so in light of our increase in deeds and service – and especially because of our activities related to the Nine Days, i.e., the Siyumim that were already held and that will continue to be held!<sup>46</sup>

### A GENERAL LETTER FROM THE REBBE

*Below is a letter from the Rebbe concerning the 5<sup>th</sup> of Menachem-Av that was originally published as a letter to all Jewry in 5732*

Tzedakah. His Torah teachings ("Mishpat") likewise explain the greatness of Tzedakah." (ibid 5748 p.109)

#### **Name of Hashem in act of charity**

"It is stated in the writings of the Arizal that the distribution of Tzedaka is connected with the name [of Hashem,] Havaya: For that which is *given* (i.e., the coin given to Tzedakah) constitutes the letter Yud; the *hand* which distributes and which contains five (fingers) corresponds to a Hei; the distributor's *arm* forms the letter Vov; and the accepting *hand* constitutes another Hei." (ibid 5749 p.120) See also below, the letter brought in the main text.

#### 44. **Spread the wellsprings within oneself and throughout the world**

"...Particularly as this wisdom has been very elaborately explained, elucidated and clarified, in the teachings of Chabad Chassidus – which are the three intellectual faculties of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. This is true regarding oneself – that one's entire theme in studying the teachings of Chabad Chassidus is to further the "spreading of the wellsprings outward" via spreading the wellsprings of wisdom into clear understanding and knowledge – and it is also true regarding one's emotions – which are "external" in relation to one's intellect, and even regarding one's practical thought, speech and actions. On the contrary: The *main* thing is the deed!

Furthermore and most importantly: actually disseminating the wellsprings throughout the "externality" of the world." (Parshas Devarim 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.109)

#### 45. **His name reflects Redemption**

"...Which is bound to "Yitzchak" (the name of the Arizal), for there will then be the concept of "Shlomo" (the name of the Arizal's father) in the most complete state; both regarding peace ("Redeemed my soul in peace") and also regarding the construction of the Beis Hamikdash, the "Mikdash of Hashem, founded by Your Hands"." (5<sup>th</sup> Menachem-Av 5749 – Hisvaduyos p.119)

#### 46. **There will be many more Siyumim when Moshiach comes**

"Although Moshiach will arrive straight away – immediately, the study of Torah will nevertheless continue and on the contrary, Torah will be studied with *greater* strength and vigor and with *greater* diligence and alacrity – whereby we will conclude [sections of Torah] much faster, and then begin new subjects immediately following the Siyum!" (ibid 5749)

(1972),<sup>47</sup> and was re-sent to the public in 5748 (1988).<sup>48</sup>

To all the sons and daughters of Israel wherever they may be, may Hashem's blessings be upon them. Greetings and blessings!

Attached is the letter from [the 5<sup>th</sup> of Menachem-Av of] the year 5732. Its content applied with the same force to the current year and on the contrary, since every year we fulfill the instruction to move upwards in all matters of holiness, there has been fifteen elevations since the year 5732.

Bo ruch Hashem. Motzei Shabbos-Kodesh Chazon,

The Eve of the 5<sup>th</sup> of Menachem-Av, 5732

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greetings and blessings!

On this day, the day of passing of Arizal Hachai and specifically having completed four hundred years since his passing, it is a fitting time to contemplate on the proper paths which, to quote the Alter Rebbe in his Igeres Hakodesh, we have received instruction from his **ways** and we follow in his **paths**. For that is certainly one of the reasons for specifically these ways and paths having been revealed by his students and publicized throughout all of Israel.

And although who is the man and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to declare that he will perform the service of "the holy angel that descended from Heaven, the great, G-dly and pious Rav," the Arizal?

"Nevertheless, a minute portion and particle of his abundant goodness and light illuminates the community all Israel in each generation", together with the revelation and publicizing of these ways and instruction of his, all serves to grant us the ability and lend us great aid to follow in these ways and paths in a manner that is similar to the said holy service.

Here are a few of these proper paths and general conducts which are

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47. General Letter, 5<sup>th</sup> Menachem-Av 5748 – Hisvaduyos p.101.

48. Printed in Likutei Sichos Vol.8, p.251 and onward. See also the Letter of Erev Shabbos, 5<sup>th</sup> Menachem-Av 5747.

brought down in the writings of the Arizal:

**Torah:** I have seen my master [the Arizal] empower himself as a lion with strength when he would occupy himself with Halacha, until he would grow weary and perspire etc. The Torah is called ‘Toshia’ for it weakens the power of he who occupies himself with it. It is therefore fitting to exert effort until weakened whilst occupied with Halacha.

**Mitzvos:** Regarding Tzedakah and the Mitzvos, he was not at all stingy. As is written in Zohar, Parshas Terumah (and this is the quote from the Zohar: The person who wishes to extend himself in the fulfillment of a Mitzva... should not strive to obtain it for free or cheaply, rather... for the full price. See there.)

**Torah and Mitzvos in general:** A person should rejoice in his performance of a Mitzva, which is the inner meaning of the verse “Since you did not serve Hashem with joy and gladness of heart”.

May it be His Will, that the contemplation in all the above, in addition to that which the Arizal writes in his introduction to Shaar Hamitzvos, that a person is obligated to fulfill all of the Mitzvos and as long as he has not yet completed them his soul is left lacking, about which it is written “all that bear a blemish shall not draw close”; and likewise regarding the study of Torah where a person is required to extend effort into the [four levels within Torah, the] basic meaning, the allusions, the expositions, and the secrets, on all levels within them that are within his ability to grasp, and to extend himself and appoint a teacher who can teach him -

That the contemplation should lead to action, the fulfillment of all the above in actuality amidst true joy.

There will certainly be success and as is written “In You Hashem I trust; I shall not be shamed, forever.”

This will also hasten the fulfillment of the prophecy that these days shall be transformed into joy and gladness, with the coming of our righteous Moshiach speedily and in our days in actuality!

## **Shabbos Chazak**

## INTRODUCTION

*It is the Jewish custom that upon completing any of the five books of the Torah in our cycle of weekly readings, the entire congregation calls out: ‘Chazak, Chazak, v’Nischazek – Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!’<sup>49</sup>*

### EVERYONE’S CALL

- ‘Chazak, Chazak, v’Nischazek’ is called out by everyone present in the synagogue, including men, women, and children.<sup>50</sup>

### LOUD AND JOYFUL

- We call out with a loud, joyous, voice, which reflects on the strength and steadfastness of the Jewish people in all Torah matters.<sup>51</sup>

### THRICE STRENGTHENED

- This strength is itself further bolstered by our tripled expression of strength, ‘*Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!*’<sup>51</sup>

### IMPLEMENTING THE CALL

- During Shabbos Chazak, each and every Jewish person

49. The sources given for this custom in Likutei Sichos Vol.25 p.474, are: “*Avudraham*, Seder Hatza’os Sefer Torah; *Responsa of Maharam Mintz*, Chapter 85; *Aruch Hashulchan*, Orech Chayim, 39:15; *Keser Shem Tov* (Gagin) Vol.1, 38.”

50. “We call out – *everyone* present in Shul, both those in the men’s section and those in the women’s section and even including young children – “*Chazak, Chazak, v’Nischazek*,” using the word *chazak* three times.” (Parshas Vayechi 5752 – Sichos Kodosh p.505)

[In Jewish Law, something done three times constitutes a *chazakah* (lit. “strength”), i.e., a legally valid continuity and power. In this case, the word *chazak*, i.e., the “strengthening”, is *itself* given a *chazakah* (legal strength) by being repeated three times over – Ed.]

51. Parshas Matos-Masei 5751 – Hisvadyos p.68.

See there, footnote 4: “Note that the source for this custom comes from the fact that, “Hashem told Yehoshuah upon the completion of the Torah, ‘*Chazak v’Ematz – Be strong and fortified!*’” [See footnote 49 above for sources]. The innovation in this custom is that although ‘strength’ is mentioned only twice in the verse, “Be strong and fortified,” Jewish custom has nevertheless added a *third* ‘strength.’

Now, in addition to an established Jewish custom being “a part of Torah itself,” it even bears an *advantage* of a kind over the Written and Oral Torah (See Likutei Torah Derushei Sukos 80c and in many other location, for an explanation of this advantage). Moreover, this custom carries the quality and state of completeness of “something done three times assumes a legal strength, a *chazakah*” [See previous footnote].”

should strengthen themselves, their family, and all around them (the word ‘*nischazek* – may we be strengthened’ is plural), in all matters pertaining to Judaism, Torah, and Mitzvos.<sup>52</sup>

### GREAT KIDDUSH / FARBRENGEN

- We should connect this custom with the holding of a special *farbrengen* in addition to the weekly *farbrengen* (that are held in fulfillment of the custom ‘to gather congregations each Shabbos’). Indeed, many congregations have the custom to hold

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52. [The name of every Parshah (in addition to its content) serves as a lesson and instructed that we should implement. This fact is included in the Alter Rebbe’s directive to ‘live’ with the Parshah of the week by implementing its lessons. Moreover, since our Parshah is also the conclusion of the entire book of Breishis - and “everything follows the conclusion” (Brachos12a) - the Parshah’s name (Vayechi) must certainly contain a powerful lesson.

However, since we are already alive (and can therefore ‘live’ with the Parshah) – the life of Jewry being *true* life since it stems from the Torah of Life (Avos d’Rabbi Nasan 34) – then what instruction can we take from the name Vayechi, which means “life”?! How do we ‘live’ with ‘living’?

The explanation, in brief, is that a person generally does not *feel* his life-force and certainly not its source, i.e., the essence of his soul. He merely feels the individual powers that stem from this life-force, e.g., sight, hearing etc. Our general and essential life-force remains undetected by our senses. The instruction of Vayechi, then, is to take the expression of our soul’s essential life-force, i.e., our essential faith in Hashem, and to ‘live with it’ by expressing it within the particulars of our divine service and details of our daily affairs.

Inssofar as Torah is concerned, instead of merely living with (and sensing the vivifying force we receive from) the individual Parshah of each week, Vayechi instructs us to live with and sense the general vivifying force of Torah itself, “for it is our lives and the length of our days.” This awareness should then be likewise brought to bear in the particular of our daily ‘living’.

And since the life of the entire creation comes from the Torah, Vayechi teaches us to view the world in context of its true general life-force, so that we fully interact with the world based on the awareness that there is nothing besides Hashem. (Editor’s synopsis of Sichas Vayechi 5750 – Hisv. p137)]

“It is now Shabbos Parshas Vayechi, Shabbos Chazak, when we conclude the first book of Torah [i.e. Breishis, also known as] Sefer Hayashar [“The Book of the Upright” – our forefathers Avraham, Yitchak and Yaakov. The name Breishis comes from the word Rosh, a head or beginning – which indicates that this book is *loftier* than the other four books of the Torah. See there, footnote 1]. Each and every Jewish person should therefore strengthen ... [See main text above for continuation] ... in a manner whereby it becomes clearly discernable that he lives in the true sense of the word ‘living,’ i.e., with the individual as well as general life-force of the Jewish people and the Torah, and as it permeates every last detail of our day-to-day lives.” (Parshas Vayechi 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.137)

a *Kidushah Rabbah* – a ‘Great Kiddush’ on Shabbos Chazak.<sup>53</sup>

### RE-INSTALL THE CUSTOM

- We should re-establish and bolster this custom everywhere, so that all may add in reciting words of Torah – and add in their rejoicing upon completing an entire book of Torah.<sup>54</sup>
- We should also accept positive resolutions to increase in Torah study and the embellished performance of Mitzvos.<sup>54</sup>

## יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

53. Ibid. See also there, p.142: “We should therefore hold an extra farbrengen in honor of this Shabbos-Chazak [upon completing the book of Breishis], as well on future Shabbos-Chazaks for completing the remaining four books of the Torah. Certainly, then, we should hold an *extra* farbrengen on Shabbos-Chazak for completing the *entire* Chumash – although there is no need to encourage a celebration for that completion, since we already celebrate the completion of the entire Torah with the festival of Simchas Torah!

This practice is further necessary in this Shul [770], since those present have not fulfilled their ‘obligation’ with the current farbrengen. For that reason I found it necessary to promote and encourage this practice now. After all, I don’t want people to attribute the fact that that the Gabbaim haven’t arranged an additional farbrengen, to the farbrengen being held now! [Rather, they should go ahead and make another farbrengen –Ed]

There is plenty of time to hold a second farbrengen following this one, and even after all that we have discussed in this farbrengen, there still remains *plenty* that could – and should – be discussed. Particularly, as there are Torah scholars present amongst the audience, and especially as there are students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim who are expected to fulfill everything in the most perfect manner [Temimim means “perfect ones” –Ed].

The most important thing is not merely the discussion, rather that the message should even *transcend* speech altogether, so that it will be openly and clearly discernable that “this is our very life-force” – [as alluded to in the name of the Parsha,] Vayechi!”

See also Parshas Bamidbar 5750, footnote 137 – Hisvaduyos p.153: “It is for this reason that Kiddush on the day of Shabbos is called *kidushah rabah*, the ‘Great Kiddush,’ since it is held amongst a multitude of Jews [i.e., in Shul].” See there in the subnote: “This explanation is in *addition* to its basic euphemistic meaning – that the Kiddush for Shabbos Morning is shorter than the Kiddush for Friday night (*Magid Mishnah* to the Rambam, Shabbos 29:10).”

54. “...In a similar manner to the rejoicing over the completion of the entire Torah that is celebrated on Simchas Torah. The gathering of a large number of Jews for the sake of rejoicing over completing the Torah further emphasizes the indivisible unity of the general life-force of the Jewish people and the Torah. The final purpose, however, is for this life-force to be drawn down until it permeates our actual service, including its finest details.” (Parshas Vayechi 5750 – Hisvaduyos p.137) [See previous two footnotes for further clarification.]