

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

Yud Shevat
Tu B'Shevat
Shabbos Shira

**PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752**

**A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar**

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, וְכָל יְהִי קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה - “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 Yahrtzait [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 Yahrtzait. 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 [Yahrtzait] 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 Yahrzeit, 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

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Tu B'shevat

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TU BISHEVAT

15th of Shevat – New Year for Trees

INTRODUCTION

The Mishnah¹¹ designates Tu BiShevat as “Rosh Hashanah LeLlanos,” “the New Year for Trees.”

In the Land of Israel, most of the year’s rain has already fallen and the first trees begin to bloom. For that reason, Tu BiShevat marks a new year in the cycle of separating tithes (“Terumah” and “Ma’aser”) from fruit grown in the Land of Israel, as well as for reckoning a tree’s first three years (during which time its fruit is prohibited as “Orlah”), and the redemption of its fourth year’s yield (“Neta Revai”).

It is customary to eat fruits on Tu BiShevat, and particularly the species with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel: Grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. We reflect on the lessons to be learned from trees and fruit – in the spirit of the verse, “Man is a tree of the field” (Devarim 20:19).

On the 15th day of every month, the moon is at its fullest. Spiritually, this represents the climax and perfection of

11. Rosh Hashanah 1:1.

divine service unique to that month. Tu BiShevat therefore represents the complete state in our Shevat-related service.

Tu BiShevat occurs just five days after the Yahrzeit of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. “Yosef” signifies “multiplication” and “growth” in divine service; “Yitzchak” connotes “pleasure” in serving Hashem. It is not surprising, then, that the mid-month immediately following his Yahrzeit is celebrated as the renewal and growth of trees and their pleasurable fruit – as well as their counterpart in man’s spiritual service.

PREPARE FROM YUD SHEVAT

- We should begin our main preparations for Tu BiShevat four full days in advance, i.e., on Yud (10th) Shevat.¹²

12. Just like Rosh Hashanah

At least four days prior to Rosh Hashanah, we begin reciting morning Selichos (penitently prayers). This same concept (of preparing four days in advance) applies to “Rosh Hashanah Lellanos,” the New Year for Trees. (Yud Shevat 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.254)

In the month of growth

Rosh Hashanah L’ilanos marks the start of growth for the entire coming year. For that reason, it specifically occurs during the month of Shevat, for Shevat corresponds to the tribe of Yosef. [Each of the twelve months corresponds to another of the twelve tribes, with the eleventh month (Shevat) corresponding to the eleventh tribe, Yosef.] Now, the “Yosef” [means “multiplication” and therefore] represents “addition” and “growth.”

After the Yahrzeit representing growth

... In this generation, an additional aspect has been introduced to the month of Shevat, namely, the 10th of Shevat, the Yom Hilulah (Yahrzeit) of the Leader of our generation, whose first name is Yosef.

Complete state of sanctity

On the 15th day of the month, when the moon of Shevat is at its fullest, “completion” is brought to all aspects of divine service pertaining to Shevat – and specifically in its most significant aspect [the day of sanctity, Yud Shevat], that is alluded to in the verse “The tenth shall be *holy*.” [The full verse concerns animal tithes, and reads (Vayikra 27:32), “All that pass under the staff (Shavet), the *tenth one will be holy unto Hashem*.” The very next verse (v.33) includes the particular initial of Hashem’s Name that corresponds to the month of Shevat. It is on the 15th of Shevat, then, that] completion and perfection is brought to all aspects of the Yom Hilulah of “The Yosef of Our Generation.”

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

- We should utilize the extremely opportune time of the New Year for Trees to make positive resolutions for the entire coming year – and to begin their immediate implementation.¹³

TIME TO ADD

- We should also use this time to add and put far greater energy into all aspects of our divine service – both our personal performance as well as our outreach to others.¹⁴

A FULL AND FRUITFUL DIVINE SERVICE

- The Torah praises the Land of Israel for its seven species of produce: “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates; and land of olive oil and date honey.” The various forms of spiritual service alluded to by these kinds are contained within each member of the Children of Israel.¹⁵ On Tu BiShevat, we should ensure that all of these modes of service receive an

Tu BiShevat now assumes greater significance

Coming shortly after Yud Shevat, the New Year for Trees is now greatly enhanced. For Tu BiShevat is the start of growth – the theme of “Yosef” (meaning “multiplication”) – the power for which is drawn into every Jew in our generation via the Leader of our generation. (See also Tu BiShevat 574; Hisva’aduyos p.261-262. See there at length.)

13. Head of the year

Our Sages specifically call Tu BiShevat a “*Rosh Hashanah*,” a “*Head of the Year*” – and not merely the “*Beginning of the Year*.” This teaches us that Tu BiShevat includes, and bestows vitality to, the entire year – much as a head includes the vitality for all the limbs of a body and continues to control them even after its vitality has spread forth and been installed within those limbs. (Tu BiShevat 5748; Hisva’aduyos p.321)

14. Ibid.

Time to step up production

We should utilize the time of Tu BiShevat to bolster and add in all areas of divine service – alluded to in the verse, “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and date honey,” concerning both ourselves as well as others. (Tu BiShevat 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.201)

15. The details of these concepts have already been explained many times.

See at length Tu BiShevat 5752 (Hisva’aduyos p.193 ff.) and Tu BiShevat 5750 (Hisva’aduyos p.256 ff.).

innovative increase and are bolstered – with each of us acting according to the best of our individual abilities.¹⁶

LESSONS FROM TREES AND FRUITS

- Beginning with Tu BiShevat, each of us should add afresh in all aspects of divine service relating to “Man, the tree of the field.”

TAKE PLEASURE IN SERVING HASHEM

- 1) [Fruit are not an essential staple, but rather add enjoyment to our diet. The message of “fruit,” therefore, is that] we should serve Hashem with *pleasure*. In other words, we should not restrict our divine service to the basic requisites of Judaism – rather, we should step beyond the rudiment requirements of law and serve Hashem with delight.¹⁷

KEEP GROWING

- 2) When a tree is planted, it not only greatly multiplies in quantity, but also in quality – even to an incomparable extent. Further, a tree doesn’t stop growing.¹⁸

16. “Man” means Jews

The New Year for Trees is relevant to, and connected with, man; as expressed in the verse, “Man is a tree of the field.”

Now, the term “Man” is to be understood as a reference to all Jews. For our Sages tell us that it is specifically the Jewish nation who are given the term “Adam”; the connotation of which is meant in the spirit as in the verse (Yeshayah 14:14), “Edameh LeElyon,” “compared to the Supernal.”

We are the Holy Land

Further, the Jews are compared to the trees with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel. After all, the Land of Israel is connected with, and is indeed named after, the “Children of Israel.” Hashem also refers to the Jewish people as His “land,” and He tells them “You will be a desirable land to Me.” (Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.181)

17. Tu BiShevat 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.262 and 253.

18. [The verse praising the produce of Israel also alludes to various aspects of the service of the Jewish people:

Wheat and barley

The Torah first mentions two *grains* – “A land of wheat, barley, etc.” – and then lists five *fruits*: “Grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and date

honey.” Our basic, regular divine service is compared to grains, which (when made into bread) form the basic staple that is essential to life. In the same way, the rudiment obligations of Judaism provide our soul with its staple, indispensable diet. More specifically, Chassidus explains that “wheat” represents exercising our G-dly soul in spiritual service, while “barley” involves harnessing our animalistic soul to serve Hashem. Both are equally indispensable to our divine service.

From wine to honey

The concept of “fruit,” conversely, represents the extras, pleasures, compliments; going beyond our essential obligations, and serving Hashem with delight: “grapes” or “wine” alludes to joy and eagerness, “figs” to depth and involvement, “pomegranates” to reaching beyond the present standing, “olives” to utilizing challenge to reveal our G-dly essence, and ultimately – “date honey” to the essential tranquility in the depth of our souls.

Ingraining Kabbalas Ol

On Rosh Hashanah, we re-accept Hashem’s Kingship and refresh our regular service – our “wheat and barley.” To accomplish that, the Jews (who are compared to a land – “You will be a desirable land for Me”) must first work hard at ploughing and softening our “soil.”

Adding color and flavor

Tu BiShevat, on the other hand, is not a time for “grain”-based undertakings; rather, we now focus on producing “fruit” – our abovementioned “extras” that bring beauty and pleasure to our service.

The Yud Shevat factor

Tu BiShevat closely follows and brings completion to our spiritual service that began on the Previous Rebbe’s Yahrtzeit. Noticeably, the themes of Tu BiShevat (“fruit” and “trees”) are also indicated by the Previous Rebbe’s “themes”: His second name, Yitzchak (meaning pleasure), represents “fruit,” as we have just discussed. His first name, Yosef (meaning multiplication) represents the theme of “trees” (as opposed to “grain”) and is described below:]

Not seeds, but trees

The sprouting and growth of a tree contains an incomparably superiority over the growth of a seed of grain. For when seeds are sown, the produce that subsequently sprouts is the *exact same* stuff as the seed that was sown [for example, we plant kernels of actual wheat, in order to produce a wheat-yield]. It is only that it has multiplied *quantitatively*; by sowing a small quantity of seed, a much larger quantity of grain is produced. [The individual wheat kernels produce wheat stalks with many more kernels on them. Yet what was sown and what was grown is the very same substance.]

... Concerning the planting of a tree, however, that which grows is an immeasurably better substance than that which was planted: By planting a bulb or grafting a twig, an entire tree will grow – accompanied by quality fruits and the like. In other words, in addition to the quantitative multiplication that occurs when a tree is planted, an altogether *innovative* product is achieved.

A similar concept applies to the “tree” within each person... (Tu BiShevat 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.253. See p.262.)

[The message of a “tree,” therefore, is that] we should continually¹⁹ add innovative increases to our divine service – incomparably increasing our performance even beyond the perfection in divine service that we attained on Yud Shevat...²⁰

ACTIVATE A RIPPLE EFFECT OF OBSERVANCE

- The Torah describes fruit as “fruit of trees that produce fruit according to its kind, with which to seed” [the soil] to produce many more similar trees. In other words, it is from the seeds of fruit that yet additional fruit-bearing trees are produced.

We should derive a lesson from the growth of fruit, and act to positively influence others – beginning with our own family and associates. Our influence should spur those we affect to in turn positively influence additional people – in an ever-widening pattern.²¹

19. Ever higher

We should not assume that because we have already achieved “a complete world,” we are now able to rest and relax... On the contrary: We should now add with yet greater vigor, each and every second, in the manner of continual growth. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.274)

20. Tu BiShevat 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.269.

21. The Jews are Hashem’s orchard

Accordingly, we could shed light on the common name for Tu BiShevat, “New Year for *Trees*,” in the plural, despite the Mishnah referring to the 15th of Shevat as the “New Year for *Tree*,” in the singular:

Our divine service begins with “VeAhavtah LeRe’achah Kamochoh” – love for our fellow Jews. At the beginning of each day, even before the morning prayers, we all recite, “Hareini MeKabel – I hereby accept upon myself the positive precept to ‘love your fellow as yourself.’” Only after that do we begin focusing on ourselves, with our personal service of prayer. In other words, the start of divine service is that of “trees” – specifically in the *plural*. (Tu BiShevat 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.262)

Add branches

Therein lies a unique lesson for all those who merited to be Shluchim (emissaries) or Shluchei Shluchim (emissaries appointed by the original emissaries) of the Rebbe, the Leader of our generation – who is himself the emissary of Hashem

... The direct continuation and perfection of the Yom Hilulah (Yud Shevat) occurs on the following holy day of Shabbos, the 15th of Shevat, Tu BiShevat [for 1) it is on every Shabbos that the accomplishments of the past week are *elevated* and *perfected*; 2) it is on the 15th of every month that the accomplishments of that month are at their *fullest*; and 3) Tu BiShevat represents an *increase* in divine

EAT FRUIT

- It is our custom to partake of many fruit on Tu BiShevat – and particularly when it coincides with Shabbos.²²

THE FIVE SPECIES

- Special attention is paid to the fruits with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel.²³

CAROBS

- Although, for some reason, this custom has been neglected in many locations,²⁴ it is our custom to make a point of specifically eating carobs.²⁵

service]. As a result, we should *add* to the Shlichus (mission) by appointing an additional Shliach – in the spirit of “Shliach Oseh Shliach – an emissary may appoint another emissary in turn” – or even a hundred new Shluchim! (Tu BiShevat 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.269)

22. Use fruit to fill quota

When Tu BiShevat coincides with Shabbos, we place greater emphasis on the custom of eating many fruits. After all, it is customary on *every* Shabbos to attempt to “complete the total 100 daily blessings [some of which are lacking on Shabbos due to the alternative form of prayers, etc.] by reciting blessings before and after eating fruit” (Rambam, Laws of Prayer 7:15-16; Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, beg. of ch.46). (Tu BiShevat 5750, footnote 40; Hisva’aduyos p.254)

23. Tu BiShevat 5748; Hisva’aduyos p.322 and elsewhere.

Some (particularly in Sefardic communities) have the custom to recite a selection of verses from Tanach, Zohar and the like, which discuss the uniqueness of the fruit of trees. (ibid, in the footnote)

24. ... So that Jews everywhere will observe the custom of eating fruit – and that the custom will be greatly strengthened.

Miraculous fruit

... Note that it is also customary to eat *carobs* on Tu BiShevat. Carobs are especially associated with miracles; as is seen, for example, in the Talmudic account of Rabbi Chaninah Ben Dosah, who was able to suffice with just one measure of carobs that would last him from one Shabbos to the next – in continuation of which, the Talmud states that he was “well versed in miracles.” (Parshas Beshalach 5751; Hisva’aduyos p.222)

25. Miracles in the Holy Land

This strengthens our bond with the Land of Israel – “The Land upon which, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year, the eyes of Hashem Your G-d rest.” This also further increases the miracles which Hashem performs on behalf of the Jewish people. (ibid)

TRAIN CHILDREN TO OBSERVE TU BISHVAT

- We should train our children to observe the custom of eating fruit on Tu BiShevat.²⁶

TEACH THEM THE MESSAGE OF TU BISHVAT

- At the same time, we should explain the message of Tu BiShevat to them, in a manner to which they can relate; namely, that 1) there should be a fresh “sprouting” and growth in all areas of Judaism, Torah and Mitzvos and 2) they should be “trees” that bear goodly “fruit.”²⁷

Eat carobs

Now is the perfect time to promote a matter in which has lately fallen into neglect: In the past, it was taken for granted that, in keeping with Jewish custom, housewives would prepare the seven species with which the Land of Israel was praised by the Torah – including *carobs* – in honor of Tu BiShevat. We should now promote and strengthen observance of this practice. (Roshei Devarim, Parshas Beshalach 5751)

... We should again mention and promote the observance of the Jewish custom to taste and consume the seven species with which the Land of Israel is praised, sometime during the 24hrs of Tu BiShevat. (Tu BiShevat, at a Yechidus, 5751; Hisva'aduyos p.243)

Make a blessing to receive a blessing

... Particularly after having actually eaten from the fruits. Blessing will come upon all who increase in this matter – and meanwhile, they will have already have recited yet another blessing over fruit, which *itself* naturally elicits blessing and a bestowal from Above. (17th of Shevat 5752, at a Yechidus; Sichos Kodesh p.621)

26. ... And particularly those fruit with which the Land of Israel is praised.

27. Tzedakah and education on Shabbos Tu BiShevat

It is worthwhile and fitting to immediately commence with a real act – in a manner that is not only permissible, but is indeed strongly encouraged on Shabbos ...

1) An increase in Tzedakah, i.e., furthering love and unity between fellow Jews, by resolving to donate an *established figure* (as opposed to simply making a general “resolution” to give Tzedakah) – which will be set aside immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbos. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.270)

This comes in addition to our ability to immediately and literally fulfill the commandment of Tzedakah – via sharing our food and drink, as well as extending Tzedakah in its *spiritual* forms. (ibid, footnote 116)

Despite it being nighttime as well as Motze Shabbos, when some are particular not to spend money at all, they can nevertheless set aside the money on their own, and only actually give it to a Tzedakah collector or pauper the next morning. (ibid, footnote 117).

2) An addition in the education of children, by promoting the custom of eating fruit. (ibid, p.270)

FARBRENG

- In addition to the continued Farbrengens to make up for – as well as perfect²⁸ – our spiritual service relating to Yud Shevat, we should also hold Farbrengens in each possible place, on Tu BiShevat.²⁹

HAKHEL YEAR – LARGEST CROWDS, MANY DAYS

- [In 5748, a Hakhel³⁰ year, the Rebbe stated:] We should choose the most appropriate time for each location, in keeping with local conditions, to ensure that these Tu BiShevat Farbrengens will draw the largest possible attendance.
- At least, these Farbrengens should occur on either 1) on the 14th of Shevat, following Minchah; 2) on Tu BiShevat itself; or 3) on any of the subsequent days up until and including the following Shabbos – the Shabbos of Matan Torah [when the portion describing the Giving of the Torah is read]. Ideally, though, we should farbreng on *all* of these dates, in alternative locations.³¹

EXPLAIN TU BISHEVAT – EACH ON THEIR LEVEL

- We should make certain to properly utilize these Farbrengens, by explaining and promoting the abovementioned lessons in divine service (that are alluded to by the seven

28. See also Parshas Beshalach 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.600.

29. Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva'aduyos p.181.

30. **During Hakhel: Inspirational gatherings**

[Throughout 5748, the Rebbe constantly emphasized, and called for new activities that were based upon, the theme of “Hakhel,” i.e., rallying together all Jewish men, women and children, for the sake of strengthening their observance of Torah and Mitzvos. This corresponds to the Biblical obligation for all Jewry to gather in the Beis Hamikdash once every seven years (at the close of the Shemitah year), where the Jewish monarch exhorts them to carefully observe the Torah and reminds them of the Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.]

31. **Hakhel: Large groups, many Mitzvos**

We should utilize this propitious day to gather men, women and children in order to yet further increase all matters of Torah and Mitzvos – and particularly, adding and perfecting in following the paths of the Previous Rebbe; beginning with Ahavas Yisrael, love for our fellow Jews, Achdus Yisrael, unity among Jews, Tzedakah distribution and so forth – as we have mentioned at length. It is worthwhile to hold these gatherings with very large groups. (Parshas Beshalach 5748; Hisva'aduyos p.309)

species). This should be explained even to infants – and certainly to five, four, or even three year olds.³²

YEARN AND ANTICIPATE MOSHIACH

- In particular, we should arouse a yearning, a heartfelt stirring – and also a feeling of real joy, based on the awareness that we will immediately be entering the Land of Israel – to “enjoy its fruits and be satiated from its bounty,” and to fulfill in the most perfect manner all of those precepts that are dependent upon living within the Holy Land.

CENTRAL FARBRENGENS

- [In 5749, the Rebbe declared:] I propose this year, that on the day of Tu BiShevat we should arrange a Central Farbrengen (or at least a Farbrengen with very large attendance), in each and every location – and certainly in the Holy Land.

32. Seven branches to the tree of observance

During these gatherings, we should explain and elucidate how all seven species mentioned in the verse, “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and date honey” are all to be found within the “desirable land” that is each and every Jew. They are the seven dimensions of our divine service.

One day, seven kinds

On a regular basis, each of these aspects has its own established time. A Jew, however, has the ability to rise beyond all limitation, at which point he contains all the seven species at once – and openly.

This transcendence is able, and should, occur even while a Jew finds himself in the lessened spirituality of a plain weekday. Why, Tu BiShevat itself is just an ordinary weekday!

Every Jew a treasure-trove

... This then is the lesson which we should explain to each Jew: Even if at present you are able to discern only one of the seven dimensions of spiritual service in your current performance, you should nevertheless be aware that you contain within yourself a wondrous treasure-house containing all “seven species.”

That being the case, what a pity it is to waste such a precious treasure-house ... After all, with just a little effort, each Jew is able to reveal *all* seven species *at once* – including even [the final species] “honey,” which alludes to the Torah’s mysteries, as we have explained [earlier in the Sichah].

It is possible to explain this concept to every single Jew, including the extremely young – and certainly to five, four, or three year olds. They too, are able to understand that they contain a spiritual treasure – and that they should obviously strive to utilize all of it. (Parshas Beshalach 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.600-601)

In each place (city or district, etc.), a vast number of its residents should gather to publicly fulfill the customs associated with Tu BiShevat, such as consuming fruits and the like.

This is in addition to each individual performing these customs in their respective homes and in a homely environment.³³

DISCUSS TORAH

- Needless to say, we should discuss Torah topics at these events – particularly in light of our Sages’ teaching that the verse “Man is a tree of the field” refers specifically to a Torah scholar, and that each of the seven species with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel are compared to the Torah itself.³³

EVERY JEW PRODUCTIVE IN TORAH AND MITZVOS

- Additionally, we should make new, positive resolutions regarding *all* aspects of Torah and Mitzvos. In a broader sense, we should ensure that each and every person clearly reflects the message of “Man is a tree of the field,” in actuality: They should grow ever larger in all aspects of Torah and Judaism, and they should become a tree that produces goodly fruit. As our Sages explain, “What are one’s “fruit”? Mitzvos!” – and “The fruit of the righteous are their good deeds.”

Translated in the memory of Yitzchok Yosef ben Yaakov Mordechai

33. This year – public Tu BiShevat Sedarim

Amongst the new matters that we are able to do in connection with the beginning of the fortieth anniversary of the Yahrtzait [of the Previous Rebbe]: The coming Shabbos, the first Shabbos after the Yahrtzait, is Tu BiShevat.

The customs associated with Tu BiShevat are well known, starting with the most widespread custom “to partake of many fruits” and particularly those species with which the Land of Israel is praised (grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates). There are many other customs besides, with each community having their own practices – in the spirit of “each river follows its own course.”

However, there is not normally an emphasis on eating the fruit in public. Rather, the normal procedure is for each person to consume them at home, either by themselves or during a meal with their families, and so on.

This year, however, is different. Since Tu BiShevat coincides with Shabbos – the first Shabbos following the 40th anniversary of the Yahrtzait [of the Previous Rebbe] – I therefore propose, accompanied with a request to publicize this proposition in every location, that on the day of Tu BiShevat ... [See main text above for continuation]. (Parshas Bo 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.225)

מוקדש

לב"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לעילוי נשמת

ר' שמעון ב"ר יעקב ע"ה נפטר י"ז שבט

ולעילוי נשמת

אמי מורתי פריידא בת משולם ע"ה נפטר כ"ה שבט

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י בנם

ר' דניאל דוד ב"ר שמעון שיחיו לאופר



לעילוי נשמת

יהודה בערל הלוי בן לייב



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Shabbos Shira

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

Shabbos Shirah

INTRODUCTION

The Torah portion of Beshalach includes the “Song of the Sea” (Az Yashir) with which the Jews praised Hashem as they crossed the split sea on their journey out of Egypt. Consequently, the Shabbos when Parshas Beshalach is read is known as “Shabbos Shirah,” the “Shabbos of Song.”

In addition, the Haftorah for Parshas Beshalach is also a song – the “Song of Devorah” that was composed by the prophetess following the miraculous victory wrought in her days on behalf of the Jewish people.

Spiritually, the concept of raising one’s voice in song represents elevation. Shabbos, too, is an elevation of the past week’s spiritual achievements. So, when the two come together – as they do on Shabbos Shirah, the *Shabbos* of *Song* – the result is a day of foremost elevation.

Further, on the day of one’s Yahrtzait, their lifetime’s combined spiritual achievement is further elevated and magnified. And if the Yahrtzait is that of a Leader of Jewry – then the elevation of his holy soul and its sacred achievements results in an unparalleled elevation for all Jewry. Such a Yahrtzait is that of the Previous Rebbe, Leader of our generation, which takes place on Yud Shevat.

As explained earlier, the elevation of a week’s spiritual attainment occurs on the subsequent Shabbos. It follows, then, that it is specifically on the Shabbos following Yud Shevat that Jewry’s immense spiritual elevation is finalized and completed.

No wonder then, that the Shabbos following Yud Shevat is considered the ultimate Shabbos of elevation – Shabbos Shirah!¹

1. **Every Shabbos is a song**

[The concept of Shabbos is strongly associated with “song,” as we will explain. Shabbos Shirah, then, can be regarded as the “ultimate” Shabbos:]

Lechu Neranenuh

1) At Kabalas Shabbos, the service welcoming the Shabbos [on Friday Night], we begin by reciting the entire psalm that starts “Lechu Neranenuh,” “Come, let us *sing* to Hashem; let us raise our voices in jubilation ... Let us approach Him with thanksgiving; let us raise our voices to Him in song, etc.” ...

Mizmor Shir

2) The concept of joyous singing is especially associated with Shabbos [to the extent that the psalm recited each Shabbos by the Levites in the Beis HaMikdash, and which is still recited by all Jewry in their Shabbos prayers, is] “Mizmor Shir LeYom HaShabbos,” “A psalm of *joyous song* for the day of Shabbos.”

Uplifting tune

3) Then there is the Chassidic insight into the Mishnah in Tractate Shabbos, which states, “Kol Ba’alei Sheir Yotza’in BeSheir VeNimshachin BeSheir, “All [animals] that bear a collar, [may] go forth with a collar [in a public domain, on Shabbos], and [may] be drawn by a collar.”

[Simply, the Mishnah teaches a law of Shabbos governing animals in the public domain. However, the word for collar, “Sheir” (רִיָּשׁ), is related to “Shir” (רִישׁ), meaning “joyous song” – both of which are “circular.”

Chassidus therefore finds an allusion in this law to the spiritual affect of song:] Every elevation from one spiritual level to a higher spiritual level (whereby a soul “goes forth” from its previous standing and is “drawn” upwards) is accomplished by Shir, “song.”

[Chassidus further explains that on Shabbos, the spiritual accomplishments of the past week are elevated – and indeed, all realms of creation are then “elevated.”] This elevation, which takes place on Shabbos, is accomplished through “song.”

The ultimate Shabbos

4) We could even say that the chief “elevation through song” that Shabbos accomplishes occurs on *Shabbos Shirah* – and that it is from Shabbos Shirah that all the remaining Shabbosos of the year receive the power to do likewise! (Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.168)

The first Shabbos

5) Note that the *original* command to observe Shabbos is given in Parshas *Beshalach* – Shabbos Shirah. (ibid, footnote 9)

After Yud Shevat – elevating the elevation

[The Rebbe there continues to explain that the principle of elevation that occurs on Shabbos also occurs on the day of one’s Yahrzeit: Throughout the year, the soul of the departed rises to ever higher levels in Heaven. Yet, on the day of its Yahrzeit, it receives an *unparalleled* elevation.

Significantly, the Yahrzeit of the Previous Rebbe, Leader of our generation,

PERFECTING YUD SHEVAT ACTIVITIES

- We should fully utilize this special Shabbos by increasing and perfecting all of our activities that we undertook in honor of Yud Shevat.

STUDY HIS TEACHINGS, FOLLOW HIS DIRECTIVE

- This includes studying the Previous Rebbe's teachings in public sessions, and following the path he laid out in the dissemination of Torah and Chassidus.²

FARBRENG WITH SONG AND JOY

- We should certainly continue the Farbrengens in honor of Yud Shevat, and do so amidst joy and song – for it is specifically on Shabbos Shirah (song) that the service of Yud Shevat reaches its perfection.³

AHAVAS YISRAEL AND ACTUAL DEEDS

- These Farbrengens should be conducted with Ahavas Yisrael (love for our fellow Jews), and should inspire concrete action on our part.⁴

WHEN TO FARBRENG

- We should hold these Farbrengens on 1) Yud Shevat; 2) Shabbos Shirah; and 3) Motzei Shabbos Shirah.⁴

always occurs in the week leading up to Shabbos Shirah. As we have explained, all the days of the week are elevated on the following Shabbos, and therefore, the complete affects of the Yahrzeit occur on the following Shabbos – Shabbos Shirah. In this way, the day of ultimate elevation (the Yahrzeit) coincides with the Shabbos of ultimate elevation (Shabbos Shirah).]

2. Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva'aduyos p.180.

3. Ibid, p.319-20.

4. From the telegram composed by the Rebbe, to be sent to Lubavitchers worldwide in honor of Yud Shevat (5748-5752).

Maharal's custom

INTRODUCTION

On Shabbos Shirah 5702, the Previous Rebbe related that the Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehudah Loewe⁵) instituted the custom – which will hopefully be reinstated – whereby during the week before Shabbos Beshalach he would inform all the teachers and parents of small children to bring their children to the courtyard of the synagogue on Shabbos Shirah.

There they were told the story of the splitting of the sea and how the birds sang and chirped at the time that Moshe and the Jewish people burst out into the song of “Az Yashir.” The children picked fruits from the trees that had sprouted in the sea-bed and fed the singing birds.

The Maharal then distributed “Kasha” (buckwheat) to the children with which to feed the birds and fowl as a remembrance of the miraculous fruits of the sea which the children gave to the birds.

After this ceremony, the Maharal would bless the children and their parents with the traditional blessing – to raise and educate them in a manner that results in the children growing up to “Torah, Chupah and good deeds.”⁶

The Alter Rebbe, however, in his Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chayim 324:8) rules that it would be incorrect to place food before the birds on Shabbos itself.

-
5. [Rabbi Yehudah Loewe, the “Maharal of Prague” (1525-1609), was an outstanding Torah scholar, author of classic Torah works (upon which – together with other works – the Alter Rebbe based his Tanya), philosopher, Kabbalist and Jewish leader. Popularly known for his extraordinary efforts to protect the Jewish community of Prague from the frequent threat of blood libels, the Maharal was a direct descendant of King David, and direct ascendant of the Rebbes of Chabad. His Yahrzeit is on a highly significant day in the Chassidic calendar, the 18th of Elul.]
 6. Based on Sichos In English, vol.34, Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, Tu BeShevat 5747.

Note that while Chabad do not distribute “Kasha” to the birds, it is nevertheless customary to *eat* “Kasha” on Shabbos Shirah.⁷

DO NOT FEED BIRDS ON SHABBOS

- Although the Previous Rebbe publicly *recounted*⁸ the practice instituted by the Maharal (of feeding the birds on Shabbos Shirah), he [notably] was *never* observed keeping this practice himself [and it is therefore *not* the Chabad custom to feed the birds during Shabbos Shirah].⁹

DISCUSS THE CUSTOM

- However, since the Previous Rebbe made a point of publicizing this custom [including the detail of feeding the birds], we should therefore *mention* and *discuss it* on Shabbos Shirah.¹⁰

GATHER KIDS TO RECOUNT MIRACLE

- In keeping with the first part of the Maharal’s custom, we should certainly gather children and tell them of the miraculous

7. Sefer HaMinhagim; HaYom Yom, p.20; Likutei Diburim, vol.2, p.521.

8. Sefer HaSichos 5702, p.73.

9. **Fed by Heaven**

One of the reasons for [not feeding the birds on Shabbos Shirah] is based on the ruling of the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 324:8), “There are those who have the custom to place wheat before the birds on Shabbos Shirah – but it is *incorrect* to do so, since we are not responsible to provide the birds with sustenance [and it is therefore not permitted to feed them on Shabbos].”

This is certainly the case nowadays, when it is highly uncommon for the feeding of chicken and other fowl to be our direct responsibility – as was common in the tiny villages of former generations. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.270, footnote 118)

10. **Study the practice**

... Anyhow, even if, for whatever reason, we do not actually observe this custom (of feeding birds) on Shabbos Shirah, we should nevertheless recall and discuss it. One of the reasons for the Previous Rebbe publicly discussing this custom, and then instructing that his discussion be published and publicized, was in order that we should study his address from time to time – particularly on a relevant occasion, i.e., [on Shabbos Shirah] when it is a “timely topic.” And as with all of his Torah teachings, this address is considered part of the Oral Torah. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.275)

splitting of the sea – including the detail concerning the Jewish children who picked fruit from trees that miraculously sprouted from the sea-bed and fed them to the birds that joined the Jews in song.⁹

INGRAIN COMPASSION FOR ALL

- We should particularly strive to imbue our children with the positive trait of compassion for all living creatures, in the spirit of the verse, “His mercy is upon all His creatures.” This is effectively impressed upon them by recounting the feeding of the birds on Shabbos Shirah.⁹

מוקדש

לב"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לעילוי נשמת

ר' שמעון ב"ר יעקב ע"ה נפטר י"ז שבט

ולעילוי נשמת

אמי מורתי פריידא בת משולם ע"ה נפטר כ"ה שבט

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י בנם

ר' דניאל דוד ב"ר שמעון שיחיו לאופר



לעילוי נשמת

יהודה בערל הלוי בן לייב



לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה

וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

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