

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

THE MONTH OF NISSAN
THE 2/3RD OF NISSAN

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar



a CALL to ACTION

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Foreword

We are pleased to bring you a newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. This selection is a preview of a book that we are in the process of bringing to publication. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction pertaining to our bolstered ability and paralleled obligations, surrounding the month of Nissan.

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of *Hora'os* (directives) culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources ("*Muga*" and "*Bilti Muga*").

The text was translated into English by **Rabbi Yaakov Paley** and edited by **Rochel Chana Riven**

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

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu Halkar

*Erev Shabbos Parshas Tazria,
Parshas Hachodesh, 5768*

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לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח ר' יצחק יוסף בן הר"ר יעקב מרדכי פילי

נפטר י"ט אדר תשס"ו

שיקויים היעוד ד"והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר" והוא בתוכם

The Month of Nissan

The Month of Redemption

INTRODUCTION

Nissan is the “head” and first of all the months of the year, as the Torah instructs:¹ “This month [of Nissan] shall be for you as a ‘Head of Months’; it is the first month of the year for you.”

Clearly, Nissan must contain a unique and foundational instruction for our coming year’s Divine service.

One such lesson is derived by examining the name of the month, for a Hebrew name generally indicates the essential theme:

“Nissan” comes from the word “*neis*,” “a miracle.” In addition, the *Talmud*² states that a name in which the letter “*nun*” is repeated represents an abundance of “extraordinary miracles” (*nisei nissim*). This is clearly seen in Nissan, the month in which G-d took us from Egypt with earth-shattering wonders, causing the month to be designated as “the month of redemption.”³

Moreover, the word “month” (*chodesh*) is etymologically related to the word *chidush*,

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1. *Shemos* 12:2.
 2. *Berachos* 57a.
 3. *Shemos Rabbah* 15:11.

Nature and beyond

This, then, is the distinction between Tishrei and Nissan:

1) Legally, the year begins on Rosh Hashanah, the 1st of Tishrei, the “Head of the Year”; while the months are counted from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the “Head of all Months.”

2) Spiritually, Tishrei is the head as far as the world’s natural conduct is concerned, while Nissan, being the “Month of Miracles,” is the source of G-d’s miraculous relationship with the Jewish people (See *Parshas Tazria*, 5749; *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 523ff.).

“innovation.” So when combined, *chodesh* Nissan (the month of Nissan) indicates “something new in the realm of the miraculous;” i.e., we are now granted the ability to introduce a higher, miraculous element [than was introduced in the previous year] in our Divine service, breaking free of our natural restrictions and fulfilling our mission unimpeded.

As its Hebrew name suggests, nature (“*teva*”) is simply G-dliness that has been so “submerged” (“*tavah*”) within the framework of Creation that it no longer appears G-dly.

The term “miracle” (*neis*), on the other hand, also means a raised banner or pole, for a miracle is undisguised G-dliness “placed high” so that all can view its supernatural dimension with clarity.

During this “month of redemption,” we have the heightened ability to free ourselves from the restrictions of nature and serve G-d in a miraculous manner. This means stepping beyond our own innate abilities and habitual (i.e., natural) efforts.⁴

NO BARRIERS IN DIVINE SERVICE

- A fresh year begins on the first day of Nissan. Immediately, then, every Jew should “shout out loud” (Yiddish: *ois'shrai'en*) for the entire world to hear – not only proclaiming verbally,⁵ but

4. *Ibid.*, p. 523.

5. *Ibid.*

He gave it to you for use in His service

... for each of us is expected to fully utilize the abilities G-d has given us, including the power of speech. ... The main point is that we should express (our ability to speak, along with the rest of) our abilities, in actuality (*ibid.*, fn. 61).

Don't repeat; do better

... Seeing that with each successive day [of Nissan] the power for miraculous conduct steadily increases, we can no longer make do with yesterday's “announcement.” Rather, we should now make a new announcement regarding our even more miraculous conduct of today!

Then, when asked why we are repeating ourselves by shouting the same message as yesterday, we should reply, “This is *not* the same message as yesterday! The

also announcing via actual conduct – that from now on, he will conduct himself in a supernatural manner on a daily basis!⁶

miraculous conduct that we proclaimed yesterday has already become natural compared to the far superior conduct of today!” (*Ibid.*, p. 533.)

We are ready

The main thing is to announce openly and publicly – to the non-Jewish world as well – that we stand prepared to offer the Pesach sacrifice in actuality, in the Third *Beis HaMikdash*; for we are literally about to exit this final exile and enter the true and complete Redemption, led by Moshiach (*Parshas Tzav, Shabbos HaGadol, 5748; Hisvaadyos*, pp. 516-517).

The work is done

After all, as far as practical service is concerned, we have already completed all that is required of us, including “polishing the buttons”; [i.e., we have reached the historic point where we have completed putting the “finishing touches” on the collective service of Jewry in exile]. *So the main thing now is to announce that we are ready for the Redemption (ibid., fn. 81. See also 2 Nissan, 5748, sec. 12; Hisvaadyos, pp. 501-502).* [Note that this was one of the very first times the Rebbe made this historic announcement.]

6. **Do whatever it takes, on a regular basis**

... so that everyone on earth will literally see and be amazed that here is a Jew whose natural conduct is beyond the realm of (their) laws of nature! Moreover, the Jew himself is not fazed in the slightest by his own conduct; for him it is the perfectly natural thing to do. Such “miraculous” conduct is (to use a common phrase) “normal behavior” for him, or to borrow a colloquialism, “it just couldn’t be otherwise”... (*Parshas Tazria, 5749; Hisvaadyos, p. 527).*

Don’t let the world get in your way

A Jew should demonstrate how nature is in fact miraculous by performing whatever is required of him in his Divine service ... [showing that] he accomplishes [this] successfully, despite his soul being housed within a corporeal body and a physical world; a body and a world that are bound by the rules of nature, to the extent that they consider a miracle to be a novelty and a wonder.

A Jew, nevertheless, shows that he does not take the rules of nature into account when it comes to performing his Divine service. Instead, he conducts himself in a supernatural manner. Moreover, it does not come as an innovation or wonder to him to act this way, since such conduct quickly becomes his natural way of behaving, to the extent that he now relies and bases his conduct on miracles in the first place. Being a Jew, after all, miracles are *natural*.

Aren’t we told *not* to rely on miracles?!

True, “we are not meant to rely on miracles” (*Pesachim 64b*); however, that is only if the matter is considered miraculous to *us*. Once the miracle has become natural – as is the case with Jewry (particularly during Nissan), insofar as goodly and holy matters and our Divine service of Torah and *mitzvos* are concerned – then such conduct is considered “miraculous” only in the eyes of the non-Jewish world (which judges according to the rules of nature). That being the case, we are able, and indeed should, “rely on ‘miracles.’” And we should rely (*someich*) on them all the way – just like the law regarding *kodshim*, [animal sacrifices requiring the one

- Simply put, this means [having] a change of attitude towards all those things that, until now, we shied away from taking upon ourselves, thinking that we lacked the natural ability to accomplish them. These include matters pertaining to our regular Torah study, donations to *tzedakah*, prayers, conducting our daily and mundane affairs for the sake of Heaven, and “knowing Him in all your ways.”⁷
- Being the start of a new year,⁸ now is the most appropriate time to take on new activities that we possibly lacked the ability to carry out until now and would have required a “miracle” to enable us to accomplish them.
- Now, however, we will certainly succeed in these matters – and succeed in a natural manner.⁹

bringing a sacrifice to rest his hands on the animal’s head (*semichah*) and pressing down with all his might, immediately before it is slaughtered. In other words, we should do whatever it takes to accomplish our mission, relying on miracles as a matter of course]. Jews, after all, are a holy nation by their very nature....

However, we should not make do with becoming accustomed to this mode of conduct. For once miraculous conduct becomes second nature, we should raise ourselves to an even higher level (than our newfound standing), and subsequently make that level part of our nature as well. We should climb to ever-superior levels of “miraculous conduct”... (*ibid.*, pp. 526-527).

7. *Ibid.*, p. 529.

8. **Superior each year**

During Nissan of each subsequent year ... the power for an ever-superior innovation is introduced ... in the “super-miracles” that are done – which in turn, are integrated into a Jew’s nature (*ibid.*, p. 527).

9. *Ibid.*, p. 529.

We’re only human, aren’t we?!

When a Jew is asked, “How is a human being, with a corporeal body that is bound by the rules of nature, able to conduct himself in a supernatural manner, to the extent that such conduct becomes his natural conduct?!” he answers:

Member of the Holy Nation

I was born a Jew (though not through my own choosing) and was given a *neshamah* (soul) that is an actual part of G-d. I belong to the Jewish people, who are *mamleches kohanim vegoy kadosh* (a kingdom of priests and a holy nation), and have been that way for thousands of years, from the time of the Giving of the Torah.

This is not a mere historical fact; rather, it is perpetuated via the constant, eternal and true link that every Jew shares with *Matan Torah* and with all Jews of every previous generation.

TRAIN OTHERS AS WELL

- In accordance with the “major principle of the Torah” to “love your fellow Jew as yourself,” we should not only conduct ourselves in the above fashion, but also influence other Jews to act likewise.¹⁰

For that reason, each Jew, in each era and location, is part of the “kingdom of priests” and the “holy nation” ... and since, [by virtue of their G-dly souls,] the Jews are absolutely one with G-d, I have the ability to make my nature supernatural, to the extent that it comes as no wonder at all!

[This is particularly since: a) the soul of every Jew was present at Mount Sinai; and b) the attribute of truth (which is the attribute of Yaakov *Avinu*, whose soul includes the souls of all Jewry) is the “central shaft that stretches from one extreme to the other” (see *Tanya*, ch. 3); i.e., it exists at every level and runs through every single generation (*ibid.*, fns. 51-52).]

Aren't we restricted by exile?

Yes, it is true that we are presently in the Diaspora and in exile, and (unlike the Temple era, when we witnessed open miracles on a regular basis), nowadays, we no longer witness the miracles [that were commonplace in the *Beis Hamikdash*].

However, [it is a basic principle that] the very lowest spiritual levels are directly linked to the very highest of levels. In our case, this means that the miracles that occur nowadays (as well as the ability for a Jew to conduct himself in a miraculous fashion) during exile – when “the person on whose behalf a miracle is being performed does not even recognize that a miracle is taking place altogether” – are in fact extremely superior forms of miracles, even beyond those that occurred during Temple times.

Each Jew a powerhouse

We should therefore appreciate the amazing powers that are given to each Jew in exile, and certainly during the [final and harshest period, known as the] “footsteps of Moshiach.” For in this latter time, even according to nature ... all of the predicted due-dates (auspicious times) for the Redemption have long passed [without the Redemption materializing]. We now find ourselves *just a fraction of time before the actual Redemption*.

All of Jewish history stands behind you

... Our ability to conduct ourselves in this manner is all the more understandable in light of the vast cumulative buildup of spiritual service that has been performed by Jewry throughout the many generations ... amidst self-sacrifice that was entirely supernatural. ... Through this, the Jews have purified and refined the world's physicality (its coarseness certainly having been nullified via our granting predominance to spirit over matter), thus transforming physicality into something spiritual.

It is absolutely certain that a Jew nowadays finds it far easier to perform his Divine service in a supernatural manner, and even outdo the performance of all previous generations (*ibid.*, p. 528).

10. Seeing it done

The power of a congregation helps each individual: If someone has been unable to openly [conduct himself in a miraculous manner] up until now, then witnessing the fact that other Jews have already achieved this serves to empower and embolden him to follow suit (*ibid.*, p. 529).

Reciting the Nasi

INTRODUCTION

The *Mishkan* built by the Jews in the desert was inaugurated on the 1st of Nissan. Over the course of the next twelve days, the *Nesiim* (leaders) of the twelve tribes of Israel¹¹ took turns at supplying the inauguration offerings on behalf of their tribes; one *Nasi* per day.

As stated in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*,¹² it is customary for each individual to recite the Torah section describing the offering brought by that day's *Nasi* – from the 1st through the 12th of Nissan.

This is followed by a short prayer (*Yehi ratzon*), as printed in the *Siddur* (*Tehillat HaShem*, pp. 470-473).

On the 13th of Nissan, an additional portion is read, representing the tribe of Levi.¹³

RE-INTRODUCE AND STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOM

- Unfortunately, there has been widespread neglect of the custom to recite the daily “*Nasi*” (and even more so regarding the subsequent *Yehi ratzon* prayer). *It is a mitzvah*¹³ *to bolster this custom.*¹⁴

11. [Counting the descendants of the two sons of Yosef (Menasheh and Ephraim) as two tribes, and excluding the priestly tribe of Levi, whose duty it was to perform the actual services in the *Mishkan*.]

12. *Orach Chayim* 429:15.

13. **How did reciting the Nasi fall into neglect?**

Note that the Alter Rebbe does not mention this custom in his *Siddur*. (There are, of course, additional matters that the Alter Rebbe omits from his *Siddur*, despite the fact that they are indeed our custom.) However, even when this custom was [subsequently] added to *Siddur Torah Or* and *Tehillat HaShem*, it was merely appended to the end of the *Siddur*, following all the other prayers. Further, it was merely mentioned in a footnote to the Torah reading for Chanukah (for that reading was likewise belatedly appended to the *Siddur*), which is also followed by the *Yehi ratzon* prayer recited after the [daily] *Nasi*.

The 2nd/3rd of Nissan

Yahrtzeit of the Rebbe Rashab and the Beginning of Previous Rebbe's Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe) passed away in Rostov on the 2nd of Nissan, 5680 (1920).

One of his most significant achievements was the founding of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah, and for that reason, the Rebbe explains, “The 2nd of Nissan is an auspicious day¹⁵ regarding everything that is associated with the Yeshivah.”¹⁶

On the 3rd of Nissan, one day after the Rebbe Rashab's passing, his son, the Previous Rebbe, assumed the leadership of Chabad. Under his direction, the network

This, perhaps, is the reason for the unfortunate neglect of the custom to recite the *Nasi*, and even greater neglect of the *Yehi ratzon* (which, although mentioned in works of foremost Torah authorities is not mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch's* discussion on reciting the *Nasi* ...).

It is a mitzvah to bolster this custom (Parshas Tazria 5749, fn. 76; Hisvaadyos, p. 530).

Reminders are essential

On Chanukah, these same portions are read to the congregation from the Torah and therefore do not require further promoting. Conversely, during Nissan, each person reads the *Nasi* to themselves, which is why we need to actively promote and remind everyone to recite it.

The essential point is that through [promoting and observing] this custom, we hasten the dedication of the Third *Beis HaMikdash* (*ibid.*, p. 534).

14. A Jewish custom is precious

It is a *mitzvah* to bolster this custom, and to do so in a manner befitting the activity [of carrying out a custom] described [by G-d] as “the practices instituted by the Sages [that] are more important and cherished to Me [than My own commandments]” i.e., as befits the preciousness of a custom established by Jewry. (In this regard, reciting the *Nasi* may be compared to the custom of *Hakafos* on Simchas Torah) (*ibid.*, fn. 76; p. 530).

15. ... In addition to similar propitious dates, e.g., the 18th of Elul, when the Yeshivah officially opened for study (*Parshas Tazria*, 3 Nissan, 5749; *Hisvaadyos*, p. 534).

16. *Ibid.*

of Tomchei Temimim Yeshivahs was greatly expanded.¹⁷

TAKE A MOMENT TO CONTEMPLATE THE YESHIVAH'S EFFECT

- All past or present students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, or a branch with a variation of this title¹⁷ – along with their families, and all who have been influenced [to advance in Torah and *mitzvos*] by them – should dedicate at least a moment today to contemplate the ways in which the Yeshivah positively influenced them, and indeed, should continue influencing them in the future.¹⁸
- On the 2nd of Nissan, one should take some time to dwell on the Yeshivah's success at bolstering Torah study – of both the inner and revealed dimensions of Torah – the enhanced observance of *mitzvos*, heightened mode of prayer, further utilization of every day affairs for the sake of Heaven, and promotion of the service of “knowing G-d in all your ways.”¹⁸

EXTENDED INFLUENCE

- This contemplation is also for those who, for reasons beyond

17. Worldwide network

One of the fundamental achievements of the Rebbe Rashab was the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. He first established the Yeshivah in just one location, but later, following the various “exiles of Tomchei Temimim” [where, due to Soviet persecution, its students and teachers were forced to flee from one place to the next, eventually going underground completely,] branches of the Yeshivah were opened across the entire globe (*ibid.*, p. 531).

Many of these branches have been given variant titles; nevertheless, their themes, mode of conduct, and study methods are in the spirit of Tomchei Temimim (*ibid.*, fn. 85).

18. *Ibid.*, p. 531.

Far-reaching effect of Nigleh with Chassidus

As we can see for ourselves, a curriculum that combines the study of both *Nigleh* and *Chassidus* has a disproportionately positive effect on the students. The influence extends through them to their families (after marriage), and to all who fall under their range of influence. It enhances all areas of their Divine service, continuing to do so even after they leave the Yeshivah ... the main enhancement being that they now perform these matters with the self-sacrifice of “all who go forth in battle for the House of David,” i.e., in a supernatural manner (*ibid.*).

their control, were unable to personally attend a Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah, but nevertheless sent their sons or grandsons to study there.¹⁹

THE GOALS OF TOMCHEI TEMIMIM

- It is unnecessary to launch into a lengthy explanation, describing exactly what one should contemplate; anyone with the slightest idea of the objective of Tomchei Temimim should understand this on his own.

And if he nevertheless requires additional elaboration, he should approach another former or current student who will surely enlighten him.²⁰

19. ... especially now, [in the year 5749,] the beginning of the 70th anniversary of the 2nd and 3rd of Nissan, 5680 (1920) – the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe Rashab and the assumption of leadership by the Previous Rebbe. It is also the 40th anniversary of [the year of the Previous Rebbe's passing on *Yud Shevat*,] 5710 (*ibid.*, p. 532). See *A Call to Action*, 20 Cheshvan.

20. **Free to flourish**
 ... Maintaining the Yeshivah once involved many hardships and difficulties, particularly under Soviet rule, although in truth, these matters were mainly trials [to be overcome] that lacked real substance [other than to call forth greater energy by those who had to overcome them]. ...
 Nowadays, however, it is far easier to fulfill the will of the [Rebbe Rashab and the Previous Rebbe] who [respectively] founded and conducted the Yeshivah, without having to face any hardship or problem at all.
 We can now increase (beyond the significant additional achievements to date) in all of those matters that the Yeshivah was designed to achieve. In a general sense, this means the dissemination of Judaism, with particular focus on the dissemination of *Chassidus* (*ibid.*, p. 531-532).

מוקדש
לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לזכות
התינוק הכהן בן מלכה צבי' שי'
נולד ביום ג' כ"ה אדר ב' והיכנסו לבריתו של
א"א ביום שלישי ג' ניסן תשס"ח

ולזכות
הוריו ארי' לייב הכהן וזוגתו מלכה צבי' שיחיו
ואחיו רפאל משה הכהן, חי' מושקא, שרה, שיחיו

יהי רצון
שיזכו הוריו לגדלו לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים
טובים לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח
ומשפחתו שיחיו ומתוך הרחבה



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



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד