

The birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek

A BRIEF HISTORY

The third Lubavitcher Rebbe is known as the Tzemach Tzedek. A grandson of the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad Chassidus, the Tzemach Tzedek brought the Chabad movement to unprecedented heights in all matters. He was born on the 29th of Elul, Erev Rosh Hashanah 5549 (1789).

UTILIZING THE DAY CORRECTLY

• Every man, woman and child,¹⁹ should make certain to utilize this day by increasing in Tzedakah and in many other positive matters, and in particular, by studying the Torah teachings and fulfilling the instructions of the Tzemach Tzedek.²⁰

FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS

• In the merit of the Tzemach Tzedek, we should add in those matters through which the Tzemach Tzedek chiefly expressed his service of Hashem. They are: the dissemination of Torah, and particularly Chassidus, and promulgating the service of prayer and of performing every single Mitzvah with embellishment, particularly the Mitzvah of Tzedakah.²¹

TORAH AND TZEDAKAH

• In 5749 (1989) the Rebbe instructed: We should make certain to utilize this two hundredth anniversary of the Tzemach Tzedek's passing in order to increase in the study of the Tzemach Tzedek's Torah teachings, and to give Tzedakah in honor of the occasion – ideally in multiples of two hundred.²²

Yitzchak's stature (as seen in the Torah reading) was the result of his mother Sarah's parenting; the Halachic sound of the Shofar is derived from the cries of a woman (either Sarah or the mother of Sisrah – as explained in Avudraham).

19. Erev Rosh Hashanah 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.388.

20. Erev Rosh Hashanah 5752; Hisvaaduyos p.360.

21. "In the merit of the Tzemach Tzedek, in addition to our own merit, we should add... [See main text above for continuation]." (Erev Rosh Hashanah 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.388)

22. **200 Pennies**

"Two hundred pennies – a goal that is within reach of everyone, including children. Those who wish to add in this matter could give two hundred coins of greater value, or two hundred dollar bills and the like – doing so further adds to the abovementioned matters." (Erev Rosh Hashanah 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.388)

a CALL to ACTION

SHABBOS MEVARCHIM TISHREI
THE 3RD DAY OF SELICHOS
EREV ROSH HASHANAH

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

Table of Contents

Shabbos Mevarchim Tishrei

Introduction	4
Teach Torah In Other Shuls	4
Explain Significance Of This Shabbos.....	4
Promote The Providing Of Festival Needs.....	5
Av Harachamim	5

The 3rd Day of Selichos

Introduction	6
Study And Implement The Discourse	8
Main Point Is To Proceed.....	8
At Least Part Of A Ma'amor.....	9
Prepare A Lively Farbrengen	9

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Introduction	10
24 Hrs To Complete Our Year	10
Festive Meal	11
Spend Time With Your Wife	11

The birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek

A Brief History.....	12
Utilizing The Day Correctly.....	12
Follow In His Footsteps	12
Torah And Tzedakah.....	12

מוקדש

לב"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

❖
a CALL to ACTION

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FESTIVE MEAL

• The Tur writes that on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish people “dress in white and enwrap in white” and hold a great feast – for they “rest secure that they will prevail in judgment.”¹⁶ We should certainly do likewise (and hold a festive meal) this Erev Rosh Hashanah, whether during the preceding evening or at another time during the twenty four hours of Erev Rosh Hashanah.¹⁷

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR WIFE

• Close to the commencement of Rosh Hashanah, the Chabad Rebbes would spend some time speaking with their wives. Since this custom has been revealed and publicized to us, after having been kept confidential for a long time, it is therefore to be taken as an instruction for every one of us.¹⁸

likewise the extent to which we should utilize every single moment of this time.” (Rosh Hashanah after Mincha 5748; Hisvaaduyos p.387)

16. Farbrengen reaches Atzmus – preparation for the Shofar

“To quote the Tur, “already on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jews dress in white and wrap themselves in white for they rest assured that they will prevail in judgment.” This is particularly true when on the eve of Rosh Hashanah we join together in a Chassidic farbrengen; such an occasion arouses great pleasure in the spiritual realms, and reaches Hashem’s very “essence”! This then is a fitting preparation for the arousal of pleasure that will be generated by our blowing of the Shofar.” (Sichos in English, Vol.32, Erev Rosh Hashanah 5747)

17. Tzom Gedalya 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.31.

18. Shalom Bayis

“Since the quality of the Jewish woman is emphasized on Rosh Hashanah ... this is a directive for every person. The implication of this instruction is the great extent to which Shalom Bayis, domestic harmony, is important and imperative.

If they did it...

It is so very fundamental and easy to appreciate the immense value and quality that each moment in time held for the Rebbes – certainly on Erev Rosh Hashanah... Yet nonetheless, they would take the time to talk with their Rebbitzens...

Cosmic harmony

This practice assumes additional significance in light of the broadest sense of ‘Shalom Bayis,’ which includes “peace in the supernal retinue and the terrestrial retinue” [and between Hashem and the Jewish people].” (2nd day of Rosh Hashanah 5748; Hisvaaduyos p.39)

See there for the particular significance of Rosh Hashanah to women, concerning the Sefirah of Binah and the entire concept of Binyan haMalchus; see footnotes there for references.

There are many further significant links, among them: Sarah, Rochel and Chana were “remembered” regarding having children on the day of Rosh Hashanah; the birth of Rivkah is specifically mentioned in the second day’s Torah reading;

Erev Rosh Hashanah

INTRODUCTION

The last twelve days of Elul represent the twelve months of the year that is coming to a close (as discussed earlier, concerning Chai Elul).

Therefore, the last of these twelve days, Erev Rosh Hashanah, in addition to its other qualities and responsibilities, specifically concerns the outgoing month of Elul.

24 HRS TO COMPLETE OUR YEAR

• Today is the last day of the month of Elul and the entire year. We should therefore be aware of the need to utilize the twenty four hours of this day to their absolute maximum, in order to conclude and complete every matter connected with the month of Elul, and thus the entire year.¹⁵

They couldn't walk straight

[The account includes the fact] that when they reached the time for Selichos, they were tottering; their having attained a state of Ad deLo Yoda, caused them to stagger even after the concluding blessing of the farbrengen and even after many of them had in the meantime immersed in a Mikvah and so on!" (ibid)

"It is recounted regarding the Chassidim, that they would hold a farbrengen during the Melaveh Malka meal at the conclusion of Shabbos Parshas *Nitzavim*, which was also Erev Rosh Hashanah (Rosh Hashanah occurring on a Monday that year [and Selichos beginning on Motze Shabbos Ki Savo]). Following that, they would begin to recite the Selichos whilst yet tottering...!" (Chai Elul 5711, p.327)

15. **The King gives us power to act**

"Hashem certainly grants us the powers that are necessary to fulfill the positive resolutions we have accepted – and with an addition of His own too; moreover, He does so in the manner to which He is accustomed, namely, that the 'addition' exceeds the principle!

Further, Hashem's granting of power is greatly enhanced by that fact that we are currently in a situation where "the King is in the field" – as He is throughout the month of Elul. This last factor increase daily; for if all holy matters continually increase, then how much more so a direct bestowal from Hashem Himself. Therefore, this [steady increase of power] continues until the last day of Elul, which constitutes the "total" of the entire month – the unique month when "the King is in the field" ...

A year in one day

All of the above adds further alacrity and insight to our utilization of this day, the conclusion and "total" of the entire month and the entire year." (Eve of 29th of Elul 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.383)

Use every moment

"The great virtue, value, and importance of this time is clearly understood – and

Foreword

In honor of the second Yahrzeit of **Harav Hachassid Reb Tzvi Meir ben Shlomo Dov Steinmetz a"h** (renowned Hebrew poet, Tzvi Yair¹) on the 12th of Elul, we are pleased to bring you this second, newly revised and improved edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. This special edition covers the highlights in the end of the month of Elul, from Shabbos Mevarchim Tishrei, The 3rd Day of Selichos, Erev Rosh Hashanah, The birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek.

Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's Sichos that pertain to the entire month of Elul and preparations for Tishrei.

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of Hora'os ("directives") culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources (Muga and Bilti Muga); we have expended great effort in our attempt to capture some of the Rebbe's calculated and instructive phrasing. This edition's English translation was provided 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 Halkar
Erev Parshas Ki Tzeitzei, 5766

1. see www.zviyair.com

Shabbos Mevarchim Tishrei

INTRODUCTION

On the Shabbos preceding every new month, we recite a special prayer to bless the coming month; such a Shabbos is called Shabbos Mevarchim.

The exception to this universal custom is the Shabbos preceding the month of Tishrei, when we do not bless the coming seventh month.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that the reason behind this blatant exception, is that Hashem Himself blesses the month of Tishrei [see footnote 5] and, in fact, it is through His doing so that the Jewish people receive the ability to subsequently bless the following eleven months of the year.

TEACH TORAH IN OTHER SHULS

• We should certainly make the effort, particularly on this Shabbos, to visit² other Shuls and study halls in order to “gather congregations” for the purpose of Torah-study.³

EXPLAIN SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SHABBOS

• In these gatherings, we should study topics which focus on timely themes, notably the teachings of the “three forefathers” of Chassidus⁴ concerning Hashem’s blessing on this Shabbos Mevarchim Tishrei, which is encapsulated in the opening phrase of this week’s Parshah, “You are all standing today.”⁵

2. The directive in the name of the Parsha

“[In the spirit of the opening words of this week’s *second* Parshah,] Vayeilech, which means “And he went,” we should go visit other Shuls and study halls in order to gather congregations of Jewish people [in the spirit of the first words of this week’s *first* Parshah,] Atem Nitzavim haYom Kulchem, “You are all gathered today,” for the purpose of Torah study.” (Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5750; Hisvaaduyos p.302)

3. Ibid.

4. The “three forefather” of Chassidus are, 1) the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidus, 2) his disciple and successor, the Maggid of Mezritch, and 3) the Maggid’s disciple and successor, the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad Chassidus.

5. Ibid.

The Alter Rebbe’s words

“The Alter Rebbe related, “When I was in Mezeritch, I heard the following from my master and teacher, the Maggid [of Mezritch], in the name of *his* master and

the like – for every addition in Torah, Mitzvahs and Chassidus is in itself the ultimate truth.¹²

AT LEAST PART OF A MA’AMOR

• Sometime during the twenty four hours of the third day of Selichos, each of us should study at least a section of one of the Chassidic discourses that were delivered for the third day of Selichos; due to the profusion of such discourses, a person has a large selection from which to choose...¹³

PREPARE A LIVELY FARBRENGEN

• One should certainly make a resolution regarding the farbrengen that should be held tonight – so that it should be held with great Shturem (highly-charged and lively).¹⁴

12. Extra Tzedakah

“Accordingly, we should – for the first time – connect the unique virtue of the third day of Selichos with the distribution of Tzedakah. This comes in addition to the fact that we are accustomed to increase in giving Tzedakah throughout the month of Elul.” (ibid)

See also 3rd day of Selichos 5751; Toras Menachem p.296 and onwards, in the main text and the footnotes, where the Rebbe points out the relevance that the number three and especially the third of Selichos contains to a variety of concepts.

13. Action counts

“It is known that this day, as we [clearly] saw, was one of the established occasions whereupon the Previous Rebbe would publicly deliver Chassidic discourses. We likewise saw that many of these discourses were published and distributed. Being that the whole point in mentioning these matters is to lead to *action*, it is fitting that sometime during the twenty four hours ... [See main text above for continuation].” (Roshei Devarim from 3rd day of Selichos 5751)

14. One person should drink for the rest

“Certainly they will resolve to hold a farbrengen this very night – “Ah Shturemdiker” farbrengen!

It should specifically be held with immense joy, to the extent of Ad deLoy Yoda [a state in which a person is too inebriated to think straight], at least by *one* participant of the farbrengen – who will thus fulfill the obligation on behalf of all present...

Not Purim – but almost

The limits [on drinking alcohol in excess] still apply, for after all, it is not yet Purim... Nevertheless, Purim is connected to Yom Kippurim, which being the culmination of the Ten Days of Repentance, is also bound with their onset, namely, Rosh Hashanah and therefore also the prior days of Selichos!

As in Lubavitch

There is a well known account of the Previous Rebbe concerning the farbrengen in [the original town of] Lubavitch [that took place on the Motze Shabos before Rosh Hashanah – which was *not* the first night of Selichos that year, as explained below]. [“Although we are not able to compare ourselves to the circumstances and stature of those times and that place, nevertheless, the matters were transmitted to each of us as our “inheritance” – and an heir inherits *everything*...” – subnote there]

The Previous Rebbe did not specify the cause for the added auspiciousness of the third day (but see footnote 9).

STUDY AND IMPLEMENT THE DISCOURSE

• The Previous Rebbe¹⁰ expressed the uniqueness of this day through a Chassidic discourse, which he then instructed to be printed and publicized. This discourse contains a great number of teachings which each of us should take and apply to our Divine service, thus increasing in Torah, Mitzvahs and Chassidus.¹¹

MAIN POINT IS TO PROCEED

• Regardless of whether or not one discovers the true reasons for the uniqueness of this day, the main point is for each of us to add yet further in Torah, and yet further in proper conduct and

Matan Torah and Rosh Hashanah

In fact, there is a link between the Giving of the Torah and Rosh Hashanah, which is reflected in the text of the Mussaf prayer on Rosh Hashanah: one of the reasons for sounding the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah is, “to recall the stand at Mount Sinai.” This then is the value of the third day of Selichos; it contains the virtue of the number three.

Three insights into the number three

Additionally, the third day of Selichos:

1) Always occurs on the *third* day of the week [Tuesday], “the day when ‘It was good’ was doubled” [i.e., Hashem repeated “It was good” on the *third* day of Creation as opposed to the other five days.

The reason that the third day of Selichos must always be a Tuesday, is] because [the days of] Selichos always begin at the conclusion of the Day of Rest [Shabbos]. The uniqueness of being the third day of Selichos comes in addition to the [ever-present] quality that accompanies *every* Tuesday (during both day and night) throughout the year.

2) The entire [historical] context of forgiveness [of the Jewish people by Hashem] comes from the *third* set of forty days and nights that Moshe spent on Mount Sinai, whereupon Hashem announced, “I have forgiven as you have requested.”

3) We employ *three* expressions of forgiveness in our requests: Mechilah, Selichah and Kaparah, “forgiveness, pardon and atonement.”

There are many further concepts that apply [to the third day of Selichos in particular], but a hint is sufficient for the wise.” (3rd day of Selichos 5748; Hisvaaduyos 336-337)

[In the spirit of the above license to derive further insights into the 3rd day of Selichos: note that the colossal events of 9/11 2001, the international and global impact of which are yet unfolding, occurred in New York, the “capital” of the Leader of our generation, on the *third day of Selichos* 5761 – Ed.]

10. “Note that the Previous Rebbe himself did not give a reason behind the uniqueness of this day, and every person is therefore able to seek an explanation according to their abilities. As far as we are concerned however, since the Previous Rebbe revealed ... [See main text above for continuation].”
11. Yom Gimmel, Parshas Haazinu 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.372-373.

PROMOTE THE PROVIDING OF FESTIVAL NEEDS

• It is extremely worthwhile that one who visits other Shuls for the abovementioned purpose, should also utilize this opportunity to encourage the congregations regarding providing the needy with their festival requirements.⁶

AV HARACHAMIM

• The Chabad custom is to recite Av Harachamim on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah [See footnote].⁷

teacher, the Baal Shem Tov: [concerning] Tishrei, the seventh month, which is the first month from all the months of the year, Hashem Himself blesses it on Shabbos Mevarchim, which is the final Shabbos of the month of Elul. With this power, the Jewish people then bless the [subsequent] months, eleven times during the year.” (ibid, p.290)

What blessing does Hashem give?

In that Sichah, the Rebbe explains that the *content* of Hashem’s blessing is to be found in the Torah portion for this week, Parshas Nitzavim, which is always read the Shabbos preceding Rosh Hashanah. Nitzavim begins, “You are all standing today”; the word “today” refers to Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment – similar to the verse “And it was on *the day*,” which Targum Unkelos translates as, “It was on the Day of the Great Judgment.” The words “you *stand*” indicate that we stand firm and well-established, and are found meritorious in judgment.

On the Shabbos we bless the seventh month. The Hebrew word Shevii, “Seventh,” is related to the word Musbah, “satiated” – indicating that the month “is itself satiated [with holiness] and satiates all Jewry with abundant goodness for all of the year.”

Studying this teaching brings further revealed blessing

“Through studying the Torah teachings of the “three forefathers” of Chassidus concerning the blessing that Hashem gives on Shabbos Mevarchim Tishrei, namely, “You are all standing today,” we increase this blessing itself. For these teachings include the great virtue that is associated with a universal Jewish custom, as well as the virtue of a teaching from Torah’s inner dimension. Further, our study of these teachings results in “today,” i.e., light and revelation – as in the verse, “And Hashem called the light: Day.” We further accomplish all this through studying the teachings of “the two great luminaries” ([the anniversary of whose births we recently celebrated,] i.e., the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe – through the ‘mediation’ of the Maggid of Mezritch).” (ibid, page 295)

See there, p.294, for a thorough treatment of this topic, and *a Call to Action*, “Chai Elul”.

6. Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5750; Hisvaaduyos p.302.

7. **When on Shabbos does Hashem give this blessing?**

“Although it was not clearly stated *when* exactly during the Shabbos preceding the seventh month Hashem gives His blessing, it would be logical to assume that His blessing comes at the very time that the *Jews* [would normally] bless the remaining eleven months of the year: [after the Amidah in the morning prayers,] following the recital of the two Yukan Purkan prayers – which reflects on a “doubling” of the Purkan, “Redemption”, and is similar to the concept of a “doubled consolation” [see *a Call to Action*, “Shabbos Nachamu”].

The 3rd Day of Selichos

INTRODUCTION

“Selichah” means forgiveness. In the week prior to Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment, it is our custom to rise early each morning in order to recite the Selichos prayers before the regular morning prayers.

The Previous Rebbe wrote, in the year 5705, that the third day of Selichos was observed by the Alter Rebbe as a special day and he would privately and with utmost discretion deliver a Chassidic discourse to his son, the Mittler Rebbe. This secret practice continued on every third day of Selichos, from each generation of Rebbes to the next. The Rebbe Rashab, however, told the Previous Rebbe that he would eventually be instructed to publicize this practice.⁸

Arousing a father’s mercy

The bestowal of Hashem’s blessing at this juncture in the prayers is likewise emphasized in the prayer that follows [the recital of the two Yukan Purkan prayers]: Av Harachamim. For it is Chabad custom to recite Av Harachamim on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah [as opposed to almost every other Shabbos Mevarchim], as it is explain in numerous places that there is a immense virtue to the recital of Av Harachamim, and that it is far loftier that the level represented by our recital of Av Harachaman...” (Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5750; Hisvaaduyos p.299)

8. Sefer Hamaamorim 5705, p.226.

Are we worthy of such revelations?

“For many years, the concept of Chai Elul and the third day of Selichos were concealed. Now however, that permission has been granted to reveal them, the Previous Rebbe has publicized them to all corners of the world.

Although one could question whether [or not] our generation was worthy [to have received this information, especially when we are contrasted with the spiritual standing of former generations]...

Our low standing merits great revelations

The answer to that, is that this [lowly standing] is *itself* the very point [of revealing such information]: due to the concealment and obscurity of [the present times, which are referred to as] “the heels of Moshiach,” that have grown overpowering[ly oppressively], as a counter-measure, “they even opened hidden storehouses containing precious wealth and treasures that had been sealed and concealed from the eyes of all” until now.

We will prevail with the treasures of Chassidus

Specifically following the [Previous Rebbe’s] departure, it is certainly incumbent upon each of us to strengthen ourselves, and connect with the “tree of life” and our Leader, the Rebbe, with ever greater strength. With the aid of his treasures and the

Sure enough, in the later years after his arrival in America the Previous Rebbe publicly unveiled the previously unknown fact that, within the Selichos period itself, the third day of Selichos is a particularly spiritually-charged day. (The timing of this revelation carries further significance.⁹)

treasures of his ancestors [i.e., the earlier Rebbes of Chabad], who opened [these treasures] and delivered them to us, we will remove the concealments and obscurities. This is also a preparation and readying to our being “inscribed and sealed [on Rosh Hashanah] for the good.”” (Sefer Hamaamorim 5710, p.270-271)

9. **Why did he wait until he came to America?**

“He did not reveal this while he was yet in the “globe’s upper hemisphere” [i.e., Russia, which is amongst those lands where “the influence of Matan Torah *clearly* permeated”]. Rather, he did so upon arrival in the “globe’s lower hemisphere” [i.e., America, a land in which “the influence of Matan Torah did *not* clearly permeate”].” (Yom Gimmel, Parshas Ha’azinu 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.372)

He even changed his schedule of delivering Ma’amorim

“In general, we strive to bolster matters of good conduct that existed in former years – certainly when public awareness of their existence has, for some reason, weakened.

What concerns us is that the Leader of our generation revealed and publicized the particular importance of the third day of Selichos. Further, he did so to the extent of altering his delivery of Chassidic discourses, and the [continued theme-related series of] Chassidic discourses that pertain to Rosh Hashanah, which were normally delivered on specific dates from Rosh Hashanah onward, began to be publicly delivered in the year 5705 (1945) from the *third day of Selichos*. (As the Previous Rebbe wrote in his notes [See intro. and footnote 7, above].)

Why is the third day so special?

True, he did not clearly record a revealed reason [for the importance of the third day of Selichos] in that discourse. Nevertheless, an obvious reason does in fact exist - so patently obvious that there is no need for lengthy research...

If your idea will advance Avodas Hashem with love and awe...

Although one must generally be wary of discovering allusions and explanations of matters on his own – for not every person is qualified to do so – there is, however, the familiar words of the Rebbe Rashab (in his letter that was also printed in Kuntres Eitz Chaim) concerning reading various interpretations into the words of the Tanya. He writes that although one must be wary of doing so, nevertheless, if it will *add to the service of Hashem*, one is then able to state their interpretations.

Note that this message was transmitted even to the ordinary Chassidim, and not only to unique individuals. The message holds true for all matters – if finding one’s own interpretations and explanations will increase the service of Hashem with love and awe, it is then permissible to do so.

Three is Torah

To return to our subject: The number three carries unique significance – to the extent that even the Giving of the Torah was associated with the number three: “A threefold Torah [Torah, Neviim, Kesuvim], that was given to a threefold nation [Kohanim, Leviim, Yisraelim], on the third month [Sivan].”