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יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

a CALL to **ACTION**

PURIM KATAN
PREPARATIONS FOR PURIM

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
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commemorates the half-shekel that all Jews donated [to the Temple] annually, in the month of Adar. The widespread custom is for the head of a household to give additional Machatzis HaShekel on behalf of each member of his household.²⁰

EDITOR’S NOTE:

The following instruction was the last (new) directive that we merited to receive from the Rebbe.

TRAIN CHILDREN IN MACHATZIS HASHEKEL

- It would be a very good and fitting practice to train our young children in the donation of Machatzis HaShekel, by having them donate from their “own” money; their parents should aid them, ensuring that they have plenty to give – and even enough surplus for their other “needs.” After all, we do not want to cause them any sort of financial “loss” by having them observe this annual custom...²¹

PURIM OBJECTIVE: REACH EVERY JEW

- We should begin – and indeed, *complete* – the necessary preparations for conducting the worldwide “Purim Campaign.”
- This campaign should not leave out even a solitary Jew in the furthest spot on earth. Rather, it should embrace all Jews – or as the Megillah puts it, “From their greatest to their smallest” and “from youth to elderly, [both] infants and women.”²²

20. Ta’anis Esther 5749; Hisva’aduyos, p.439.

21. 24th Adar I 5752; Sichos Kodesh, p.788.

22. **Inspire full observance**

... Our campaign should yield results that continue throughout the rest of the year; in the spirit of “the Jews [then] established that which they had [only formally] accepted beforehand” – accompanied by a complete state of divine service, Torah and Mitzvos. [See below, Intro. to Purim.] (Parshas Terumah 5751; Hisva’aduyos p.310-311)

PROMOTE TZEDAKAH

- We should make a point of promoting the giving of Tzedakah in general. After all, Tzedakah is the theme of many of the Mitzvos of Purim [i.e., distributing food portions and charity].
- We should increase in giving Tzedakah throughout the month of Adar.¹⁹

MACHATZIS HASHEKEL

- On Ta'anis Esther [the fast day immediately preceding Purim], it is customary to donate three coins that are halves in the local (current) currency [e.g., a half-dollar in America].²⁰

FOR EACH MEMBER OF HOUSHOLD

- This practice, known as “Machatzis HaShekel,”

subsequently be spent on mundane matters... True, we are dealing with the mundane affairs of a Jew, which are undoubtedly in full accord with the Torah and so on – yet that simply cannot begin to compare to the superiority of being spent on Tzedakah... (ibid, footnote 35)

18. Parshas Vayakhel 5749, ibid, footnote 106.

19. Parshas Pekudei 5749, ibid, p.410.

We should begin the effort to supply all who are needy with their Purim requirements well in advance (certainly by Rosh Chodesh Adar, two weeks before Purim).

We should begin with those in our immediate proximity and continue to include even those found in distant locations – even reaching out to those in a remote corner of the globe. We should ensure that *all* Jews will be able to celebrate Purim in the proper manner and with “light, gladness, rejoicing and honor” – in the literal sense ... and in a manner of “feasting and rejoicing” (Mishteh VeSimchah) – even attaining an unlimited degree of joy.

Hashem repays us “Midah Keneged Midah” [in direct commensuration with our efforts and deeds], and His reciprocation is in fact *many times more* than our input. When we strive to provide the needy with their Purim requirements, Hashem [likewise] increases by providing His blessings – with vast abundance – to each and every Jew, during these two weeks before Purim – to the extent that we will need to really *search* for a destitute Jew in order to fulfill the Mitzvah of Ma'atanos LaEvyonim (donations to the poor) on Purim... We can readily appreciate the great joy that each Jew will then have, this coming Purim. (Parshas Mishpatim 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.317-318)

There is room for research to clarify how exactly we will be able to fulfill the Mitzvah of Ma'atanos LaEvyonim [when Moshiach comes – for his arrival will bring about] the fulfillment of the Torah's tiding that “there will not be a destitute person among you.” (ibid, footnote 114)

Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's Sichos pertaining to Purim Katan and our preparations for Purim.

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of Hora'os (“directives”) culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources (“Muga” and “Bilti Muga”); we have expended great effort in our attempt to capture some of the Rebbe's carefully calculated and instructive phrasing. This edition's English translation was provided by Rabbi **Yaakov Paley**.

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 Parshas VeAtah Tetzaveh,
Adar Rishon 5768

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לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח ר' יצחק יוסף בן הר"ר יעקב מרדכי

נפטר י"ט אדר תשס"ז

שיקויים היעוד ד"והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר" והוא בתוכם

everything necessary to fulfill all the Mitzvos of Purim:

Hearing the Megillah reading (Mikrah Megillah); sending food portions to a fellow Jew (Mishlo'ach Manos); distributing charity to paupers (Ma'atanos LaEvyonim); enjoying a festive meal (Se'udas Purim); rejoicing on Purim (Simchas Purim) and so on.¹⁶

EREV PURIM NEEDS

- We should also ensure that all have whatever is necessary for their Purim *preparations* – such as the customary Erev Purim donation to Tzedakah of “Machatzis HaShekel” (three half-shekalim)¹⁷ [explained below].¹⁸

16. Parshas Pekudei 5749, ibid, p.480.

17. [Three coins are given, as stated in Rema (Orah Chayim, beg. of 694).]

Why three?!

There is a surprising fact concerning the custom to donate half-shekalim on Ta'anis Esther:

The half-shekel given by the Jews [in Temple times] during the month of Adar, and which was donated to provide for the communal sacrifices whose annual cycle would begin again on the 1st of Nissan, consisted of just one solitary half-shekel coin. Nevertheless, we have the custom to donate *three* such coins on Ta'anis Esther!

[In explanation:] It is possible that the three half-shekalim donated on Ta'anis Esther also commemorate the *three days of fasting* that were decreed by Queen Esther; as stated in the Megillah, “Fast for *three* days on my behalf.”

This explanation comes in addition to our desire to attain the superiority of a Chazakah [lit., “[legal] strength”]; something that is done three times consecutively is becomes a presumed fact]. By performing this act [of giving half-shekalim] three times, we add “[legal] strength” to the concept of “they established (in the times of Mordechai) that which they had previously accepted (at Sinai)” [See Intro. to Purim, below] (Ta'anis Ester 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.439-440)

Food for three

We could suggest that there is an allusion to the three days of fasting [mentioned in the Megillah] in the one day fast of Ta'anis Esther that we currently observe – that is, our custom to donate *three* half-shekalim:

It is mentioned in Kaf HaChayim, Orach Chayim 566 and 115, and elsewhere, that we should donate the equivalent of a meal to charity on the day of a fast. Accordingly, the *three* half-shekalim that we give to Tzedakah are a result [and represent the meals] of *three* fast-days. (Motzei Shushan Purim 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.460)

We do not fast to save money!

One of the reasons for this practice is that it is not fitting for the money saved via our abstaining from food and drink on the fast day to remain in our wallets and

our actions.¹²

HIGH PROFILE PURIM CAMPAIGN – REACH ALL JEWS

- We should gather all Jewry, including Jews from the most farflung corners of the globe.¹³ We should create a “Ra’ash DeKedushah,” a holy “storm,” and “Ah Moradiken Shturem,” an awesome commotion concerning all aspects of Purim – so that all Jews will be able to fully observe Purim, with all that it entails.
- Needless to say, we should conduct this campaign in a pleasant and peaceful manner, amidst love for our fellow Jews and with great joy.¹⁴
- In order to accomplish this, we should prepare well in advance – starting with Shabbos Mevarchim Adar.¹⁵

PROVIDE EVERY JEW WITH ALL PURIM MITZVOS

- We should ensure that every Jew, in even the far ends of the globe – in the physical and/or spiritual sense – will have

12. Know the law

It is now the second month of Adar, less than two weeks before Purim. We should make all of the proper preparations for Purim – including studying all the laws of Purim... (Parshas Pikudei 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.410)

13. Reach each of the King’s subjects

[To paraphrase the Megillah:] “Gather all the Jews,” “who are in all the countries of the king,” i.e., [in this case, all the Jews in the kingdom of] the King of the Universe – both those who are “near and distant”... (Parshas Vayakhel, Shabbos Mevarchim Adar II 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.387)

14. Great joy like Matan Torah

... Just like the great joy that was experienced at the Giving of the Torah [See below, Intro. to Purim] – where, together with the whole commotion that caused “fear, awe, trembling and perspiration,” there was also the fact that Hashem “suspended the mountain above [and around] them.”

[Seemingly, this means that Hashem “forced” the Jews to accept the Torah by threatening to drop the mountain on them. However, Chassidus understands this as a parable, meaning that He “forced” them to accept the Torah] via a revelation of Ahavah Rabah, immense love, which encompassed their entire being [giving them “no other choice”; the overpowering revelation of G-dliness caused them to be drawn to the Torah with irresistible love and devotion].

Obviously, then, the Giving of the Torah was accompanied with *great joy*... (ibid, footnote 105)

15. ... And certainly from Rosh Chodesh Adar *Sheni* [during a leap-year]. (ibid.)

Purim Katan

14th of Adar I (during a leap-year)

BRIEF HISTORY

Purim is celebrated on the 14th and 15th of Adar. In a leap-year, when there are two months of Adar, Purim is celebrated during the *second* month. In that case, the 14th and 15th of the *first* Adar is known as “Purim Katan” (“the minor Purim”).

The Chassidic discourse entitled “VeAtah Tetzaveh 5752 (1992)” was the last discourse issued by the Rebbe, who personally distributed copies to men, woman and children, on Purim Katan of that year.

The Rebbe’s discourse is based on an earlier discourse entitled “VeKibel HaYehudim 5687 (1927)” that was delivered by the Previous Rebbe on Purim Katan 5687, in an act of literal self-sacrifice: He had been warned repeatedly by the Soviet KGB to cease his activities towards maintaining and strengthening the practice of Judaism in the USSR. Indeed, only four months after this the Rebbe was arrested and initially sentenced to death.

Similarly, hundreds of Chassidim risked their lives and defied Communist rule to gather in a small Lubavitch synagogue in Moscow to hear the Previous Rebbe deliver the discourse. This, despite the fact that they knew of KGB agents among them, recording every participant and every word uttered.

In the discourse, the Previous Rebbe openly extorted his followers to defy the regime and to risk their lives for the sake of preserving Judaism and Torah education.

VEATAH TETZAVEH

The Rebbe’s discourse (5752) expounds the first verse of

the Torah portion read on the Shabbos prior to Purim Katan:

ואתה תצַנֶה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ כְּתִית לְמֵאוֹר
 – “And you [Moshe] shall command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to raise the flame [of the Temple Menorah] continuously” (Shemos 27:20).

When an olive is pressed, its pristine oil is revealed and serves as a source of illumination. During Exile, the Jews have been “crushed” repeatedly. This takes the form of physical oppression (such as the story of Purim and its constant echo throughout the generation) and/or spiritual oppression (which is prevalent to this day). It is under such pressure that the essence of the Jewish soul – its source of illumination – spills forth; its innate ability to choose the ultimate self-sacrifice for Hashem and His Torah awakens and shines brightly.

During the times of the Megillah, this resulted in the miracle of Purim and the complete establishment of the Torah (see *a Call to Action*, Purim). In our own times, it will result in the complete and final Redemption; as the Rebbe explains, being truly “crushed” from the very fact that we – and the Divine Presence with us – still languish in Exile, is enough to call forth the essence of our souls.

Like the original command issued to Moshe, “And you shall command the Children of Israel, etc.,” our ability to reveal this source of illumination comes to us from the Leader (the “Moshe”) of each generation. In ancient Persia, this was Mordechai; in our own times, it is the Previous Rebbe and the Rebbe.

SHABBOS OF EMUNAH AND MESIRAS NEFESH

- Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh, Erev Purim Katan, is an

Purim Preparations

PROPER STUDY OF PURIM LAWS AND INNER MEANING

- We should thoroughly study the laws and the Chassidic discourses concerning Purim¹¹ – so that we fully comprehend the material and take it to heart, thus influencing both our study and

11. Within a wall or without

[The first Mishnah in tractate Megillah states that the inhabitants of cities that were fortified with a wall during the era of Yehoshua (who first led the Jews into Eretz Yisrael) read the Megillah on the 15th of Adar. In unwalled cities, large towns and villages, it is read on the 14th of Adar. This law reflects the miracle of Purim, where the Jews of Shushan (a “walled” city) were given an extra day to eradicate their enemies. The Rebbe explains the spiritual significance of the law.]

Familiarity with royalty

This is the content of our Purim service, in ascending order:

At the outset of our service, we find ourselves spiritually in “unwalled cities,” i.e., a state of relative spiritual “poverty” – this state is represented by the [“lesser” date, the] 14th of Adar ... We may then be compared to “a villager who beholds the king” [who, being unaccustomed to such “revelations,” is thoroughly overwhelmed], similar to the celestial vision that was seen by the Prophet Yechezkel [who was tremendously excited by the revelation].

Following that, we ascend to the spiritual level of a “walled city,” i.e., a state of spiritual “affluence” – this is represented by the 15th of Adar ... We are then compared to a dweller of the royal capital who beholds the king [and being more familiar with royalty, is not completely overawed], similar to the [same] celestial vision that was seen by Yeshayah [but, being more familiar with those Heavenly realms, took it in his stride].

Touring the Heavenly capital

... The instruction we are to take from this – as it pertains to the divine service of each Jew – concerns the study of Chassidus:

Chassidus speaks of the sublime Sefiros and similar topics, through which we literally fulfill the instruction to “Know the G-d of your fathers.” In truth, we are all really “dwellers of the royal capital who behold the King” – so that when discussing topics such as the Ten Sefiros (and not only those of the [lowest] world of Asiyah, but even the Ten Sefiros of *Atzilus*), we should not feel it to be an overly unique or unfamiliar discussion.

[Having attained this familiarity with the Heaven capital] we need not make any great fuss over discussing such topics; we can save our excitement for other matters... Certainly, a Jew should be excited about G-dliness – after all, that is a fundamental requirement of divine service; however, our excitement should be directed towards what *transcends* Atzilus... (Motzei Shushan Purim 5749, p.462-463)

- Purim, after all, is closely associated with Tzedakah – a fact borne out by our distributing Ma’atanos LaEvyonim (donations to the poor), and indeed, doing so generously and “to whoever stretches forth his hand.”⁷

PURIM JOY

- We should certainly increase in Simchah (rejoicing) on Purim and Shushan Purim Katan – since the principle that “When Adar enters, we increase joy” applies to the first month of Adar as well.
- We should attain a degree of joy that completely defies all constraints, experiencing joy of a far superior level to the joy of the festivals; a joy of Ad DeLo Yadah (beyond all reason).⁸

BEGIN ON EREV PURIM KATAN

- We should begin fulfilling these directives on Erev Purim Katan (for it is then that we prepare ourselves for Purim Katan⁹) and certainly on the actual eve and day of Purim Katan.
- We continue on through Shushan Purim Katan, and from then on, we persistently amplify the joy – the phrase “Marbim BeSimchah” suggests that we should continuously increase in joy...¹⁰

7. What’s minor about Purim Katan?!

It is called “Purim Katan” (minor-Purim) [but what does that mean?!] It is impossible [to suggest] that we should therefore distribute Tzedakah in a manner of “smallness” – especially when it comes to giving in a friendly manner and the like. Indeed, it will require a full search and investigation to discover where exactly this “smallness” is in fact expressed... Better yet, instead of debating what exactly this “smallness” refers to, we should simply do everything in a manner of “largeness” – starting with giving Tzedakah in a friendly manner, with generosity and so on. Heaven will increase [in the bestowal of blessings] to all who increase [in giving Tzedakah]! (ibid, p.352-353)

8. Before we say Lechaim and sing the Nigunim, we are once again reminding everyone to be joyful; “Marbim BeSimchah” – we increase in joy, to the extent of Ad DeLo Yadah... (ibid, p.355)

9. Erev Purim Katan:

It is “Erev,” according to Torah – which is why we do not recite the penitentiary Tachanun prayer (or Tzidkasechah Tzedek) during the Minchah prayer prior to Purim Katan. It is now that the preparations for Purim Katan take place – in a manner reflecting our Sages’ teaching [regarding Shabbos], “All who toil [to prepare food] on Erev ... will have what to eat on...” Purim Katan (without the need for toil).

10. Ibid, p.355.

extremely auspicious occasion. We should use its unique bestowal of ability to bolster our faith and self-sacrifice that is based on the essential bond between the Jewish people and Hashem.

- We should express these essential qualities in a manner whereby they permeate every detail of our divine service and observance of Torah and Mitzvos.¹

STUDY CHASSIDUS

- A particularly effective way to accomplish this is through increasing our study of Chassidus – concerning which it is written (Divrei HaYamim 28:9), “*Know* the G-d of your fathers; [through which you will be able to] serve Him with a complete heart.”

OUR SPIRITUAL NURTURE – THE REBBE’S MA’AMARIM

- More specifically, we should study the Chassidic teachings of the Rebbe, Leader of our generation; for he is the “Ispashtusa DeMoshe”² of our generation.
- It is through him that the message of “VeAtah Tetzaveh” is realized – due to his providing all Jewry with powers of faith and self-sacrifice that they can internalize and actually express [See next paragraph].

VEKIBEL HAYEHUDIM

- We should specifically promote the study of the Chassidic discourse of the Rebbe, Leader of our generation, entitled “VeKibel HaYehudim 5687 (1927).”
- In that discourse, the concept of “VeAtah Tetzaveh” is explained, i.e., that the mission of Moshe and his successor in each era is to provide and nurture faith and self-sacrifice within Jewry, particularly in times of Exile.³

1. Parshas Tetzaveh 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.349.

2. [I.e., an “extension of the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu” that enclothes itself in the Leader of each subsequent generation (Tikunei Zohar, Tikun 69 (pp.112a, 114a).]

3. **Tyrannical regimes**

... Similar to Haman’s decree [and the subsequent arousal of faith and self-

START NOW, COMPLETE LATER

- Ideally, we should begin studying the discourse on Shabbos itself.
- At least study the beginning of the discourse or the “start” of the beginning – or even just the opening verse [which is taken from the Written Torah]... Seeing that the verse is being studied as an opening to a Chassidic discourse, is it also considered as studying Oral Torah (a Chassidic discourse, in this case).
- Then, on Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan, we should study the rest of the discourse.⁴

DIRECT TRANSMISSION

- It is particularly relevant that this discourse be studied by those who merited actually seeing the Rebbe and hearing his teachings.

sacrifice] that took place in the days of Mordechai and Esther [Mordechai being the “Ispashtusa DeMoshe” of that generation], when the Jews were in a state of being “crushed” (Kasis).

Trade tyrants for toil in Torah

After all the tragedies that Jewry has undergone in past generations, there is no need for any literal “crushing,” G-d forbid, in our present era. Rather, we experience “crushing” by intensive and constant Torah study. In other words, [we replace the need for tyrannical subjugation] with self-nullification [to Hashem and His Torah, depicted in our prayers as] “May my soul be as dust to all” – not, G-d forbid, in a manner whereby anything gets broken (!), but rather, in a pleasant and joyful manner. Through doing so, the actual “source of light” is revealed. (For further elucidation of this concept, see the original discourse at length.)

Defying the Russian Haman

This, in fact, was the very situation and setting in which the Previous Rebbe delivered his discourse on Purim Katan 5687 (1927) [i.e., during an extremely hard-pressed era for Russian Jewry, and shortly before his own arrest on capital charges by the Communists].

The details surrounding that event are well known and publicized – including the fact that the Previous Rebbe totally spurned all of the extreme dangers involved in [holding a religious gathering and publicly delivering the discourse – especially on such a topic]. He had been warned [against doing so by the authorities] and so on, and knew that there were [KGB] agents present who were recording his words. In fact, the Previous Rebbe’s arrest closely followed that event... Nevertheless, he chose to go ahead with the gathering and to inspire his followers with a powerful motivation to observe the Torah and its Mitzvos completely and with self-sacrifice. (ibid.)

4. Ibid, p.352.

- Its study is likewise pertinent to all who studied his teachings, or study them at present, from the Rebbe’s disciples or *their* disciples and so on.

PURIM KATAN OBSERVANCES – LARGE MEAL

- Our study of the discourse should come in addition to observing all of the standard practices for Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan.
- For example, see Rema (conclusion of 697), “Some hold that we are obligated to increase in feasting and gladness on the 14th of Adar I; although this is not our custom, we should nevertheless hold somewhat larger meals so as to fulfill our obligation according to the more stringent opinion – for it is written (Mishlei 15:15), ‘A good-hearted person feasts perpetually!’”

By “feasting,”⁵ Rema refers to a feast that is connected with a joyous occasion (Mishteh Shel Simchah).⁶

PREPARE FOR A PRE-EMINENT PURIM

- We should also prepare for “Purim Gadol” [lit., “major Purim”; the 14th and 15th of the second month of Adar] by studying the laws and Chassidic discourses that address Purim.
- In a leap-year, Purim attains greater superiority [than during an ordinary year] – and is therefore called “Purim Gadol,” “The Major Purim.”

TZEDAKAH

- Ideally, in addition to studying the discourse on Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan (which provides us with the element of Torah study), we should also increase in Tzedakah (since it is the regular practice to connect Torah and Tzedakah with one another).

5. Shushan Purim Katan as well

... So it seems from his wording ... However, there is still room for research as to why he did not include Shushan Purim Katan in this practice, as he did in the beginning of that chapter. The omission is all the more glaring considering his concluding quote, “A good-hearted person feasts perpetually!” (ibid p.350, footnote 103)

6. Ibid, p.350.