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# DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

plus a collection of Chassidic insights  
& excerpts from the Rebbe's talks

## Three Weeks & Summer Part I

6 Tammuz until Erev Rosh Chodesh  
Menachem Av 5784

FROM THE BADATZ  
OF CROWN HEIGHTS



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 Under the auspices of Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita  
 Member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

B"H

# **DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE**

plus a collection of Chassidic insights  
& excerpts from the Rebbe's talks

## **Three Weeks & Summer - Part I**

**from 6 Tammuz until Erev Rosh  
Chodesh Menachem Av 5784**

Halachos, Minhagim & Hora'os  
for Chag Hageulah, Bein Hametzarim  
& Summer Vacation

By

**Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita**  
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

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## FOREWORD

Presented here are the laws & customs and selected sichos for the summer months; Part I covers the 12th-13th of Tammuz, as the Three Weeks and the 17th of Tammuz, as well as supplementary summer-related guidance.

The details are derived from multiple sources, revised by **Rabbi M.M. Rotenberg**.

Due to a dearth of space, only some references and halachic notes have been added. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer Haminhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos*, and *Igros Kodesh*. Please see the footnotes in the Hebrew section for more halachic discussion of the topics mentioned.

The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the Halachos comprehensively.

**Please note:** Specific laws are mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, although they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

\* \* \*

### TIME TO PREPARE

In a *sichah* on the second day of Rosh Hashanah in 5752, the Rebbe states:

"We need to focus on studying the laws that apply to this time of year, during which many changes are made to the standard prayers and there are numerous customs that apply. We should make certain to study these laws in the Code of Jewish Law.

"Recently, yearly calendars have begun to include many of the laws that apply to the relevant time of the year and that are necessary to know. This is particularly useful for those who, for whatever reason, do not have *sefarim* or do not know how to find what they are looking for in the *sefarim* that they own. Now, however, they can simply examine such calendars and easily find the relevant laws.

**"It is therefore extremely appropriate for every single person to peruse the contents of these calendars, such as the Kollel Chabad calendar (available both in wall size and pocket size formats) in such a manner that the laws that apply to this time of year will become fixed in his memory. After all, it sometimes happens that a halachic question arises precisely at a point during which it is forbidden to interrupt and ask for someone's guidance - or when there is nobody around to ask. Furthermore, [not having familiarized himself with the relevant laws beforehand] it can happen that one does not even realize that there is a problem to begin with."**

### LEARN TO KNOW

"It's time to remind everyone," the Rebbe says in a *sichah* of Rosh Chodesh Av,<sup>1</sup> "to

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1) In 5748; free translation of transcription from audio. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Masei* (see more from this occasion further on): "There are also laws that apply to our behavior during *Bein Hametzarim*, but the specifics of these appear in *Shulchan Aruch*—a sefer that surely every Jew has in their possession or is easily accessible to them, and since we make favorable assumptions of every Jew, each of you surely learns the

be judicious in learning the halachos applicable to this period of time. I am greatly surprised that no one has made any brouhaha (*tumul*) about this, in line with the clamor accompanying the campaign to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Learning these straight-out halachos in *Shulchan Aruch* is much more timely and relevant (*z'man gerama*) than studying *Hilchos Beis Hebechirah*. Obviously, this includes those pertaining to the Nine Days as well those regarding the (general time period) already transpiring of the Three Weeks as well.”

All this talk concerning our conduct in this time period, the Rebbe says,<sup>2</sup> must be prefaced and supplemented with the caveat, “if Moshiach’s coming is delayed, *chas veshalom*,” since (as stated in the Rambam’s Principles of Faith), “we anticipate him” that he will come today, actually. So any resolutions (in the realm of our Divine service during *golus*) must be accompanied by the above stipulation. The truth is, though, that even after Moshiach arrives we will continue to grow in Torah and *avodah*, building on the good resolutions of the time of *golus*.

\* \* \*

This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice.

### LAWS OF REDEMPTION

The concept of studying these halachos is based on several *sichos*, some of which are quoted below.

### TO REALIZE REDEMPTION

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately states,<sup>3</sup> “to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote Rambam], ‘King Moshiach [who] will build the *Beis Hamikdash* ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the mitzvos that are stated in the Torah,’ speedily, in our time—literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy,] ‘We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.’”

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded.<sup>4</sup> “One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the *Beis Hamikdash*. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from

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appropriate timely halachos of each season, and has done the same with regard to the halachos of the Three Weeks.”

2) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5751

3) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 341—*Emphasis in the original*

4) *From a sichah addressed to N'shei uB'nos Chabad—Sefer Hasichos* 5750, vol. 2, p. 485.

studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, “We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!” An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach’s arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the *Beis Hamikdash*] are matters that every Jew—men and women alike—must know, in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings.”

\* \* \*

**General Note:** The times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Since one can never achieve complete precision, and many factors may influence the accuracy of these times, it is recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time, when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., at the close of Shabbos).

### **Editorial Committee**

Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5784

Brooklyn N.Y.

## FRIDAY, 6 TAMMUZ, EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS CHUKAS

Select individuals have the tradition to fast on this day, the Friday of Parshas Chukas, as it is the anniversary of the calamity that befell European Jewry in the 13th century with the burning of twenty wagonfuls of holy *sefarim*. In the aftermath, it became known to the *Rabbonim*<sup>5</sup> that this occurred in connection with the opening words of the *parshah*, *Zos chukas hatorah* (“this is the decree of the Torah”, which can also be read as “**concerning** the Torah”). This date is therefore commemorated on the day of the week it occurred, as opposed to a set calendar date.

Another tragedy connected with this fast that occurred on this day in the first year of *Gezeiras Tach V'tat* (1648-89), as recorded in the *Selichos* composed by Rabbi Shabse Cohen (the *Shach*, of the famous eponymous commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch*), was the destruction of two entire Jewish communities in pogroms initiated by the Cossacks.

### SHABBOS PREP

Although we hear the Torah being read in shul each Shabbos, an individual is nevertheless obligated to read each week's *parshah* for himself on a weekly basis, in the format of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*—reading each *posuk* twice and then its Aramaic translation in *Targum Onkelos* once. It is best practice to complete this reading on *erev Shabbos* after *chatzos* (halachic midday); to fulfill this obligation, however, it is still good to read it anytime on Shabbos morning before eating the day meal, though it is better if completed before Shacharis. Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Chukas*.

Candle lighting is at **8:08 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv*.

## MONDAY, 9 TAMMUZ

At the time of the *churban* of the first *Beis Hamikdash*, this was the day that the wall of Yerushalayim was breached. However, since in the days of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, the breach occurred on the 17th of the month, and its lasting impact was many times more devastating, we commemorate the latter date—our Chachamim establishing that fasting on both these days would be too arduous for most people.

## THURSDAY, 12 TAMMUZ

### Chag Hageulah

Today we celebrate the birthday of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak in

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<sup>5</sup> The process in which this information became known to them is a *shaalas chalom*, a practice in which holy people write a query before going to sleep and the Heavenly answer “comes” to them in a dreamstate.



5640 (1880). Also, on this day in 5687 (1927), he received the good tidings that he was freed from the exile imposed upon him after his arrest and imprisonment for his efforts in strengthening Torah and Judaism.

### BLESSING, FARBRENGING, LEARNING

In 5748 (1988), the Rebbe announced: “The 12th and 13th of Tammuz need to be in tune with the principle of ‘we open with blessing’, so ‘*Gut Yom Tov!*’ It is a mitzvah to wish a good Yom Tov to every Jewish person, even to a one who ‘merely bears the title ‘Jew’—to him and to his family!”

“During the forthcoming two days of liberation,” the Frierdiker Rebbe states in a letter, “which are the 12th and 13th of Tammuz, Chassidim are to *farbrenge* for material and spiritual good and blessing in the spirit of the custom instituted by our first father, the Alter Rebbe (to *farbenge* on special occasions). During this *farbrenge* Chassidim should talk to one another in a spirit of brotherhood about strengthening fixed times for Torah study. I send them my blessing that G-d favor them in body and spirit.”

On a number of occasions, the Rebbe directed us to learn the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *maamar* entitled *Asarah Sheyoshvim Ve’oskim Batorah*—“Ten who sit and engage in Torah”. Its publication for the first celebration of the 12th of Tammuz constituted an everlasting instruction to study it on each subsequent *Chag Haegulah*; men, women and children should study it.

It is clear from the content of the Previous Rebbe’s discourse and letter that his desire is for the discourse to be studied publicly—in a manner of “**Ten** who sit ...” When lacking an alternative, the discourse should be studied even if there are less than ten at the session—and even by an individual. It is clear, however, that all effort should initially be extended to facilitate the study with a session of (at least) ten people.<sup>7</sup>

### FIRST PRINTING

On the 12th of Tammuz, 5676 (1816), the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* was set for print for the very first time.

We do not say *Tachanun* today.

## FRIDAY, 13 TAMMUZ

### Chag Haegulah

On this day in 5687 (1927) the Frierdiker Rebbe was actually released to return home.

6) This phrase refers to an identical description in a famous letter the Frierdiker Rebbe disseminated in honor of his release concerning who is a potential celebrant on this occasion.

7) See *Sichas Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5748*, *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 13. Also, *Shabbos Parshas Chukas 5750*, *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 409. This *maamar* was reprinted and personally distributed by the Rebbe in honor of 12 Tammuz, 5750.

We do not say *Tachanun* today.

From a letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe to mark the festival of his liberation: “I send you a *maamar* ...which is my participation—for their success—with my beloved friends the Chassidim wherever they reside, (which is my way of) being united with you in your *farbrengen* for the purpose of strengthening the practices of Chassidus, in fixing and observing periods for studying Chassidus and to be inspired to pragmatically implement those studies...

“May our G-d and G-d of our Fathers bless the whole community of Chassidim—them, their households, their children and grandchildren among all our brothers the people of Israel (G-d grant them eternal life) with all good things from the soul to those of the flesh.”

### SHABBOS PREP

Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Balak*.

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv* especially since Shabbos clothes were worn during the week for the Chag Hageulah of 12-13 Tammuz.

Candle lighting is at **8:04 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

### SHABBOS PARSHAS BALAK, 14 TAMMUZ

Kabbalas Shabbos is recited as every Shabbos.

According to Ashkenazi custom, the *chazzan* does not announce an approaching fast during the preceding Shabbos. May the approaching fast be transformed into a Yom Tov!

**Pirkei Avos:** In the tradition of extending the recital of the *perek* every Shabbos throughout the summer months, this week the sixth chapter of Avos is recited.<sup>8</sup>

**Shabbos ends at 9:10 pm.**

### SUNDAY, 15 TAMMUZ

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s imprisonment began at 2:45 a.m. on Wednesday, the 15th of Sivan, 5687 (June 15, 1927) for his “crimes” of spreading Torah Judaism under the Communist regime. On the 3rd of Tammuz, the first breakthrough occurred, when his death sentence was commuted to three years of exile. On the 12th of Tammuz, in exile in the town of Kostroma, he was informed that he would be released to return home. He remained until one half-hour past midday on Wednesday, the

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<sup>8</sup>) We avoid the mention of Hashem’s name in the incomplete Torah verses mentioned in *Pirkei Avos*. This week, it applies in two places, both in Mishnah 10. We read, “*Ad ya’avor amcha Hashem...*” and “*machon leshivticha Hashem, mikdash Hashem...*”

13th of Tammuz. Two days later, on the 15th Tammuz, he arrived back home in Leningrad, the last leg in his journey to redemption.

### TODAY'S SPECIALTY

“Today (the 15th of Tammuz),” the Rebbe says,<sup>9</sup> “is connected with the joyfulness of the (Friediker) Rebbe’s release (upon arriving home after his final arrest)—and its power shows itself in the full moon of this ‘month of geulah’. This day has the greatest ability, from any other day this month, to affect the ‘fullness’ and perfection of all the rest of its days, that they too should be transformed to ‘days of happiness and joy’.”

Today also commemorates the *yahrtzeit* of the *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh*.<sup>10</sup>

## MONDAY, 16 TAMMUZ

### ANTIDOTAL JOY

“Today,” the Rebbe said in 5745,<sup>11</sup> “Before the Three Weeks begin, we need to preempt the negative aspects related to this time period with the appropriate antidote. This demands that in the upcoming days—all twenty-one of them—special efforts should be made to increase Torah learning and giving *tzedakah* (the latter on weekdays, of course). Since the achievement of every spiritual act (in learning and mitzvah performance) is improved when it involves ten Jews or more, we should try, in every way possible, that these resolutions should be of a communal nature—learning in groups of ten or more, giving *tzedakah* in collaboration, and also throughout these days putting greater effort in strengthening the aspect of *tefillah* (especially with a *minyan*). And in all these three mainstays should carry an infusion of *simchah* (even *tefillah*, together with the aspect of introspection needed as a preparation for davening), for ‘you should serve Hashem with joy’.”

## THE THREE WEEKS

### Bein Hametzarim

*Bein Hametzarim*, which means “between the straits”, is the time between the 17th of Tammuz, when the calamities associated with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* began, and the 9th of Av, when the *churban* culminated. It is a period of mourning for the Jewish people, one that should affect each of us personally and painfully even today, 1956 years later, as the adage admonishes, “Any generation that doesn’t effectuate the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it is considered as if it was destroyed in their time.”<sup>12</sup>

9) *Roshei Devarim* of *Sichas Tes-Vov Tammuz*, 5736

10) The *Ohr Hachaim*’s relationship with the *Baal Shem Tov* (and their connection to *Moshiach*) is discussed in various sources. See Hebrew section for these, and also for references for the addition of “*Hakadosh*” to his title.

11) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, pp. 280 ff

12) *Talmud Yerushalmi Yuma* 1,1

**KER A VELT TODAY!**

On the subject of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe says<sup>13</sup>: According to the Rogachover, the *churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash* is **continuous**. This doesn't simply mean that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed about two thousand years ago and from then on we are righteously mourning, and when it comes to *Tishah B'Av* and the Three Weeks we pray for its rebuilding, similar to how we when *daven* every day and say *V'sechezena eineinu* for the *geulah* after more than nineteen hundred years in *golus*.

"No!" says the Rogachover. The continual destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* is **every single day**. When we recognize this we also realize how we need to cry out every single day, "*Ad Mosai!*" The Rogachover declares that this is explicitly stated in Talmud Yerushalmi. It is written there: "Anyone who **doesn't effectuate the rebuilding** the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time" is "as if the *Beis Hamikdash* **was destroyed** in his time!"

More than nineteen hundred years have passed. Being as it is Thursday, *Parshas Pinchas*<sup>14</sup> and it is already after Maariv, and the *Beis Hamikdash* still hasn't been built, we need to know that we must cry out for the *geulah* **as if it was destroyed on Thursday of Parshas Pinchas!** ...And being as Yidden have already cried out yesterday, "*Ad Mosai!*", and the previous day cried out, "*Ad Mosai!*", and **all the days before that** cried out, "*Ad Mosai!*"—then, *rachmana litzlan*, the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, this afternoon or tonight! **And from this we understand how we have to cry out "*Ad Mosai!*" right now!**

This is not some canny interpretation, but a halachah in Torah, as it says in Torah (itself), "Anyone who didn't build the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time" it is as if "such and such".

Imagine! The *Beis Hamikdash* is being burned, and nearby stands a Yid who is **hardened**, a Yid of stone, with a "heart of stone", and he sees how the *Beis Hamikdash* is being destroyed in his days— (even) this Yid would most certainly turn over the world (to prevent the destruction)! The Torah of truth and the Torah of life teaches us a lesson in life: [Here the Rebbe cried out, loudly] Turn the world over today!

**DON'T DESPAIR!**

"Around the time of the Three Weeks," it says in *Likkutei Sichos*,<sup>15</sup> "A Yid can begin to think about the strength of the darkness of *golus* in general and, more specifically, how dark it is (right now) during the birthpangs of Moshiach. This can lead him, *rachmana litzlan*, to fall into a state of despair, not knowing how he can get through all the hardships. He does know that it is the torment and tribulations during *golus* that will **then** result in the *geulah* being even more elevated; but **now** he finds himself in such a dark and bitter *golus*—how can he now overcome all the difficulties?

"The lesson to educate and uplift us is that, on the contrary, particularly in **this**

13) From a *sichah* of 12 Tammuz, 5744

14) the day of this *sichah*

15) vol. 18, p. 316

generation, in the generation of the birthpangs of Moshiach, the inner (hidden) aspect of Torah has been revealed to us. It uncovers and extols the inner meaning of these days: that these days have in them the full strength of the love of Hashem to the Yidden.

“To preface these days, we have the *Chag Hageulah* of twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz, which shows how we can bring out this inner, higher level into revelation **during** the time of *golus* itself (in a way that the concealment will be annulled even on a surface level). This encourages and strengthens Yidden to focus their energy during these days on the inner aspect of *golus*, and then, ever more so, will we avoid being affected by the bitterness and lowliness of it.

“Though we must keep all of the laws of mourning of the Three Weeks, as is required by the *Shulchan Aruch* in all of their detail, we find ways **in the spirit of Torah** to act with happiness even during these days. For example, make a *siyum* on a *mesechta* that will transform the day into a ‘*yom tov of Rabbanan*’ also during **these** days of the Nine Days! (We can do this to the point that we can even eat a *seudah* of meat when we make a *siyum* on a *mesechta* during the Nine Days.) Or, more generally, we can focus our energy on learning Torah (which gladdens the heart), with an emphasis on the learning of the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* (about building the *Beis Hamikdash* and the like). Through learning Torah on the subjects of how the *Beis Hamikdash* looked, ‘I consider it as if they were involved in the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*’.

## ANTICIPATION

“Conducting ourselves in this manner of revealing the inner meaning of the Three Weeks in the same way that it will be when Moshiach comes, then, these days will be transformed ‘into rejoicing and happiness, and *yomim tovim*.”

Concerning the time period of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Rebbe says<sup>16</sup>: On the one hand, this is a time during which we have the obligation to “mourn over Yerushalayim.” On the other hand, it is specifically this time that demands of us to have a special strength to avoid falling into a state of despair from *golus*, *chas v’shalom*. For we know (that we will ultimately return), as the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Masei* ends, “Will you not from this time call me, “My Father, You, the Master of my youth?” Even better: encourage yourself, and other Yidden, during the multiplied darkness of the birthpangs of Moshiach, and all the more during the Three Weeks, through strengthening the aspect of “I await for him that he will come every day.” (How will he come?) Learn and occupy yourself with studying the “formation of the *Beis Hamikdash* and all of its *halachos*.”

## HAPPY?

During the time of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe encourages,<sup>17</sup> “we should increase in all areas of Torah and *mitzvos* with a *shturem* (extra enthusiasm), especially

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411

<sup>17</sup> *Roshei Devarim* from *Shabbos Parshas Masei* 5744

in the area of *simchah*. Certainly, the intention isn't an artificial joy, where one pinches his cheek so that people should think he's happy or, even more heartily, does some movement like clapping his hands. The intention is to reach a true happiness that permeates the emotions of the heart. For this reason, we should exert effort to utilize every opportunity to organize *farbrengens* during the Three Weeks. This will lead to happiness not only amongst the participants, but also to happiness Above, since through increasing in joy, we minimize and nullify all of the undesirable aspects of the Three Weeks, to the point that it leads to effect *nechamah* (comfort), a double *nechamah* in our physical reality."

### ADVANTAGEOUS

In *Or Hatorah*<sup>18</sup>: There is a parable of a king who, when traveling, is more easily reachable to converse with than when he is at home. This accessibility is not limited to those who are worthy. In the same way, as is explained by the *Avodas Yisroel*<sup>19</sup> in the name of the Maggid, all who pursue a revelation of G-dliness, will reach it *davka* during the Three Weeks, as in the above parable.

In several *sichos* (too many to enumerate here), the advantage of the days of the Three Weeks is explained. Despite the fact that on a surface level these days appear to be of sieges and calamities and a time of decreased happiness to the point that we even have laws of mourning, it is clear that we should not spend this time focused on bitterness and depressing subjects, *chas v'shalom*.

On the contrary, the whole point of this descent is in order for there to be an ascent, and when we experience an incomparable descent, the ascent will be so as well. Even more than that, the inner essence and truth of these days themselves is an elevated goodness; being hidden good it is rooted in a higher level than revealed good.

Additionally, when you look at reality through the lens of the Torah, and not the way reality is perceived in this world below, you see only pure goodness. Through our Divine service of the Three Weeks (*Bein Hametzarim*), that is "from the *metzar* (strait) I call out"—from the constraints of *golus* we are able to "draw down from above the 'higher strait' (which is a place) that no mind can grasp," as is brought in *Chassidus* concerning this time period.

### STRAIT TO FREEDOM

When Moshiach comes the good will be revealed below in a tangible way, within the reality of this world. This revelation will be like the advantage of light that comes after darkness. And after the *metzar*, as the *passuk* continues, "Hashem answers me with *merchav* (latitude)", an essential latitude and extravagance, resulting in these days being transformed into days of joy and happiness, to the point that the happiness is incomparable to the rest of the days of happiness.

We already have a spark and taste of this positive, inner aspect of the Three Weeks

18) *Parshas Vayeshev*, vol. 5, p. 900. See also *Ma'anos Kodesh* 5745, bottom of pp. 110 ff.

19) *Parshas Masei*

during *golus*, especially in more recent generations nearest to the time of Moshiach, which is when the idea of happiness and *geulah* in the month of Tammuz was revealed. This idea was manifested in the *Chag Hageulah* of the twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz to the point that the whole month becomes a month of *geulah*. This is already visibly apparent before the days of the Three Weeks even begin so that, from the start, we should know the inner theme of these days.

The closer that we are to Moshiach, the less we feel the *churban* and *golus* during the Three Weeks. The feeling of preparing for the *geulah*, which is the good within these days, continually increases. Since we now find ourselves right before the *geulah*, the positive aspect of the Three Weeks is continuing to be increasingly felt and emphasized, and through this we will come to the complete *geulah*. Standing on the threshold of the *geulah*, **only** the positive of the Three Weeks is emphasized.

## NUMBERS

We begin with the start of the Three Weeks, on the 17th of Tammuz. *Yud-zayin* (seventeen) has the same *gematria*, **numerical value**, as the word *tov* (good). This is because the 17th of Tammuz is “an auspicious day for Hashem”. Concerning the events that took place on this day, the primary of them (both chronologically and qualitatively) was the smashing of the *Luchos*. Despite this event being something undesirable, it has within it a positive element and, indeed, the highest type of good. How so? As a result of the smashing of the first set of *Luchos*, the second set of *Luchos* were given, which were “of a double strength”, (and thereby affected an increase of Torah) even to the point of infinity. The same applies to the culmination of the Three Weeks, the 9th of Av. How so? Because this is the day that Moshiach was born; the *mazel* of our righteous Moshiach was strongest during the moments of the *churban*.

The three **weekly parshios** of this time also carry themes closely associated with the *geulah*: In *Matos-Masei* and *Devarim*, the Torah speaks of conquering and dividing the Holy Land (that includes the three areas of *Keini*, *Kenizi* and *Kadmoni*, which will only become ours in the future); previously, in *Pinchas*, there is the connection both in name: “Pinchas is Eliyahu” who will come and announce the future *geulah*, and the *parshah*’s content, which is about counting the Yidden, alluding to our tenth (and final) census in the future. It also speaks of dividing the Land, and mentions many *korbanos* (especially the *korbanos* of the festivals, hinting to the transformative nature of the Three Weeks to days of festival and rejoicing). Even earlier, preceding this time period, *Parshas Balak* explicitly prophesies Moshiach’s coming.

This also applies to the **number of the weeks**—Three Weeks—“because three is a *chazakah*, the strength of something ‘fixed.’” The Three Weeks are a *chazakah* in matters of holiness. As well, there is the idea of a descent of three gradations, which makes it as if the descent has an established *chazakah* and power, and thus an incomparable ascent is accomplished. The essential theme of the Three Weeks is the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash*, which will be for all of eternity being the work of Hashem Himself, and totally incomparable to the first two *Batei Mikdash*.

The same applies to the **number of days** of this time period. There are twenty-one days in the Three Weeks, which is the amount of time it takes for an almond to grow. This is the fastest gestation period of any fruit, representing an alacrity and speediness with great overpowering strength to annul the obstacles and impediments of *golus*. This is apparent in a detail of the process as well: Almonds are bitter when they are small, and when they finish ripening (at twenty-one days) they become sweet. The point of the Three Weeks is to transform these days into days of rejoicing and happiness, happy and sweet days.

### THREE WEEKS' RESTRICTIONS

The laws and restrictions of *Bein Hametzarim* commence on the **evening** of the 17th of Tammuz.

#### HAIRCUTS

Both men and women<sup>20</sup> refrain from cutting their hair during this period. This includes all facial hair as well as hair anywhere else on the body. Adults may not cut children's hair.

We are also restricted from trimming or waxing eyebrows, mustaches and the like, even hair around the private parts. If the mustache interferes with eating, it may be trimmed.

However, it is permissible—indeed it is a *mitzvah*—to cut a forelock (*tshup*, in Yiddish) during the Three Weeks.<sup>21</sup>

When a boy's third birthday falls during the Three Weeks, the *upshernish* is delayed until the tenth of Av after midday. This however does not include the other customs associated with the *upshernish*, such as wearing *tzitzis*, saying the morning *brochos*, *Birchas Hamazon* and the bedtime *Shema*; these should begin on the day of the birthday.

Until Rosh Chodesh Av, it is permissible to cut and style a *sheitel* and it is not considered cutting hair. (Concerning the time after Rosh Chodesh, see further in the laws of the Nine Days.)

### ENGAGEMENT & MARRIAGE

It is permissible to get engaged and host a *Lechaim* during the Three Weeks. However, during the Nine Days (starting from Rosh Chodesh Av), we do not hold a festive meal for the occasion; rather, light refreshments may be served.

Weddings may not be held, even without a festive meal, and even for someone who has not yet fulfilled his obligation of bearing children. This includes the remarriage of a divorced couple.

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<sup>20</sup> A woman may cut hair for reasons of modesty, as well as in preparation for *mikvah* (even if it is during the Nine Days for an immersion following *Tishah B'av*, as we refrain from trimming three days before immersing). She may also remove any body hair that could render her unattractive to her husband, even during the Nine Days.

<sup>21</sup> See [www.halacha2go.com](http://www.halacha2go.com), Halacha #243



We may conduct a *sheva brochos* meal during this time without music or dancing.

### SHEHECHIYANU

It is best to avoid making a *Shehechianu* blessing during the Three Weeks. Therefore, we refrain from eating new fruit<sup>22</sup> or wearing new clothing. Our custom is to refrain from blessing *Shehechianu* at any time during the Three Weeks, even on Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh.

The restriction on new clothing during the Three Weeks applies to garments of substantial worth. Clothing of lesser significance may be purchased and worn until Rosh Chodesh Av—this includes underwear, socks and shoes. Someone may also purchase and wear a new pair of *tzitzis*. New glasses are also permitted, provided they are for improved vision, not pleasure.

Someone whose wife gives birth to a daughter should make the blessing of *Shehechianu* upon seeing her for the first time, even during the Three Weeks. A father also blesses *Shehechianu* at his firstborn son's *pidyon haben* during the Three Weeks.

The *brachah* of *hatov vehemetiv* may be recited during the Three Weeks.<sup>23</sup>

### DANCING & MUSIC

Dancing is prohibited during the Three Weeks.

We may not play<sup>24</sup> or listen to music, including recorded music. Some are lenient to listen to music which is only vocals (without instruments). However, many contemporary *poskim* say this is the same as music. Certainly, some of these recordings sound very professional and essentially negate the original purpose of the custom. However, there is room to be lenient when listening to slow *niggunim* that are recorded primarily with vocals and only some background musical accompaniment.

Listening to music in order to stay alert while driving for extended periods is permissible—even obligatory—especially when driving through the night.

The prohibition on music applies at camps too, especially since the camp's objective is to educate children toward *yiras Shamayim*. In a day camp or daycare setting, where it is necessary to calm younger children who have not reached the age of *chinuch*, and the music is not intended for joy, the Morah may be lenient.

<sup>22</sup>) A pregnant woman may eat a new fruit without blessing *Shehechianu*, out of concern that an unsatisfied craving may endanger the child. Similarly, an ill person may eat a new fruit without reciting *Shehechianu*.

<sup>23</sup>) This applies to its recital for various occasions such as the birth of a male child, and on wine, when warranted. (For a comprehensive overview on saying *hatov vehemetiv* on wine, see the supplement for the Day-to-Day Guide for Purim 5784.)

<sup>24</sup>) A professional musician may play for non-Jews until Rosh Chodesh Av excluding the actual day of the 17th of Tammuz.

Music lessons or practice for students are permitted from the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av when they are for the purpose of developing skills to earn a livelihood. However, learning for pleasure is prohibited.

We refrain from dancing and playing music even at a *seudas mitzvah*, such as a bar mitzvah, *siyum*, *sheva brochos* and similar occasions.

The Rebbe answers someone regarding a *siyum sefer Torah* during the Three Weeks: “It needs further study; a more suitable date would be appropriate.” The Rebbe negates holding such an event after Rosh Chodesh Av.

### TRAVEL, TRIPS & GENERAL SAFETY

The Three Weeks is a time of heightened risk and we must take care to avoid any element of danger.

From the 17th of Tammuz, we refrain from going out alone between the end of the fourth halachic hour until the end of the ninth halachic hour.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, we take care not to walk in a place that is in between the sun and the shade. This all only applies in a desolate place. However, where there are passersby, the concern doesn't apply.

Trips should be less frequent during the Three Weeks. But if the excursions are for health reasons or as an incentive for Torah learning, they are certainly permitted.

From *Likkutei Dibburim*<sup>26</sup>: During the two midsummer months (in Lubavitch) from Shavuos until *Shabbos Nachamu*—except for a certain break during the Three Weeks, which were days of real mourning, the laws of the period being punctiliously observed in all their details—people would sometimes take a little stroll across the marketplace between Mincha and Maariv. No one ever went out for a walk between Pesach and Shavuos, but from then on people took the opportunity of enjoying the pleasant summer weather.

Swimming—in a pool or the ocean—is allowed until Rosh Chodesh Av. However, extra caution must be exercised. Many refrain from swimming in rivers due to the danger they present.

When an extended trip is necessary, it is proper to make significant preparations before the 17th of Tammuz, to emphasize that the trip began before the Three Weeks.

### MEDICAL CARE

When possible, it is proper to delay complex medical procedures until after *Tishah B'av*—as the popular saying goes: “Any delay is good.” If the doctor insists, it should definitely be scheduled before *Shabbos Chazon*.

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<sup>25</sup> Calculated by dividing the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve parts. Thus 1/12 of the day is a halachic hour. For example, if the sun rises at 5 am and sets at 7:30 pm, a halachic hour is 72.5 minutes.

<sup>26</sup> (English) vol. 1, p. 241. Published by Kehos, 5747

Of course, in a life-threatening situation, any procedure should be done immediately without any delay.

Routine procedures that pose no risk may be performed, including dental care and the like.

Children and students should be rebuked gently; no parent or teacher should use corporal punishment at all during the Three Weeks.<sup>27</sup>

### HOUSE-BUYING, MOVING, RENOVATING

Though some are stringent and refrain from buying homes during the Three Weeks because it is an “inauspicious time”, according to the letter of the law someone may buy a **residential** home, especially if they will incur a loss by forfeiting the deal. (It is permitted even during the Nine Days.) When the closing is after *Tishah B’av*, there is no concern at all.

It is customary not to move into a new home during the Three Weeks (even when *Shehechyanu* wouldn’t be recited). It is proper to move in after the fifteenth of Av, and if possible, in the month of Elul, which is the month of mercy.

Expansion of living quarters is allowed until Rosh Chodesh Av, though many avoid starting a new build during this time.<sup>28</sup>

As well, small home improvements may be done until Rosh Chodesh, but decorating the house, such as painting, should be avoided. If someone already contracted a non-Jew and they began the job, it may be completed until Rosh Chodesh Av.

Someone who has moved into a new home before the 17th of Tammuz should not schedule a *chanukas habayis* feast during the Three Weeks.

### THE REBBE’S HORA’OS

(From the preface to *Chidushim U’bi’urim B’hilchos Beis Habechirah*)

**Torah & Tzedakah:** In accordance with the verse, “*Tzion* will be redeemed with justice (*mishpat*) and those who return to her—with *tzedakah*”, we should increase in both Torah study (*mishpat*), specifically in the halachos of *Bein Hametzarim*, and *tzedakah* during the Three Weeks.

**Five Periods:** The Three Weeks are subdivided into periods of increasing intensity: (1) From the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av (2) from Rosh Chodesh until the week of the 9th of Av (3) the week of *Tishah B’Av* itself (4) the day before the fast and (5) the actual fast day. We should intensify our Torah and *tzedakah* at each ensuing phase of the Three Weeks.

<sup>27</sup> Regarding hitting in general, see [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #6349 for a comprehensive discussion.

<sup>28</sup> See [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #15381

**Erev Rosh Chodesh:** On the day before Rosh Chodesh Av, we should especially amplify our Torah study, prayer and *tzedakah*. We should at least distribute the monetary equivalent of two meals to *tzedakah* – and ideally, the equivalent of three meals.

**Preempt with Positive:** We should resolve to fulfill the above directive **before** the Three Weeks commence. Those who have not yet made such a resolution should do so **at their very first opportunity**—and the sooner (even by a moment) the better!<sup>29</sup> Obviously, someone who failed to accomplish any of the above directives on the applicable dates should make it up afterwards.

**Mivtzoim:** During the Three Weeks, we should put special effort into the mitzvah campaigns: Ahavas Yisrael, Kosher Education, Torah-Study, Torah Books, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Shabbos Candles, Kosher Diet and Family Purity.

### MORE LOVE

In several *sichos kodesh*, the Rebbe explains how the reason for the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* was baseless hatred, and that in order to undo the cause we need to increase in *Ahavas Yisrael*, love for a fellow Jew, and *Achdus Yisrael*, unity of the Jewish people, in a manner of baseless love. This includes the areas of Torah, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah* as a community—with special emphasis on these acts during the Three Weeks. Now, standing on the threshold of *geulah*, it is certain that the reason for *golus* has already been rectified, and so the emphasis on *Ahavas Yisrael* is in the way of a taste (of the future), to the point that this love is the beginning of the *geulah*. The *geulah* is tied with a point of Jewish unity that is higher than any division. This is emphasized in the togetherness of Yidden when on the level of *yechidah* (the very essence of the soul), which is a spark of the *neshamah* of Moshiach, who is the *yechidah klolis* (general *yechidah* of all Jews).

### HILCHOS BEIS HABECHIRAH

Make it a point to study about the *Beis Hamikdash*<sup>30</sup> during the Three Weeks. This learning is also applicable to women and children.<sup>31</sup>

### WHAT TO LEARN

“In the days preceding *erev Tishah B’Av* and *Tishah B’Av*,” the Rebbe says,<sup>32</sup> “we must study the necessary halachos and the established *shiurim* that we have. Increase in learning the *perakim* of the *navi* Yechezkel that discusses all about the *Beis Hamikdash*, its exits and entrances, and the commentaries on those chapters.

29) “According to the halachic ruling in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 571:3*”

30) Primary sources include: From *Tanach*, from the *navi* Yechezkel from chapter 40 & on; in the Mishnah and Gemara, *Mesechtos Tamid* and *Midos*; In the Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, adding in all these the explanations and commentary that are expanded upon in *Chassidus*.

31) See the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei 5736*. In *Sichos Kodesh*, pp. 496 ff. Also, *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei 5740*. In *Sichas Kodesh*, pp. 658 ff.

32) From the *sichah* of *erev Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei, 24 Tammuz, 5736*. In *Sichos Kodesh*, p. 485

Then go on to *Meseches Middos* with commentaries, and finally, *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, the laws of the *Beis Hamikdash* of the Rambam's *Mishnah Torah* with its *mefarshim*. It is certain that Hashem will then keep His promise that 'I consider it as if they are involved in its construction.' And this is the preparation that will result most speedily in the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash* in its designated palace, with the coming of Moshiach, now."

### HOW TO LEARN

"Standing on the threshold of Moshiach, who is coming immediately," says the Rebbe,<sup>33</sup> "it is understood that the study of *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* needs to be **in an entirely different way**; at the very least, the learning shouldn't be because one is overcome with emotions of mourning and due to his efforts to rectify the lack that resulted from the *churban Beis Hamikdash*, but because of the yearning and desire for Hashem and the completion of the third *Beis Hamikdash*... Additionally, and more essentially, the study should be an outcome of the completely certain knowledge and recognition that these aren't 'the (farfetched) halachos of Moshiach', but they are **actual, pertinent halachos for the coming moment**, since the 'future *mikdash* that we anticipate is built and perfected (already now above, and immediately) will be revealed and will come from the Heaven' **this very moment!**"

### WHEN TO LEARN

At this time, in 5740, the Rebbe spoke<sup>34</sup>: "We are now starting the Three Weeks and I was waiting to see if anyone would talk about (studying *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*) this year, and I see that no one has. So now that it's ten days from the 17th of Tammuz, a few days before the Nine Days, someone thought to put a notice about this in the newspaper! And only then did people find the courage to write to me all perturbed, asking if it's appropriate to learn the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year because I haven't mentioned it yet! But, we have already mentioned this the last four years, and we have mentioned that we should publicize this all over, and that's what we have actually done, and it was accepted in several places. And I have not said this in a way of 'a decree I have decreed' (without explanation), but I have also given a reason for this, and the reason is relevant every year this time, this year included.

"And since we have already done it for three years, we must continue, because the halachah is that if someone does something three times, and he didn't say *bli neder*, he must continue to do it, and it is certain that in the past years we didn't say *bli neder* when we have studied *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, because I didn't mention that we have to. It is therefore certain that we need to do it this year as well! And despite all that, someone asks me a question if we have to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year—does every single thing need to be repeated over and over?! And may it be His will that since we have at least now caught on and

33) *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5751, part 9

34) *Roshei Devarim of the sichah of Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*

placed a notice in the newspaper, we should follow from now on what it says in the notice, that we should learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* in the coming days, and specifically in the Nine Days, and more specifically in the week which *Tishah B'Av* falls, and most especially on *erev Tishah B'Av* and *Tishah B'Av* itself. And certainly we need to study today, since Moshiach is coming today; and so too, if, G-d forbid, Moshiach has not come by tomorrow, we will also have to learn tomorrow...

“Even once Moshiach arrives we must learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Even though Moshiach will build the *Beis Hamikdash*, every Yid can potentially contribute. Say, Moshiach will be building the *Beis Hamikdash*, and one detail there won't be according to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* of the Rambam. Any Yid should be able to go over to our righteous Moshiach and ask him—of course, with this introduction, ‘With all due respect to *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, who is one of the “eight princes of Man” and of the “seven Shepherds”...perhaps, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* has constructed a detail of the *Beis Hamikdash* not as it is in Rambam? And if it is so, where is the source to change how the Rambam rules? Being that ‘Torah is not in the Heavens’ and ‘a shy person doesn't learn’, if a Yid will doubt the way Moshiach is building the *Beis Hamikdash*, he may, and he **must**, ask him about it. And certainly Moshiach will bear no grudge and not become vexed, since he knows that the path of Torah learning is ‘the shy person doesn't learn’, and he will therefore certainly respond to his question.”

### WHO SHOULD LEARN

And in 5741<sup>35</sup>: These days we must endeavor to learn the parts of Torah that are connected to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, and to influence other Yidden in the same way, because through this every Yid builds the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is the foundation of the entire world. As is explained in the words of *Chazal*, that in the Holy of Holies in the *Beis Hamikdash* on the Temple Mount is the *even hashesia*, the foundation stone, from which the entire world exists. As a result, every man and woman who learns *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* builds the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! During this time, we need to go out into the street and find a Yid and say to him, “Listen up! You need to build the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!” This will be accomplished through learning the parts of Torah connected to the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*. He may claim in return that he doesn't know any of the *Alef-Beis*, not even know the *Alef-Beis* (the very basics) of *Yiddishkeit*. Tell him: “All this deliberation has no place when you need to build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! Ay, you don't understand the parts of Torah connected to the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Lashon Hakodesh*, so learn the material in another language—but you must build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!”

When we know that every single person is building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world through learning the part of Torah connected with the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, all deliberations that result from a lack of emotional or spiritual serenity fall away, because what are they worth compared to building a

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<sup>35</sup>) *sichah of Shabbos Parshas Matos*

*Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world, (that place) “from which the entire world exists?”. “And through this,” we declare to every Jew, “you accomplish that these days [of the Three Weeks] will be transformed to days of rejoicing and happiness and *yomim tovim*, with the true and final *geulah*, immediately!

### THE BOTTOM LINE

In reference to all this, the Rebbe’s words, brought in *Likkutei Sichos*,<sup>36</sup> implore us: “This is the main thing here: **now** is the time to be involved in these efforts (to learn and publicize the learning of *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*), to begin them even before *Bein Hametzarim*, before the Nine Days. This opportunity must be, as in the vernacular, ‘a priority, with extra attentiveness and alacrity, more intense and stronger, the effort doubled and quadrupled, exponentially greater than at any other time’. However, if for any reason, a day or two passes without action, we must simply apply ourselves even more assiduously, and make up for what we missed with an augmented learning schedule. And since, in this case, there is an aspect of guilt of having missed a peak juncture in time, do as *Chazal* advises: If you are accustomed to reading one page, now read two etc.—and thereby ‘double down’ in this undertaking.”

### MAKING FARBRENGENS

“To add even more *simchah*,” the Rebbe says on the Shabbos before the Three Weeks began,<sup>37</sup> “so the addition of joy in itself will break all the limitations of *golus* since ‘joy breaks boundaries’—it is very favorable and appropriate to add and increase in happy opportunities in these days, (specifically) in joyous *farbrengens* after the 17th of Tammuz (during the Three Weeks), in a manner that is permitted according to *Shulchan Aruch* (such as holding a *seudas mitzvah* or the like), if, G-d forbid, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* is still delayed another day. The benefit of this is both with regard to its component of joy, which breaks the limitations of *golus*, and additionally—and primarily—through this occasion heightening in the aspect of ‘brothers who sit together’ with *Ahavas Yisrael* and Jewish unity, for ‘partaking together fosters closeness’, and thus nullify the cause for *golus* altogether.”

“Add in the realm of joy, literally” the Rebbe further explains the next day,<sup>38</sup> “which is accomplished through gatherings of Jews generally, and more specifically when they get together for a *Chassidische farbrengen*—as elaborated by the (Friediker) Rebbe.<sup>39</sup> Even during the Three Weeks—should the arrival of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* be delayed *chas veshalom* for some minutes or hours—whenever it is permissible to be joyous within the parameters of *Shulchan Aruch*, whether at a *bris milah*, a *pidyon haben* or another occasion.

“Even within this framework, at the appropriate time and situation, within

36) vol. 13, p. 279

37) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Balak*, in *Sefer Hasichos 5747*, vol. 2, p. 471

38) 15 Tammuz, 5747, transcribed from audio.

39) In a story he told, as recorded in the appendix to *Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchak*.

holy miens, and with proper order, the celebration can be beyond measure and limitation, as we have stated many times that Torah can accomplish this, if led by a lively, dynamic person who lives with *Toras chaim*, the 'living Torah' and within *Toras chaim* itself, with the inner aspect of Torah, which enlivens and breeds ever more life.

“And since this is required of every Jew, it is a sign that each one has the inherent power to balance both these counterpoints—keeping in mind, always, that by accomplishing this within the correct parameters, keeping to the proper setup, in a time and place sanctioned by Torah, that it will certainly be a great *simchah*, beyond all limitations, but *chas veshalom*, without undue intoxication—and that is meant literally, without room for alternate interpretations, as we have discussed many times (the limits on drinking).” (After reciting the after-brachah, the Rebbe stood up from the table, and distributed bottles of mashke to those who were arranging *farbrengens*.)

## MONDAY NIGHT, EVE OF 17 TAMMUZ

For a fast that begins in the morning, such as this one, you may eat until dawn (see time below) if you did not go to sleep for the night. Temporarily dozing off does not constitute going to sleep. If you did sleep properly before the fast, you can only eat if you stipulated before going to sleep that you would eat or drink when you awake. Someone who usually rises to drink during the night can drink without making a stipulation.

Even if you have satisfied the requirements of being able to eat before the fast, do not begin a proper meal within a halachic half-hour of dawn. You may snack on fruit, vegetables and non-alcoholic beverages, and eat up to a *kebeitzah* of *mezonos*.<sup>40</sup>

### NIGHT UN-FAST

On the eve of the 10th of Teves 5752, the Rebbe explains that although *Asarah B'Teves* begins at night (as is the case with all Jewish dates), the actual fast only begins at dawn. The lack of fasting on the eve of the 10th of Teves symbolizes the power that is granted at that time to reverse the negative events that the fast day commemorates. It is an auspicious time for *teshuvah* that will bring the Redemption and a night of opportunity to forever nullify the fast before it begins. The Rebbe pointed out that the night stretches for a number of hours, which offers ample time for *teshuvah*.

## TUESDAY, 17TH OF TAMMUZ

This day is a communal fast day during which eating and drinking is forbidden, as it is the day that the walls of Yerushalayim were breached.

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40) Generally, the volume of food that would fit into two small matchboxes.



There were five events that occurred throughout history on the 17th of Tammuz: (1) The *Luchos* were broken (2) The *Korban Tamid* ceased in the *Beis Hamikdash* (3) During the time of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached (4) The wicked Apostomus burned the Torah (5) A graven image was put in the *Heichal*.

### THE FAST

The main purpose of observing a fast day is to awaken our hearts toward the path of *teshuvah*. *Poskim* write that the fast obligates a person to examine their actions, and rectify their negative deeds—refraining from eating and drinking are but a means by which to focus ourselves inward to *teshuvah*.<sup>41</sup> Those who utilize the fast day as a break in their normal schedule for trips or other banal activities make the minor aspect all-important while ignoring its essential purpose.

The Rambam writes that to truly experience the spiritual weight of the fast day, we must not occupy our time with frivolous or enjoyable activities, but feel bothered and distressed, as the *possuk* in Eichah states: “Of what should a living person complain? Their own sins...” The Shaloh adds that anyone who does not fast with purpose is merely torturing themselves (with gratuitous thirst and hunger). The true intention of fasting is to put mind over matter and focus on spirituality when we are without the physical constraints of feeding and hydrating the body—similar to the experience of *Olam Haba* where we will be fully occupied in enjoying the rays of shining G-dly light without distraction. On this day, we can access this spiritual delight today, with our acts of *teshuvah*, prayer, *tzedakah*—and Torah study, which is equal to them all.

### EXEMPTIONS

Pregnant women, or nursing women who have difficulty fasting, and other people feeling ill, are exempt.

A *Chosson* and *Kallah* during their *sheva brachos*, the week following their wedding, fast today.

The custom is that for a *bris* which takes place on the 17th of Tammuz, the father, *mohel* and *sandek* still fast. A minor child is given the wine to drink and the *seudah* takes place that night.

Someone who is exempt from fasting should refrain from eating delicacies and should suffice with only as much food as is necessary.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: FAST TO FEAST

All fasts will be nullified when Moshiach comes. More so, they are destined to be *yomim tovim* and days of rejoicing.

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41) though it is not halachically acceptable to disingenuously avoid fasting with a *teshuvah*-focused day.

The last halachah on fasting in the *Shulchan Aruch* states: “These days will be transformed to joyous occasions in the Future Era.” The Rebbe notes<sup>42</sup> that this statement is halachically binding in the here and now as well (for what is *Shulchan Aruch* but a guide for living today?). How? Our acts of *teshuvah* and fasting affect our current circumstances to the point that they have the power to actually transform the fast day into a Yom Tov.

### FASTING

The fast begins from dawn (*alos hashachar*) at **4:04 am**.<sup>43</sup>

Someone who travels to a different time zone during the fast continues to fast until nightfall (*tzeis hakochovim*) of the place that they are in at that time.<sup>44</sup>

It is a *minhag Yisrael* to increase *tzedakah* on fast days. We estimate the value of what we would have eaten that day and give it to a poor person on the eve of the fast.

We do not rinse our mouths on a fast day.<sup>45</sup>

### EATING BY MISTAKE

Someone who mistakenly breaks their fast must still complete it. They are not required to compensate by fasting on a different day (unless they choose to as an atonement for breaking the fast). If someone eats less than a *koseves* (the size of a large date) within the timeframe of *k'dei achilas pras*,<sup>46</sup> or drinks less than a *reviis*, they are still considered to be fasting and pray *Aneinu* as normal. If they consumed more than that, they should replace the words “*Aneinu b'yom tzom ta'aniseinu*” with “*Aneinu b'yom tzom hata'anis hazeh*” during Minchah.

Someone who is not fasting should not be given an *aliyah*. However, after the fact, a non-faster<sup>47</sup> who is called up to the Torah and is embarrassed (and concerned of *chillul Hashem*) to decline, may continue with the *aliyah*.

Bathing and doing laundry on the fast of the 17th of Tammuz are permitted.<sup>48</sup>

### SHACHARIS

Only the *chazzan* says *Aneinu*, and only during the repetition of the *Amidah*. In

42) In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 416; see fn 38.

43) There are various methods of calculating sunrise. This time is according to the opinion that *alos hashachar* is when the angle of the rising sun is the position of 1.16 degrees from the horizon.

44) If extremely weak, and fasting is causing great difficulty, there is room for leniency to break the fast at the time the fast is over in the location of origin.

45) If there is specific need—such as for a halitosis sufferer, the mouth can be rinsed, but use astringent wash and lean forward so none of it is inadvertently swallowed. See [#1988](http://www.asktherav.com)

46) The halachic span of time that is based on the norm for someone consuming a half-loaf of bread.

47) This applies to someone who broke their fast by mistake as well. See [#29087](http://www.asktherav.com)

48) Though there are some who maintain that *ba'alei nefesh* (very pious individuals) should avoid bathing with hot water, and even institute all the constraints of *Tishah B'av* on other fasts as well. See the discussion on [#346](http://www.halacha2go.com) and [#19897](http://www.asktherav.com)

both Shacharis and Minchah, *Aneinu* is recited by the *chazzan* between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. If a *chazzan* mistakenly omits *Aneinu*, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

*Selichos* are said during davening. The order for Shacharis is as follows: *Chazaras Hashatz* followed by *Tachanun* and *Nefilas Apayim*; *Selichos* (starting with *Al titnu*; omit *Ashamnu*); the long *Avinu Malkeinu* and then *Va'anachnu lo nedah*; half-*Kaddish*. (*Kel Erech Apaim* is not recited). Then the *sefer Torah* is brought out and three *aliyos* are read from the section *Vayechal Moshe*.

The *minhag* in 770 is that when there is a *chossan*, a *bris* was held that day, or the like, the congregation (aside from the *chossan* and the *ba'al habris*) says *Selichos*, but omit *Tachanun*, *Nefilas Apayim* and *Avinu Malkeinu*. When this is done, start with *Selach lanu* and continue without omitting anything; *viduy* of *Ashamnu* is said.

### INTRODUCTORY 3

The Rebbe explains<sup>49</sup>: Before starting *Selichos* on the 17th of Tammuz, we headline the Three Weeks with the recitation of three *pesukim*, which can be considered the most essential aspect of the *Selichos* in general and compared to the role of the *Amidah*. The content of these three verses, and the order as well, are significant.

The first of these is not about personal accounting as would be expected when beginning supplicatory prayers, but with an outcry—one sourced in Torah—of *Al Titnu*: “And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem praised in the land”<sup>50</sup> which is a demand from Hashem to not only rebuild Yerushalayim, but not to be silent and continue to implore and beg until Yerushalayim reaches the stage of receiving accolades.

The reasoning for this is stated in the next verse we recite, *Ki imcha*: “For with You is the Source of life, in Your light we will see light.”<sup>51</sup> It is the belief that Hashem brings into being and continuously enlivens everything, including this *golus* (which is long and terrible), but because we know it is “with Him” and that He is “the source of life”, that we realize that eventually its inner greatness and purpose will be revealed in the Future Era, when darkness will be transformed into light. And how will we “see the light”? Through “His light”, which is the Torah that illuminates the path of Man and which states, “give Him no rest” (and demand the *geulah*).

Only with these prefaces can the mind and heart focus, and be capable of the true, complete *teshuvah* alluded to in third statement, *Elokeinu*: “Hashem, we are ashamed of our deeds and repentant of our sins”. The core aspect and the most timely insistence remains the first *posuk*, not remaining silent concerning the extant *churban*, which infuses the appropriate meaning into our admittance of

49) *Sichas Tes-Vav Tammuz* 5742, at the end of the *farbrengen* after saying the *brachah acharonah*.

50) *Yeshayahu* 62:7

51) *Tehillim* 36:10

wrongdoing that it should have the strength of a true and internally impactful return to Hashem. In fact, the very act implied by the first *possuk*—turning to Hashem and demanding the *geulah*—is the implicit action needed for complete *teshuvah*.

### TODAY'S PARSHAH

“This is not well publicized and has been applied by very few,” the Rebbe says in 5748,<sup>52</sup> “But on the 17th of Tammuz, there are those who study the chapters regarding fasts from the *Neviim*, similar to the custom of saying a chapter of Tehillim specific to each day (*Shir shel Yom*) and similar; these texts are the ‘*parshah*’ of today. Now, the Torah is eternal, so even when Moshiach comes, we will include these parts of *Neviim* that discuss fast days. Because this is the ‘**Torah** of (eternal) **truth**’ and the ‘Torah of **light**’, the good in every aspect shines through (even within these negative passages about fast days). This is explained elsewhere<sup>53</sup> concerning the words ‘Yaakov and Eisav who are spoken about in the *parshah*.’ This means that we can access the good that is in these fasts as they will be transformed into days of rejoicing and *yomim tovim* (literally, ‘good days’) in the future. So on the contrary (learning about the fast days from the *Neviim* is not a focus on negativity, but) through learning about the temporary descent, this magnifies the happiness and *yom tov* aspect.”

### MINCHAH

It is preferable to daven Minchah earlier, finishing before *shkiah* (8:19 pm) so that it does not run into twilight (*bein hashmoshos*). In addition to the fact that it is appropriate to daven Minchah before *shkiah* every day, on a fast day specifically this is the correct thing to do. In the event that someone does daven late, he may still conduct *Krias Hatorah* and *Maftir* even once it has reached *bein hashmoshos*.

The Torah reading of Shacharis is repeated for Minchah with the addition of *Maftir* for a fast day: *Dirshu Hashem*.

During the *Amidah*, *Aneinu* is recited by all (fasting) congregants during the blessing of *Shema Koleinu*. If it is mistakenly omitted, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

During *Chazaras Hashatz*, the *chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. The *chazzan's* priestly blessing is recited before *Sim shalom*.

The order for Minchah is as follows: 1. *Vayedaber* (*Korbanos* for Minchah) 2. *Ashrei* 3. half-*Kaddish* 4. *Vayehi binsoa* and *Krias Hatorah*, then *Maftir* and its blessings 5. *Yehalelu*, 6. half-*Kaddish* 7. *Amidah* (including *Anienu*) and *Chazaras Hashatz* 8. *Tachanun*, the long *Avinu Malkeinu* 9. *Kaddish tiskabel* 10. *Aleinu* and *Kaddish Yasom*.

<sup>52</sup>) *Sefer Hasichos*, p. 247, fn. 63

<sup>53</sup>) in *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 20, pp. 341ff; vol. 30, p.144 part 6; and others

*Divrei Kevushin*, an address that motivates its audience toward self-improvement, are said after Minchah.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: MINCHAH WITH MOSHIACH

“Today may be the day Moshiach arrives,” the Rebbe said on a fast day.<sup>54</sup> “In that case we won’t be saying the fast-day liturgy in Minchah, but adding happy remarks, for in the middle of the brachah of *Shema Koleinu* we are permitted to add any personal *tefillos*.”

During that same *sichah*, the Rebbe added, “When Moshiach comes today, Minchah will be prayed without a Torah reading!”<sup>55</sup>

### MAARIV & BREAK-FAST

The fast ends after Maariv at **8:51 pm**.

There are various methods of calculating the time of nightfall (called *tzeis hakochavim*, when three stars are observable). Following the Alter Rebbe’s opinion to account for “smaller stars”, we generally wait some minutes after this time to say the nighttime *Shema*. But for the purpose of the fast, you may daven earlier, at the time detailed above, and then repeat the *Shema* sometime later.

## THURSDAY, 19 TAMMUZ

On this date in 5640 (1880), was the *bris milah* of the Frierdiker Rebbe (and the seventh day from his bar mitzvah thirteen years later, in 5653-1893). In various *sichos*, the Rebbe speaks about the spiritual strength of the great *simchah* to commemorate this day and its redemptive effect on the time we are currently experiencing—*Bein Hametzarim*, and its connection to the final *geulah*.<sup>56</sup>

### SEARCHING SIMCHAH

“Those days are recalled and recurring’ spiritually,” the Rebbe says in 5745,<sup>57</sup> “but we live in a physical world of action (which includes practices of mourning for *Bein Hametzarim*), so we must try to find some way to give a *heter* to properly celebrate the (Frierdiker Rebbe’s) *bris milah*. Perhaps there will be a current *simchah* like a *bris, pidyan haben*, or the like—since these are celebrations that are in accord with the halachos of *Shulchan Aruch* pertaining to the Three Weeks—and we will extend that *simchah* (to include the one of the Frierdiker Rebbe).

54) 18 Tammuz (17 Tammuz *Nidcheh*), 5751

55) And not Shacharis? Perhaps the Rebbe spoke thus because it was Minchah time. Would we still read the Torah at Shacharis if we are no longer fasting? See Hebrew footnotes for a comprehensive discussion on these topics.

56) See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* 5749 (in *Sefer Hasichos*, pp. 581 ff) and others.

57) *Sichah* of 15 Tammuz; free translation transcribed from audio.

“And we will emphasize that even though the focus of this *simchah* is the halachic and *gashmiyus* one, still, for Yidden and Chassidim who live with the Rebbe, our *Nasi*, consistently it is as if today, actually, we are celebrating the bris of a dynamic person, one who grows each year, advancing higher ‘from strength to strength’ in a cumulative manner—so that this year (5745), is the 106th bris of the (Frieddiker) Rebbe!<sup>58</sup> And therefore the celebration of the occasion is that many times greater!

“In rebuttal to those who may claim (‘those who seek allegations’) and take issue with such a non-required celebration—and in truth, this is a halachically-justified argument, not a pretext at all—which is why we should find an actual, halachah-sanctioned *simchah* of a bris, *pidyan haben*, or the like, and in the course of such, discuss a point of Chassidus originating from the *ba’al hasimchah* himself, the (Frieddiker) Rebbe, (mentioning that) he lives on and that each year reaches a higher level. And then we should continue the *farbrengen*—all this done in a way that is within the purview of the *Shulchan Aruch*. And regarding that it can be said, as is brought in Chassidus, that the one that places the limits on itself is not truly limited—and such can be said of the restrictions of the *Shulchan Aruch* in this case.<sup>59</sup>

## FRIDAY, 20 TAMMUZ

### Erev Shabbos Parshas Pinchas

Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Pinchas*. (See more details regarding this practice in last Friday’s entry.)

Candle lighting is at **7:58 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv*.

## SHABBOS PARSHAS PINCHAS, 21 TAMMUZ

### HAFTORAH

During the Three Weeks, the *Haftorah* of every Shabbos is one of the *Tilasa D’piranusa* (three selections from the *Navi* concerning *golus* and the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*). This Shabbos, the *Maftir* is *Divrei Yirmiyahu*.<sup>60</sup>

### POWER OF 3

In Chassidus it is explained that *Tilasa D’piranusa* (the three *Haftoros* of disaster) correspond to the three intellectual faculties (Chochmah, Binah and Daas) and by

<sup>58</sup>) This year is the 144th.

<sup>59</sup>) The Rebbe referenced this again the following Shabbos, *Sichas Parshas Balak* 5745, quoted in the Hebrew section footnotes on this topic.

<sup>60</sup>) If the regular *Haftorah* of *Parshas Pinchas* is read by mistake (in some other years, it is not yet in the Three Weeks), the *Haftorah* of *Divrei Yirmiyahu* should be read next week, together with the second of the Three *Haftoros*, *Shim’u* (the two segments are consecutive in the source in *Navi*).

contrast, the *Shiva D'nechemta* (seven *Haftoros* of comfort) that follow *Tishah B'Av* until Rosh Hashanah, correspond to the seven emotional attributes (Chessed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchus).

The concept of *תלתא דפורענותא* (*Tilasa D'piranusa*) is, in its truest sense, positive. It is connected with the level of *פרעה דקדושה* (*Paroh D'kedushah*), a very great, holy light that *אתפריעו* (*ispari'u*), gushes forth; all other levels of spiritual light are revealed through this extremely high level of revelation.

### THE SHABBOS EFFECT

“The melancholy aspects of the Three Weeks do not apply to Shabbos,” the Rebbe says on Shabbos during this time,<sup>61</sup> “because on Shabbos we must be happy. Moreover, this particular Shabbos needs to be even more joyous than others so that there shouldn't be a suspicion that any lack of happiness is due to the Three Weeks.”

This is the inner meaning of the concept: Shabbos is a taste of the future *geulah*, which is known as “*yom shekulo Shabbos*” (a time that is always [like] Shabbos). Since the *geulah* is defined as a time when no vestige of *golus* remains, so too no Shabbos may have any impression of the Three Weeks at all.

However, the above is no more than an explanation for why there cannot be any aspect that is the opposite of happiness. The reason why this Shabbos has to have even more *simchah* than others is based on the well-known adage that the redemption that follows the exile raises us to an even higher place than before the exile began...So Shabbos during the Three Weeks is a taste of Moshiach, “*yom shekulo Shabbos*”, and thus mandates an extra dose of *simchah*. This is because the idea of **this** Shabbos is that we are given extra strength (thanks to a revelation of light of the future) to transform the Three Weeks into joy and happiness. This is in line with the *psak* in *Shulchan Aruch* that it is permitted to have our meals as “the meals of Shlomo's times” (i.e., in their full splendor), as in his days “the moon was in its fullness (and glory).” This Shabbos we are given the strength to transform these days (as they were then, and even better) into joy and happiness (of the *geulah*).

On Shabbos during the Three Weeks, we have to be even more joyous than any other Shabbos of the year, to remove any suspicion that anyone is practicing *aveilus* (acts of mourning, which are forbidden on Shabbos). There is a story of someone who wore non-leather clogs all the time. Unfortunately, he became an *avel* (mourner who lost a close relative). The Shabbos of the *shivah*, he asked a *sha'alah* whether he may keep wearing his clogs. The Rebbe's father (Harav Levi Yitzchak) *paskened* that he may not—so that no one should suspect that he is adhering to mourning practices on Shabbos.<sup>62</sup>

61) *Sichah* of *Parshas Matos-Masei* 5715. In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, pp. 358 ff.

62) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1091

## TRANSFORMATION

From *Maor V'Shemesh*: Concerning what “the Holy Greats” say,<sup>63</sup> *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are exceedingly elevated. It appears to me that this is because the six days of the week (preceding the *Shabbosos*) are exceedingly low and minimized.

It is known that on Shabbos, all worlds are elevated and this (in turn) elevates the six days of the week. Hence (now, during the Three Weeks), because everything that was so minimized is brought up so high, it is understood that the *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are extremely elevated. This is unlike the rest of the *Shabbosos* during the year, when, being as the days of the week aren't as exceedingly low, the elevation isn't as high as the *Shabbosos* of the Three Weeks, when all the things that were in the lowest of the low, in the valleys of the abyss, have been elevated to holiness.

## BEIN HAMETZARIM MATH

The Tzemach Tzedek explains how the three *Shabbosos* of the Three Weeks have the ability to transform the negativity into positivity, according to Kabbalah:

Temporally, the Three Weeks are what the *midbar* (desert) is spatially, and representative of *golus* in general. The three *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are the “cure that preempts the illness”. To understand this we make a calculation that accounts the following:

Every Shabbos can be considered as two *Shabbosos* (because each Shabbos comprises two aspects) and there are three Shabbasos in the Three Weeks.

$$2 \times 3 = 6$$

The seven days of the week during the Three Weeks are illuminated by the double *Shabbosos*.

$$6 \times 7 = 42$$

It is through the Shabbos aspect of every day of the Three Weeks that we remediate the forty-two journeys of the *midbar-golus* to finally reach *Eretz Yisrael*. What does this mean? Through the *Shabbosos*, we cure the negative side of the Three Weeks.

## HOW TO FARBRENG

“A unique issue occurs,” says the Rebbe in 5744,<sup>64</sup> “concerning Yidden who have become so involved in worldly matters, that during those special times when it is incumbent upon them to release themselves from worldly affairs and become steeped in spiritual matters, they have great difficulty doing so. This is especially with regard to feeling the pain of the descent of *golus* to the point of thirsting for the comfort of redemption...”

“When we come to the period of the Three Weeks—including Shabbos, as is highlighted by the fact that from *Bereishis* until the 17th of Tammuz, the *Haftorah* is connected to the weekly *parshah*, but starting from the first Shabbos of the Three

63) Brought in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 25. There it says: (The author) was a student of the Mezritcher Maggid's students; certainly he's referring to them.

64) *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Masei*



Weeks, the theme relates to the events of the current time period—it is difficult to have influence upon the above-mentioned Yid, that he should be aroused with feelings of pain from being in the Three Weeks, and that he should thirst to be comforted by the *geulah*. Since he is steeped in the world of business, and he sees that Hashem is making him successful and is blessing him with children, health and sustenance, he doesn't feel like he's lacking in anything at all...

“However, since Hashem doesn't demand of us more than our abilities, it's understood that, despite how difficult this is, it is still within the ability of every Jew... Since he is imbued with the knowledge and feeling that his truest existence is his *neshamah*, even when his physical matters of children, health and sustenance are not lacking, he knows and feels the extent of the pain of *golus*, especially when we are in the time period of the Three Weeks. Therefore, he will be in this state of thirsting for the comfort of redemption.

“It would seem that there's room to question the point of discussing all this during the *farbrengen*, that there is a need for us to remember that we are in the Three Weeks, which causes pain and sadness. Is this the purpose of the *farbrengen*? Certainly, there are unique laws for how to conduct oneself during the Three Weeks. But these laws have already been written in *Shulchan Aruch*, a *sefer* that every Jew certainly owns, or at least can get a hold of easily, and we should assume that every Jew acts correctly and studies the details of the laws relevant to each time period, and the *halachos* of every festival, and in the same way the laws unique to the Three Weeks.

“So, what is the purpose of discussing this topic? And even if there is a need to awaken the observance of these things, Hashem should have mercy and spare us from a *shlichus* like this, to remind Jews of an idea that is the opposite of happiness, *chas v'shalom*... Yet, on the contrary, the (Friediker) Rebbe instituted that we should *farbreng* on *Shabbos Mevarchim*, including *Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av*, and it's understood that, at the very least, we need to discuss *inyonei d'yoma* (time-relevant matters)!

“The guidance and saving grace for this is the concept of “Menachem-Av” (“Av of Comfort), meaning we must bring up topics that bring succor, and (ultimately) the concept of the annulment of the undesirable matters of the Three Weeks, by increasing in all matters of *Yiddishkeit*, in Torah and *mitzvos*, with happiness and good-heartedness.”

After Minchah, *Pirkei Avos* is said (with the addition of one Mishnah learned in depth with Chassidic interpretation). This week the first chapter is recited (for the third time).

Shabbos ends at 9:03pm.

## FRIDAY, 27 TAMMUZ

### Erev Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei

Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Matos-Masei*. (See more details

regarding this practice in the entry of Friday ,7 Tammuz.)<sup>65</sup>

Candle lighting is at **7:51 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

## SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI, 26 TAMMUZ

### Shabbos Mevarchim Menachem-Av

The entire Tehillim is recited early in the morning.

#### SING LIKE YOU MEAN IT!

“There are those who sing *Sheyibaneh Beis Hamikdash*,” the Rebbe remonstrated<sup>66</sup> at a Shabbos *farbrengen* during the Three Weeks, “and they do so with a feeble voice; after, they wipe the sweat from their brow and conclude that they have done their duty! Even throughout the year, we need to consider whether there is room for such conduct, but certainly during Shabbos of *Bein Hametzarim*, when extra care is demanded of us to avoid acts that show a lack of *simchah*, so that no one will think that we are practicing *aveilus* on Shabbos. (There are a number of stories that prove how careful we must be.)

“Therefore, an extra measure of joy is required of us today than on any other Shabbos of the year—though every Shabbos is referred to as ‘*yom simchaschem*—the day of your rejoicing’. Only once Shabbos is over, if we are, G-d forbid, not yet redeemed from *gulus*, is there any place for mourning practices as prescribed by *Shulchan Aruch*. However, even then, it should not in any way interfere with the imperative for *simchah* associated with Torah learning and mitzvah observance, about which it states, ‘Hashem’s edicts are just, they bring joy to the heart.’

“May it be Hashem’s Will, that through the mitzvah-joy associated with all aspects of Torah and mitzvos, we should very soon be worthy of the everlasting joy that will betide us when these days are transformed to feasting, joy and festive days, with the true and complete redemption through *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.”

#### SHABBOS CHAZAK

During today’s Torah reading, it is customary to rise for the reading of the final verse in the book of *Bamidbar*, after which the entire congregation (men, women, and children) shouts loudly and joyfully—*Chazak, chazak, venischazeik!* This call symbolizes the strength of the Jewish people in all matters of Torah—with the

<sup>65</sup> In the *Hayom Yom* for 30 Sivan, it mentions that both *Haftoros* are recited when doing *shnayim mikra* in the case where there are two *parshios* (even though only one is read in shul after the reading). However, it does not mention the practice regarding the *Haftoros* of the Three Weeks and the seven weeks following. (The weekly *Haftorah* is related to a theme in the *parshah*; the practice of its reading was established at a time when Torah readings were forbidden and a selection from the *Neviim* was read as a reminder. Though the *Haftoros* for the Three Weeks and the seven following relate more generally to the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and its ultimate rebuilding, the Rebbe explains in many places how these *Haftoros* also relate to the *parshah* they are read with—since everything connected with Torah is meticulous and exact.) See Hebrew footnotes (including for Friday, 18 Tammuz) for guidance.

<sup>66</sup> From the *Roshei Devarim* of *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*, 5742

additional strength of a *chazakah*.

The one who is called to the Torah for the seventh *aliyah* should join the rest of the congregation in proclaiming *Chazak*. This is not considered an interruption in the reading, because it is considered part of the final verse's reading process.

### TRIPLE POWER

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe explains the connection between *Shabbos Chazak* and *Bein Hametzarim*, especially the (more powerful) *chazak* that results completing the fourth of the Five Books (being that the fifth is called *Mishnah Torah*—a review by Moshe himself of the four Divine Books that come before it, and is therefore of a distinct category). It is a result of the steepest of descents that occur during the Three Weeks that calls forth Torah's greatest possible boost, a **tripled strength**—*chazak, chazak, venischazek!*—the announcement of which is an implication of the everlasting power of the (imminent) building of the third *Beis Hamikdash* precipitated by our third redemption from exile.

### FARBRENGEN & HACHLATAH

It is customary for the *gabbaim* to organize a special *farbrengen* on this Shabbos, beyond the ordinary Shabbos *farbrengen*. They should use this opportunity to discuss and encourage strengthening of all aspects of Torah and mitzvos.

On this Shabbos, it is customary to increase in *divrei Torah* and to rejoice at having completed an entire *sefer*, and to make resolutions to increase in Torah study and to keep the mitzvos in the best possible way.

### NOT ENOUGH!

In *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayechi* 5750, the Rebbe cautioned: “Strong encouragement is particularly necessary in this shul (770). It is necessary to clarify that the participants in the present *farbrengen* have not fulfilled their obligation of holding a special *farbrengen*. I am therefore forced to emphasize and encourage, because I do not want them to depend on me, claiming that due to the present *farbrengen* there will not be a special *farbrengen* held by the *gabboim* in honor of *Shabbos Chazak*.”

After the Torah reading, we bless the month of Av.<sup>67</sup>

The *molad*<sup>68</sup> is on Monday early morning at 1:53 and 11/18 of a minute. Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av is on Monday.

We do not recite “*Av Harachamim*” before Musaf, as on every *Shabbos Mevarchim*.

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67) Some authorities hold that we do not bless the month on this Shabbos. The *Darchei Moshe*, in the name of *Haga'os Mordechai*, discredits this notion, saying that on the contrary, there is no time that the Jewish nation is more needful of blessings! See also *Sichas Shabbos Mevarchim Parshas Matos* 5741 (in *Sichos Kodesh*, pp. 205 ff).

68) first appearance of the new moon. The Alter Rebbe writes, “It is proper to know the *molad* before blessing the new month.”

## THE LOUDEST AMEN

“What is special about *Shabbos Mevarchim Menachem Av*?” the Rebbe asks in 5747.<sup>69</sup> “Today, we draw down a blessing that is so powerful, it can transform all the negative aspects of the coming month—to the point that (even) *Tishah B’Av* will be ‘for joy and happiness and good times’. This is apparent in the language of the blessing for the new month, when we announce: ‘Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the week’. The tradition (and a *‘minhag is Torah’*) is to call the month not merely Av but Menachem Av, preceding and superseding the name ‘Av’ with ‘Menachem’ and branding the time with the idea of comfort.

“Then, further on, in the blessing itself, we say, ‘Renew it for us...as a salvation and comfort,’ referring to the Redemption and (the subsequent) succor it will bring to the Jewish people and to Yerushalayim (as we say, ‘comfort *Tziyon* and build Yerushalayim’) and then we immediately add ‘and we all say “Amen”’. This affirmation of ‘Amen’ is in close proximity to the salvation/comfort phrase, both when the congregation states it privately and the *chazzan* out loud. Even in the latter case, when each phrase of the blessing is followed by an ‘Amen’, none are so boisterous as that final one, giving it a stamp of truth and staying power. And in this prayer, we can come to understand the lofty quality of this *Shabbos Mevarchim* over all others.”

## YOU DIDN'T SING?

Concerning the *niggun* of *Hu Elokeinu* (that we sing during *Kesser* of Musaf), the Rebbe says<sup>70</sup>: It has already been several years since singing *Hu Elokeinu* on *Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av* was introduced, at a time most pertinent to the *geulah*. And yet this year, it didn't occur to anyone to start the *niggun*! Everyone was waiting for me to indicate with the finger that it is time to sing, but I was waiting to see if someone would have the *sechel* themselves and sing the *niggun*... What actually happened is that no one sang it! How many times do we have to do it until it will be self-understood that this is how it must be done?! In a few days, we will likely receive a letter from someone overseas demanding: “How can it be that you didn't sing *Hu Elokeinu* on *Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av*?”

## WHEN SAYING “AV” BRINGS HAPPINESS

From a *sichah* in the Three Weeks, 5733<sup>71</sup>: Some *kehillos* have a custom to make changes from their normal mode of behavior from other *Shabbosei Mevorchim* throughout the year on account of the negative aspects associated with the beginning of this new month. Chabad does not follow this *minhag*—no such changes are made. (To the contrary), our practice is to **add in *simchah***, reproaching the idea that one should act in a spirit of mourning on Shabbos.

Concerning Shabbos, it says, “there is no sadness to it,” without qualification about which time of year a particular Shabbos falls. To the point that when it came to *Shabbos Chazon* (the Shabbos that immediately precedes *Tishah B’Av*), we find that the Alter Rebbe was careful not to make any alteration in his manner of dress,

69) *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*

70) *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei* 5740

71) *Roshei Devarim Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*

unlike the practice of other Torah greats of his time on that particular Shabbos. If it is the *minhag* to make no restrictive changes on Shabbos within the Nine Days, how much more so must we refrain from doing so to *Shabbos Mevorchim Av*, which occurs before the Nine Days begin.

To this point, we have spoken of our conduct as an outcome of the rule to refrain from sadness on Shabbos. However, since Torah is called “the Torah of truth” and truth permeates all perspectives and details, we must conclude that the positive outlook on “the Shabbos that we bless the month of Av” is not only a result of its Shabbos-ness elevating its negative time-designation so that we override its need for change. No, it is the advent of the month of Av that also indicates that we do not change our normal practice. On the contrary, Torah’s truth about today permeates all facets and we increase in *simchah* because we celebrate **both** today’s “Shabbos” and “new month of Av” as positive aspects.

### A DAY OF FARBRENGEN

At a *farbrengen* this Shabbos,<sup>72</sup> the Rebbe told a well-known story of his father Rav Levi Yitzchok about wearing (non-leather) slippers on a Shabbos that falls out during days of mourning, and then continued: There are those who go around every *Shabbos Mevarchim* wondering whether they should be in *merirus* (bitter), or, perhaps, just *atzvus* (melancholy). Every other *Shabbos Mevarchim*, you can give them the benefit of the doubt that they are lacking sleep, are weary, lazy, or the like. This *Shabbos Mevarchim*, the possibility of the benefit of the doubt rises because of the Three Weeks. However, this theme of the Three Weeks cannot be applied to Shabbos. As is known, certain provinces had the custom of singing *Lecha Dodi* to the “*Tishah B’Av niggun*” in this time period and later, there were terrible decrees in those areas.

So even if there is something lacking in the strength (of your *simchah*) every other *Shabbos Mevarchim*, this *Shabbos Mevarchim* needs to have an extra dose of happiness. As the Friediker Rebbe stated, “*Shabbos Mevarchim* needs to be a joyous Shabbos!” So, in order to circumvent any suspicion, **this Shabbos Mevarchim** our happiness needs to be greater.

### SHABBOS AFTERNOON

Today is a day of *farbrengen*.

After Minchah, *Pirkei Avos* is said (with the addition of one Mishnah learned in depth with Chassidic interpretation). This week the second chapter is recited (for the third time).

Shabbos ends at **8:54pm**.

### SUNDAY, 29 TAMMUZ, EREV ROSH CHODESH AV

*Erev Rosh Chodesh* is called a “mini Yom Kippur” with spiritual practices associated with it. The Rebbe’s directive concerning today is that we should

<sup>72</sup>) From the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos*, 5714. In *Sichos Kodosh*, pp. 363 ff.

add (even more than any other *erev Rosh Chodesh* throughout the year) in Torah, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*. The amount for *tzedakah* (in lieu of fasting) should be the total to replace two meals for the day, or even better, all three.

### WHY NOW?

“This *farbrengen* taking place now in the Three Weeks,” the Rebbe says on *erev Rosh Chodesh Av 5735*,<sup>73</sup> “is seemingly a new-fangled idea, one that required me to work hard searching for some sort of halachic loophole to allow it. So the best *heter* I found is with regards to the Three-Weeks’ performances of a professional musician whose *parnassah* depends on their playing music even during this time. But it must be, as *poskim* determine, with some qualifications, such as that the musical event must exclude dancing...

“**This** is my livelihood, so I have no choice to *farbreng*, despite the Three Weeks. And when it comes to the parameters of the joy associated with singing, as we stated earlier with regard to musicians, when it comes to *niggunim*, there is a clear halachic leniency, brought even by latter-day *poskim*...

“Since the subject (of the *farbrengen*) is connected with the Nine Days, it is not an appropriate topic for much earlier (before the Three Weeks); even talking today, only one day before, may cause a person to lose heart, and take it as a sign that Moshiach will not be here by tomorrow, *chas v’shalom*. So we wait until the last moments of the day preceding the Nine Days, a time when (as Yirmiyahu states), the summer has passed, the harvest ended and yet we have not been saved...”

“The spirit in which Hashem sends us the cure (to the events of the Nine Days),” says the Rebbe in a *sichah* of *erev Rosh Chodesh Av*,<sup>74</sup> “(which He does in the manner of ‘I am Hashem your Healer’) is in the form of preventative measures, ‘I will not put it on you’—(‘He sends the cure’ **before** the malady’. Therefore: all our efforts in acts of adding in Torah learning, *tzedakah*, etc. need to start even before the ‘the onset of the month of Av (when joy decreases)’. Let us advise how today...*erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av*, each and every one of you will accept upon yourself (resolutions) in all of these—personal acceptance and also publicizing these directives within your sphere of influence.

“And may it be Hashem’s Will, that all this will hasten the promise that ‘these days will be transformed to joy and happiness’ in a way of ‘I will not place on you’, meaning that they will start off as days of joy and happiness.”

### NINE DAYS PREP

It is recommended that all laundered clothing you intend to wear throughout the Nine Days should be worn for a short amount of time today (as long as it takes for the freshly-laundered feeling to recede). We are restricted from wearing newly-washed clothes during the Nine Days because of the pleasure derived from the experience. This restriction does not apply to under-clothing.<sup>75</sup>

73) Free translation of transcription from audio

74) 5734 (in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, p. 278)

75) If you neglected to do so on Sunday, it is possible to give them to a Sefardic compatriot to try them on anytime this week, as their tradition is to avoid laundered clothing only during the week of *Tishah B’Av* itself.

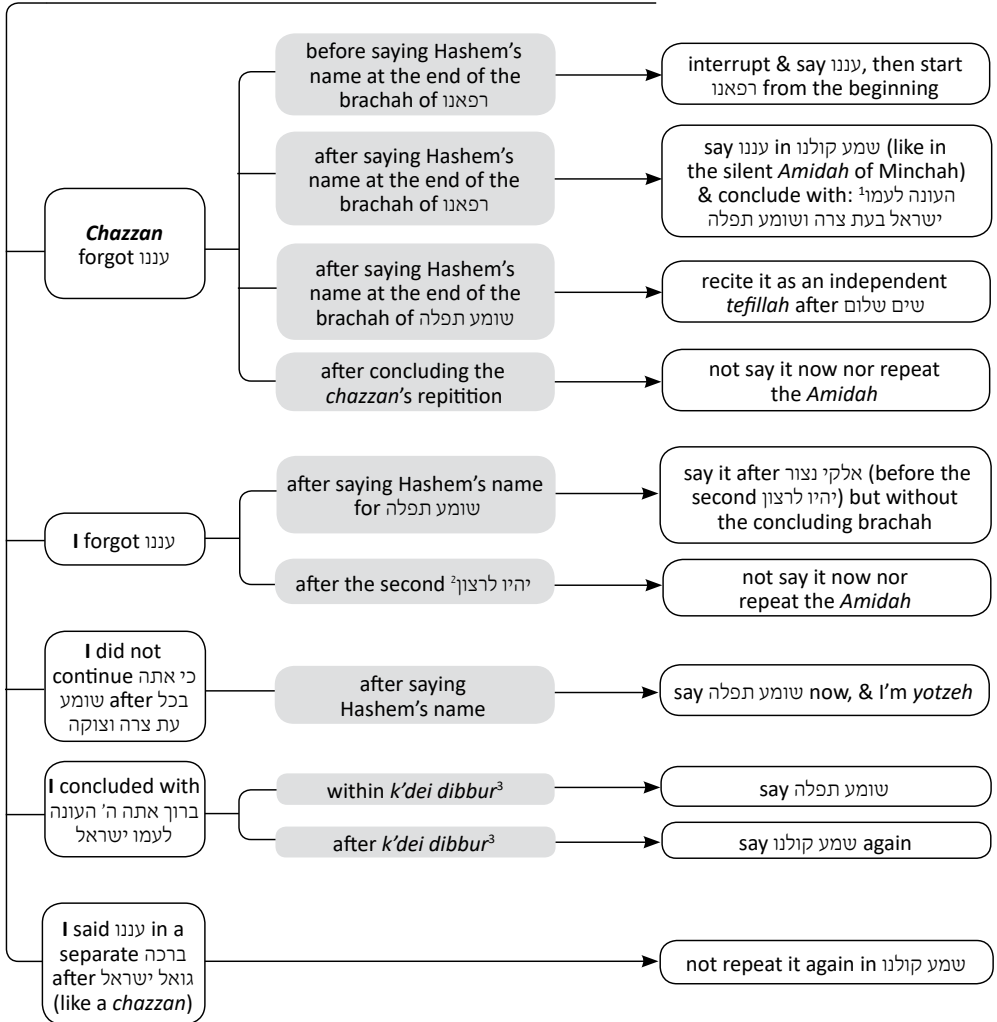
# “Oops! I made a mistake...”

What did I do?

When did I remember?

Now I should...

## Amidah Shacharis & Minchah • on 17 Tammuz



### Notes

1. If you concluded with שומע תפילה, you are yotzeh.
2. and you also made the decision not to lengthen your

tefillah with extra requests and supplications.

3. a short span of uninterrupted time it would take to say the words, "Shalom alecha, Mori v'Rabbi"

# Practical Guide for a Safe and Chassidish Summer

INCLUDING HALOCHOS AND MINHAGEI CHABAD  
RELEVANT TO TRAVELING, TRIPS, AND IN THE COUNTRY<sup>76</sup>

## TRAVELING TO THE COUNTRY

### WHEN TO TRAVEL

Many laws come into play when going to the country, from the moment one embarks on his journey. Some of these considerations are presented below:

1. Chazal teach us that “one should always set out on a trip at a good hour,” meaning that he should invest considerable effort into leaving during daylight hours. Although there may be justification for leniency in this matter in modern society, the darkened country roads and added difficulty in reading signs make this particularly relevant for those traveling to the country.

2. One who plans to set off early in the morning must first pray if the time for *Shacharis* has arrived. This law appears unique to *Shacharis*, not to *Minchah* or to *Ma’ariv*. There seems to be justification for leaving before praying if the alternative would entail sitting in heavy traffic, provided one has already recited *birchos hashachar*.

If there is no *minyan* at one’s present location but there will be a *minyan* at his destination, he should delay praying if he is certain to arrive in time for *Shacharis*.

If one has already set out on his trip and will arrive at his destination before the

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<sup>76</sup> by Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun shlita, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights.

This is in addition to THE SUMMER BUTTERFLY: It’s In Our Hands 5771, From the Desk of Badatz Vol. 3, Summer 5772 and Summer Halachos & Minhagim 5773.

For a more complete compendium, additional information, and extensive references, please see the Hebrew version, and AskTheRav.com.

It is important for those who spend the summer in the country to learn the laws that are especially relevant to their situation. It is also important to contact a Rav should any queries arise. The Badatz can be reached on 718.604.8000, or [www.AskTheRav.com](http://www.AskTheRav.com).



time for *Shacharis* expires, it is preferable that he delay praying until he arrives rather than praying while seated in a vehicle.

One should not plan to spend his vacation in a location where no *minyan* exists, unless it is required for health reasons or similar significant concerns.

3. When setting out on a Friday one must leave plenty of time to arrive well in advance of Shabbos, bearing in mind the possibility of considerable traffic delays. This is the case only if his Shabbos requirements will be prepared for him by others at his destination. If, however, he will have to make his own preparations upon arrival, he must leave with plenty of time to arrive and to prepare.

### HOW TO TRAVEL

1. Out of *ahavas yisrael* and as an act of kindness, one should inform others of his travel plans to and from the country so that others can join him if they share the same destination. (He is not obligated to do so if it will cause him financial loss.)

2. In consideration of the Torah obligation to protect oneself from harm, he should take all standard precautionary measures. For example, the vehicle should be fit for travel and contain sufficient gas for the trip. Both driver and passengers should wear their seatbelts. A map or GPS should be brought along for trips through unfamiliar territory.

A driver has an obligation to drive safely and to ensure that he remains alert on long trips. The Rebbe advised stopping once an hour on long trips to refresh oneself and remain alert. The Rebbe repeatedly advised placing *seforim* such as a *chitas* in the car, as well as a *tzedakah* box, for added protection.

3. One must avoid potential situations of *yichud* while travelling. This is especially important while travelling at night or alongside country roads that do not have pedestrian traffic.

General laws of *yichud*: It is forbidden for a woman or girl over the age of *bas mitzvah* to remain alone in a state of *yichud* with a man or boy over the age of nine. Similarly, it is forbidden for a man or teenager over the age of *bar mitzvah* to remain in a state of *yichud* with a girl over the age of three. *Yichud* applies even there is one man and two or more women. The reverse, when there are two or more men and one woman is not necessarily *yichud*, depending on circumstances. The laws of *yichud* are extensive, and one is advised to consult a *Rav* regarding any situation that may involve *yichud*.

In *Sefer Ha-Sichos* 5751, the Rebbe advised: "A Jewish woman or girl must be careful about traveling in a car or taxi driven by a male where the issue of *yichud* may apply. There is much halachic debate on this topic and in cases such as these one should clarify the relevant details with a *Rav*."

### WHILE TRAVELLING

1. When travelling beyond city limits, one must recite *tefillas ha-derech*. If easily achievable he should stand to recite the blessing. The obligation to stand depends on circumstance, as illustrated by the fact that when the Rebbe Rashab would travel in a horse drawn carriage he would pray while seated. In such a setting, the obligation is to stop moving rather than to actually stand. While traveling by train, however, the Rebbe Rashab would pray while standing.

*Tefillas ha-derech* should be recited during the actual journey, but not before exiting the city limits. People say that on the Rebbe's trip to Camp Gan Israel he recited the blessing after exiting the Tappan Zee Bridge, which crosses the Hudson River. According to some authorities, when headed upstate one should recite the blessing after exiting the George Washington Bridge.

2. If for some reason one is forced to stop and pray (*Shacharis, Minchah, or Ma'ariv*) along the roadside he should preferably avoid praying in the open. Rather, he should pray among trees, next to a wall, beside his vehicle, and the like. He should also make certain that the location in which he prays is suitable from a standpoint of *tzni'us*. He should dress appropriately for prayer, wearing a hat and jacket and a *gartel*, and so on, as required by *halachah*.

3. If one encounters a fellow Jew whose car is stuck or broken down it is an important *mitzvah* to stop and do everything possible to assist him, and not to leave him alone on the roadside.

### VACATION DESTINATIONS

1. One must plan a vacation in a location that is in keeping with the spirit of Judaism and Chassidus. Rather than finding a place that is suitable for his body, he must find a place that is also (and more importantly) suitable for his soul. This includes determining in advance the identities of those with whom he will be vacationing. As the Rambam writes, "By man's very nature his outlook and actions will be influenced by his friends and acquaintances."

## IN THE COUNTRY

### MATTERS OF TIMING

1. There is usually a difference in the *halachic* times between New York City and Upstate New York. One must be careful to rely on a calendar or device that is accurate for his current location. It is important to know the precise times of sunrise, sunset, nightfall, etc., for the sake of Shabbos and many other laws.

2. One must be vigilant to recite the *Shema* by the proper time each morning. This is especially pertinent while on vacation when many are accustomed to rising later than usual.

One who notices a fellow Jew asleep when the deadline for reciting the *Shema* is coming close, is obligated to wake him up to recite the *Shema*.

## PRAYER AND ITS PREPARATIONS

1. One should try to immerse in a *mikveh* before praying *Shacharis*.

A *mikveh* of *mayin she'uvim* (such as a pool) can be used for this purpose as long as its waters are stationary, not flowing, and they are not contained in some form of vessel, but in a pool that is permanently set in the earth. Therefore, one should confirm that the filter is off while immersing.

If neither a *mikveh* nor a pool is available, one may make do with pouring nine *kabim* of water over himself in a continuous stream that reaches every part of his body. The definition of nine *kabim* varies greatly, ranging from 2.8 gallons to 4 gallons. Up to three water containers may be used, as long as the stream is truly continuous. A shower may be used for this purpose (some estimate that at least a three minute shower is necessary). If one has used either of the above methods, but later has access to a proper *mikveh*, he should immerse in the *mikveh*.

2. If there is a *minyán* available within the distance of one *mil* from where one is vacationing he must travel that distance to join the *minyán*. A *mil* is approximately an 18 minute journey. (Some authorities estimate this as a 24 minute journey. There is also some debate over whether this applies to travel by foot or by vehicle. Some say that there is no limit at all if the *minyán* is in his city.)

3. When one is traveling and has his *tallis* and *tefillin* in the car he should keep them out of direct sunlight so that they are not damaged by the heat.

## TORAH STUDY

1. Each person is obligated to establish times for studying Torah during the day and in the evening, as required by *Shulchan Aruch*. The precise extent of the obligation varies, as explained in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*. One who maintains a fixed study session throughout the year is required to continue it during vacation. In fact, the vacation is an opportune time to greatly increase his Torah study.

One also has a Torah obligation (*mitzvas asei d'oraisa*) to teach Torah to his children. The Torah study of young children may not be interrupted even for the sake of building the *Beis HaMikdash*. In his *sichos* the Rebbe repeatedly insisted that Torah schools should not close during summer months, using the term "G-d forbid." It is therefore extremely important to maintain a regular schedule of study with one's children. In fact, doing so while on vacation will impress upon the children the true importance of Torah study.

2. In addition, for the sake of *tzni'us* and *kedusha*, one should avoid books (or websites) with mundane or lowly material. Similarly, it is extremely important to avoid places such as theaters.

### THINGS TO NOTE

1. One must avoid placing himself in danger by wandering along roads and paths that are not adequately lit where passing drivers may not clearly see the pedestrians. He should take all necessary precautions, such as wearing light colored or reflective clothing.
2. One should not forget the *mitzvah* of *kibud av va-eim* while vacationing. He should make it a point of contacting his parents periodically to inquire about their wellbeing, etc.
3. Serious issues of *yichud* may occur in vacation settings. One should study the appropriate laws in advance and also bear in mind the warning in *Avos* against a man and a woman engaging in excessive chatter with each other.
4. The laws of *tzni'us* apply to men as well. The Rebbe placed great emphasis on this obligation and took the unusual step of including a **bold typed warning** in *Likkutei Sichos* regarding this issue (see vol. 13, page 84).

## PURCHASING FOOD

### THE VENDOR

1. One should try, wherever possible, to buy food products from a Jewish storeowner. This law applies throughout the year, but has become especially relevant in vacation spots, where although Jewish food stores exist, people prefer to patronize larger, brand name stores.

This requirement applies even if the Jewish store is slightly further away than the non-Jewish store, and even if it is slightly more expensive. However, if the difference is significant there is no obligation to shop in the Jewish store.

### KASHRUS

1. One should make certain that the *kashrus* meets the standards which our community adheres to throughout the year. He must check whether each product has an appropriate *hechsher*. Often an unsuitable product will be packaged in a manner similar to a familiar product. Some goods are marketed with a *hechsher* only in particular areas, such as in the religious sections of Brooklyn, while these identical products appear elsewhere without a *hechsher* because they were not produced on the company's *kosher* production lines.
2. One must be especially cautious when patronizing a restaurant. He must check whether the establishment carries a *mehudar'dige hechsher*. This is even more

critical when purchasing milk, meat, or fish products, or wine. Ensure that the restaurant's certificate of *kashrus* has been issued for that particular location and has not expired. In addition, one should ensure that the *mashgiach* is supervising as necessary and is alert to check vegetable leaves for bugs, and so on.

### ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

1. In a kosher hotel, milk-based foods are sometimes served within six hours of having served meat-based dishes. A hotel relies on its customers to keep track of their own *kashrus* obligations. One must keep this in mind and maintain the appropriate time between meat and milk.
2. Bread that was on the table during a meat-based meal may not be eaten during a subsequent milk-based meal, and vice versa.
3. Before choosing a hotel or restaurant one must determine whether the standards of *tzni'us* in those locations are appropriate.

### TRIPS

*One should prepare everything that is required in advance of a trip or hike to ensure compliance with halachah. This applies to the overall choice of destination as well as the details of the trip. The following should be taken into consideration:*

### EATING

1. One must prepare in advance a *kosher* utensil for washing the hands, a towel, bread, salt, a text from which to recite *birchas ha-mazon*, and so on.
2. One should not wash his hands from a disposable cup or container unless there is nothing else available. If that is the case one should designate a particular disposable cup for hand washing, giving it a semblance of permanency in this regard.

If there is no water available for washing one's hands he should travel to find water. If this requires him to backtrack, he must travel at least as far as 18 minutes (or 24 minutes according to some authorities). If he is required to advance along his intended route in order to find water he must travel at least 72 minutes until he finds water.

One may immerse his hands in the sea for this purpose. However, he may not remove water from the sea and wash his hands with a basin containing sea water, because its salty water is not considered fit for even a dog to drink. He may use rainwater that has gathered directly in the ground provided that it contains a measure of 40 *sa'ah* and that the water is stationary, not flowing. A spring or river is kosher for immersing one's hands, even though the water isn't stationary. It does not require 40 *sa'ah*, and it is sufficient if there is enough

water in one place to completely cover his hands. He may not immerse his hands in a pond or puddle that was filled with water

It is necessary to immerse one's hands only one time. He must examine his hands first to ensure that there is nothing on his hands that would prevent the water from fully reaching his hands. He does not have to dry his hands, nor raise them. He should recite the blessing for immersion, "*Baruch .....al shtifas yadayim.*" If he has already recited *al netilas yadayim* or *al tevilas yadayim*, he need not recite another blessing.

One should not use liquids other than water for this purpose (this is particularly important according to Kabbalah). If water cannot be found at all, he may use liquids that are primary comprised of water, such as tea, coffee, or soft drinks. It would seem that soda may be considered actual water for this purpose. However, he may not use natural fruit juices, milk or wine.

If one does not have a towel, he may not dry his hands on his clothing (an act that is considered to cause forgetfulness). Any material that dries may be used. He may not wait until his hands dry by themselves; he needs to find something with which to wipe them dry.

Some prefer to wash their hands and eat some bread before setting out on a trip, avoiding the difficulty of finding water during the trip. This works only as long as one remembers to keep his hands away from unclean places or objects. The best prevention against this is to wear gloves. He must also remember to recite *birchas ha-mazon* within the time it takes for the bread to be digested, i.e., before he again feels significantly hungry, since after that he may not recite *birchas ha-mazon*.

3. When eating outdoors one should take care not to leave containers or plates uncovered to prevent flies and insects from getting into the food. Before he eats something he should check that nothing has fallen into it.

4. Rambam states that one can discern a wise person from his actions—from his eating and drinking and other activities. One must continue acting thus even while on vacation. This is especially important if the absence of such behavior will cause a *chillul Hashem*.

### ANIMAL ATTRACTIONS

1. While visiting an animal attraction such as a petting zoo, and also when encountering animals in their natural habitat in the countryside, one must take care to avoid causing harm or pain to any creature—the Torah prohibition of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*.

2. One should not go fishing for fun, but only if he intends to eat the fish he catches (as long as they turn out to be kosher). There is some debate as to whether one is permitted to catch fish and kill them immediately. Certainly, he should not choose to do so in the first place.

3. One is permitted to kill creatures that cause him pain, such as mosquitoes. Even so, he should not go out of his way to find them in order to kill them for no reason.

The Alter Rebbe writes that one should personally trouble himself to rescue any living creature that is in distress. Indeed, some *tzaddikim* would not harm a creature even if it caused them pain. The Rebbe records that the Rebbe Rashab would gently wave away mosquitoes but he would never kill them. The Rebbe Rayatz records the now familiar story of a boy named Yitzchak Shaul, which teaches us the great importance of avoiding causing harm to any living creature.

### SWIMMING

1. Every pool, well, pit, and other potentially hazardous place must be adequately and securely fenced in from all sides so that no one falls in or is harmed, G-d forbid. This is included in the Torah obligation (*mitzvas aseï d'oraisa*) to erect a fence around an accessible roof.

2. A child or adult who cannot swim well should not enter deep water under circumstances that may put him in danger. No child may be left in or beside a pool or any other place of potential danger without a lifeguard or an adequate adult supervisor.

3. Swimming is good for one's health. Nevertheless, one should not indulge excessively in swimming for pleasure's sake. This is reflected in the story in the Gemara about Rabbi Elazar ben Arach who indulged in swimming and other pleasures in excess and lost his vast Torah knowledge. The Rebbe repeatedly refers to this story as a lesson that if something like that could happen to one of the greatest sages, then common people such as ourselves must surely avoid indulging excessively in bodily pleasures, even healthy ones.

4. Needless to say, *halachah* applies even to an indoor swimming pool. It is more than obvious that girls and boys should not swim together at the same time in a pool. It is forbidden in the strictest terms for a boy over the age of nine and a girl over the age of three to swim in a pool at the same time. It is prudent to avoid having girls over the age of three and boys over the age of five swim together. In fact, it is correct to avoid having even younger boys and girls swim together or even to stand and watch while the others swim. It is therefore preferable to maintain separate swimming hours.

5. Men and boys should be supervised by a male lifeguard, and women and girls should be supervised by a female lifeguard. There is no *heter* for a man to serve as a lifeguard for girls. Under **extremely** pressing circumstances and when there is no other option, a *Rav* should be consulted as precisely how to proceed. The same applies for a woman lifeguard overseeing boys—a *Rav* should be consulted for guidance if this is necessary under pressing circumstances.

## LAWS FOR SHABBOS

### EREV SHABBOS

1. Spider webs such as those found upon entering a vacation bungalow at the start of a summer should be removed before—and not during—Shabbos.

### BEGINNING SHABBOS EARLY FOR CHILDREN

1. Many children find it difficult to remain awake until their fathers come home from *shul* on Friday nights during the summer. If they have already reached the age of *chinuch* they should recite their own *kiddush* early, even during daylight hours, then wash for *ha-motzi* and eat their meal. This applies to children in overnight camps as well. The only limitation is not to have them recite *kiddush* before *plag ha-minchah*, according to the times posted on the calendars for their particular location.

If they must go to sleep before *plag ha-minchah*, they should not recite *kiddush* at night at all. They should recite the night-time *kiddush* before eating their meal the following morning (without the “*yom hashishi*” paragraph).

2. If they go to sleep before Shabbos ends, they should recite *havdalah* on Sunday morning.

### LOCATION OF SHABBOS MEALS

1. During Shabbos it is preferable to avoid eating in a garden or in a grassy or wooded area, especially if liquids are involved. Due to a number of *halachic* concerns, it is better to eat the Shabbos meals indoors.

If it is necessary to eat outdoors because of oppressive indoor heat, because there is no room for everyone indoors, or similar considerations, care must be taken to avoid actions that are prohibited on Shabbos. For example, one should wash his hands before or after the meal indoors. Although *halachah* differentiates between water and other liquids, care should be taken to avoid spilling any liquid outdoors.

2. If the place for eating happens to be under or near a tree, one must be careful to avoid climbing the tree on Shabbos or using it in any way, or even standing on its roots if they protrude three *tefachim* from the ground. He may not hang his hat or jacket on a tree or bush, nor touch any vegetation with his hands. However, he may sit on the grass on Shabbos.

### CARRYING

1. In oppressive heat one may drape his jacket over his shoulders without placing his hands in the sleeves, even while walking.

2. One must not walk beyond the area contained by an *eiruv* while wearing sunglasses. This is permitted, however, for someone who always wears sunglasses outdoors due to the sensitivity or fragility of his eyes.



3. According to the laws of *eiruvei chatzeiros* established by *Chazal*, if a number of homes open into a common yard, one may not carry in that yard unless an *eiruv chatzeiros* has been prepared. Each home must contribute bread towards the joint *eiruv chatzeiros*. Alternatively, one homeowner can donate the *eiruv* on behalf of all the others. It is preferable to use bread that lasts a long time, such as *matzos*, for the *eiruv*.

One must determine that the homeowner in whose house the *eiruv* is placed will in fact spend Shabbos at home. Alternatively, the homeowner may leave the key of his home with one of his neighbors who participates in the *eiruv*. He may also make alternative arrangements to ensure that it is theoretically possible for those who participate in the *eiruv* to enter his home while he is away and access the *eiruv* during Shabbos.

If the owner of the home in which the *eiruv* is placed travels elsewhere for Shabbos and his neighbors cannot access the *eiruv* without performing a *melachah d'oraisa* such as breaking down his front door, they must arrange a new *eiruv* in another home before Shabbos.

If one of the neighbors in such a situation is not Jewish, the *eiruv* cannot be made with his participation. The solution in such a case is to rent the non-Jew's share in the joint yard.

### SPREADING OUT A WET GARMENT

1. A wet item of clothing or cloth may not be spread out to dry on Shabbos because it may appear as if one is laundering it on Shabbos. Therefore, he must avoid spreading out the towel he used after the *mikveh* on Shabbos morning on a floor, over a wall, or the like. However, he may place it somewhere without spreading it out entirely. Some permit spreading it fully beside a *mikveh* or a pool, since it is obvious to all that he is not laundering clothing on Shabbos, but has merely used the towel to dry himself after immersion.

### AIR CONDITIONING

1. If one forgot to turn on the air conditioner before Shabbos he may not instruct a non-Jew to turn it on for him. However, if the heat is truly oppressive to an unbearable degree and is causing extreme discomfort, he may be lenient and ask a non-Jew to turn on the air conditioner. This certainly applies if there are children present who will suffer greatly from the heat.

If the heat is not extreme, but rather a matter of personal comfort, it is forbidden to even hint to a non-Jew to turn on the air conditioner.

2. If the air conditioner was running from before Shabbos, but during Shabbos the outside temperature plunged and it became unbearably freezing inside the home, one may ask a non-Jew to switch it off. The *halachah* considers everyone as ill in

the face of extreme cold. A non-Jew may be asked to turn off the air conditioner even when the discomfort caused by the cold air has not reached extreme severity.

3. In general, one must avoid asking a non-Jew to perform any activity that is forbidden for a Jew to perform on Shabbos, even *miderabanan*. There are multiple laws involved in such a request, and one must be well versed in them in order to employ the assistance of a non-Jew on Shabbos.

## LAWS OF RECITING BLESSINGS

1. The bracha on ice cream is *shehakol*. If one ate a *kezayis* within the timeframe of *k'dei achilas p'ras*, he must recite a *berachah acharonah*.

If the ice cream is served in a plain cone that is made from a species of grain, then it serves primarily to hold the ice cream and to prevent the ice cream from melting over one's fingers. It is secondary to the ice cream and requires no separate blessing. However, if the cone is sweetened and intended as a treat in itself, the ice cream is considered secondary to the cone, and *mezonos* is recited over the entire ice cream cone. Whenever a *mezonos* is necessary one should endeavor to eat a *kezayis* of the cone enabling him to recite *al ha-michiyah* afterwards.

2. For a number of halachic considerations one should avoid eating *mezonos* rolls outside the context of a meal for which he washed for *ha-motzi* and ate a *kezayis* of real bread. Alternatively, he may eat *k'dei sevi'a* of these rolls, meaning the size of four eggs, provided that it is sufficient to make him feel full. (For this purpose, we also consider the feeling of satiation derived from other food eaten with the bread.) In such a case, he must wash for *ha-motzi* beforehand and recite *birchas ha-mazon* afterwards.

3. One may not leave the location of a meal for which he washed for *ha-motzi* without reciting *birchas ha-mazon*.

If he forgot and has already left, he must return and recite the blessing. However, if he has other food prepared for him in a second location and he leaves the first to continue eating in the second—something that he is not supposed to do—he is not obligated to return to the first location. Instead, he may eat some bread in the second location and then recite the *birchas ha-mazon* once he has finished eating.

This does not apply if one had in mind while reciting *ha-motzi* that he intends to go elsewhere for the remainder of his meal. Therefore, those going on a trip are who are accustomed to washing and eating some bread beforehand, with the intention of completing their meal elsewhere, are permitted to recite *birchas ha-mazon* wherever they complete their meal.

# Going to the “Country” & Appropriate Summer Conduct

## SELECTIONS FROM THE REBBE’S SICHOS AND IGROS THAT DISCUSS THE SUMMER SEASON

### A DEEPER PURPOSE IN GOING TO THE COUNTRY

There are those who travel to the country for health purposes, insisting that the country air is unique. In actual fact, it may even be inferior – but it is considered special nonetheless, because it is different from the city air. And so, they insist on traveling to the country for their health, to breathe its special air...

The true purpose for their journey to the country is because their *soul* is hungry for the country. The soul needs to draw the Jews who live there closer to their Father in Heaven. However, were the soul to tell that directly to its body, the body would simply not understand what the soul is talking about! The soul is therefore forced to speak English to its body. It concocts some story about the country and its beneficial air. It tells it that in the country there are unique flying insects. They may even be inferior, but at least they are different. Therefore, one must travel to the country!

The true purpose, however, is that the soul has a mission to accomplish in the country.

Seeing that the primary reason for visiting the country is for the soul to accomplish its mission there, one must not consider the primary purpose as less significant, nor make the less significant reason his primary

focus. When in the country, he must indeed work at drawing the hearts of his fellow Jews closer to their Father in Heaven.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei 5712 – unedited.*

### ASHAMED NOT TO GO TO THE COUNTRY

When it comes to giving *tzedakah*, someone might claim that he has insufficient funds. He needs it for his family’s needs and for going to the country, and so on. The fact that back at home, his family is forced to diet on hard bread and water does not bother him that much. After all, no one else knows what goes on in his home. By contrast, were he to forgo travelling to the country – why, everyone would realize that he does not own six hundred and eighty nine thousand dollars! That would truly be unpleasant...

The Rebbe [Rayatz] once spoke with a businessman who dealt in lumber. The Rebbe told him that he should study Torah. He responded that he does not have the head for study. The Rebbe replied, “If I had told you that you do not understand the lumber trade, you would fly into a rage, slam the door, and not wish to speak to me further. But when it comes to Torah, you personally state that you are not up to it – without the slightest shame! The reverse should be the case!”

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Naso 5720 – unedited.*

### NEGLECT OF MITZVOS IN THE COUNTRY

A word of caution about the country: People travel to a place where nobody knows them and they convince themselves that if they are accustomed to wearing a full garment back home, then they can make do with a half in the country, or even a third or quarter.... Back home they are scrupulous to eat only *glatt* kosher meat and drink *chalav Yisrael*, but this is not possible in the country.... In this way, everything about the country smacks of *prikas ol*, casting off the yoke of Heaven.

I once asked someone, “Why do you go to the country? You become absolutely worn out there. You lack the coziness of your own home. It is challenging to find appropriate foods. At home, you own a color television whereas only an ordinary television is available in the country – and one cannot begin to compare a colored to a plain.... [Editor’s note: See Likutei Sichos vol. 18 p. 459 (& more) about the severity of having a TV at home, chas veshalom.]

At home, you review the newspapers before morning prayers; you don’t have that luxury in the bungalow.” I asked him if he really felt it was worth spending a thousand dollars for this.

He replied, “Oh, you are truly a *batlan* [inexperienced]!” He explained that the entire point in going to the country was precisely that – *prikas ol*! Back home, he feels ashamed [to act as he wishes because] of the rabbi, the spiritual leader, and his neighbors. When he travels to the country – why, the rabbi remains in the city, his neighbors remain in the city, and he meets his wife only for Shabbos. For him, it is worth spending *two* thousand dollars for that!

–*Sichas Yom Beis D’Chag HaShavuos 5728 – unedited.*

### EXILED TO THE COUNTRY

When the summer season arrives and one abandons his home on a self-imposed exile, he must ensure that his destination is a place of Torah [reflecting the *mishnah*’s directive, “Exile yourself to a place of Torah”].

He voluntarily subjects himself to exile. Nor is he exactly happy about it. He is forced to squander considerable finances. All this, for the sake of traveling “*from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father’s house*” and journeying to the country!

What a peculiar phenomenon! It is readily observable that a person can enjoy all the conveniences specifically in his own home. Nevertheless, he travels away to the country. (Back in Russia, it was known simply as *datche*, but here it is given all kinds of fancy names....) And he makes a grand parade out of the whole thing! But what is this parade truly about? It is about *not* having the household help he enjoys at home. It is about *not* having all the conveniences associated with his food, drink, and sleep that he enjoys at home. As long as he can languish in a place of exile!

This is a prime example of the extent to which a person’s will can turn matters on their head. Here we are, discussing an experience of exile (which, as *Sefer HaChinuch* explains, is worse than all other penalties). Nevertheless, he convinces himself that this exile will bring him all wonderful things – physical and spiritual, and both at once! As a result, not only is not distressed from this exile, but he actually derives pleasure from it. He even spends more for the few weeks that he remains in the country than he would spend in the same period on his own home where he has every available convenience.

Whatever the explanation for this phenomenon may be, we readily observe the *ma'aseh rav* (proven experience) that hundreds, thousands, and myriads of Jews are doing precisely this.

I do not wish to employ the language of *Rambam* by stating that “this practice has been adopted by the wider Jewish community,” because that would make it a positive command and a negative command to travel to the country.... In fact, it is not a *mitzvas asei*, it is not a *mitzvas lo sa'asei*, nor is it *mi-divrei sofrim* (introduced by the sages). And I have set the example. I will not elaborate any further...

### EXILE YOURSELF TO A PLACE OF TORAH

As mentioned, myriads of Jews spend the summer in the country. They insist that their bodies will grow healthier (an experience that will in turn improve the state of their souls, because whatever a Jew is involved must eventually lead to some benefit for his soul). Out of desire to improve their bodily health, they must force themselves to travel [away from home] and to make their way to a place where all of their affairs, their food, drink, sleep, and exercise will not be as it should (because they are not in their own homes). Most importantly, goes the claim, they must alter their usual habits because after all, they are now in the country...

This can be compared to the *halachah* regarding fasting on Shabbos due to a disturbing dream (*ta'anis chalom*). The law is that because this particular person desperately wishes to fast, it cannot be considered something painful. In fact, for him it is sheer pleasure! (This is the fact; no clever interpretations of the law hold sway in this case, because on Shabbos one must fulfill the command, “*You must call Shabbos a pleasure.*”)

The same applies to our case. A person goes off to the country where he wears himself out in every way. Nevertheless, upon his return we notice that he looks fresher, livelier, he has put on some weight, and so on.

When he is then approached and asked to give a greater donation to *tzedakah* or to increase in his Torah study, he is more readily agreeable – because he is more relaxed, fresh, and happy, in body and soul all at once.

At the same time, we cannot claim that he was at home. He spent his time in exile. That is not his permanent place of residence.

There are those who are so taken by the country experience that they own a home there throughout the year. Nevertheless, that home is considered a temporary residence (although he pays for the home throughout the year), because they spend the majority of the year in the city and they stay in their country home only from time to time (during the summer or more often). We must therefore consider such an arrangement as suiting the words of the *Mishnah – hevei golah* “Exile yourself...”

As a result, if one’s summer destination is not already considered a place of Torah [“Exile yourself to a place of Torah”], then he must transform it into a place of Torah.

The meaning of “a place of Torah” can be appreciated by comparison to an area regarding which it is said, “This is place of King So-and-so.” We do not mean that the place is significant for another reason and that incidentally the king happens to live there. To the contrary, [the significance of the place is entirely attributed to the king’s presence. Similarly, a place of Torah is a place primarily defined by the Torah that exists there].

Practically speaking, whoever exiles themselves to the country must see to it that they fulfill the dictum, “Exile yourself to a place of Torah.” If it is not a place of Torah, G-d forbid, it should be made into one through establishing fixed schedules of Torah study there. If it is already a place of Torah, the study there should now be increased.

We previously discussed the fact that one might have every convenience in the country. He may have all he needs regarding food, drink, sleep, business, and everything else on Rambam’s list [of basic human activities]. These may even be present in great abundance, “As the feast of Shlomo!” and to a greater degree than in his primary home. He is nevertheless in exile which is considered the greatest affliction, as quoted earlier from *Sefer HaChinuch*. And because it is an exile, one must have the will to transform the pain into pleasure.

True, it is not necessary to live in a physically disastrous state while in the country. I am simply repeating what has been the actual common experience up until the most recent summer.

Nevertheless, even if one has everything he needs in abundance, it is still a state of exile.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Korach 5738 – unedited.*

## VACATIONING FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN

One of the reasons for reading *Pirkei Avos* on Shabbos throughout the summer months, starting from the Shabbos immediately following Pesach (i.e., Shabbos *mevarchim* Iyar), is because around this time of year (the month of Iyar), the trees begin to bud. At this time, a current of renewal and invigoration runs through every aspect of Nature.

Included in this surge of power are the bodily desires. One must therefore fortify himself to a greater extent in matter of ethical conduct and positive character traits. This is the purpose of reading *Pirkei Avos*, which discusses *milei d’chassidusa*, “matters of pious conduct.”

We see the above in actual practice in this country. No sooner has Pesach concluded then people begin thinking and worrying about going on vacation (to their *datche*) for the duration of summer.

Quite a number of weeks remain [after Pesach] in which business must be conducted as usual, as is indeed done each year. Nevertheless, one is aware that the time in which he must relax is approaching. And for some reason, he has decided that he cannot relax unless he travels to a destination that is specifically beyond the city, wasting a huge amount of money to accomplish that. Therefore, [immediately after Pesach] he begins thinking and worrying about finding a place to spend the approaching summer. He begins discussing it with this person and the other, until he finally settles on the location, the price, and so on.

Due to Hashem’s kindness, we find ourselves in a country of abundance and it therefore possible to vacation. One must remember that the abundance is not to be used simply in order to benefit from this physical world. It must be used *le-sheim shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven, bearing in mind the example of Rabbeinu *HaKadosh* (who was given the title *kadosh* because he sanctified himself by removing himself from the affairs of this world), regarding whom our Sages declared, “He did not derive benefit from this world all his life.” The Gemara states that “at the time of his passing ... he raised his ten fingers heavenwards and said, ‘I did not even benefit with one small

finger!” Therefore, despite the fact that “his table never lacked horseradish, *etc.*, neither in the summer nor in the winter,” nevertheless, he did not do anything for the sake of the physical pleasure it could provide, but rather, so that he would be strong enough to serve his Creator appropriately.

Therefore, the blessing that is imparted during the month of Nissan, on Shabbos *mevarchim chodesh Iyar*, generates a source of empowerment not only for the month of Iyar itself, but also for the summer months in general. For that is the period in which the main spiritual descent begins to effect the world to the point that the physical waxes powerful. Even in such a state, a person is empowered to create for himself a state of *redemption*.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5747 – unedited.*

### TZNIUS IN THE COUNTRY

It is now necessary to emphasize the following timely consideration:

Some people permit themselves to be lenient in many aspects of *tznius* during the summer, and especially while they are in temporarily homes outside the city. Some even declare *echta va'ashuv* [“I will sin and then I will repent”], meaning [I will lower my standards while on vacation and then return to my former standards] when *ashuv*, “I will return” to the city.

This applies to the conduct of men as well, and especially to women. For each woman is considered *akeress habayis*, the mainstay of the home. Much more deserves to be said about this issue.

–*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 13, p. 84, fn. 34 – edited and placed by the Rebbe in large font and in bold type.*

### TZNIUS FOR MEN

#### ON VACATION – NOT TO WEAR SHORTS

There are matters that we need to address that relate specifically to the summer months.

True, there is still quite some time until the summer begins, but now is the time to call attention to these issues, particularly as some people tend to begin their summers even before being directed by their calendars.

The main issue we need to address at present is that of *tznius*.

This is not a burning issue in the winter season, because people are garbed appropriately regardless. If any part of the body is uncovered, it is affected by the rain, the cold, the frost, etc. In the summer, by contrast, this definitely becomes an issue.

In truth, *tznius* needs to be reinforced during the winter months as well. For *tznius* applies even within one’s home. There is the famous case of Kimchis, the mother of Rabbi Yishmael, who proclaimed, “In all my life, the rafters of my house have not seen my locks of hair!” Wooden rafters are merely derivatives of the vegetable kingdom that have now become inanimate objects. Nevertheless, Kimchis made certain that even the rafters of her home would not see the hair of her head.

In the home, there is no rain, frost, and the like. Therefore, one must be carefully regarding *tznius* regardless of the seasons. Nevertheless, nothing can compare to the summer vacation season, when people are outdoors and there is a strong need to encourage *tznius*.

There is a misconception that *tznius* applies only to women, for “*all the glory of a woman is within*,” and not to men. In truth, it applied to men as well, as

set forth in *Shulchan Aruch*. The need to reinforce men's *tznius* is acute in the summer months.

The summer arrives, and one of the *shpitz* Chabad [those who consider themselves the "Chabad elite"] travels to a bungalow colony and dresses himself exactly the way the Kohanim used to dress... and this is written in Torah - so he also wants to dress the same way! It seems (and this is a way to judge him positively) that he has no idea that there is a law in *Shulchan Aruch* regarding men's *tznius*. He claims, this is precisely how the Kohanim would dress! However the Kohanim wore other clothing as well, which covered all parts of the body; but he is wearing only pants "from the hips until the [end of the] thighs," whereas below the "thighs" [the knees] - nothing at all! And above the "thighs" - also nothing!

Furthermore, the Kohanim did not pride themselves with this. He, however, displays himself with pride!

A photo was even sent to me showing someone who was dressed this way. Alright, you wish to go around like that, but why do you need someone to take a picture of you in such a situation, so that it should remain as an eternal souvenir, and so that your grandchild can see how you are dressed in pants "from the hips until the [end of the] thighs"?! He made such a publicity of himself that a picture even made its way to me.

It is not that someone decided to inform on him. Quite the opposite! He wished to show how the *mitzvos* were being kept there *be'hiddur*. *Mezuzos* on each doorway, men and women separately, as is truly appropriate for those who are in fact Chabad "elite." I took a look at the pictures and I noticed that so-and-so the son of so-and-so, from the *shpitz* Chabad,

sits the way I just described. And I have no doubt at all that it is indeed him!

That's how he dressed under the open skies. Naturally, it was not where women were present. He would never dress that way in a place where women are to be found. Certainly, he would not dress that way if his own wife was present, because the *baale bosta* would give to him with a plate over his head!

When he is not at home, however, he dresses this way simply because he is unaware that *tznius* applies to men as well. There are indeed specific *halachos* regarding *tznius* conduct, such as not to expose more than a basic minimum [even in a bathroom] and how to conduct oneself before and afterwards... In his case, however, much more than that was exposed, because the height of a human is approximately three *amos*, while the distance "from the hips until the [end of the] thighs" is barely one *amah*. So two entire *amos* remained exposed!

It is obvious from the picture that the photographer did not catch him by surprise. He knew the picture was being taken and he appeared to derive pleasure from that fact. It was therefore done willingly, as per [the confession prayer, *al cheit*], "For the sin with which we sinned before You willingly..." Not merely willingly, but with pleasure!

All of the above is a parenthetical note regarding men. But my main point of caution due to the approaching summer is regarding women. This coincides with an overarching theme of *tznius* - men and women are to remain separate...

[The Rebbe then devoted the remainder of the *sichah* to *tznius*. See original.]

-*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Terumah 5741 -  
unedited.*



## VACATION – NOT FROM TORAH AND MITZVOS

Viewed in a positive and sacred light, vacation is not a respite from matters of goodness and holiness, G-d forbid, but a vacation from bodily work. Its purpose is to relax the body from work so that it can rejuvenate. This will facilitate greater positive and sacred accomplishments with the body, with Judaism, and with G-dliness.

In *Hilchos Dei'os*, Rambam states as law that Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos* can be accomplished with greater gusto and with greater success when the body does not interfere because it is not hungry, thirsty, or tired. Certainly, then, the health of the body must be maintained.

In fact, Rambam states that “maintaining a whole and healthy body is one of the ways of Hashem” – to quote the precise language that appears in current editions. Apparently, this phrase is meant to read “one of the ways of *servicing* Hashem.”

This consideration comes in addition to the general command, “*You must guard yourselves*,” which means that one must protect his body. As is known, the Radbaz stated that the body is Hashem’s property. We have no permission to cause it harm, G-d forbid.

Moreover, each individual must ensure that his body does not distract him from Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos*.

This then is the intent of vacation viewed from a sacred viewpoint. It is a time for the body to relax.

However, the need to relax the body for spiritual purposes [opened the door for eventual misuse of this relaxation]... Some people began looking for loopholes.

Although one may be scrupulous in all *mitzvos* while at home, nevertheless, when he goes on vacation and is no longer in his own home, then he considers himself no longer obligation in all of the same *hiddurim*. At home it is easy, but he finds it difficult in unfamiliar territory. His solution therefore is to permit himself a bit of freedom – so that when he returns home he can be even more meticulous than during the previous year....

Wait – there’s a nagging question. Can he consider *mitzvos* and *aveiros* a business? Can he purchase a small *aveirah* in order to earn a great *mitzvah*? Hashem told us to observe *mitzvos* and to avoid *aveiros*, and He gave no man permission to calculate what is a greater loss and what is a greater gain in order to make his own calculations and business deals!

Nevertheless, as described earlier, from the concept of vacation to relax the body from its strenuous work load, things have deteriorated to the point that people vacation to relax their standards of *mitzvos*.

At home he is scrupulous to eat *glatt* kosher meat and to drink *chalav Yisrael*, *pas Yisrael*, and so on. Then comes vacation time and he is forced to travel around in a trailer. Who knows where he will end up? He will forgo insisting on *chalav Yisrael*, all for the ideal of “*You must guard yourselves very well*.”

One would assume that he has the option of remaining in his own home. He would fulfill the precept “*You must guard yourselves very well*” to a far greater degree. He will even be spared the rigors of travel.

However, he invokes [the Talmudic proverb] “Go to a city, follow its ways.” In this country, it is common practice to leave home when the fourth of July

arrives. He must therefore leave his home as well. He has no strength to travel, no money to vacation, he has no destination, but he must not remain at home. It will damage his credit with the bank. They will notice that everyone else travels while he remains at home.

Since he is already *anus al pi ha-dibbur* [“compelled by divine decree” – as our Sages describe Yaakov’s reluctant departure to Egypt], leaving him with no choice by to leave home, he cannot take along a second set of dishes and he is forced to eat in places where nobody knows him – as a result, he cannot observe all of his *hiddurim*.

In His abundant mercy, Hashem orchestrated matters so that he can accomplish his duty of fleeing home and wearing himself down, but at least he can do it together with other Jews.

Many *minyanim* of Jews set out together, taking the cow with them so that they will have *chalav Yisrael*, and they will have their own *minyan* [for prayers].

[At this point, the Rebbe smiled and continued:] But here the *yetzer hara* comes up with an alternative approach, [telling a person]: When you are at home, you must dress yourself in a tie with a hard collar two pairs of shoes, green socks.... But now that you are already in a bungalow, you do not need a tie, nor a hat – certainly not two head coverings, nor a pair of shoes, and you can remove the *yarmulke* as well, and why do you need a pair of wool *tzitzis* – an ordinary pair is fine, in fact what difference whether you wear *tzitzis* altogether, the main thing is to walk around in the manner of the Kohanim, wearing shorts “*from the hips until [the end of] the thighs*” – it does not matter if everything else is exposed...

He is asked, “But there is a law in

*Shulchan Aruch* that prevents you from going around like this!” He replied, “But I’m on vacation!” What is vacation? He claims it means *prikas ol*, casting off the yoke of Heaven! Since this country now casts off its yoke of work, it makes no difference if he simultaneously casts off the yoke of Heaven...

## DO NOT DEVOLVE

### IN MATTERS OF TZNIYUS – MEN INCLUDED

The above described conditions devolve further. The *yetzer hara* hits on another strategy. He tells a person that the laws of *tznius* apply only to women and girls, whereas men and boys have absolutely no restrictions whatsoever.

This reasoning contradicts *Shulchan Aruch*. In fact the laws of *tznius* begin with arising in the morning, and they make no distinction between men and women.

He further claims that he has conducted himself this way for years already, and that his brother, his friend, and so on, conduct themselves this way; he cannot “separate himself from the community”!

This is the appropriate time and place to remind everybody that there is a *Shulchan Aruch*. It was published many years ago. It begins by describing how a Jew is supposed to awaken from sleep. It then begins immediately, in its initial paragraphs, in the Rema, and quoted in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, to state that a Jew must contemplate the fact that wherever he finds himself he is in the presence of the King of Kings. Even a person with limited intellect appreciates that one cannot compare the way a person conducts himself while he is all alone at home behind closed doors to his conduct in a place when is visible to others. Who in this case can see him? The *Ani Havayah*

["I am Hashem"], the *Eibishter*, the *Melech malchei ha-melachim ha-Kodesh baruch Hu!*

Therefore the laws of *tznius* are exactly the same in the dead of winter and in the heat of summer. By the same token, all the *hiddurim* one observes during the winter apply even more so during the summer. The reasoning is simple. During the winter season, he may be able to claim that he needs to earn a livelihood and according to *halachah* he must support his wife and children. He is exhausted and needs to look after his health. By contrast, during the summer he is on vacation and does nothing at all. And why would he even think of studying...

[In reply to this attitude, I ask:] why is it so critical to eat specifically five times a day and to drink a specific number of glasses of milk a day, and on and on.... While it is true that "*You must guard yourselves*" is also a *mitzvah*, it does not imply that one must be *mehader* in it! And certainly not *mehadrin min ha-mehadrin*.

Where is there truly a need for a *hiddur*? When his performance of *mitzvos* and his daily study sessions are weakened, when his going to Shul three times a day is weakened...

Here he come with an excuse that he is in the country, where there is not always a *minyán*. Then, he does not enjoy the *chazzan*, then he does not appreciate the *gabbai*, then he is not happy with the *aliyah* he received the previous Shabbos. So he lets all that go, along with *kedushah* and *barchu*. He can pray alone without *kedushah* and *barchu*.

So, he finds no reason to be *mehader* in food, drink, and the like. Certainly there is no need to follow the laws of *tznius*. So he leaves that behind him at home together with the *Shulchan Aruch*. He secures it at

home with two locks, and sets off for the country without the *Shulchan Aruch*.

### INFLUENCE OTHERS TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES APPROPRIATELY

It has been proven from actual experience that one who truly desires can travel on vacation while ensuring that it a vacation only from activities that wear down the body in a literal sense, and that the vacation brings greater power to matters that are necessary for strengthening the soul.

This is not mere talk. Do not think that we needed to share a joke and therefore began with a discussion on *tznius*. Rather, this is a matter of timely concern. Just as we observed that from the same discussion we held at this time last year, one or two people were in fact positively influenced, it could well be that our present discussion will cause more than just two or perhaps even three people to be positively influenced. Especially if those present now will give this message over to others. They should first review the law in *Shulchan Aruch* and then explain to others that the Rema states such-and-such in *Shulchan Aruch*. They should emphasize that these laws carry the same weight nowadays as they did in the times of the Rema, and they apply equally to a large city as to a small city and even when one is alone in a field.

"Words that come from the heart enter the heart [of the audience] and achieve their desired effect." May the summer therefore be spiritually clean, and as a result, physically kosher and pure as well. May it serve to increase bodily healthy and the health of the soul, bringing new strengths. May the vacation be used to increase Torah study and *mitzvos* due to fewer pressures of earning a livelihood. The return from vacation should be met

with an increase in *shiurim* of *nigleh* and *chassidus*, observance of *mitzvos* *be'hiddur*, and with joy and gladness of heart. *L'chaim!*

–*Sichas Yud Beis Tammuz 5724 – unedited*

### “LET NON-JEWS

### RAVE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

### AND LET JEWS ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!”

The month of Tammuz is one of the summer months. In summer, people tend to relax. In America, people tend to go to the country – and “when you go to a city, follow its ways.”

People come to me, inquiring about travelling to the county. They tell me that their wives wish to travel. It is inappropriate to say that they themselves wish to leave, so instead they tell me that their wives wish to go...

Going to the country by no means guarantees that one will be able to relax. It is highly likely that life is more tedious there than in New York. There is no *chalav Yisrael*, homes are expensive there and he therefore languishes in some run-down place. All this for the sake of fulfilling the maxim, “When you go to a city, follow its ways,” that when the fourth of July rolls around, one goes to the country.

There was once a *melamed* whose doctors advised him to visit the forest. Since he needed to earn a livelihood, he slaved away with young children all day. Once his work was done, he still lacked the funds for a ride to the forest, so he set off on foot. This took him a few hours. By then, night fell and he wished to join a *minyan* for *maariv*. He immediately turned and made his way back to the city where he prayed with a *minyan*. So each day, he schlepped himself back and forth in this manner, completely wearing himself down – all for the sake of

following the doctor’s recommendation to spend some time in the forest.

In the country there are expensive and cheaper areas. He cannot go to a cheaper area; he finds it necessary to specifically choose an expensive area. But he has no money, he will therefore settle for a dilapidated apartment and wear himself out. But that does not matter to him, as long as he is among people who pay hefty income taxes.

When he later returns home from the country, he will still be worn out because while he was there he lacked the strength to stroll through the hillsides. He spent the whole day in bed and put on weight. But he has his doctor, and his doctor recommends that he fast every Monday and Thursday in order to lose weight.

The end result from all this is that he wears himself out while he is there and continues to do so upon his return. All for the sake of being among people who are mentioned in “Who’s Who” and to fulfill the aphorism, “When you go to a city, follow its ways,” that when the fourth of July arrives, one travels away from home to relax.

After all that, he is truly caught up in the whole thing and he raves about the wonder of his experience. He thanks Hashem for the fact that in..., they allow a Jew with a beard and a child wearing *tzitzis*.

Certainly, it is indeed a great marvel. It is truly a wonder that a Jew finds himself in such a place, when a Jew’s true place is not there but in a *beis midrash!* On the other hand, there are no grounds for describing as a marvel Hashem’s kindness in allowing him to end up in a place like that...

The Gemara relates that Rabbi Elazar ben

Arach visited a place that had good wine and hot springs. He was drawn after these amenities, and as a result he forgot all his learning. It was not the water or the wine themselves that caused him such a loss. Rather, it was the fact that he was “drawn after them.”

So the fact that a person goes to the country is one thing. But why must he get overly excited about the experience? Let non-Jews rave about the experience and let Jews merely benefit from the experience!

If one is already going, let him not be taken by the experience. While he is there, he must continue to carry out his mission. And since he is going only for the sake of fulfilling his mission, his “wife” will no longer be interested in going to the country, because he himself will not be interested!

–*Sichas Yud Beis Tammuz 5714- unedited.*

### HASHEM DIRECTS THE STEPS OF MAN

Those who travels to the county must recite *tefilas ha'derech* along the way. Therefore, the concept of “Hashem directs the steps of man” applied to them as well – despite the fact that they think they are simply travelling to get some fresh air. They should know that the Alter Rebbe’s teaching on the verse “Hashem directs the steps of man” applies to them.

–*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5723 – unedited.*

**“THOSE WHO GO, NEED NOT GO;  
THOSE WHO NEED, CANNOT  
AFFORD TO GO.”**

There are those who travel to the country. In this regard, reality has become confused. The majority of those who travel do not actually need to go. And those who need to go cannot afford to go. May they have a healthy summer, as the

Rebbe would wish people – *ah gezuntzen zummer!*

They should use their time there to increase in strengthening Judaism among the people they meet there. It is stated that one of the ways of the Baal Shem Tov is that when a Jew passes through a particular place he refines the place by his very presence, even if he does nothing there. And he certainly refines the place if he adds something in Torah and *mitzvos* while in that location.

He must act. Whether his actions lead to a desired accomplishment or not is not his concern. He simply has to act. This can be compared to *bedikas chametz*. All he must do is to search for *chametz*. As long as he looks, even if he finds nothing, he has fulfilled the *mitzvah*. The same is true in this case. He must act. As long as he acts, he has made himself fit for Moshiach to bring him close to himself ... and to truly see his accomplishments.

Now that so many people travel away to the country, New York has itself become a country! Those who remain behind in this local “country” must do what is needed right here.

*Ah gezunter zummer!* May we meet for *chassidische farbrengens!*  
*Sichas Yud Gimmel Tammuz 5715 – unedited.*

### A GREAT MITZVAH TO PUBLICIZE

There is an explicit law in *Shulchan Aruch* that is also recorded in numerous *sefarim*. It is of timely concern, especially among this large gathering of Jews, who will undoubtedly publicize it further:

Since it is now the summer and people travel to the country, it is a great *mitzvah* to publicize in the vacation spots that the *Shulchan Aruch*’s laws of *tznius* are not only for the winter season. They apply during the summer as well. Nor

are they only for the city. They apply in the country as well. They are not only for children, but also for adults – and not just adults but also for the advanced of age.

May Hashem help that it be a healthy summer, a kosher summer, and a healthy and joyful summer!

–*Sichas Yud Beis Tammuz 5717 – unedited.*

### VACATION IS A BIZARRE PLOY

To our pain and grief, the bizarre ploy of the *yetzer hara* that is known as vacation is now a common practice even among those who carefully heed the words of Hashem the rest of the year. They claim that vacation time is different, and that there is no need for effort or toil [in spiritual matters while on vacation].

They do not sense that this runs in contradiction to the Torah, which states, “*Man is born to toil,*” and, “*One who claims to have invested no effort but nevertheless achieved is not to be believed,*” and, “*Days have been formed and one of them is His.*”

The latter verse means that not a single day or hour is superfluous because they were issued according to exact measure, not a moment longer than necessary for a person to complete his inner mission, the theme of which is expressed in the Mishnah, “I was created to serve my Creator.” There is not a moment extra, because every moment to which the above theme does not apply is an irretrievable loss – “days without any clothing [meaningful activities]”, to quote the Zohar. There is no need to elaborate on what is understood by every normal person.

–*Michtav Chaf Hei Tammuz 4716.*

### SPIRITUAL SURGE TO MATCH PHYSICAL PROGRESS

In reply to your letter dated Iyar 24,

in which you mention establishing schedules of study Torah – *nigleh* and *chassidus*. You mention that after Shavuot, many members of Anash travel to the countryside.

You will undoubtedly begin – well ahead of time – discussing and encouraging those who go on vacation to establish times for Torah study in the country as well, and in fact, to increase their study.

“*For Hashem created one versus the other.*”

When the body busies itself in self- invigoration via physical matters in the literal sense, increasing its food intake, exercise, and so on (and not always with the intention to serve Hashem, at least not overtly), a corresponding increase of the soul is needed.

[Spiritual increase is necessary] to a greater extent that the bodily invigoration. For the vacation environment naturally pulls a person to these basic things that I have mentioned to a greater extent than while he is in the city. At the very least, the increase in the spiritual must match the increase in the physical.

It is stated that the above consideration is one of the purposes of reading *Pirkei Avos* as soon as the summer season begins. For then nature is invigorated, the trees bud, and so on.

Certainly, this in no way contradicts the Baal Shem Tov’s teaching on the verse, “*You shall surely assist him*” [meaning that one should assist his body in drawing closer to Hashem’s service via positive methods] and not via fasting, afflicting oneself, and the like.

For the body’s natural power of craving is to be redirected towards spiritual matters and so on, until the fulfillment of the longed for prophecy [regarding the final redemption], that not only will the

body cease distracting a person from the service of Hashem, and not only will it assist a person in his service, but to the contrary – “*The female will envelope the male*” [meaning that the body will enliven the soul!]

With blessings, as per the words of the Rebbe [Rayatz], “A healthy and happy summer!” May it be so physically and spiritual at once!

–*Michtav Chaf Vav Iyar 5715.*

### FREEDOM CANNOT BE TAKEN

It seems that is customary for a person to change location at this time of year. Or, as per common parlance, one “takes a *chofeish* (vacation).”

Obviously, this phrase is self-contradictory. *Chofeish* [literally meaning “freedom”] cannot be taken. It can only be granted. One who is able to take a *chofeish* on his own is already free! More importantly, such a notion contradicts the concept of “*They are My servants*” [in which sense, a Jew is never free].

Anyhow, the intent of this expression is clear, and since [vacation] is undertaken for healthy purposes, it is fine according to the Torah.

May Hashem grant success, so that the *chofeish* is utilized to increase in the truest freedom, [as our Sages state,] “There is none as free as he who toils in Torah.”

–*Michtav Yud Gimmel Menachem Av 5719.*

### THE TRUE PURPOSE OF VACATION

May Hashem grant that while you and your family are in the country, the intended benefit should materialize in the literal sense, in the health and invigoration of the body. To quote a saying of that the Rebbe [Rayatz] repeated in the name of his father the Rebbe [Rashab], “How precious is [the body] that

so much Torah has been poured on its behalf!”

See Rambam (*Hilchos Dei’os*, beg. ch. 4), “Maintaining bodily health is one of the ways in which we serve Hashem.”

From this we can appreciate to an infinitely greater degree just how very important it is to maintain the health of the soul. This is a goal we work on around the year. How much more so must we strengthen this effort with increased energy during the time of year in which we are occupied and interested specifically in invigorating the body. [Heightened focus on the soul’s health during vacation is critical] to avoid arriving at the state, G-d forbid, of “the strength of the body is the weakness of the soul” (*Zohar*, vol. 1, 180b). Also see *Shabbos* (147b – “the waters of Diomsus,” etc.).

I am not here to give a lecture but to inspire a revolution in approach: Utilize the time and focus that is being given to bodily health for strengthening the soul!

Accomplish this through adding a regular Torah study session specifically for the summer months, and through seeking opportunities to encourage others who have arrived for vacation in your location and its environs to increase in Torah study, in prayer, and in acts of kindness – each according to his ability.

It is sometimes worth explaining to them that one cannot begin to fathom the workings of Divine Providence. Perhaps the very reason why all of you were brought together to this specific location is to use the opportunity to add precious gems to the crown of the King of kings, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

*Michtav Chaf Alef Tammuz 5710. This letter was sent to quite a few members of Anash between Tammuz 21 and Menachem Av 4.*

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