

## a CALL to ACTION

RABBI SHAIS TAUB

### PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE TORAH

*In our festival prayers, we refer to the holiday of Shavuos as the Time of the Giving of the Torah. For it was on this day – the sixth of Sivan – in the year 2448 since Creation, that G-d gave the Torah to Moshe and the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. Every year at this time, the Jewish people renew their commitment to the Torah and prepare to receive G-d's gift anew as they did for the first time.*

### LEARNING

■ Preparations for Shavuos begin on the last Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Sivan and primarily entail involvement in Torah study. It is understood that the best way to prepare to receive the Torah is by learning the Torah.<sup>1</sup>

■ This learning should encompass both the revealed and mystical aspects of Torah, marking an increase in the quantity as well as quality of learning, in particular, 'learning which brings to action.'<sup>2</sup>

■ Specifically, we should learn the laws dealing with the upcoming Festival, including the study of those sources in Torah which explain the greatness and wonder of the Giving of the Torah. For this will intensify our desire and longing to receive the Torah.<sup>3</sup>

■ For example, one may learn the section in Tractate Shabbos that deals with the Giving of the Torah.<sup>3</sup>

■ On Rosh Chodesh Sivan, we learn the discourse "B'Chodesh HaShlishi" in *Torah Ohr*, found at the beginning of *Parashas Yisro*. For if we begin right away on Rosh Chodesh we may then increase throughout the days leading up to Shavuos.<sup>4</sup>

### MAKING GATHERINGS

■ The Shabbos before Shavuos, Jews should gather in synagogues and yeshivas and learn Torah.<sup>5</sup>

■ Ideally, these gatherings should be attended by at least ten men. For "G-d's Presence rests among every group of ten who sit and occupy themselves with Torah."<sup>5</sup>

■ These gatherings should also be

spent arousing everyone there to begin preparing for Shavuos – the first preparation for which may already have been simply bringing another Jew to the gathering.<sup>6</sup>

### LOVE YOUR FELLOW JEW

■ In preparation for receiving the Torah, we must increase in our love for our fellow Jew. As it is related in the Torah, when the Jews arrived in the Wilderness of Sinai on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the Jewish nation stood together in complete unity – 'as one man with one heart.' Thus, every year, on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, we should begin to increase in our feelings of love and unity among Jews.<sup>7</sup>

### YEARNING FOR THE FINAL REDEMPTION

■ So great is our desire to receive the Torah on Shavuos that we count down the days – the *Sefiras HaOmer* – leading up to it. This same desire and longing should be coupled with our yearning for the Final Redemption for which we are also counting down the days, and years and generations of our exile and cry out "Ad Masai?! Until When?!"<sup>8</sup>

### EREV SHAVUOS

■ The day before Shavuos, there should be a special increase in giving *tzedakah*.<sup>9</sup>

■ The day before Shavuos, we

1. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukoisai 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 352):* "Besides the general preparation that takes place throughout the counting of the Omer."

2. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 215).*

3. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukoisai 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 352).*

4. *Sichas Rosh Chodesh Sivan, The*

*Night Following 3 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 380).*

5. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 253).*

6. *Ibid.* p. 254: "As is the famous teaching of the Previous Rebbe that "Whenever two Jews meet, it should bring about the benefit of a third Jew."

7. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 226).*

8. *Sichas 24 Iyar, to the Lubavitch Women's Organization 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 229):* "This is by way of increased study in topics of Redemption and the Holy Temple, for such learning actually hastens these things to come about in reality.)

9. *Maamar – Anochi Hashem Elokecha 5749 (Hisva'aduyos p. 255).*

should think deeply throughout the day about the Jews' answer to G-d when He offered them the Torah – that they answered first “we will do,” and then “we will hear.”<sup>10</sup>

■ This contemplation should be one that brings us to action. For in all matters of Divine service, action is foremost – we will do, and understanding with one's own intellect comes after – we will hear.<sup>10</sup>

## CUSTOMS OF SHAVUOS

### SHAVUOS BLESSING

■ Men bless men, women bless women, and children bless other children<sup>11</sup> with the following words of the Previous Rebbe, not adding and certainly not subtracting a word – “*Kabbalas HaTorah B'Simcha U'B'Pnimius*. May you receive the Torah with joy and inner depth.”<sup>12</sup>

■ We should start increasing in this joy and inner depth even several days before Shavuos so that by the time we receive the Torah on Shavuos, these qualities will have already become second nature to

every Jew.<sup>13</sup>

## THE TIKUN

*Our Sages tell us that the entire Jewish nation overslept on the morning of Shavuos – the very morning that G-d was to give them the Torah. Today, and for generations, Jewish people seek to rectify this fact by staying awake all Shavuos night reciting a digest of holy writings. These collected verses and teachings are referred to colloquially as the ‘Tikun’ – literally the ‘Rectification.’ - Editor.*

■ As indicated by its name, the *Tikun* repairs all that needs rectification.<sup>14</sup>

■ Everyone should be encouraged to complete the reading of the entire *Tikun*.<sup>15</sup>

■ Even those who were not particular to do so in years past out of preference for more in-depth Torah study<sup>16</sup> should from now on say the entire *Tikun* from beginning to end – as this is the true preparation for receiving the Torah.<sup>17</sup>

■ During the time available for reciting the *Tikun*, we should spend

every spare moment influencing all that will listen that the *Tikun* must be recited properly; that is, with awe and fear, as if one were at that very moment receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai.<sup>18</sup>

■ We should also explain in a way that will be understood that one does not show awe and fear by shaking back and forth or other such superficial displays. Rather, one must intellectually generate a sincere feeling in his heart that at that very moment G-d literally sits opposite him and recites the same words of Torah along with him.<sup>19</sup>

■ We must act swiftly in attempting to influence others to recite the *Tikun*. For if not, we may be unable to sway these people before the time for saying the *Tikun* has finished. And even if we do convince them to say the *Tikun*, if we do not act with haste, there may not be enough time left for them to finish it in its entirety.<sup>19</sup>

■ It should be noted that errors were located at the end of the excerpt from *Sefer Yetzira* in the *Tikun* and that a table of corrections has since been printed.<sup>20</sup>

(To be continued.)

10. *Ibid.* p. 254

11. *Sichas 24 Iyar, to the Lubavitch Women's Organization 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 229).*

12. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 5 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 410).*

13. *Sichas 24 Iyar, to the Lubavitch Women's Organization 5750 (Hisva'aduyos p. 229).*

14. *Roshei D'varim from Farbrengen of the Second Day of Shavuos 5751.*

15. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar*

*5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 409).*

16. *Ibid.*: “We must refute those who claim that reciting the *Tikun* is ‘a waste of their time.’ These people are of the opinion that they could make better use of their time learning Torah in depth or learning deep *Chasidus* like ‘*Hemshech Ayin Beis*’ instead of saying the *Tikun*. Or they claim that they could at least be learning the *Rambam's ‘Minyan HaMitzvos.*’ The truth is, by the time they finally start the ‘*Minyan HaMitzvos,*’ they end up just counting them off at the very end of the night, when they are already

thinking about going to the the *mikveh* and preparing for *davening* and hearing the Ten Commandments. They're already tired and they are unable to concentrate or reflect upon on the content of the mitzvos, and how much more so, the spiritual content of the mitzvos.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 5 Sivan 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 404).*

19. *Ibid.* p. 405.

20. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5748 (Hisva'aduyos p. 409).*