

Day-by-Day Halachic Guide

**Detailed instructions on the
laws and customs for the
Festival of Chanukah 5776
Year of Hakhel**

**From the 21th of Kislev
thru the 15th of Teves**

Including Hey Teves and Asarah B'Teves

From the Badatz of Crown Heights

לעילוי נשמת
ר' יוסף בן צבי הירש ע"ה
נפטר עשרה בטבת ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.
ולעילוי נשמת ליבא חי' בת ר' דוד ע"ה,
נפטרה ט"ו טבת, ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

We wish all *toshavei haschechuna*
a *freilechen Chanuka!*

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B”H

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The following points were distilled from a series
of public shiurim that were delivered by
Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun,
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

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The basic laws and customs presented below are derived from multiple sources. Due to a dearth of space and time they are presented without their references and halachic notes. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad*, *Lu'ach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*

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

Hakhel: Once every seven years, on the second day of Sukkos immediately following the conclusion of a shmitah year, the entire nation – men, women, and children – would gather at the beis hamikdash and hear the king read aloud from the Torah. The incredible setting was compared to the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and inspired all present with commitment, love, and awe of Hashem. This mitzvah is known as Hakhel, “assembly” of the Jewish nation. Moshiach himself will read from the Torah in the third beis hamikdash each Hakhel year – may this Sukkos be the first such occasion!

The Rebbe calls attention to the concept of Hakhel to an extraordinary degree and with increasing intensity, to the point that his *sichos* and letters are filled with Hakhel-related directives. Hakhel is not limited to Sukkos. It remains a timely and urgent concept throughout a Hakhel year. We are expected to raise awareness of Hakhel at every possible opportunity and in every possible way, to draw associations between all our activities and the “call of the hour” – Hakhel. Leading by example, the Rebbe went to unusual lengths to draw such associations in his many *sichos*.

“All aspects of divine service performed in the course of the year must travel through the gateway – and are carried through with the spirit of – *hakhel*.” (*Sichas Shabbos Bereishis* 5748)

During Simchas Torah 5748, the Rebbe called for a

Hakhel, assembly, of literature on Hakhel, meaning that information from all relevant Torah sources on the concept of Hakhel should be published in a single volume. It was to include teachings from *nigleh* and especially from the inner dimensions of Torah, primarily as those teachings are explained in *Chassidus*. The goal of the volume would be identical to the goal of an actual Hakhel experience: to inspire the people to greater fear and awe of Hashem.

On Shabbos *Mishpatim* 5741, the Rebbe called for studying the “laws of Hakhel.” It is an obligation to study the laws of each festival every year thirty days in advance of the actual festival. We should similarly study the spiritual laws of Hakhel as they are recorded in the Torah teachings of *Mussar*, *Chassidus*, and *Kabbalah*.

This year is a Hakhel year. It is not the purpose of this publication, nor is it within its scope, to record all the relevant information on Hakhel, but we have made an effort to include snippets of relevant material wherever appropriate, culled from *sichos* that the Rebbe delivered at *farbrengens* in 770 – or, to borrow a phrase from the laws of Hakhel, that “the king would read ... at a wooden podium in the courtyard of the *beis hamikdash*.” This is no exchange for the need to study the topic from the original sources. The Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters on the matter are incredibly extensive.

For more on Hakhel, see Kovetz Hakhel published by *Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos* in 5755; *Kahal Gadol (Otzeros Mitzvas Hakhel)*, republished this year by *Mamash*; *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, entry “**Hakhel**”; *Hakhel (Kovetz leMitzvas Hakhel u’Birurei Hilchosehah)*, authored by Rabbi Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim in Yerushalayim, published in 5706 and 5733; *Sefer Hakel (Mitzvas Hakhel – Asufas M’amarim)*, published by *Machon HaTorah ve’HaAretz* in 5761.

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

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately stated, “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 the 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.’” (*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 341 – *Emphasis in original.*)

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded. “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 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.” (*From a Sichah addressed to N’sheiu’B’nos Chabad – Sefer HaSichos 5750*, vol. 2, p. 485)

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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., the close of Shabbos).

Chanukah Preparations

♦ The best way to perform the mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights is to obtain olive oil because it produces a pure, clear and steady flame, it is easily drawn by the wick, and it was the fuel with which the miracle of the Chanukah originally occurred.

♦ All other types of oil are also fine to use in a Chanukah menorah, except on Shabbos Chanukah (there are conflicting opinions about the kinds of oil permitted on Shabbos). Nevertheless, it is a greater mitzvah to use oils that offer pure, clean lights.

♦ **Buyers beware!** Fake olive oil is currently being sold in stores. The bogus oil is more yellow, less bitter and runnier than actual olive oil. When heated, olive oil will emit a strong olive smell, but it will not bubble or foam when fried, does not smoke or give off an unpleasant scent. It is easy to tell a fake by placing a sample in the fridge alongside a sample of genuine olive oil. The olive oil will become thicker and stickier than the fake.

♦ The best way to perform the mitzvah is to obtain cotton wool or linen thread for wicks. Any other type of material is also fine.

♦ This year directly follows a *shemita* year. As a result, olive oil produced during *shemita* is being sold on the market. There is debate among the halachic authorities as to whether such oil may be used for lighting the *menorah*. The use of fruit produced during *shemita* under a loophole known a *hetter mechirah* is also a matter of debate. (See sources referenced in *Shi'urim BaHalachah*, 139:4, and in *Kuntras Basra (in manuscript form)*; as well as *Sha'alos u'Teshuvos Mishnas Yosef*, vol.

1, 21; and elsewhere.) One who wishes to be stringent should avoid olive oil which has these concerns.

♦ According to Halachah, a wax candle is considered to be a wick in a wax container. Technically, there is no need to insert the candle into a holder—a menorah. Nevertheless, Chazal instructed that mitzvos be performed in a beautiful manner, in the spirit of *zeh Keili ve-anveihu* (“This is my G-d and I will glorify Him”) and this instruction extends to the rabbinic mitzvah of Chanukah. It is therefore important to obtain a beautiful menorah, ideally made of metal. Those who can afford it should obtain a menorah made of precious metal such as silver, all for the greater splendor of the mitzvah.

♦ It is the Chabad custom to use a beeswax candle for the *shamash*.

♦ In *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 21, p. 69), the Rebbe states, “There is basis for suggesting that menorahs that are designed for use on Chanukah should be fashioned with straight, diagonal branches...why change the true design of the original menorah, whose branches were diagonal and not curved?”

♦ The Rambam states, The Chanukah lights are an extremely precious mitzvah. Be extra careful in observing this mitzvah, in order to publicize the miracle and to praise G-d and thank Him for the miracles that He performed for us.”

♦ Men and women are equally obligated in the mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights. Even a pauper who survives on *tzedakah* is expected to sell his garment if need be and to purchase oil for his menorah.

♦ A household member may fulfill his obligation through the menorah that is lit by the head of his household. In that case, he should listen to the blessing and respond *amen*, but he should not respond *baruch hu u-varuch shemo*.

Note: While it seems logical that one who does not have a home is not obligated to purchase or rent a home for the sake of observing this *mitzvah*, nevertheless, it is equally

obvious that due to the preciousness of the *mitzvah*, one should not cause it to be neglected deliberately. Therefore, **one who intends to travel should organize his schedule in advance so that he will be able to personally light the menorah at its proper time in his own living quarters.** It is a far greater *mitzvah* to personally light the *menorah* rather than delegate it to an emissary.

♦ A guest should light the *menorah* wherever he is staying. However, if during the halachic time for lighting, that location will no longer be considered his place – for example, if he permanently leaves the location at which he was staying immediately after lighting, and now travels elsewhere – there is grave doubt as to whether he has fulfilled his obligation.

(As an aside, regarding the need to buy or rent a home for the sake of the *mitzvah*, there is actually a halachic debate about this. Some have pointed to the words of Rambam – “There are positive commandments for which one is obligated to try to fulfill and actively pursue them ... these are referred to as *chovah*, obligatory, because one is obligated to find a way to fulfill them, one way or another. Then there are *mitzvos* that are not obligatory and are comparable to *reshus*, optional instructions. Take, for example, the *mitzvos* of *mezuzah* and *ma’akeh* [fencing an open rooftop]. One is not obligated to live in a house that meets the requirements for a *mezuzah* just in order to put up a *mezuzah*. If he wishes, he may spend his entire life living in a tent or on a ship. Nor must he build a home just in order to erect a fence along its roof ... Then there are [non-biblical] *mitzvos* that are obligatory according to Rabbinical decree, such as kindling the Chanukah lights.” Some also point to the words of Tosefos, *Sukkah* 46a, s.v. *ha-ro’eh sukkah*.)

♦ Those organizing Chanukah parties for friends, relatives, and the like, should time and host these events at a location and hour that will allow the participants to light their own *menoros* at the correct time **in their own homes.** It is therefore best to avoid arranging parties in the early hours of the evening, from a half hour before

sunset until after nightfall. It is also forbidden to sit down to a meal during the half hour prior to kindling time. Needless to say, if the participants are not actually staying at the location in which the party is held, they cannot fulfill their obligation by lighting the *menorah* at that location.

♦ On the eve of Ches Teves 5747, the Rebbe stated, As is known, the word *goshnah* (let. To Goshen) in the phrase “*He sent Yehudah ahead of him, to Yosef, to direct him to Goshen*” – (*Bereishis* 46:28) is comprised of the four letters that appear on the *dreidel*, which form the acronym of *neis gadol hayah sham* (A great miracle happened there). It has been observed that the Rebbeim also used *dreidels* in their homes. As is known, there are numerous allusions contained in the *dreidel* and all of its details, as described in the books that elucidate the reasons behind Jewish customs (and ‘Jewish customs are Torah’).” This concept is also explained in *Sefer HaSichos* 5748 (p. 260, fn. 32). Also see *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 12, notes at foot of p. 33), and *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 9, p. 66).

Thursday of Parshas Vayeshev, Kislev 21

Hakhel: The Rebbe explains (*Sefer Hasichos* 5748, vol. 1, p. 164, fn. 90) that this week’s *parshah* is associated with *hakhel*: The *parshah* begins, “*Yaakov dwelt in the land of megurei aviv – his father’s sojourning.*” The term *megurei* has alternative meanings: “It means to assemble and gather, as in *ogeir bakayitz*, ‘harvests in the summer’ (*Mishlei* 10:5).” Also, “*Megurei* means *yirah*, fear or awe, and it also refers to an *otzar*, treasure ... *yiras Hashem hi otzaro*, ‘fear of Hashem – that is [man’s] treasure’ (*Yeshayah* 33:6). [The multiple implication of *megurei*] correspond to the concept of *hakhel* – the assembly and gathering of the entire Jewish nation ... “so that you shall fear Hashem your G-d all of the days.”

The association with *hakhel* appears more specifically [in Yosef’s dreams]:

1) “Behold, we were binding sheaves ... your sheaves encircled and prostrated themselves to my sheaf” (37:7). This represents the ingathering and assembly of all twelve tribes – similar to the concept of *va-yakhel Moshe*, “*Moshe assembled the nation*,” “*When the heads of the nation gathered; the tribes of Israel in*

unity” – through a sense of self-nullification demonstrated by prostration and so on.

2) “Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were prostrating themselves to me” (v. 9). The prostration and sense of subservience is felt by the entire nation – the men (symbolized by the sun), the women (symbolized by the moon), and the children (represented by the stars). This is similar to *hakhel* – “Assemble the nation, the men, the women, and the children ... to fear Hashem your G-d.”

At the conclusion of the above *sichah*, the Rebbe calls for “an increase in matters of *hakhel* and *simchah* in fulfillment of the prophecies, ‘You will be gathered one by one, sons of Israel!’ and ‘A great multitude shall return here,’ and ‘[There will be] eternal gladness upon their heads.’”

Friday, 22 Kislev

- Shulchan Aruch states that although a person hears the entire Torah read in Shul on Shabbos morning, he also needs to read it himself every week. We recite *shnayim mikra ve’echad targum*, i.e. we read twice each verse and once the commentary of Onkelos. It is customary to do this Friday after chatzos, midday. The best way to fulfill this *mitzvah* is to ensure that the reading has been completed before starting the Shabbos morning meal, and preferably even before the start of Shacharis.
- Today, we recite *shnayim mikra* of *Parshas Vayeshev*
- Candle lighting is at **4:10pm** (in New York), which is 18 minutes before sunset.

Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev, Kislev 23

- Early on Shabbos morning, the entire book of Tehillim is read. Today is a day to *farbreng*.
- The blessing over the coming month of Teves is recited. This month, the *molad* will occur on Friday morning, at 7:19 am, plus 12 *chalakim*. Rosh Chodesh Teves will be on Shabbos and Sunday.
- *Av harachamim* is not recited on this Shabbos.
- ♦ *Av ha-rachaman* is not recited before Musaf however *tzidkasecha tzedek* is recited during Minchah, as on an ordinary Shabbos.

Hakhel: In *Sichas Parshas Vayeishev* 5748, the Rebbe states:

The key miracle of the Chanukah lights involved spiritual concerns – Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos*, [as it is stated,] “They revoked their religion and did not permit them to occupy themselves with Torah and *mitzvos*,” [and as recited on Chanukah,] “...to make them forget Your Torah and transgress the decrees of Your will.” Consequently, the victory is primarily a spiritual triumph [which is why our Sages] “established and made them into days of praise and thanksgiving.” Similarly, they decreed that the miracle be memorialized through kindling lights, in the spirit of “*A commandment is a candle, and the Torah is light*” (*Mishlei* 6:23). “They established a memorial for the miracle in a matter of divine service.”

From this it is understood that the days of Chanukah are especially auspicious to further encourage and strengthen Torah study – “Your Torah” – and the observance of *mitzvos* – “the decrees of Your will” – “*A commandment is a candle and the Torah is light.*” We should do so in a manner of “publicizing the miracle” and “*with a multitude of people.*” This is also the theme of “*Assemble the nation, the men, the women, and the children ... to fear Hashem your G-d.*”

In a footnote to that *sichah*, the Rebbe adds:

The ultimate purpose of studying “Your Torah,” and observing “the decrees of Your will” is [expressed in the verse], “*And Hashem has commanded us to perform all these laws to fear Hashem our G-d.*” Also note that the war of the *Yevanim* was not against studying Torah or performing *mitzvos* *per se*, but rather, that no mention be made that the Torah is Hashem’s Torah (“Your Torah”), and that the commandments are Hashem’s *mitzvos* (“the decree of Your will”). They fought specifically against the emphasis on fear of Heaven within the observance of Torah and *mitzvos*.

This is associated specifically with the dimension of Torah that is compared to oil, namely, the Torah’s inner, mystical teachings, and especially the highly elucidated form in which these teachings are presented in the teachings of Chabad *Chassidus*. Through these teachings, one comes “*to fear Hashem,*” in the spirit of, “*Know the G-d of your father and serve Him with a complete heart*” (*Divrei HaYamim* I 28:9).

Motzei Shabbos, Eve of Kislev 24

♦ Shabbos ends at 5:15 pm.

♦ *Vih* *no'am* is recited as usual at the conclusion of tonight's Maariv.

V'sein tal u'matar li'verachah

♦ Tonight marks sixty days since the onset of Tishrei *tekufah* (autumn season), and therefore, outside *Eretz Yisroel*, the winter prayer of *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* is said in the *Amidah* in the blessing of *bareich aleinu*. This phrase replaces *v'sein berachah*, which is recited throughout the summer months. The winter phrase will continue to be recited on all weekdays until (and including) the *Minchah* service of *erev* Pesach.

♦ The *gabbai* should **not** make an announcement between the blessing of *hashkiveinu* and the start of the *Amidah* reminding the congregation to say *tal u'matar*.

♦ There are a number of laws that apply in case *v'sein tal u'matar* (or even just the word *u'matar*) was not said:

1) If we realized the error before pronouncing Hashem's name in the blessing of *mevareich ha'shanim*, we go back to the words *v'sein tal u'matar*.

2) If we have already recited Hashem's name in *mevareich ha'shanim*, we add the words *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* immediately after *mevareich ha'shanim*, before beginning the following blessing of *tekah be'shofar*.

3) If we began *tekah be'shofar*, we add the words *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* in the blessing of *shema koleinu* immediately after the words *reikam al teshiveinu*, then we continue *ki ata shomei'a* etc.

4) If we already pronounced Hashem's name at the conclusion of *shema koleinu*, we add the words *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* immediately after that blessing (after the words *shomei'a tefillah*), before beginning *retzei*.

5) If we already began *retzei*, then as long as we have not taken three steps back at the conclusion of the *Amidah*, we return to *bareich aleinu* and continue from there.

6) If we concluded the *Amidah* by taking three steps back, or even if we recited the second *yihyu le'ratzon*

(which is considered the conclusion of the Amidah), we must repeat the entire Amidah.

7) If we realized our error only at the time of the next prayer service, we recite the Amidah of that service twice, the first time for the current service and the second time as a way to make up for the invalid Amidah of the previous service. However, if we omitted *v'sein tal u'matar* in the *Minchah* service of *erev* Shabbos, we do not recite the Shabbos Amidah of *Maariv* twice. The same law applies if we omitted *v'sein tal u'matar* in the *Minchah* service of *erev* Pesach.

♦ The calculation of sixty days from the onset of the Tishrei season is not measured down to the exact hour. We begin reciting the prayer for rain, *v'sein tal u'matar*, at the very first prayer of the sixtieth day, even though sixty full days haven't yet completed. The halachic authorities are uncertain in the case of one who omitted *v'sein tal u'matar* before the precise hour at which the sixty days expires has arrived - for example, during *Maariv* tonight. In such a case, we repeat the entire Amidah on condition that if we are not technically required to do so by halachah it should be considered a *nedavah* (voluntary) and not a *chovah* (obligatory).

The following is a general principle in halachah: For thirty days after a seasonal change in a prayer, if we are in doubt whether we said the correct version, we must assume that we said the previous, incorrect one. However, after thirty days have elapsed (this year, beginning from *Maariv* on the eve of Teves 24 (Jan. 4), we can assume that we have grown accustomed to the new version, i.e. reciting *v'sein tal u'matar* and did so in this instance as well. (See at length in the letter from the Secretariat of the Badatz, dated Friday Parashas Vayechi 5575, which appeared then in the Badatz bulleting board in "770".)

Sunday, Kislev 24, Erev Chanukah

- ♦ *Tachanun* is not recited during *Minchah*.
- ♦ In order to further publicize the miracle, we light a menorah in Shul and recite the appropriate blessings.

Menorah Lighting Times for Brooklyn NY

Note that the times for sheki'ah listed below are the times that appear in the calendars (sunset at sea level). For purposes of menorah lighting, **one should add several minutes. Several minutes should also be added** to the *plag ha-minchah* times.

Sunday, Kislev 24 (Dec 6)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:30 pm

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:29 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:47 pm

Monday, Kislev 25 (Dec 7)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:30 pm

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:29 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:47 pm

Tuesday, Kislev 26 (Dec 8)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:30 pm

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:29 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:47 pm

Wednesday, Kislev 27 (Dec 9)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:30 pm

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:29 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:48 pm

Thursday, Kislev 28 (Dec 10)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:31 pm

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:29 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:48 pm

Friday, Kislev 29 (Dec 11)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:31 pm

Shabbos Candles – 4:10 pm (18 minutes before sunset)

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:31 pm

Motzei Shabbos, Eve of Kislev 30 (Dec 12)

Shabbos Ends – 5:14 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:49 pm

Sunday, Teves 1 (Dec 13)

Plag Ha-Minchah – 3:31 pm

Shekiah (Sunset) – 4:29 pm

Chatzos (Midnight) – 11:50 pm

Since this lighting is for publicity's sake, there should be at least a *minyan* (ten people) present while the candles burn—preferably at the time that the blessings are recited.

- ♦ The Shul menorah should be on the southern wall, its lamps stretching from east to west. It should be placed on a platform to make it visible (even if it is higher than ten *tefachim* from the floor, in contrast to the home menorah which must be lower).

It is best to prepare the *menorah* before the service to avoid distracting those who are praying during the actual service.

- ♦ It is the Chabad custom to light the Shul menorah towards the conclusion of Minchah before reciting *aleinu*. There is no need to wait until *shekiah* (sunset); it can be kindled any time after *plag ha-minchah*. The *chazzan* recites the three blessings; since it is the first time, *shehechyanu* is recited. A mourner should not light the Shul menorah on the first night of Chanukah for this reason.

- ♦ The lamps of the menorah should not be kindled until all the blessings are fully concluded.

- ♦ On the first night of Chanukah, the first right-hand lamp of the menorah is kindled.

- ♦ Attending a menorah lighting in Shul or at an outdoor public event does not dispense with each person's obligation to kindle his individual menorah at home. Even the *chazzan* who lit the Shul menorah must light again upon returning home and he must repeat all the blessings. If there is no one at the *chazzan's* home observing and fulfilling their obligation through his private menorah lighting, he should only repeat the first two blessings—not the blessing of *shehechyanu*.

Hakhel: We do not find a precedence of holding public gatherings during Chanukah in order to expound on matters pertaining to the festival. (To the contrary: As is known, the Rebbe [Rayatz] was accustomed, as was his father [the Rebbe Rashab], to kindle the Chanukah light within the confines of

his home, with only his own family present.) Nevertheless, since so many tens of Jews have already gathered and assembled for the prayer service and to kindle the Chanukah lights in *shul* (in addition to each of them lighting a *menorah* in his own home in a manner that publicizes the miracle, and so on) – and in addition, those assembled want and desire to hear something about Chanukah, be it a matter of *halachah*, *aggadah*, or the like – there is no reason not to – and indeed, it would be extremely good and fitting to – utilize this gathering to increase the publicity of the miracle through discussing matters pertaining to Chanukah. This year, doing so is all the more necessary because it is a year of *hakhel* – “Assemble the nation, the men, the women, and the children ... to fear Hashem your G-d.” We must therefore use every opportunity to assemble men, women, and children in order to arouse them in matters of Judaism, the Torah and its commandments – “A commandment is a candle and the Torah is light” – the essential point and theme of which is “to fear Hashem your G-d.” (*Sichos Yemei Chanukah, Acharei Hadlakas Neiros 5748*)

It is noteworthy that the *mitzvah* of *hakhel* is to be performed during Sukkos. Chanukah and Sukkos are associated in numerous ways:

The most obvious correlation is in their number of days. Both Chanukah and Sukkos span eight days, because in addition to the seven days of Sukkos, there is also Shemini Atzeres (unlike Pesach which lasts seven days without a subsequent festival, and unlike Shavuos (and Purim) that are single-day festivals).

On both Chanukah and Sukkos we recite the entire *hallel* each and every day. This is because each day of Chanukah is considered unique due to the specific number of lights kindled that day, and each day of Sukkos is likewise considered unique due to the specific number of sacrifices offered that day. (See *Shibolei HaLeket*, 174, quoted in *Beis Yosef, Orach Chayim*, 683; and elsewhere.)

Chanukah and Sukkos are also associated in their themes. The name Chanukah refers to *chanukas ha-mizbei'ach* and *chanukas ha-mikdash* – the rededication of the Altar and the Second Temple. It is significant that the original dedication of the (First) Temple took place on Sukkos (*Melachim I 8:45*).

Chanukah and Sukkos are further associated in the manner of kindling the lights. The number of lights differ on each night of Chanukah in order “to correspond to the pattern

of sacrifices offered during Sukkos” (*Shabbos* 21b). “The House of Hillel argue only in deference to the obligation to increase in matters of sanctity” [instead of decreasing as per the Sukkos sacrifices that represent the nations]. (See *Ohr HaTorah, Chanukah* (vol. 5), p. 942b.) There is also a spiritual parallel between the Chanukah lights and the Sukkos sacrifices in that both serve to elicit the supernal *makifim* (“encompassing lights”). (See *Torah Ohr, Mikeitz*, 34a; see at length *Tanu Rabanan Mitzvas Neir Chanukah* 5738; and elsewhere.)

Sunday Night, Kislev 24, First Night of Chanukah

- ♦ Although it has become customary to light the menorah indoors and not in an entrance facing the street (in view of pedestrians), it is nevertheless appropriate to light at the correct time.
- ♦ According to Chabad custom, we light the menorah at home immediately after the true moment of *shekiah*, between Minchah and Maariv on each night of Chanukah except for *erev* Shabbos (which requires an earlier lighting) and *motzei* Shabbos (which requires a delayed lighting).
- ♦ It is the Chabad custom to fill the menorah with sufficient fuel to burn for at least fifty minutes, so that it remains lit for half an hour after nightfall.
- ♦ If you are unable to light the menorah before the time for Maariv, you should first recite Maariv and only then light your menorah.
- ♦ It is forbidden to begin an activity or a meal within a half-hour of the proper kindling time. If you began such an activity you must stop. Some opinions maintain that studying Torah is only prohibited once the proper time of kindling has arrived. You may appoint someone to remind you to light the menorah.
- ♦ If you did not light the menorah at the appropriate time, you may do so later, provided that there is still pedestrian traffic outside. If this time has elapsed, you must at least attempt to light the menorah before halachic midnight. If

this is not an option, you may light the menorah during the night, any time before dawn, provided that other members of the household are awake to observe the lighting. It is worth rousing them from their sleep so that you can recite the blessings. If they are asleep, you may light the menorah without the blessings.

♦ If you know in advance that you will be unable to light the menorah on time, it is possible to light it earlier—any time after *plag ha-minchah*. In that case, make certain that the menorah holds sufficient fuel to continue burning until a half-hour after nightfall. However, there are varying opinions regarding reciting the blessings at this early hour. Some authorities prefer that you appoint a representative to light the menorah at the proper time on your behalf rather than light early. In the final analysis, it is far better to personally light the menorah and to recite the blessings—even if it can be done only later at night—than to appoint a representative or to light earlier in the day without the blessings.

♦ It is customary to remain beside the menorah for the first half-hour after its kindling. However, if you are not able to remain, you should still light on time rather than postpone it. Nevertheless, make an effort to at least linger briefly before abandoning a newly-lit menorah. The best option when forced to leave is to appoint someone else to continue watching the menorah until end of the thirty minutes.

♦ It is the custom of the Chabad Rebbeim to position the menorah in a doorway to a room in the home, and not to place it on a windowsill facing the outside.

♦ Light the menorah in the room in which meals are consumed on a regular basis, if there is a choice of multiple rooms or even homes. When visiting a friend, even for a meal, return home to light the menorah.

♦ Children are trained to personally light their own menorahs. They should begin from the earliest possible age. It is preferable for each child to light at the doorway to his own bedroom. Naturally, all safety measures should be in place for this event. See the excerpt from the Rebbe, below.

In *Sefer HaSichos* 5748 (p. 162), the Rebbe instructs, “In addition to explaining the significance of lighting the Chanukah menorah to children, it is advisable for children to have a menorah situated at the entrance to their rooms. The lighting should take place there as well. Children are impressed by the Chanukah lighting experience to a far greater degree when it is held at the entrances to their own rooms. The menorah’s message enters deeper into their souls and their *chinuch* (Jewish education) is thereby advanced. The *chinuch* (inauguration) of their bedrooms is also advanced, for every child’s room should serve as a *mikdash me’at* (a miniature Beis HaMikdash). This experience reflects and alludes to the *chinuch* of the Beis HaMikdash (the re-inauguration of the Second Temple by the Maccabees) that is commemorated with the festival of Chanukah.”

In answer to questions that arose from the *sichah* above, the Rebbe suggests that parents’ overriding principle in making educational decisions should be the effect any given experience will have on their particular child: will implementing the practice indeed advance his or her *chinuch*? (*Hisva’aduyos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 91. For further elaboration, see p. 133.)

- ♦ Yeshivah *bachurim* should light the menorah at the entrance to their dorm rooms. Needless to say, they should observe all fire safety procedures.
- ♦ Women are equally obligated in this mitzvah. The custom in the homes of the Chabad Rebbeim is that women do not light their own menorahs, but fulfill their obligation through their fathers lighting. Married women fulfill their obligation via their husbands. A lady who is unmarried or whose husband will not be lighting in their home must kindle the flames personally or via a representative.
- ♦ Girls studying in seminaries, away from home, must therefore fulfill the *mitzvah* in the location at which they presently live. However, one girl may be appointed as a representative to light a *menorah* on behalf of them all.
- ♦ The *Taz* states, “In the case of one lives in town and happens to leave his home to eat in a friend’s home, it is obvious that he should not abandon [lighting the *menorah* at] his home by [instead] lighting the *menorah*

in his friend's home, at which he eats on a one-time basis. Rather, he should return to his own home to light the *menorah* there ... It makes no sense to light in the location where he spends an hour or two over a meal instead of at his own home. It is as if he happened to be standing in the street when the time for lighting arrived – it is clearly inappropriate for him to light in the street! True, we observe a few people who eat at the home of others and then send someone to fetch their *menoros* for them so that they can light there [at their friend's home] ... but they are making an error and fail to understand what is expected from them.”

(We have elaborated on this topic elsewhere, quoting the views of *Bach*, *Magen Avraham*, and *Admor HaZaken*, and we also reported on the practice of the Rebbe Rashab.)

♦ In *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 30, p. 312), the Rebbe states: “The Rebbe [Rayatz] related that when his father the Rebbe [Rashab] had to leave home before Chanukah, he instructed his wife, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, to personally light her own menorah, although she would listen to the blessings recited by one of the men.”

♦ For the sake of lending the greatest possible publicity to the miracle, one should gather the entire household to attend the menorah lighting. It is worth lighting close to suppertime, when the family naturally gathers.

♦ Chabad custom calls for wearing a *gartel* to light the menorah, but not Shabbos clothing.

♦ It is a mitzvah to place the menorah within a *tefach* (handbreadth) of the left doorpost. If there is no *mezuzah* on the right doorpost, the menorah should be placed on the right, whether the doorway does not require a *mezuzah* or it does, but is nevertheless lacking one.

♦ It is the Chabad custom to position the menorah within the actual space of the doorway, alongside the width of its doorposts, and to place it on a somewhat lower object such as chair, without concern for the direction of the branches—whether they stretch from east to west or north to south.

♦ The lights of the menorah must be situated at least three *tefachim* (approximately 10 inches) from the floor but no higher than ten *tefachim* (approximately 31 inches). It is not the Chabad custom to specifically position them between seven and ten *tefachim*, or close to three. In the event that one did light the menorah above ten *tefachim* he has fulfilled his obligation, but at twenty *amos* (approximately 30 feet) or higher it must be relit.

♦ When more than one menorah is placed in an identical location, they should be spaced in a way that allows the viewer to easily observe how many lights each menorah contains. It should not appear as one single menorah.

♦ If a number of people are lighting *menoros* but at **different** locations in a house, each *menorah* must have its own *shamash* light. This applies even if there is already a candle [for general illumination] on the table. (There are numerous reasons including mystical ones for lighting a *shamash*. Likewise, there are sources that refer to a total of forty-four lights over the course of Chanukah [which must include a *shamash* each day]. Therefore, there is room to be *mehader* that even if numerous people light at the identical location in a home – with a *hekeir*, something to distinguish one from the other, such as each person using a separate *menorah* – nevertheless, each person should light a separate *shamash*.)

♦ On the first night of Chanukah, one lamp is lit to the extreme right of the menorah.

A law that will become relevant with the Redemption:

In the current era, the halachah follows Beis Hillel, who holds that the fewest number of lights are lit on the first night of Chanukah and that the number of lights steadily *increases* on each subsequent night. The opinion of Beis Shamai is that the greatest number of lights is lit on the first night of Chanukah and that they steadily *diminish* on each subsequent night. As a result, eight lights are lit on the first night (instead of just one), seven on the second night, six on the third, and so on.

“This requires further illumination: Since in the era of the Redemption the halachah will follow the opinion of Beis Shamai - when Moshiach first arrives, will the *halachah* immediately switch to the views of Beis Shamai? If so, then

this year, we will need to light eight candles on the first night of Chanukah. Accordingly, our Chanukah preparations will have to reflect this.” (*Sichas Erev Chanukah* 5750)

“At that time, we will experience the perfection of the concept of steadily increasing from one day to the next.” (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach* 5752)

According to the Rebbe’s explanation in *Sichas Simchas Torah* 5752, in the initial stage of the Redemption, the law will follow the view of Beis Shamai, whereas in the advanced stage of Redemption, the law will follow both Beis Hillel as well as Beis Shamai. For at that time, the physical world will be the recipient of the revelation of *Atzmus*, Hashem’s Essence. He is able to tolerate impossibilities, and He considers opposing views of our Sages as equally valid divine disclosures. The impossibility of following both views will then become possible, and that will become the practical law.

(Note that according to one version of our Sages’ teaching (as quoted in *Igeres HaTi’ul*, *Derush Ois Mem*, and in *Sefer HaChayim*, vol. 3, beginning of ch. 7— also see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 172, fn. 4), “All the festivals will be nullified in the future era, except for Chanukah and Purim.” See *Ateres Zahav*, 676, that the term used in the blessing over the *menorah* — *le-hadlik*, “to kindle,” refers to the kindling of the Chanukah lights in the future era. On the other hand, *Maggid Meisharim*, *Parshas Vayakhel*, seems to imply that in the future era only the verbal recounting of the miracle will be observed. See *Ben Ish Chayil*, vol. 2, *Derush Alef LeShabbos Shuvah*.)

It is also necessary to clarify the concept of lighting candles at night in the future era. According to *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 18, 11, “In the future era, night will become day, as it is stated, ‘The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun.’” Note the statement in *Sha’alos u’Teshuvos Be’eir Moshe*, vol. 8, 17.)

- ♦ The *shamash* must be lit before reciting the blessings, so that it is available for kindling the lamps immediately upon concluding the blessings.
- ♦ The three blessings are: (1) *le-hadlik neir Chanukah* (2) *she-asa nissim la-avoseinu* and (3) *shehechyanu*. The menorah is kindled only after reciting the blessings. The *shamash* must be held beside the wick until the majority of the tip is aflame. **After** the kindling, *haneiros halalu* is recited.
- ♦ Someone who recited the blessings previously (as the

chazzan in Shul, for example, or while doing *mitzvaim*) must repeat them when lighting his own menorah at home. He should not repeat the third blessing (*shehechianu*) unless others observe and fulfill their obligation through him.

Safety Alert: The Torah insists that protecting lives overrides religious observance: Children must not be permitted uncontrolled access to a lit menorah or to matches and the like. Nor should a lit menorah be left unattended without adequate safety precautions.

- ♦ It is customary to remain beside a menorah for a half-hour after its kindling.

- ♦ If a light has extinguished during the fifty minutes (required according to Chabad custom) it should be relit without a blessing. If the menorah remains lit beyond this minimum time, it may be moved.

- ♦ It is forbidden to make use of the illumination provided by the Chanukah lights. (According to a number of opinions, this includes the light of the *shamash*. Another candle or electric light must be present in the vicinity of the menorah in order to provide general illumination.) The flames may not be used even to light a *shamash*. Even after the allotted time has passed, one should not make use of the light provided by the Chanukah lights.

- ♦ It is customary for women to refrain from chores for fifty minutes after kindling. (According to some authorities, this applies to men as well.) After fifty minutes, women may work as they wish—provided they do not perform activities in front of the menorah. According to custom, only sewing, knitting, laundering, ironing and the like must be avoided. Other activities, such as sweeping and cleaning the house or cooking and baking may be performed. Take note of the following statement of the Rebbe:

- ♦ The significance of women customarily refraining from chores while the candles remain lit is that women internalize the concept and message of the burning Chanukah lights to the degree that they shed

any association with mundane chores. (*Michtav Leil Chanukah*, published in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 25, p. 512.) (See *Tur Barekes, Orach Chaim*, 670; *Sefer HaMitzvos (Tzemach Tzedek), Mitzvas Neir Chanukah* beg. ch. 3 (*Derech Mitzvosecha* 74a))

♦ The Rebbe Rashab would sit in proximity to the Chanukah lights and study Torah. Naturally, he avoided making use of the lights themselves. As mentioned in numerous *sichos*, the Rebbe saw in this a directive to increase in Torah study during Chanukah.

♦ For directives regarding Chanukah *gelt*, see the entries below for the fourth night of Chanukah. There, the directive to give Chanukah *gelt* on each night of Chanukah is discussed.

♦ It is customary to give additional *tzedakah* during Chanukah.

♦ During Maariv tonight, the gabbai should **not** interject between the blessing of *hashkiveinu* and the start of the Amidah in order to announce “*Al ha-nissim!*” for the benefit of the congregation.

♦ If you forgot to recite *al ha-nissim* during the Amidah but recalled the omission before pronouncing Hashem’s name in the blessing of *ha-tov shimcha*, you should return to the correct place for *al ha-nissim* and continue from there. If you already said Hashem’s name, you should not return at all. (In that case, some say to insert it before reciting the second *yihyu le-ratzon*, by saying: *ha-rachaman hu ya-aseh lanu nissim, kemo she-asah la-avoseinu, ba-yamim ha-heim bi-zman ha-zeh, bimei Matisyahu...leshimcha ha-gadol.*)

♦ Every effort should be expended to ensure that a Chanukah menorah is lit in each Jewish household, and that all men including very young children should personally light a menorah.

♦ Menorahs should be lit in the most public and central locations, to further publicize the miracle of Chanukah. Such public events should be utilized to urge all participants to light their own menorahs at home.

It is best to clearly announce that no one fulfills their obligation with a public lighting—they must also light at home.

♦ A working man who lights a public menorah at his office for the sake of publicizing the miracle should not recite the blessings unless it is positioned where at least ten Jews will view it within a half-hour.

♦ Rambam states that the days of Chanukah are days of joy. The Rema qualifies that it is partially a mitzvah to increase in meals” during Chanukah. The prevailing custom is to add in festive meals during Chanukah. It is best to sing and recount Hashem’s praises for the miracles that He made for our ancestors during these meals, which will guarantee that the meals are considered *se’udos mitzvah* according to all opinions.

♦ In numerous *sichos*, the Rebbe discusses the requirement to rejoice on Chanukah. Despite the halachic dispute as to whether rejoicing is actually required or not, the Rebbe encourages an all-out observance of the custom—*mehadrin min ha-mehadrin*. Included in this, the Rebbe explains, is holding *farbrengens* with fellow Chassidim, family or friends, and reaching positive resolutions for the future.

♦ It is customary to serve cheese and milk products during Chanukah.

♦ It is customary to serve foods that are prepared with oil in order to recall the miracle of the oil. In *Sefer Hasichos* 5752 (p. 196), the Rebbe explains this custom at length.

♦ In *birchas ha-mazon*, the *al ha-nissim* prayer is inserted into the blessing of *nodeh lecha*. If you forgot to recite *al ha-nissim* but realized the omission before pronouncing Hashem’s name in the following blessing (*al ha-aretz ve-al ha-mazon*), return to the correct place for reciting *al ha-nissim* and continue from there. If you realized after pronouncing Hashem’s name, do not return at all, because there is no binding obligation to recite *al ha-nissim* in *birchas ha-mazon*. If you wish—and this is the appropriate procedure to follow—upon reaching the section for

adding a *ha-rachaman* (right before *ha-rachaman hu ye-zakeinu*), recite: *ha-rachaman hu ya-aseh lanu nissim, kemo she-asah la-avoseinu, ba-yamim ha-heim bi-zman ha-zeh, bimei Matsiyahu...leshimcha ha-gadol.*

Hakhel: “It is fitting and appropriate to organize *farbrengens* and joyful gatherings in the spirit of *hakhel*, in each and every location during Chanukah. These events should be geared for men, for women, and for children, and their goal should be to motivate the participants to advance in Torah and *mitzvos*, “A commandment is a candle and the Torah is light,” and to inspire them in a matter that is the start of all divine service as well as its very core and source: “To fear Hashem your G-d.”

On Shabbos *Parshas Vayeishev* 5752 (*Sefer HaSichos*), the Rebbe stated, “Seeing that we have already accomplished all that was required and nevertheless the Redemption has not yet arrived, it is extremely appropriate to “publicize the miracle,” meaning that we should publicize the miracles that Hashem performs for us, broadcasting this awareness to ourselves and to others in every location. We should do so with the understanding that publicizing Hashem’s miracles brings the true and complete Redemption. This effort should be stepped up during Chanukah—a festival whose entire purpose is to publicize Hashem’s miracles.

In addition to all of our other activities, including *mitvza* Chanukah, we should hold *chassidische farbrengens* on each day of Chanukah. Naturally, these events may be renamed to fit the location and the audience—‘When you visit a city, follow its local customs.’ At these *farbrengens*, we should discuss words of Torah, both *nigleh* and *prinius* and make positive resolutions in all matters of Torah and *mitzvos*, so that there is a steady increase—in a manner reflecting the steadily increasing lights of the menorah. Above all, we must use these events to discuss and publicize miracles that occur nowadays—in the spirit of the Chanukah blessing, *ba-yamim ha-heim bizman ha-zeh*, ‘In those days [of yore as well as] in the current era.’”

Monday, Kislev 25, First Day of Chanukah

- ♦ In the morning, it is customary to kindle the Shul menorah without a blessing and to keep it alight for the duration of Shacharis. Use a *shamash* for this lighting.
- ♦ In 5750, the Rebbe instructed, To further increase the impact of the Chanukah lights, it is appropriate to keep

the menorah that is lit in Shul (where everyone gathers) burning around the clock, provided that there is no concern of children playing with fire.”

- ♦ Do not skip *al ha-nissim* in order to complete the Amidah in time to respond to *kedushah* or *modim* together with the congregation.
- ♦ The complete Hallel is recited on each day of Chanukah, followed by *chatzi kaddish* and a Torah reading comprised of three *aliyos* from the *parshah* of *Naso*.
- ♦ An *avel* (within his period of mourning) may lead the congregation throughout Chanukah, with the exception of Hallel, for which someone else must take over. The *avel* resumes his position as *chazzan* immediately, and he recites the *chatzi kaddish* that follows Hallel.
- ♦ It is forbidden to fast or to deliver a eulogy during Chanukah. The only exception is a *ta'anis chalom* (a fast for a deeply unsettling dream). Unlike *chol ha-moed*, all forms of work may be performed during Chanukah.

A law that will become relevant with the Redemption:

The following statement is recorded in *Sha'alos u'Teshuvos Tzafnas Panei'ach HaChadashos* (vol. I, 45):“...May we speedily merit the coming of our righteous Moshiach and the true Redemption! Then will be revealed to us the *megillah* that the elders of Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel inscribed regarding the events of Chanukah, which occurred in their own times. It is only because there were no prophets that they were unable to create an official *megillah* [to be read by all Jews, and although they personally recorded the events], it was not given over to be written [for public use], as explained in *Yoma* 29a. G-d willing, in the future era, soon, the prophets will be revealed to us and this *megillah* will be revealed to us!” (See *Halachos Gedolos, Hilchos Soferim*, 75; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 368, fn. 17; and *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev* 5750 (in *Sefer HaSichos*).)

Monday Night, Kislev 26, Second Night of Chanukah

The Alter Rebbe returned from his incarceration in Petersburg to his home in Vitebsk on the second night of Chanukah, following his original liberation (in the year 5559). He remained in Vitebsk for the remainder of Chanukah.

♦ *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad* records that “it is customary to use fresh wicks on each night of Chanukah. Other opinions differ, insisting that there is no need for fresh wicks and that used wicks are easier to light. So far, I have been unable to clarify the [Previous] Rebbe’s custom.”

Nevertheless, in a *sichah* of Shabbos *Parshas Vayeishev* 5716, the Rebbe states that the Previous Rebbe reused his wicks and he derives a lesson from this. (See also *Kuntres BaKodesh Penimah*, p. 24.)

♦ From the second night of Chanukah, the third blessing of *shehechyanu* is no longer recited. Someone who has not yet kindled a menorah this Chanukah must recite *shehechyanu* whenever he first lights a menorah. (This is typically the case when introducing a Jew to Chanukah on *mitzaim*.)

♦ When preparing the menorah on the second night of Chanukah, a new lamp is added to the left of the previous night’s lamp. Begin kindling the menorah with the newest lamp. It is customary to be stringent and to avoid lighting one Chanukah lamp from another.

♦ After concluding to kindle all the lamps, *haneiros halalu* is recited.

Tuesday, Kislev 26, Second Day of Chanukah

♦ The prayers of today and the remaining days of Chanukah (with the exception of Rosh Chodesh) are the same as yesterdays. The order of Torah reading for each day of Chanukah is recorded in the *Siddur*.

Tuesday Night, Kislev 27 Third Night of Chanukah

Today is the anniversary of the Alter Rebbe’s release from his second incarceration, in the year 5561 (1800).

Wednesday, Kislev 27

Hakhel: In *Sichas Yom Zayin d’Chanukah – LeYaldei Tzivos Hashem* 5748, the Rebbe states:

The uniqueness of the current year is that it is a *hakhel* year. When the *beis hamikdash* stood [the following occurred:] on the festival of Sukkos that followed the conclusion of a *shmitah* year, the entire Jewish people, men, women, and children, would gather in the *beis hamikdash*. [The king] would read portions of the Torah before them to inspire them to advance in their fear of Heaven. As the Torah states, “At the end of [every] seven years, at an appointed time, in the festival of Sukkos, [after] the year of release, when all Israel comes to appear before Hashem, your G-d, in the place He will choose, you shall read this Torah before all Israel, in their ears. Assemble the people: the men, the women, and the children, and your stranger in your cities, in order that they hear, and in order that they learn and fear Hashem, your G-d, and they will observe to do all the words of this Torah; and their children, who did not know, will hear and learn to fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days ...” (Devarim 31:10-13).

For everything that occurred during Temple times there must be – and actually is – a similar concept in our own times. For example, the sacrifices continue because “the daily prayer services were established in the place of the sacrifices.” For instance, we just recited the Minchah service, which takes the place of the daily afternoon offering. The same is true of all other Temple matters, even those which did not occur on a daily basis but only during specific times. When they did occur, they were observed with great fanfare, such as the *mitzvah* of *hakhel*. Consequently, there must be a parallel to *hakhel* nowadays as well.

This is what is so special about the Chanukah gathering that is being held this year, a *hakhel* year. A gathering is precisely the concept of *hakhel* – an assembly. And its goal is also identical to the purpose of *hakhel* – “in order that they hear, and in order that they learn ... and they will observe to do all the words of this Torah ... to fear Hashem, your G-d.”

There is an even more specific association between *hakhel* and a *Tzivos Hashem* gathering: The foundation of an army is to obey, to be subservient to the commander-in-chief. In the case of *Tzivos Hashem*, its foundation is fear of Heaven (as per the passage just recited, “Behold, Hashem stands over him ... and He searches his mind and heart [to see] if he is serving Him as is fitting” – Tanya, Chapter 41). This is also the theme of *hakhel* – “to fear Hashem, your G-d.”

This, then, is the special instruction resulting from this *Tzivos Hashem* rally that is being held during Chanukah in a *hakhel* year: Each and every one of you – each of us – must use the

days of this year of *hakhel* to assemble Jewish men, women, and children. This effort should start with children associated with Tzivos Hashem rallying all other Jewish children and saying words of Torah before them – words that inspire them to fear of Heaven and to also join the ranks of Tzivos Hashem. Then those children in turn will influence additional children, and so on. We must also gather and rally their parents and adult brothers and sisters, and inspire them to the extent that they in turn assemble even more men and women – who are naturally beyond the reach of children’s outreach – and inspire these Jews as well to fear of Heaven.

The Torah states that Hashem gives according to our input, measure for measure. Consequently, our efforts to assemble the nation further hastens the time in which it will be possible to observe the *mitzvah* of *hakhel* in the literal sense, in the third *beis hamikdash*, through our righteous Moshiach. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy, “*To Hashem will be the rulership,*” the revelation of Hashem’s dominion over every aspect of Creation.

Thursday, Kislev 28

Fourth day of Chanukah

On this date, King Yehoyakim burned the original *megillas eichah* that Yirmiyahu *ha-Navi* had dictated to his disciple, the prophet Baruch, foretelling the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, 580*. The commentaries point out that there are various versions as to the precise date of this event.)

Thursday night, Kislev 28

Fifth Night of Chanukah

It is customary among Chassidim to celebrate the fifth night of Chanukah, because one account of the Alter Rebbes liberation from his second incarceration (in 5561 [1800]) sets the fifth night of Chanukah as the date of his release. The Rebbe suggests that various stages in his liberation occurred on the third and some on the fifth night of Chanukah as well.

♦ The Rebbe Rashab would distribute Chanukah *gelt* on the fourth or fifth night of Chanukah. In 5748, the Rebbe instructed that Chanukah *gelt* be given on each night of Chanukah with the exception of Shabbos, and that additional *gelt* be given on the fourth and fifth nights.

Hakhel. “This is connected with our earlier discussion regarding the custom to distribute Chanukah gelt, because giving Chanukah gelt generates joy. Also, when it is announced that Chanukah gelt will be distributed, large number of people gather and assemble. And the more Chanukah gelt being offered, the greater the number of people who assemble.” (*Sichas Parshas Vayeishev* 5748, fn. 105.)

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe encourages making the greatest fuss out of the Chanukah gelt. It should be given with great fanfare and excitement, in generous amounts, and in increasing amounts. The distribution of Chanukah gelt should be designed to make the children happy and excited to receive it. Although the entire Chanukah is a time of rejoicing and celebration, the children’s delight at receiving Chanukah gelt should bring about extra *simcha*, to the point that children who have not yet received Chanukah gelt should be deeply impressed simply by hearing about the experiences of their friends who already received the gelt (or who were at least promised it). The Rebbe notes that it is customary for children to receive gelt from as many people as possible—in addition to a child’s father, the other members of his family should give him Chanukah gelt as well. Explain to the children that they are receiving Chanukah gelt so that they will further increase their Torah study and to enable them to give more *tzedakah*. “After all,” the Rebbe concludes, “What else is a Jewish child expected to do with money?”

- ♦ It has become customary in many communities for school children to deliver Chanukah gelt and other gifts to the teachers who teach them Torah.

Friday, Erev Shabbos, Kislev 29, Fifth Day of Chanukah

Erev Rosh Chodesh is observed by many as *Yom Kippur katan*, a day of fasting and Selichos. Today, however, one is not permitted to fast or even recite Tachanun due to the joyous festival of Chanukah. In *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 15, p. 545), the Rebbe explains the association of this day to *teshuvah ila’ah*, the higher form of *teshuvah* that is beyond repentance for sins.

- ♦ In today’s reading of *shenayim mikra ve-echad targum*, in accordance with the custom of the Chabad Rebbeim, the *haftorah* of *Mikeitz* is read after completing *shenayim mikra ve-echad targum* on *erev Shabbos*, while the

Torah portion from *shevi'i* until the conclusion is read once again (in the manner of *shenayim mikra ve-echad targum*) on Shabbos morning, but this time it is followed by the *haftoros* of Shabbos Chanukah, Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, as well as *machar chodesh*.

♦ Minchah is recited earlier than usual, because it precedes the lighting of the menorah. If there is no early *minyan* available, you should first light the menorah and then join the regular *minyan* for Minchah. The Shul menorah is lit after Minchah – any time after *plag ha-minchah* (3:31 pm in NY).

♦ It is appropriate to complete all Shabbos preparations before lighting the menorah, so that the entire family can attend the lighting together. The menorah must be lit before the Shabbos candles (Shabbos candle lighting time - eighteen minutes before *sheki'ah* - is at 4:10 pm in NY), and for that reason, it is lit earlier on Friday than on any other day of Chanukah. It can be lit any time after *plag ha-minchah*, although it is best to light it as close as possible to the Shabbos candle lighting time.

♦ Unlike all other days of Chanukah, it is not customary to linger beside the newly lit menorah for a half-hour.

♦ An extra-large quantity of oil should be used today, so that the menorah continues to burn for at least fifty minutes after sunset. According to many opinions, someone who failed to use the appropriate amount of fuel, resulting in the lights being extinguished before the proper time, has not fulfilled his obligation.

♦ If you realized after kindling the menorah that there is not sufficient oil, immediately extinguish the flame, add more fuel, and then rekindle the lamp without a blessing. If you realized the error only after personally accepting Shabbos—although it is still before *shekiah*—ask someone who has not yet accepted Shabbos to add the fuel. Similarly, if the menorah goes out before the onset of Shabbos, either rekindle it yourself or ask someone else to do so if you already accepted Shabbos.

♦ Before Shabbos, it is appropriate to place an object that

is worth more than the flames of the menorah (such as a *challah*) on the tray upon which the menorah stands. This makes it permissible to move the tray during Shabbos. Some authorities are more stringent and require that the object be placed on the chair upon which the tray rests (as will be explained below).

♦ **Chanukah gelt for Shabbos** should be given Friday or Sunday (Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeshev 5748, Sefer Hasichos 5748, I:163. See also Address to Tzivos Hashem on 28th of Kislev 5750, Sefer Hasichos 5750, I:199, “Also on Friday before the onset of Shabbos.” See also Yechidus on 24th of Kislev 5748).

♦ We do *not* give “Chanukah Gelt” on Shabbos; not even via a permissible object [that will be exchanged for money following Shabbos]. (Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeishev 5750, Sefer Hasichos 5750, I:194).

Friday Night, Kislev 30, First Day of Rosh Chodesh Teves Sixth Night of Chanukah

♦ *Kabbalas Shabbos* is recited as usual. In addition to *al ha-nissim*, *ya’aleh ve-yavo* is added during Maariv. If you forgot *ya’aleh ve-yavo*, do not repeat the Amidah.

♦ *Retzei* and then *ya’aleh ve-yavo* are also added to *birchas ha-mazon*. The laws that apply its omission are to be found in the Siddur. (On the theme of tonight’s benching, see Tosafos s.v. *Semol*, Brachos 51a)

♦ Take care to avoid rushing past or opening a door directly opposite a lit menorah on Shabbos, so as to avoid extinguishing its flames.

♦ On Shabbos, it is forbidden to directly touch the menorah, its tray, and the chair on which the tray is placed—even after the flames have gone out. Even if the menorah is no longer on the tray or chair, the tray and chair may not be moved. However, provided that the menorah has gone out, you may move these objects in an indirect way, such as using your body, foot, elbow, the back of a hand and the like. Similarly, if you need to use the place in which the menorah is located, you may ask a non-Jew to move it.

♦ If you placed a *challah* (or another object that is worth more than the flames of the menorah) on the tray before the onset of Shabbos, then once the flames have gone out, the tray—even with the menorah on top—may be moved directly on Shabbos.

♦ According to alternative opinions, the tray has been designated for the use of the menorah and it does not help to place a *challah* on it before Shabbos. Rather, the object must be placed on the chair on which the tray rests. Then you may then move the chair—with all that is placed on it—during Shabbos. Nevertheless, this solution works only if you need to move the chair in order to provide space to pass by, or in order to use the place in which the chair stands. The chair may not be moved in order to protect the menorah.

(There is an opinion that the *heter* of placing a permissible object does not apply to the menorah during Chanukah. Without getting into myriad details, be aware of this stringency and if possible utilize a non-Jew or indirect handling.)

♦ The *dreidel* should not be played on Shabbos. According to some authorities, a *dreidel* is possibly considered a *keli she-melachto le-issur* (object whose primary use is prohibited on Shabbos).

♦ Chanukah gifts should not be given during Shabbos, unless they are articles that are necessary for Shabbos itself.

♦ Doughnuts and other solid foods may be squeezed on Shabbos to remove the excess oil, if the oil is discarded.

♦ *Haneiros halalu* is not sung during Shabbos. (See *Shabbos Chanukah* 5742.)

Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, Kislev 30, First Day of Rosh Chodesh Teves Sixth Day of Chanukah

Ya'aleh ve-yavo and *al ha-nissim* are inserted into the Amidah. If you forgot to recite *ya'aleh ve-yavo*, follow the laws set out below:

1) If you realized that you omitted *ya'aleh ve-yavo* before pronouncing Hashem's name in the blessing *ha-*

machazir, return to *ya'aleh ve-yavo* and continue from there.

2) If you concluded the blessing of *ha-machazir* but did not begin *modim*, recite *ya'aleh ve-yavo* immediately and then continue with *modim*.

3) If you passed *modim* but realized before reciting the second *yihyu le-ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, return to *retzei*.

4) If you passed the second *yihyu le-ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, you must restart the entire Amidah.

5) If you realized only after praying Musaf, you should not repeat the Amidah of Shacharis.

♦ The complete Hallel is followed by *v'avraham zaken*, *kaddish tiskabel*, *shir shel yom* (*mizmor shir l'yom ha-shabbos*), *hoshi'einu*, *barechi nafshi*, and *kaddish yasom*.

♦ Three *sifrei torah* are used today. *Parshas Mikeitz* is read from the first (in six *aliyos*), after which the second *sefer torah* is placed on the *bimah* alongside the first, (so as not to leave a void between the presence of the first and second Torah). *Hagbah* is performed on the first Torah. The seventh *aliyah* is read from the second *sefer torah*. It is the reading for Rosh Chodesh (*u'verashei chadsheichem*). Then the third *torah* is placed on the *bimah* alongside the second. *Chatzi kaddish* is recited, and the second *torah* is raised and wrapped.

♦ *Maftir* is read from the third *sefer torah*. It is the offerings of the *nassi* to the tribe of Gad (*ba-yom ha-shishi*). The third *torah* is then raised and wrapped.

♦ The *haftorah* begins *rani ve-simchi* and describes the lights of the golden *menorah* as seen by Zechariah. Upon its conclusion, the following are added this year: 1) The first and last verses from the *haftorah* of Shabbos Rosh Chodesh. These are: *Koy amar Hashem ha-shamayim kisi... Ve-hayah midei chodesh... Va-yatze'u u-ra'u... Ve-hayah midei chodesh...* 2) The first and last verses from the *hatorah* of *machar chodesh* are added. These are: *Va-yomeir lo Yonasan machar chodesh... Va-yomeir*

lo Yonasan le-Dovid leich le-shalom.... (See at length, *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 35, p. 187 ff.)

♦ *Av ha-rachamim* is not recited before Mussaf. Neither is *tzidkasecha* recited during Minchah.

♦ During Musaf, the section for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh is read instead. It begins *ata yatzarta* and ends *mekadeish ha-shabbos ve-Yisrael ve-roshei chadashim*.

♦ One who inadvertently concluded the blessing with the regular phrase, *mekadeish ha-shabbos*, has fulfilled his obligation.

♦ One who mistakenly recited the ordinary Shabbos Musaf (*tikanta shabbos*) but realizes his error before reciting the concluding blessing must return to *ata yatzarta*. However, if he already pronounced Hashem's name at the conclusion of the blessing, he should now conclude with the correct wording of *mekadeish ha-shabbos ve-Yisrael ve-roshei chadashim* and then add *ve-na'aseh lefanecha be-temidei ha-yom u've-korban musaf rosh chodesh ha-zeh*, then continue with *retzei* as usual.

1) If he realizes his error only after beginning *retzei*, he should add *ve-na'aseh* etc. as above, after the words *ve-hasheiv ha-avodah lid'vir beisecha*. The same applies if he realizes his error after completing *retzei* but before reciting *modim*.

2) If he already began *modim*, he must return to *ata yatzarta*. This applies even if he had included *ya'aleh ve-yavo* for Rosh Chodesh in his mistaken prayers.

3) If he realizes his error after pronouncing Hashem's name in either the blessing *ha-tov shim'chah* or *ha-mevareich es amo Yisrael* – he should recite the two words *lam'deini chukecha* before returning to *ata yatzarta*.

4) If he realizes only after reciting the second *iyu le-ratzon*, he must repeat the entire *amidah*. (See references in the Hebrew section).

♦ One who concluded the *amidah* but is uncertain as to whether he recited *ata yatzarta* instead of the ordinary Shabbos Musaf must repeat the entire Musaf correctly.

Hakhel: In *Sichas Shabbos Miktz, Chanukah 5748*, the Rebbe states:

This is the year of *hakhel*: In general, it is important for everything related to Chanukah to be celebrated with great publicity in the spirit of *pirsumei nisa*, “publicizing the miracle,” and, “[The *menorah* is lit] by the entrance to his home, on the outside.” During a *hakhel* year, it is all the more important to ensure that everything related to Chanukah – whose theme is “A commandment is a candle and the Torah is light” – are celebrated in a manner of “Assemble the people: the men, the women, and the children.”

Further in that *sichah*, the Rebbe adds:

... As is usually done, the nature of these events as well as their time and location should be announced, and everyone here should be invited to participate personally or via representative in the rallies and *farbrengens*, where the [Rebbe’s] *mashke* should be distributed, and so on.

May it be Hashem’s will that these *farbrengens* that are held in the spirit of *hakhel* and *simchah* achieve the fulfillment of the ultimate *hakhel* and *simchah* - “You will be gathered one by one, children of Israel” and “A great assemblage will return here” – to our Holy Land, “The Land which ... the eyes of Hashem are upon it from the start of the year until the end of the year,” to the holy city of Yerushalayim, to the *beis hamikdash*, and to “eternal joy upon their heads,” speedily, in our days, *amein!*

Motzoei Shabbos, Eve of Teves 1, Second Day of Rosh Chodesh Teves, Seventh Night of Chanukah

- ♦ Shabbos ends at **5:14 pm**.
- ♦ During Maariv, *atah chonuntanu, ya’aleh ve-yavo*, and *al ha-nissim* are inserted into the Amidah. *Vihy no’am* is recited as usual at the conclusion of tonight’s Maariv.
- ♦ In Shul, the *menorah* is lit before reciting *aleinu*. It is followed by *haneiros halalu, aleinu*, etc., and then *havdalah* by the *chazzan*. It is necessary to verify that the one kindling the Shul *menorah* did not forget to recite *ata chonantanu* in the Amidah. If he did, he must recite *baruch ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-chol* before kindling the *menorah*.
- ♦ Needless to say, the *menorah* is lit only at the conclusion of Shabbos (5:14pm). Hurry home from Shul in order to

avoid delaying the menorah lighting more than absolutely necessary.

♦ At home, first recite *havdalah*, then light the menorah, and only then recite *veyiten lecha*.

♦ “There are some people here who are careful to avoid dealing with money on *motza’ei Shabbos*” – See *Sichas Ohr LaYud Gimmel Nissan 5743* (and numerous other *sichos*). In a *yechidus kelalis* (Kislev 24, 5748), the Rebbe explained that this concern should not apply to Chanukah *gelt* because it is associated with a mitzvah and is used as a tool to advance children’s education. The Rebbe noted that it could be discussed on *motzei Shabbos* that money be spent only the following morning. In a *sichah* on the eve of Kislev 23 the following year (5749), the Rebbe took a slightly alternative approach and concluded that it is appropriate to refrain from actually giving the *gelt* on *motzei Shabbos*.

Sunday, Teves 1, Second Day of Rosh Chodesh Seventh Day of Chanukah

Ya’aleh ve-yavo and *al ha-nissim* are inserted into the Amidah. If you forgot to recite *ya’aleh ve-yavo*, follow the laws set out below:

1) If you realized that you omitted *ya’aleh ve-yavo* before pronouncing Hashem’s name in the blessing *ha-machazir*, return to *ya’aleh ve-yavo* and continue from there.

2) If you concluded the blessing of *ha-machazir* but did not begin *modim*, recite *ya’aleh ve-yavo* immediately and then continue with *modim*.

3) If you passed *modim* but realized before reciting the second *yihyu le-ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, return to *retzei*.

4) If you passed the second *yihyu le-ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, you must restart the entire Amidah.

5) If you realized only after praying Musaf, you should not repeat the Amidah of Shacharis.

♦ The complete Hallel is followed by *kaddish tiskabel*, *shir shel yom* (*rishon ba-shabbos*), *barechi nafshi*, and *kaddish yasom*.

♦ Two *sifrei torah* are read during Shacharis. The first is used for the Rosh Chodesh reading and requires three *aliyos*. (Kohen until *revi'is ha-hin*, Levi until *ve-niska*, and Yisrael—*u've-roshei chadsheichem* until *ve-nisko*.) The second Torah is then placed on the *bimah* beside the first (so as not to leave a void between the presence of the first and second Torah).

After *hagbah* on the first Torah, one *aliyah* is read from the second Torah, from *Parshas Naso* (*ba-yom ha-shevi'i*, etc., but no further).

♦ The Torah reading is followed by *chatzi kaddish*, *ashrei*, *u'va le-tziyon*, *yehalelu*, *chatzi kaddish*, and Musaf (*al ha-nissim*).

A law that will become relevant with the Redemption:

Specific families merited to donate wood annually for use on the altar, as described in *Ta'anis* 4:5. On the first of Teves, the family of Parosh donated wood. They actually had an earlier date in the year as well, on the fifth of Menachem-Av. (See *Tosefos Yom Tov* to the Mishnah, and *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1105, fn. 9. However, note Rashi's comment in *Eiruv* 41a, s.v., *mi-b'nei sanav*, which implies that the donation was arranged through lottery.)

Sunday Night, Teves 2, Eighth Night of Chanukah, "Zos Chanukah"

In *Sichos Kodesh*, the Rebbe urges each person to utilize the remaining hours of the eve of *Zos Chanukah* for *mitzvah Chanukah* (Chanukah Mitzvah Campaign). See more details further below on the day of *Zos Chanukah*.

♦ Oil and wicks that remain in the menorah after the conclusion of Chanukah should be burned, since they had been designated for a mitzvah.

♦ Oil that remains in its container and has not been poured into the menorah may be used in any manner—it has not acquired sanctity at all.

Monday, Teves 2, Eighth Day of Chanukah, “Zos Chanukah”

♦ For today's Torah reading, the Kohens *aliyah* is from *ba-yom ha-shemini* until *melei'ah ketores*. Levi is from *par echad* until *ben pedatzhur*. Yisrael is from *ba-yom ha-t-shi'i* until *kein asa es ha-menorah*.

In *Sichos Kodesh*, the Rebbe instructs each person to use this special day—when all eight flames of the menorah shine forth—to bring *mitvah Chanukah* (Chanukah Mitzvah Campaign) to its climax. The Rebbe urges whoever has not yet observed the custom of giving Chanukah *gelt* to “grab the opportunity” now, in the final hours and minutes of Chanukah. Failing that, he should make it up on the night following Chanukah, or in the coming days—the sooner the better. Even those who have already given *gelt* should use the final day of Chanukah to give even more, because there is basis to question whether they have indeed given enough, especially in light of the great *chassidische nachas* that they receive from their sons and daughters—the *nachas* that they will receive in the future through increasing their Jewish education from this point onwards.

The Rebbe also instructed that on this final day of Chanukah, one should take stock of his entire Chanukah in a manner that will continue to positively influence his service throughout the year, in actuality. One should resolve to advance in all matters of Torah and *mitzvos*. The ideal way to launch this process is with a *farbrengen*.

The Rebbe once instructed that the Alter Rebbe's *ma'amor* (see *Likkutei Torah, Derushim LeShemini Atzeres* (p. 88b)) that explains the greatness of Zos Chanukah be studied today. The main point, the Rebbe explained, is to live with this *ma'amor*.

On Zos Chanukah 5713, the Rebbe said, “It is stated in the books of the Chassidim of Poland (and although it most likely appears somewhere in Chabad Chassidus, I have not yet located such a teaching) that the eighth day of Chanukah – “Zos Chanukah” – is a day of special blessing for resolving fertility issues.” (For further explanation, see the original *sichah*.)

The following portion of *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev* 5734 can be heard in the digital recording of the *farbrengen*, although it does not appear in the printed version of that address:

“[The Rebbe Rayatz] explained in *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev* 5704, that the concepts of *erev* Rosh Hashanah, the days of *selichos*, the month of Elul, and so on, are also present regarding the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus, Yud-Tes Kislev. It is also understood that after the *kesivah* (inscribing) that occurs on Yud-Tes Kislev, there follows the concept of *chasimah* (sealing), similar to the *chasimah* of Yom Kippur that comes as a result of the *kesivah* of Rosh Hashanah.

The Rebbe explains further that this *chasimah* [that follows Yud-Tes Kislev] occurs during Chanukah, which is why the Alter Rebbe returned home after his liberation during Chanukah.

He also mentions that this teaching runs parallel to a teaching recorded in *Poilishe sefarim* (works of other Chassidic streams) that Chanukah marks the *gmar chasimah* (final sealing) of the judgments [of Tishrei]. The Rebbe explained that he quotes the works of *Poilishe sefarim* because in this case, the teaching concurs with the teachings of Chabad Chassidus.”

See also *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 14, p. 112) – “It was a common teaching in Poland that ... the *gmar chasimah* occurs in the month of Kislev, during Chanukah.” Also see *Likkutei Torah, Derushim LeShemini Atzeres* (p. 88b), explained in *BaYom HaShemini* 5746 (in particular, see fn. 33), to the effect that the eighth day of Chanukah is like Shemini Atzeres (the eighth day of Sukkos). See also *Sichas Zos Chanukah* 5738.

Tuesday, Teves 3

♦ According to Chabad custom, today’s portion of Chumash in Chitas study ends with the verse, “*And they told him all of Yosef’s words ... and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived*” (45:27).

The following law will become relevant with the Redemption: Some authorities, such as *Minchas Chinuch* (*Mitzvah* 301:6), are of the opinion that in the era of redemption, when the Jewish people will return to establishing their calendar according to human sightings of new moons, Chanukah will then be observed by distant Jewish communities as a nine-day festival, due to unavailability of real-time updates of the calendar decisions made by the *beis din* in Eretz Yisrael.

In *Sichas Zos Chanukah* 5738, the Rebbe states that even a

suggested approach found within Torah sources remains an integral part of the Torah. Since there is some debate over a future nine-day Chanukah, we should continue to apply the themes of *Zos Chanukah* on the following day. The Rebbe even compares the day after *Zos Chanukah* to Simchas Torah that follows the eight days of Sukkos and was established due to the inability of ancient Diaspora communities to obtain real-time updates from the *beis din* in Eretz Yisrael. (See also *Sichas Purim* 5719 regarding the theory of a nine-day Chanukah.)

Nevertheless, the Rebbe clarifies in *Sichas Simchas Torah* 5749, that in the era of redemption, uncertainties regarding the true calendar dates will simply not exist. The *beis din* of the future will be able to instantly communicate their decisions to every location, regardless of geographic distance. It is only those festivals that in ancient times were allotted an extra day in the Diaspora due to the delay in long distance communications, and that have been observed as two-day festivals by millennia of Jews, that may possibly continue to be observed as two-day festivals even in the era of redemption.

The following law will become relevant with the Redemption: Once Chanukah has ended, *bikurim* (First Fruit) may no longer be brought to the *beis hamikdash*. Fruit that ripens after Chanukah are considered as belonging to the following year, insofar as the laws of *bikurim* are concerned, and they must be kept until after Shavuos. This is because the Torah specifies that *bikurim* must be “*that which you bring from your land*,” meaning that *bikurim* may be brought only as long as the same species are still found growing across the Land of Israel – “when they are still available for the beast of the field.” After Chanukah, however, fruit is no longer found growing in the fields and orchards, etc.

This raises the question of the *bikurim* season in the future era (see Yechezkel 44:30, and a similar theme in 20:40), when fruit will indeed be found growing in the field even after Chanukah. For “trees will bring forth fruit every day” in the future era (*Shabbos* 30b), and “*the ploughman will encounter the reaper*” due to the instant and constant growth of produce (*Amos* 9:14). See *Toras Kohanim, Bechukosai* 26:4. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5741, vol. 2 (p. 743, fn. 70) and (p. 809, fn. 131).

There is also room to debate the obligation of *bikurim* regarding fruit that grows miraculously.

Thursday, the 5th of Teves, “Didan Natzach”

“Behold, it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the tenth [month], on the fifth [day] of the month of our exile, that the fugitive from Yerushalayim came to me, saying, ‘The city was struck!’” (Yechezkel 33:21). For halachic considerations, Rashbi considered this day on which the news of the tragedy arrived as if it were the day of the event itself (*Rosh Hashanah* 18a). See *Turei Aven* there. The Rebbe explains all this in footnotes to *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 555.

♦ *Shalshelless HaYachas* (included in the introduction to *HaYom Yom*) states: “In the year 5747 ... on the fifth of Teves, we experienced a *didan natzach* (complete victory) that was revealed for all the nations to see through a federal court ruling regarding [ownership of] the books and manuscripts of our Rebbeim that are housed in the Lubavitch Library.”

♦ Today's entry in *Lu'ach Colel Chabad* reads: “The date of *Didan Natzach*. In 5747 (1987), the Federal Court vindicated the claim lodged by *Agudas Chassidei Chabad* with regard to the Previous Rebbe's library. The Rebbe declared the date to be an auspicious day for all generations to come. The Rebbe also called on us to add to, and expand the library of *Agudas Chassidei Chabad-Lubavitch*.”

♦ During these days, the Rebbe stated, we must add greater vigor to our Torah study. For the true victory of the books is the increased Torah study that results, especially public Torah classes, in the spirit of the Mishnah's statement regarding 44ten who sit and occupy themselves with Torah.

♦ Our study must lead to action: In *nigleh*, we must study the laws that are necessary for practical application (these are found in Rambam and similar works). In the inner dimension of Torah, we must study *chassidus* that allows us to observe the *mitzvos* with complete love and awe of Hashem.

♦ The individual home of each and every Jew must also house the fundamental books of *yiddishkeit* (in addition to a *chitas*), and especially books that record the practical

laws relevant to daily life, so that everyone can determine what they must do.”

Hakhel: In *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, Hei Teves 5748*, the Rebbe states:

“I propose that *sefarim* publishers and vendors be approached and encouraged to announce a **special discount** on *Shulchan Aruch* and other works of the *Beis Yosef*, in honor of the fifth centennial of his birth. The goal of this initiative is to encourage and make it easier for people to purchase these books, and to therefore study these works, in the spirit of “*teach it ... place it in their mouths.*” [The *Beis Yosef* clarified the practical laws in his works.]

“Furthermore, according to the principle of “a *mitzvah* brings another in its wake,” the publishers and vendors should offer discounts on all *sefarim* that relate to every area of Torah knowledge, in connection with the year of *hakhel* regarding which the Torah instructs, “*You shall read this Torah ... and they will observe to do all the words of this Torah.*” This is accomplished through studying Torah works that offer a reader clear explanation of the *mitzvos* and knowledge of practical laws.

♦ In the year 5749, the Rebbe marked *Hei Teves* by distributing an additional dollar to all who approached him as his participation in their acquiring new *sefarim* or in the repair of their worn *sefarim*.

♦ The Rebbe repeatedly encouraged book sellers to offer special discounts on all sacred literature to make it feasible for everyone to buy *sefarim*.

For the Rebbe’s *sichos* regarding *Hei Teves* that occurs in a year with an identical calendar sequence to the present, see *Sefer HaSichos 5752*.

Friday Parshas Vayigash, Teves 6

- ♦ Today, we recite shnayim mikra of Parshas Vayigash.
- ♦ One is obligated to check his pockets on *erev* Shabbos before the onset of Shabbos. This is especially important if he wore the same Shabbos / Yom Tov clothing yesterday in honor of *Hei Teves* and may not remember that he is carrying something.
- Candle lighting is at **4:12 pm** (in New York), which is 18 minutes before sunset.

Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, Teves 7

The Rebbe states that “according to Jewish custom (which becomes part of the Torah), the third Torah portion ends with the verse ‘*And they told him all of Yosef’s words ... and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived*’ (45:27). (According to alternative custom, this is the end of the fourth portion.)” (*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 30, p. 224) The significance of this is explained there at length, and this is indeed the practice in 770.

♦ 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!

Motzei Shabbos, Eve of Teves 8

♦ Shabbos ends at **5.17 pm** in New York

♦ *Kiddush Levanah* is recited tonight, following Maariv. *Kiddush levanah* should be recited while dressed in fine, respectable clothing. (According to Kabbalah, *Kiddush Levanah* should not be recited until seven days have passed since the *molad* (birth of the new moon). See *Sefer HaSichos* 5752, vol. 1, p. 68. Regarding the precise calculation of these seven days, see references that appear in the Rebbe Rashab’s notes to *Siddur Torah Ohr*, and references that appear in the Rebbe’s notes to *Sha’ar HaKollel*. Also see *Sichas Vav Adar Rishon* 5746.)

Sunday Night, Teves 8

On the eighth of Teves, the Torah was first translated into Greek by order of King Talmi. This caused “three days of darkness to descend upon the world” (*Megillas Ta’anis*, quoted in *Shulchan Aruch*). That day was “as difficult for the Jews as the day on which the Golden Calf was made” (*Maseches Sofrim*). The Rebbe explains this concept in *Likkutei Sichos* (beginning of vol. 24) and *Sefer HaSichos* 5752 (*Mikeitz*).

On this day in 5573 (1812), the Alter Rebbe reached the village of Pienna, after fleeing Liadi to escape Napoleon’s advance into Russia. (The Alter Rebbe passed away in Pienna soon after, on Chof-Daled Teves.)

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chayah Mushka, the wife of the Tzemach Tzedek. She passed away in the year 5621 (1860) and is buried in the town of Lubavitch.

Monday, Teves 9

Chazal state that the ninth of Teves is one of the dates on which calamities befell our ancestors and it is appropriate to spend the day fasting. They also note, however, that there is no record of what these calamities were (*Megillas Ta'anis*, quoted in *Shulchan Aruch*). It has since been explained that Ezra Ha-Sofer died on this date. The commentators to *Megillas Ta'anis* describe additional events. The Rebbe's explanation appears in *Sefer HaSichos* 5749 (*Vayigash*, Teves 9).

Monday Night, the 10th of Teves

♦ The Rebbe often mentioned that the preparations for *Yud Shevat* begin thirty days in advance, from the tenth of Teves.

On the eve of the tenth of Teves 5752, the Rebbe explains that although the tenth of 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 tenth 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*.

♦ As is the case with any fast that begins in the morning, we are permitted to eat throughout the night until dawn, provided that we had not gone to sleep in between. Dozing off temporarily is not considered going to sleep in this regard. One who stipulates before going to sleep that he intends to awaken before dawn and eat or drink may do so. If he regularly rises from his sleep to drink at night, he may do so tonight without stipulating before going to sleep.

Tuesday, Teves 10, the Fast of Teves

♦ All men (from the age of 13 years) and women (from the age of 12 years) should refrain from eating and drinking

on daybreak until nightfall. Those who wish to wake up early and eat before daybreak should have in mind to do so before retiring the night before. Pregnant or nursing women, or people feeling ill, are exempt. Consult a Rav if necessary.

♦ Dawn and the start of the fast are at **5:48 am** in New York.

Hakhel: The Rebbe explains the association between the Tenth of Teves and the year of *hakhel* in *Sichas Asarah BaTeves* 5741.

♦ The fast commemorates the date on which the king of Babylon laid siege to Yerushalayim. One who is ill is not obligated to fast. The same is true of a pregnant or nursing woman who suffers pain from fasting.

♦ The Torah is read during Shacharis and Minchah, and the *haftorah* is read during Minchah, as on every fast day.

The following will become relevant with the Redemption: All of the fast days (except Yom Kippur) will be canceled in the era of Moshiach. In fact, they will become “*yomim tovim* and days of feasting and gladness.” This is further discussed in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 412, where the Rebbe draws particular relevancy to the Fast of Teves. [For the concept of holding a festive meal in the era of Redemption, see *Magen Avraham, Tisha b’Av*, 552:11 and *Sichas Beis d’Rosh Hashanah* 5752.]

In *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 25, p. 449), the Rebbe explains that the events marked by the Fast of Teves were the start and eventual cause of the calamities commemorated by the remaining fasts. Therefore, when the Fast of Teves is transformed into a *yom tov*, all other fast days are consequently transformed along with it into “*yomim tovim* and days of feasting and gladness.”

♦ It is customary to increase in *tzedakah* on fast days. According to custom, one should estimate the average cost of his daily meals and donate that amount to *tzedakah* on the eve of the fast.

♦ In Shacharis and Minchah, the *chazzan* adds *aneinu* in the Amidah, between the blessings of *go’eil Yisrael* and *refa’einu*. If he omitted *aneinu* and has not yet pronounced Hashem’s name at the conclusion of

refa'einu, he should return to recite *aneinu*. If he already pronounced Hashem's name, he should recite *aneinu* in the blessing of *shema koleinu* as each individual does when praying Minchah silently. In that case, he should conclude the blessing with the words: *ha-oneh ba-eis tzarah ve-shomei'a tefillah*. If he already passed *shema koleinu*, he should recite *aneinu* as a passage for itself after the blessing of *sim shalom*.

- ♦ During Shacharis, Selichos are recited.
- ♦ This is the order for Shacharis: Tachanun. Selichos. *Avinu malkeinu*. *Va'anachnu lo nay'da* followed by *chatzi kaddish*. Reading of the Torah. The *aliyos* are read from the section of *va-yechal Moshe*.
- ♦ This same reading is repeated for Minchah, with the addition of the *haftorah* of *dirshu Hashem*.
- ♦ During Minchah, each individual recites *aneinu* in *shema koleinu*. If he remembered it before stepping back at the end of the Amidah, he should recite it after *elokai netzor*. If he had already stepped back, he should not recite it at all.
- ♦ The *chazzan* recites *birchas kohanim* in his repetition of the *amidah* (as he usually does during Shacharis).
- ♦ This is the order for Minchah: *Korbanos*. *Ashrei* followed by *chatzi kaddish*. The reading of the Torah (*Va-yechal*) and the *haftorah*. *Yehalelu* followed by *chatzi kaddish*. Amidah with the addition of *aneinu*. Tachanun, *Avinu malkeinu*. *Kaddish tiskabel*. *Aleinu* followed by *kaddish yasom* and then *al tira* and *ach tzadikim*. If an *avel* is present, he recites *mishnayos* followed by *kaddish de-rabanan*.
- ♦ After Minchah, it is customary to listen to *divrei kivushin*—a speech urging self-improvement and further advancement in the service of Hashem.
- ♦ The fast ends at **5:03 pm** in New York.

Thursday night, "Nittal"

Nittal: The Rebbe notes that *nittal nacht* (Night of Nittal) occurs often during or in proximity to the days of Chanukah

– see *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev* 5750 (*Sefer HaSichos*).

- ♦ The name *nittal* alludes to a lack, a euphemism for birth. Some suggest it is related to the word *nitleh* and *taloy*, “the hanged one”, a reference to “that man” (“*oso ha’ish*”), the individual who is the focus of worship in the *notzri* religion. The date officially marks the birth of that man. Accordingly, the term *nittal* can be related to the Latin *natal*, “birth.”
- ♦ It is an ancient Jewish practice (which thereby becomes a venerated part of Torah) and it is also the Chabad custom to refrain from studying Torah on *nittal nacht*, until midnight. The reason is “to avoid adding vitality to the forces of impurity.” Other reasons, offered by great Torah sages, are recorded in the books that explain the reasons for *minhagim*. The Rebbe mentions these in *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 14, p. 351). Also see *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 15, p. 554). In other sources, it is explained that the phrase “to avoid adding vitality to *kelipos*” is directed at “that man” who was deified by the non-Jews as well as those who presently follow his path. See the above *Igros Kodesh* to understand how it is possible for Torah study to produce negative results.
- ♦ The timing of *nittal nacht* does not follow the Jewish calendar, but rather, the secular calendar. The date must be determined by the observance of the local non-Jewish population. The Jews of each country observe this custom on the eve of “*yom eidam*” (lit. the day of their calamity, used as a metonymy for festival) as it is celebrated by the non-Jews of their country. In the United States, this sets the date as December 25th. In a location with variances in the dates for the non-Jewish “*yom eidam*”, *nittal nacht* is observed on the date that the majority of the local non-Jews celebrate. See footnotes to *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, vol. 1, p. 192.
- ♦ The willful avoidance of Torah study is a surprising and unprecedented concept. It must not be extended beyond the strict duration set by Jewish custom – just one night, until midnight.

♦ Regarding the conduct of the Rebbe Rashab on *nittal nacht* and the implied directive, see *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev* 5750 (*Sefer HaSichos*) – “From this we derive a directive as well as an infusion of ability to utilize the duration of *nittal*, not to waste our time, G-d forbid (simply in order to avoid adding vitality to *kelipos*), but rather, for a practical benefit. It is especially appropriate to use this time for matters that lead to increased wisdom ... or to increase in acts of *tzedakah* and *chessed*, or to take care of the home, and the like.” (See further in the original *sichah*.)

♦ In his notes from the winter of 5695, recorded in Vienna, the Rebbe relates that the Rebbe Rashab would also refrain from studying *chassidus* on *nittal nacht*, not even in a cursory manner. When *nittal* coincided with the eve of Shabbos, he would defer the delivering of his customary *ma’amor* to Shabbos morning instead. (For more on this topic, see *Heichal Menachem*, p. 268. However, refer to the *reshimah* of Chof Kislev 5693. Also take note of a short *Sichah* delivered on *Leil Gimmel D’Chanukah* 5750.)

♦ Regarding the *mitzvah* of a *mikveh* night that coincides with *nittal*, see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 12, p. 424.

Friday Parashas Vayechi, Teves 13

• Candle lighting is at **4:15 pm** (in New York), which is 18 minutes before sunset.

Friday Night, Eve of Teves 14, “Shabbos Chazak”

♦ Tonight is the final opportunity to recite *kiddush levanah* this month – as a first recourse. (In general, it is customary not to recite *kiddush levanah* on the eve of Shabbos. See *Magen Avraham*, 426:7; *Kaf Hachayim* *ibid.*, 32; *Derech Hachayim* 93:3; *Sha’ar HaKolel*, ch. 33, par. 2. See *Reshimos HaGaon Rav Yehudah Landa*, published in *K’far Chabad*, Issue 986.)

Shabbos, Teves 14, “Shabbos Chazak”

♦ During today’s Torah reading, it is customary to rise

for the reading of the final verse in the book of Bereishis, after which the entire congregation (men, women, and children) calls out loudly and joyfully—*chazak, chazak, ve-nischazeik!* This shout symbolizes the strength of the Jewish people in all matters of Torah—with the 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.

- ♦ 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.

- ♦ 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.”

Motzei Shabbos, Eve of Teves 15

- ♦ Shabbos ends at **5.20 pm** in New York.

“... Starting with the festive meal of *motza’ei* Shabbos ... ‘The meal of Dovid, King Moshiach.’ Especially as the first day of the coming week is the fifteenth of the month, when the Teves moon is at its fullest. Certainly, then the *melave malka* should be truly magnificent! Moreover, and this is the most

crucial point, we should hold the meal with Dovid King Moshiach at our head!” (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayechi* 5752)

Sunday, Teves 15

♦ During these weeks (from when we begin reading the book of *Shemos*), the order of fasting, praying, and extra stringencies known as *shovavim* begins. In leap years, these stringencies are extended and are referred to as *shovavim tat*. To view this practice in the light of Chabad Chassidus, see *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, footnotes to p. 185. Also see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 18, p. 259, and *LeSheima Ozen*, p. 130.

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