

DAY - TO - DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

Laws and Customs for Bein Hametzarim 5781

Installment II

Friday, 22nd of Tammuz - Friday, the 29th of Tammuz, Erev Rosh Chodesh Av 5781

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

THE THREE WEEKS

Bein Hametzarim: the time period between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av.

On the subject of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe says:¹ According to the Rogachover, the *churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash* is a **continual** thing. This doesn't simply mean that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed about two thousand years ago, and from then on we are righteously mourning, and when it comes to *Tishah B'Av* and the Three Weeks we pray for its rebuilding, similar to how we when *daven* every day and say *V'sechezana eineinu* for the *geulah* after more than nineteen hundred years in *golus*.

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

More than nineteen hundred years have passed. Being as it is Thursday, *Parshas Pinchas*² and it is already after *Maariv*, and the *Beis Hamikdash* still hasn't been built, we need to know that we must cry out for the *geulah* **as if it was destroyed on Thursday of Parshas Pinchas!** ...And being as *Yidden* have already cried out yesterday, "*Ad Mosai!*", and the previous day cried out, "*Ad Mosai!*", and **all the days before that** cried out, "*Ad Mosai!*"—then, *rachmana litzlan*, the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, this afternoon or tonight! **And from this we understand how we have to cry out "*Ad Mosai!*" right now!** This is not some cute interpretation, but a halacha in Torah, as it says in Torah (itself), "Anyone who didn't build the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time" it is as if 'such and such'.

Imagine! The *Beis Hamikdash* is being burned, and nearby stands a *Yid* who is a **hardened** *Yid*, a *Yid* of stone, with a "heart of stone", and he sees how the *Beis Hamikdash* is being destroyed in his days— (even) this *Yid* would most certainly turn over the

world (to prevent the destruction)! The Torah of truth and the Torah of life teaches us a lesson in life: [Here the Rebbe cried out, loudly] Turn the world over today!

Don't Despair!

"Around the time of the Three Weeks," it says in *Likkutei Sichos*,³ "A *Yid* can begin to think about how strong is the general darkness of *golus* in general and, more specifically, (right now) during the birthpangs of Moshiach. This can lead him, *rachmana litzlan*, to fall into a state of despair, not knowing how he can get through all the hardships. He does know that it is the torment and tribulations during *golus* that will **then** result in the *geulah* being even more elevated; but **now** he finds himself in such a dark and bitter *golus*—how can he **now** overcome all the difficulties?"

"The lesson to educate and uplift us is that, on the contrary, particularly in **this** generation, in the generation of the birthpangs of Moshiach, the inner (hidden) aspect of Torah has been revealed to us. It reveals and publicizes the inner meaning of these days: that these days have in them the full strength of the love of Hashem to the *Yidden*.

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

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

"Conducting ourselves in this manner of revealing the inner meaning of the Three Weeks in the same way that it will be when Moshiach comes, then, these days will be transformed "into

*) The basic laws and customs presented below are derived from multiple sources. Due to a dearth of space only some references and halachic notes have been added. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*. Please see the footnotes in the Hebrew section for more halachic discussion of the topics mentioned.

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

1) From a *sicha* of 12 Tammuz, 5744

2) The day of this *sichah*

3) vol. 18, pg. 316

rejoicing and happiness, and *yomim tovim*.”

Concerning the time period of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Rebbe says:⁴ On the one hand, this is a time during which we have the obligation to “mourn over Yerushalayim.” On the other hand, it is specifically this time that demands of us to have a special strength to avoid falling into a state of despair from *golus*, *chas v’shalom*. For we know (that we will ultimately return), as the *haftorah* of *Parshas Masei* ends, “Will you not from this time call me, “My Father, You, the Master of my youth?” Even better: encourage yourself, and other *Yidden*, during the multiplied darkness of the birth pangs of Moshiach, and all the more during the Three Weeks, through strengthening the aspect of “I await for him that he will come every day.” (How will he come?) Learn and occupy yourself with studying the “formation of the *Beis Hamikdash* and all of its *halachos*.”

“During the time of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe encourages,⁵ “we should increase in all areas of Torah and *mitzvos* with a *shturem* (extra enthusiasm), especially in the area of *simchah*. Certainly, the intention isn’t an artificial joy, where one pinches his cheek so that people should think he’s happy or, even more heartily, does some movement like clapping his hands. The intention is to reach a true happiness that permeates the emotions of the heart. For this reason, we should exert effort to utilize every opportunity to organize *farbrengens* during the Three Weeks. This will lead to happiness not only amongst the participants, but also to happiness Above, since through increasing in joy, we minimize and nullify all of the undesirable aspects of the Three Weeks, to the point that it leads to effect *nechamah* (comfort), a double *nechamah* in our physical reality.”

Advantageous

In Or HaTorah⁶: There is a parable of a king who, when traveling, is more easily reachable to converse with than when he is at home. This accessibility does not consider whether one is worthy or not. In the same way, as is explained by the *Avodas Yisroel*⁷ in the name of the Maggid, all who pursue to reach a revelation of G-dliness, will reach it *davka* during the Three Weeks, as in the above parable.

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

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

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

When Moshiach comes the good will be revealed below in a tangible way, within the reality of this world. This revelation

will be like the advantage of light that comes after darkness. And after the *meitzar*, as the *passuk* continues, “Hashem answers me with *merchav* (latitude)”, the essential latitude and extravagance, resulting in these days being transformed into days of joy and happiness, to the point that the happiness is incomparable to the rest of the days of happiness.

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

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

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

Numbers

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

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

The same applies to the number of days of this time period. There are twenty-one days in the Three Weeks, which is the amount of time it takes for an almond to grow. This is the fastest gestation period of any fruit, representing an alacrity and speediness

4) *Ibid.*, pg. 411

5) *Roshei Devarim* from *Shabbos Parshas Masei* 5744

6) *Parshas Vayeshev*, vol. 5, pg. 900. See also *Ma’anos Kodesh* 5745, bottom of pg. 110ff.

7) *Parshas Ma’asei*

with great overpowering strength to annul the obstacles and impediments of *golus*. In detail: Almonds are bitter when they are small, and when they finish ripening (at twenty-one days) they become sweet. The point of the Three Weeks is to transform these days into days of rejoicing and happiness, happy and sweet days.

The laws and restrictions of *Bein Hametzarim* commence on *motzoei Shabbos*, the evening of the seventeenth of Tammuz.

Haircuts

Both men and women⁸ refrain from cutting their hair during this period. This includes all facial hair as well as hair anywhere else on the body. Adults may not cut children's hair.

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

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

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

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

Engagement and Marriage

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

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

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

Shehechyanu

It is best to avoid making a *Shehechyanu* blessing during the Three Weeks on a new fruit⁹ or new clothing. Therefore, we refrain from eating new fruit or wearing new clothing. Our custom is to refrain from blessing *Shehechyanu* at any time during the Three Weeks, even on Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh.

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

Someone's whose wife gives birth to a daughter should make the blessing of *Shehechyanu* upon seeing her for the first time,

⁸A woman may cut hair for reasons of modesty, as well as in preparation for *mikvah* (even for an immersion following *Tishah B'av*, as we refrain from trimming three days before immersing). She may remove body hair that could render her unattractive to her husband, even during the Nine Days.

⁹A pregnant woman may eat a new fruit without blessing *Shehechyanu*, out of concern that an unsatisfied craving may endanger the child. Similarly, an ill person may eat a new fruit without reciting *Shehechyanu*.

even during the Three Weeks.

A father also blesses *Shehechyanu* at his firstborn son's *pidyon haben* during the Three Weeks.

The *brochah* of *hatov vehameitiv* may be recited during the Three Weeks.

Dancing & Music

Dancing is prohibited from the seventeenth of Tammuz onward.

We may not play¹⁰ or listen to music, including recorded music. Some are lenient to listen to music which is only vocals (without instruments). However, many contemporary Poskim say this is the same as music. Certainly, some of these recordings sound very professional and essentially negate the original purpose of the custom. However, there is room to be lenient when listening to slow *niggunim* that are recorded primarily with vocals and only some background musical accompaniment.

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

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

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

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

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

Travel, Trips & General Safety

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

From the seventeenth of Tammuz, we refrain from going out alone between the end of the fourth halachic hour until the end of the ninth halachic hour.¹¹ Similarly, we take care not to walk in a place that is in between the sun and the shade. This all only applies in a desolate place. However, where there are passersby, the concern doesn't apply.

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

From *Likkutei Dibburim*: During the two midsummer months (in Lubavitch), from Shavuot until *Shabbos Nachamu*—except for a certain break during the Three Weeks, which were days of real mourning, the laws of the period being punctiliously

¹⁰A professional musician may play for non-Jews until Rosh Chodesh Av, excluding the actual day of the 17th of Tammuz.

¹¹Calculated by dividing the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve parts. Thus 1/12 of the day is a halachic hour. For example, if the sun rises at 5 a.m. and sets at 7:30 p.m., a halachic hour is 72.5 minutes.

observed in all their details—people would sometimes take a little stroll across the marketplace between Mincha and Maariv. No one ever went out for a walk between Pesach and Shavuot, but from then on people took the opportunity of enjoying the pleasant summer weather.

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

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

Medical Care

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

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

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

Children and students should be rebuked gently; no parent or teacher should use corporal punishment at all during the Three Weeks.¹²

Buying, Moving, Renovating House

Though some are stringent and refrain from buying homes, for the Three Weeks isn't an auspicious time, according to the letter of the law someone may buy a **residential** home, especially if they will incur a loss by forfeiting the deal. (It is permitted even during the Nine Days). When the closing is after *Tishah B'av*, there is no concern at all.

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

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

The Rebbe's Hora'os

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

Five Periods: The Three Weeks are subdivided into periods of increasing intensity: 1. From the seventeenth of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av 2. from Rosh Chodesh until the week of the Ninth of Av 3. the week of *Tishah B'av* itself 4. the day before the fast and 5. the actual Fast Day. We should intensify our Torah and Tzedakah at each ensuing phase of the Three Weeks.

Erev Rosh Chodesh: On the day before Rosh Chodesh Av, we should especially amplify our Torah study, prayer and

12) Regarding hitting in general, see asktherav.com #6349 for a comprehensive discussion.

tzedakah. We should at least distribute the monetary equivalent of two meals to *tzedakah* – and ideally, the equivalent of **three** meals.

Preempt with Positive: We should resolve to fulfill the above directive **before** the Three Weeks commence. Those who have not yet made such a resolution should do so *at their very first opportunity* – and the sooner (even by a moment) the better!¹³ Obviously, someone who failed to accomplish any of the above directives on the applicable dates should make it up afterwards.

Mivtzoim: During the Three Weeks, we should put special effort into the mitzvah campaigns: Ahavas Yisrael, Kosher Education, Torah-Study, Torah Books, Tefilin, Mezuzah, Shabbos Candles, Kosher Diet and Family Purity.¹⁴

More Love

In several *Sichos Kodesh* it is explained regarding the reason for the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* being “because there was baseless hatred”, and that the rectification needs to be in the same sphere in order to undo the cause. How so? By increasing *Ahavas Yisrael*, love for a fellow Jew, and *Achdus Yisrael*, unity of the Jewish people, in a way of baseless love This includes the areas of Torah, *tefillah* (prayer) and *tzedakah* (charity) as a community, and once the cause is unraveled, the effect will melt away. This should all be stressed and increased during the Three Weeks. Now, standing on the threshold of the *geulah*, it is certain that the reason for the *golus* has already been rectified, and so the emphasis on *Ahavas Yisrael* is in the way of a taste (of the future), to the point that this love is the beginning of the *geulah*. This is because the *geulah* is tied with a point of Jewish unity that is higher than any division, emphasized in the togetherness of *Yidden* when on the level of *yechidah* (the very essence of the soul), which is a spark of the *neshama* (soul) of Moshiach, who is the *yechidah klolis* (general *yechidah* of all Jews).

Hilchos Beis Habechirah

Make it a point to study about the *Beis Hamikdash*¹⁵ during the Three Weeks. This learning is also applicable to women and children.¹⁶

“In the days preceding *erev Tishah B'Av* and *Tishah B'Av*,” the Rebbe says¹⁷, “when deciding what we should learn, we must study the necessary halachos and the established shiurim that we have. Increase in learning the *perakim* of the *navi* Yechezkel that discusses all about the *Beis Hamikdash*, its exits and entrances, and the commentaries on those chapters. Then go on to *Maseches Middos* with commentaries, and finally, *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, the laws of the *Beis Hamikdash* of the Rambam's *Mishnah Torah* with its *mefarshim*. It is certain that Hashem will then keep His promise that “I consider it as if they are involved in its construction.” And this is the preparation that will result most speedily in the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash* in its designated palace, with the coming of Moshiach, now.

More Than Ever

“Standing on the threshold of Moshiach, who is coming

13) “According to the halachic ruling in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 571:3”

14) from the preface to *Chidushim U'bi'urim B'hilchos Beis Habechirah*

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

16) See the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5736. In *Sichos Kodesh* pg. 496ff. Also, *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5740. In *Sichas Kodesh* pg. 658ff.

17) From the *sichah* of *erev Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*, 24 Tammuz, 5736. In *Sichos Kodesh* pg. 485

immediately,” says the Rebbe more recently¹⁸, “it is understood that the study of *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* needs to be **in an entirely different way**: At the very least, the learning shouldn’t be because one is overcome with emotions of mourning and due to his efforts to rectify the lack that resulted from the *churban Beis Hamikdash*, but because of the yearning and desire for Hashem and the completion of the third *Beis Hamikdash*... Additionally, and more essentially, the study should be an outcome of the completely certain knowledge and recognition that these aren’t “The [farfetched] halachos of Moshiach”, but they are **actual, pertinent halachos for the coming moment**, since the “future *mikdash* that we anticipate is built and perfected (already now above, and immediately) will be revealed and will come from the Heaven” **this very moment!**

At this time, in 5740, the Rebbe spoke¹⁹: We are now starting the Three Weeks and I was waiting to see if anyone would talk about [studying *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*] this year, and I see that no one has. So now that it’s ten days from the seventeenth of Tammuz, a few days before the Nine Days, someone thought to put a notice about this in the newspaper! And only then did people find the courage to write to me all perturbed, asking if it’s appropriate to learn the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year because I haven’t mentioned it yet! But, we have already mentioned this the last four years, and we have mentioned that we should publicize this all over, and that’s what we have actually done, and it was accepted in several places. And I have not said this in a way of “a decree I have decreed” [without explanation], but I have also given a reason for this, and the reason is relevant every year this time, this year included.

And since we have already done it for three years, we must continue, because the *halacha* is that if someone does something three times, and he didn’t say “*bli neder*”, he must continue to do it, and it is certain that in the past years we didn’t say “*bli neder*” when we have studied *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, because I didn’t mention that we have to. It is therefore certain that we need to do it this year as well! And despite all that, someone asks me a question if we have to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year—does every single thing need to be repeated over and over?! And may it be His will that since we have at least now caught on and placed a notice in the newspaper, we should follow from now on what it says in the notice, that we should learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* in the coming days, and specifically in the Nine Days, and more specifically in the week which *Tishah B’Av* falls, and most especially on *erev Tishah B’Av* and *Tishah B’Av* itself. And certainly we need to study today, since Moshiach is coming today; and so too, if, G-d forbid, Moshiach has not come by tomorrow, we will also have to learn tomorrow...

Before & After

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

become vexed, since he knows that the path of Torah learning is “the shy person doesn’t learn”, and he will therefore certainly respond to his question.

Tell Everyone

And in 5741²⁰: These days we must endeavor to learn the parts of Torah that are connected to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, and to influence other *Yidden* in the same way, because through this every *Yid* builds the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is the foundation of the entire world. As is explained in the words of *Chazal*, that in the Holy of Holies in the *Beis Hamikdash* on the Temple Mount is the *even hashesiya*, the foundation stone, from which the entire world exists. As a result, every man and woman who learns *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* builds the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! During this time, we need to go out into the street and find a *Yid* and say to him, “Listen up! You need to build the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!” This will be accomplished through learning the parts of Torah connected to the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*. He may claim in return, that He doesn’t know any of the Alef-Beis, not even know the Alef-Beis (the very basics) of *Yiddishkeit*. Tell him: “All this deliberation has no place when you need to build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! Ay, you don’t understand the parts of Torah connected to the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Lashon Hakodesh*, so learn the material in another language—but you must build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!”

When we know that every single person is building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world through learning the part of Torah connected with the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, all deliberations that result from a lack of emotional or spiritual serenity fall away, because what are they worth compared to building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world, (that place) “from which the entire world exists”? “And through this,” we declare to every Jew, “you accomplish that these days [of the Three Weeks] will be transformed to days of rejoicing and happiness and *yomim tovim*, with the true and final *geulah*, immediately!

Happening Now

“A Jew may walk down the street,” the Rebbe says²¹ in 5736 at this time of year. “and the non-Jew sees him deep in thought, or, perhaps, murmuring something. So he asks him, ‘What are you contemplating?’ The *Yid* replies that he is concerning himself with the measurements of the *Beis Hamikdash* (for this subject can also be learned in English, the main thing being the actual facts.)

“This is just how it was with the wicked Haman. When he came to Mordechai, he saw that the children were intensely focused on something. He asked them what they were so animated about, and they told him that they are passionately discussing how one must bring up the *korban omer*. The *Beis Hamikdash* is already here! And a *kohen*, and the *omer*. The only thing one is concerned about is *how* to bring up the *korban omer*! The decree of Haman? To that one gives no thought! And even though Mordechai was also present there, and knew everything that was happening—not just in this world below, but also what is happening Above—and he knew the extent of the decree *rachmana litzlan*, nevertheless, his only concern was the *dinim* of how to bring up the *korban omer*. Yes, there was indeed a decree on the *Yidden*, and we must fast and say *Tehillim* and more. But that can happen another time; now he is engrossed with learning the *halachos* of the *korban omer*.

In the same way, now, when all decrees have already been annulled, and Moshiach’s coming depends only on *teshuvah*, what is one’s worry? Not that he is bothered by *golus*. Moshiach has already come and the *Beis Hamikdash* is already here. The only concern for a Jew should be the size of the *Beis Hamikdash*,

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

19) *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah of Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*

20) *sichah of Shabbos Parshas Matos*

21) *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah of Shabbos Parshas Matos*

so he therefore learns *Mesechas Midos*. For him, it is as though *golus* does not exist in the first place.

Right Now

In a *sichah* of the 15th of Tammuz 5746, the Rebbe says²²: Moshiach should come now, before [the seventeenth of Tammuz] and then the Three Weeks will not just (lose their negative aspect and) become days like the rest of the year, but they will also become more special than regular days, transformed into *yomim tovim*.

So, when it comes to learning *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, it is proper to start regardless. There is no doubt: just because the righteous Moshiach will come before the seventeenth of Tammuz, should that mean that we should alter the lessons connected with the Three Weeks? On the contrary! Study them even more diligently, knowing that they are actually relevant practically.

Usually we must take into account what it says in Midrash Tanchuma (“How great is the study of the laws of the *Beis Hamikdash* as much as its construction, for it is as if these students are involved in the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, to the point that through it is no longer abolished”), and so too we must keep in mind what the Rambam himself writes. But even when we will study Midrash Tanchuma and *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* of the Rambam, together with *Mesechtas Middos* with all *mefarshim*, there are those things that will remain unclear, details that we will only learn from the *Kohen* who will serve in the days after the coming of Moshiach. Only then will we truly understand the halachos of building *Beis Habechirah*, when it is practically relevant.

Perhaps what one previously understood in the abstract will be revealed to him (in the practical sense), or there will be the need to change one’s thought process, or it will (merely) mean adding one detail or another... (for all these scenarios) it is necessary to now reinforce our resolution to learn this subject with an even stronger commitment together with all of the other *shiurim* in establishing set times for Torah study. And for all those who increase, [blessings are] increased for them.

With Simchah

“We must increase even more in the realm of *simchah*, joy,” the Rebbe encourages²³ during the Three Weeks, “because ‘happiness breaks boundaries’, and, therefore, an increase in happiness will itself break the boundaries of *golus*. And in order to do so, it is good and correct that during these days everyone should increase in activities that enhance our *simchah*, such as joyful *farbrengens*... Of course, after the seventeenth of Tammuz (during the Three Weeks), should Moshiach be delayed, *chas veshalom*, by even one day, these events should be held in a way as permissible according to the Shulchan Aruch (with a *seudas mitzvah* or the like).

In this, there is a two-fold advantage: One, because an increase in *simchah* that breaks the boundaries of *golus* and two, especially because through this “brotherly gathering” and a unifying *l’chaim*, there is an increase in love and unity among Yidden, and **this** will result in the cause of the *golus* being abolished.

“Increase in the theme of *simchah* in the simplest sense,” the Rebbe says²⁴ at a *farbrengen* the following day. “This can be accomplished with gatherings of *Yidden* in general, and *Chassidische farbrengens* specifically, like described in the ‘note landing from Heaven’, through the words of the [Friediker] Rebbe, *Nasi Doreinu*.

Should there be a chance that Moshiach is *chas v’shalom* delayed

moments into the Three Weeks, or even hours into the Three Weeks, it is exactly this type of situation that necessitates a feeling of *simchah*. Whether through a *bris*, or a *pidyon haben*, or similar events of *simchah*, we should utilize the opportunity in any way that is permissible according to the Shulchan Aruch. But even within the boundaries of halacha, we can simultaneously go beyond measure and limitation. As has been discussed several times, this combination is specifically the accomplishment of Torah... To celebrate during the permissible times in permissible ways and within the boundaries of holiness, that everything is in a way of orderliness—but within the order itself should be apparent that these are the actions of *lebedike* people. This is how people who are full of life, who live with a Torah of Life, act, and within the realm of the living Torah, those who are involved more specifically with the inner aspect of this Torah, which is the very life-force giving life.

And since this is demanded of every Jew, it’s a sign that you have previously been given the strength to balance these opposite streams. Along with this should be the knowledge that we will later inquire exactly how much was imbibed at the said *farbrengen*... So it should be a great *simchah*, but only on a day, at a time and in a place that is permissible according to Torah. It should be great in the sense that it is beyond limitations, but *chas v’shalom, rachmana litzlan* should it result in intoxication. This is a subject that is not open to interpretation, as has been discussed several times. [After saying a *bracha achrona*, the Rebbe stood up from his place and distributed bottles of *marshkeh* to all those who committed to organize *farbrengens*.]

FRIDAY, PARSHAS PINCHAS, THE 22ND OF TAMMUZ

Shnayim mikra is recited for this week’s *parshah*, *Parshas Pinchas*.

Light candles at **8:12 pm** (18 minutes before sunset).

SHABBOS PARSHAS PINCHAS, THE 23RD OF TAMMUZ SHABBOS MEVARCHIM CHODESH AV

“The melancholy aspects of the Three Weeks do not apply to Shabbos,” the Rebbe says²⁵ on Shabbos during this time, “because on Shabbos we must be happy. Moreover, this particular Shabbos needs to be even more joyous than others so that there shouldn’t be a suspicion that any lack of happiness is due to the Three Weeks.

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

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

On Shabbos during the Three Weeks, we have to be even more

22) Transcribed from the audiotape of the *sichah*.

23) *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Balak* 5747. In *Sefer Hasichos*, vol. 2, pg. 471.

24) On the 16th of Tammuz 5747. This is transcribed from an audiotape of the occasion.

25) *Sichah of Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5715. In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, pg. 358 ff.

joyous than any other Shabbos of the year, to remove any suspicion that anyone is practicing *aveilus* (acts of mourning, which are forbidden on Shabbos).

Transformative

From *Maor V'Shemesh*: Concerning what “the holy greats” say²⁶, *Shabbos* during the Three Weeks are exceedingly elevated. It appears to me that this is because the six days of the week [preceding the *Shabbos*] are exceedingly low and minimized.

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

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

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

Every Shabbos can be considered as two *Shabbos* (because each Shabbos is comprised of two aspects) and there are three Shabbos in the Three Weeks.
 $2 \times 3 = 6$

The seven days of the week during the Three Weeks are illuminated by the double *Shabbos*. $6 \times 7 = 42$

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

How to Farbreng

“A unique issue occurs,” says²⁷ the Rebbe in 5744, “concerning *Yidden* who have become so involved in worldly matters, that during those special times when it is incumbent upon them to release themselves from worldly affairs and become steeped in spiritual matters, they have great difficulty doing so. This is especially with regard to feeling the pain of the descent of *gulus* to the point of thirsting for the comfort of Redemption...”

“When we come to the period of the Three Weeks, (including Shabbos, as is highlighted by the fact that from Bereishis until the seventeenth of Tammuz, the *Haftorah* is connected to the weekly *parshah*, but starting from the first Shabbos of the Three Weeks, the theme relates to the events of the current time period), it is difficult to have influence upon the above-mentioned Yid, that he should be aroused with feelings of pain from being in the Three Weeks, and that he should thirst to be comforted by the *geulah*. Since he is steeped in the world of business, and he sees that Hashem is making him successful and is blessing him with children, health and sustenance, he doesn't feel like he's lacking in anything at all...”

“However, since Hashem doesn't demand of us more than our abilities, it's understood that, despite how difficult this is,

it is still within the ability of every Jew... Since he is imbued with the knowledge and feeling that his truest existence is his *neshama*, even when his physical matters of children, health and sustenance are not lacking, he knows and feels the extent of the pain of *gulus*, especially when we are in the time period of the Three Weeks. Therefore, he will be in this state of thirsting for the comfort of Redemption.

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

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

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

The entire Tehillim is recited early in the morning.

From the seventeenth of Tammuz and onward, the *Haftorah* of every Shabbos is one of the “*Shalosh D'Pur'onusa*” (three selections from the Navi concerning *gulus* and the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*). This Shabbos, maftir is *Divrei Yirmiyahu*.²⁸

Power of Three

In Chassidus it is explained that *Tilasa D'Piranusa* (the three [Haftoros] of disaster) correspond to the three intellectual faculties (Chochma, Binah and Daas) and by contrast, the “*Sheva D'nechemta*” (seven [Haftoros] of comfort) correspond to the seven emotional attributes (Chessed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchus).

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

We bless the month of Av. The *molad*²⁹ is on Friday night, 7:59 plus 9/18 of a minute.

Rosh Chodesh Av is next Shabbos.

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

²⁸ If the regular *Haftorah* of Parshas Pinchas is read by mistake (in some other years, it is not yet in the Three Weeks), the *Haftorah* of *Divrei Yirmiyahu* should be read next week, together with the second of the Three *Haftoros*, *Shim'u* (the two segments are consecutive in the source).

²⁹ First appearance of the New Moon. The Alter Rebbe writes, “It is proper to know the *molad* before blessing the new month.”

²⁶ Brought in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 4, pg. 25. There it says: (The author) was a student of the Mezritcher Maggid's students; certainly he's referring to them.

²⁷ *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Maasei*

Blessing & Song

Concerning the *niggun* of *Hu Elokeinu* (that we sing during *Kesser* of Musaf), the Rebbe says³⁰: It has already been several years since the singing of *Hu Elokeinu* on Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av was introduced, at a time most pertinent to the *geulah*. And yet this year, it didn't occur to anyone to start the *niggun*! Everyone was waiting for me to indicate with the finger that it is time to sing, but I was waiting to see if someone would have the *sechel* themselves and sing the *niggun*... What actually happened is that no one sang the *niggun*! How many times do we have to do it until it will be self-understood that this is how it must be done?! In a few days, we will likely receive a letter from someone overseas demanding: "How can it be that we didn't sing *Hu Elokeinu* on Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av?"

Today is a day of *farbrengen*.

At a *farbrengen* this Shabbos,³¹ the Rebbe told a well-known story of his father Rav Levi Yitzchok about wearing (non-leather) slippers on a Shabbos that falls out during days of mourning, and then continued: There are those who go around every *Shabbos Mevarchim* wondering whether they should be in *merirus* (bitter), or, perhaps, just *atzvus* (melancholy). Every other *Shabbos Mevarchim*, you can give them the benefit of the doubt that they are lacking sleep, weary, lazy, or the like. This *Shabbos Mevarchim*, the possibility of the benefit of the doubt rises because of the Three Weeks. However, the theme of the Three Weeks cannot be applied to Shabbos. As is known, certain provinces had the custom of singing *Lecha Dodi* to the "Tisha B'Av *niggun*" in this time period and later, there were terrible decrees in those areas.

So even if there is something lacking in the strength (of your *simchah*) every other *Shabbos Mevorchim*, this *Shabbos Mevarchim* needs to have an extra dose of happiness. As the

30) *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5740

31) From the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos*, 5714. In *Sichos Kodosh*, pg. 363 ff.

[Friediker] Rebbe stated, "*Shabbos Mevarchim* needs to be a joyous *Shabbos*!" So, in order to circumvent any suspicion, **this *Shabbos Mevorchim***, our happiness needs to be greater.

After Minchah, *Pirkei Avos* is said (with the addition of one Mishnah learned in depth with Chassidic interpretation). This week's section is *Perek Alef* (for the third time).

Shabbos ends **9:21pm**.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, THE 28TH OF TAMMUZ

The *Tekufah* of Tammuz³² begins tonight at **1:30am**.

FRIDAY, PARSHAS MATOS-MAASEI, THE 29TH OF TAMMUZ, EREV ROSH CHODESH AV

Say *shnayim mikra* today for the weekly *parshah* of *Matos-Maasei*.

When reading *shnayim mikra*, it is our custom to recite all of the *Haftoros*. Specifically, as is the *minhag* of our Rebbeim, on this *erev Shabbos*, recite the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Maasei* (starting with *Shim'u*). On Shabbos morning, we do this again again from the seventh *aliya* until the end of the *parshah*, accompanied with the *haftorah* of Shabbos Rosh Chodesh.

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

Light candles at **8:10 pm** (18 minutes before sunset).

32) The summer season, according to Chazal. These *tekufos* are listed in *Hayom Yom* and also the *Kolel Chabad* calendar. See Hebrew footnotes for sources on laws associated with this timespan.

לזכות
ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה
וזוגתו מרת שלומית בת שושנה
ובניהם ובנותיהם וכו'
שיחיו גודמאן

לזכות
הרה"ת שניאור זלמן
וזוגתו מרת שמחה רבקה שיחיו
וילדיהם:
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אברהם משה, חי' בת', חנה,
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קאבאטשניק

להצלחה רבה ומופלגה בכל ולנחת יהודי
חסידים מכל יוצאי חלציו שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת אברהם מיכאל בן
ר' יעקב שמעון הלוי ע"ה פלינט

לעילוי נשמת
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הירש ע"ה
שפריצער-יוסטמן
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