

# the Momentous Gathering

and its  
message today,

Insights into the  
mitzvah of Hakhel  
and its relevance today,  
collected from the Rebbe's  
sichos and letters

מקץ שבע שנים במעד שנת השמיטה  
בְּחַג הַסִּפּוֹת; בְּבוֹא כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל...  
הַקְהֵל אֶת הָעָם  
הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂיִם  
וְהַטַּף

וְגֵרָד אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעֲרֵיךָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ  
וְלְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ וְיִרְאוּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיכֶם  
וְשִׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת  
(ויקרא, י"ב).

## HAKHEL INSIGHT IMPRESSIONS

A person's experiences as a child can impact his entire life. That's why the Rebbe insisted we surround our young ones with only holy, positive influences. When the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, *Hakhel* was one such influential event. "Gather... the children in order that they learn." Learn? They are but infants, their minds not yet developed enough to comprehend the events surrounding them! But they too have so much to gain: impressions. The Alter Rebbe demonstrates<sup>1</sup> this by describing the man who watches a *tzadik* daven, pouring his heart out to Hashem. He doesn't have to do anything to get inspired; observing it alone can impact a person. There is much to benefit metaphysically too, as wherever there are ten Yidden, the *Shechina* rests. Hashem's presence affects a child positively, especially considering the amount of Jews there and what they're involved in.

(Adapted from *Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5713*, vol. 1, pgs. 66-67)

1. Torah Ohr, Miketz, 33, 4



## A TIMELY CONNECTION THE ETERNAL COMMUNITY

“Death doesn’t befall the public.” The Gemara rules thus in regards to a *korban chatas* that belongs to the community. In the case of a personal *korban chatas*, if the owner meets his demise, his offering dies as well, but when the animal is owned by the congregation, even were that entire generation to pass away, the sacrifice is still brought by their children. A community isn’t affected by death. On a deeper level, this statement means that our nation will exist forever; that the Jewish nation is immortal. So *Hakhel*, an event that gathers the nation, touches that eternity. That’s how Kislev and *Hakhel* connect. The conclusion, and therefore most integral part of this month, is Chanukah. The story it relates is one of the triumph of light over dark, and how because of the struggle and ensuing victory *כיתרון האור מתוך החושך*, the menorah became eternal. They defiled the oil of superior spiritual quality in the holiest of places, bringing impurity into Hashem’s home. Then, after finding a surviving jug and lighting it, defying their machinations, the festival of Chanukah came into being, a holiday which we will celebrate forever. “These Chanukah candles will never cease to be.” So Chanukah, like *Hakhel*, points us in the direction of the eternal. Just as *Hakhel* gathers a community that will last forever, Chanukah is also an everlasting *yom tov*. The idea of eternity will reach a whole new dimension when Moshiach arrives, when again, through trial and its subsequent ascent, timelessness will be attained.

*(Adapted from the Farbrengen of Shabbos parshas Toldos 5741)*

## WHAT CAN I DO? UNITED IN STUDY

On 6 Kislev we celebrate the completion of the 34th cycle of daily Rambam study and begin learning it anew. 5748 was a year of *Hakhel*. In a *hadran* on Rambam the Rebbe delivered that year in honor of the *siyum*, he emphasized the connection between *Hakhel* and studying Rambam. The Rambam writes in his introduction to *Mishneh Torah* that it is “the Oral Torah organized so that all can learn it... people old and young”—a theme shared by *Hakhel*, where all were united in Torah study. The Rebbe encouraged the assembled to arrange *siyumei hoRambam* with grandeur, befitting the honor that Torah deserves, and wished that their study not end in Rambam but continue to the Beis Yosef’s Shulchan Aruch and that of the Alter Rebbe; Chassidus and then ultimately the *Torah Chadasha* that Moshiach will soon teach.

*(Adapted from Sefer Hasichos 5748, vol. 1, pg. 251)*

