

# 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  
בהג הספות; בבוא כל ישראל...

הקהל את העם  
האנשים והנשים  
והטף

וגרד אשר בשעריה למען ישמעו  
ולמען ילמדו ויראו את ה' אלקיכם  
ושמרו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת  
(ויקרא, י"ב).

## HAKHEL INSIGHT A LESSON IN HUMILITY

Imagine this powerful scene: The king in all his finery ascends the wooden *bima* and, from the heightened platform, begins to read the Torah. The atmosphere of grandeur it generates, say *mefarshim*<sup>1</sup>, is the reason there is a *bima*. It makes for a more compelling and influential experience. The Rebbe, in a unique explanation about the *bima*'s necessity, teaches a fascinating lesson about a rather tough character trait to master: humility. Tough, because while everyone agrees that in general, humility and its cousin subservience are good characteristics, there are times when these qualities can bring negative outcomes. Choosing to be humble instead of standing up to a challenge can be damaging, and there are certainly times when subservience, if to a less than good influence, would be the wrong path to take.



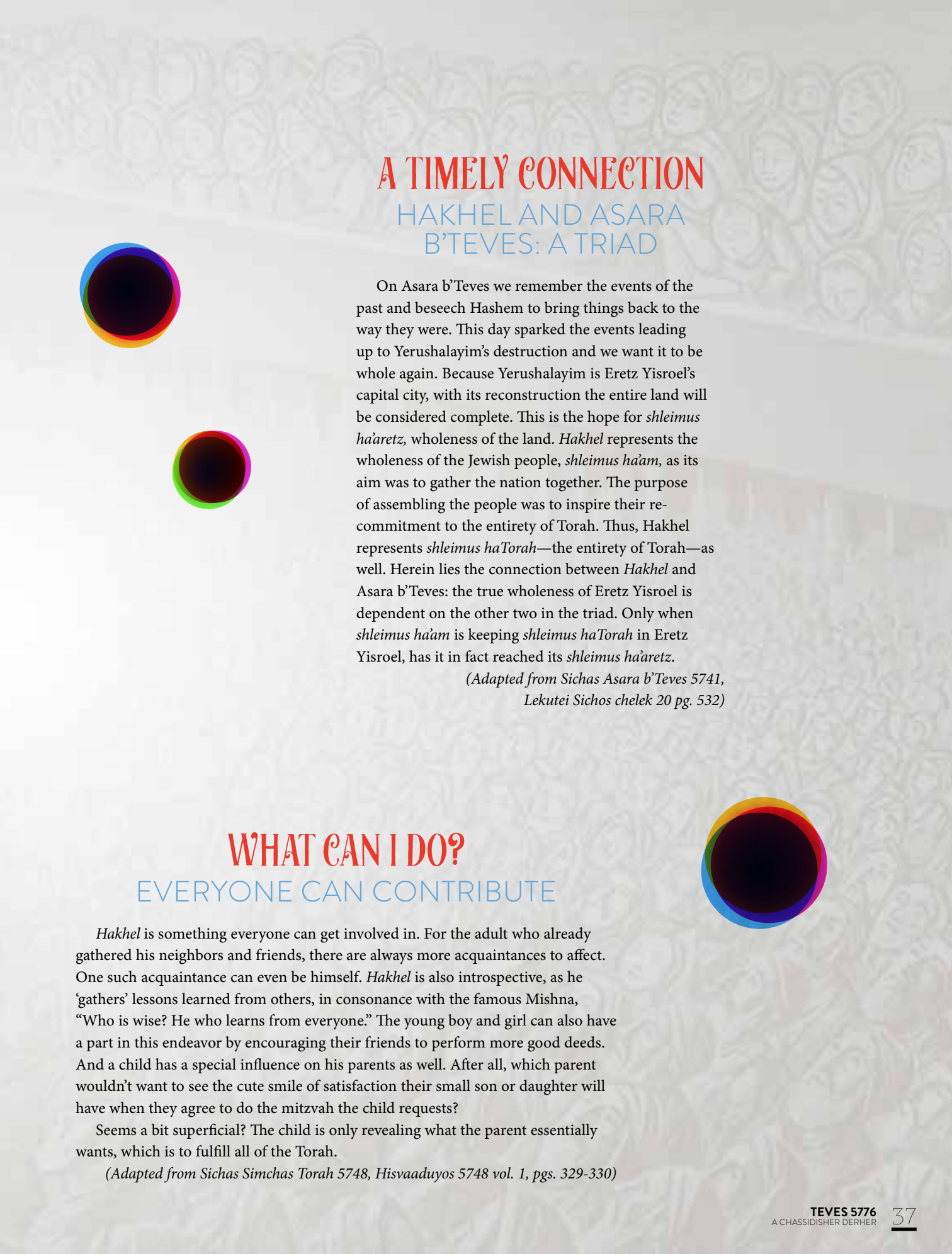
The king's job while reading the Torah was to instill *yiras Hashem* and submissiveness in the nation. He did so while standing on a *bima*, an elevated dais, to signify that while we ought to be humble generally, we must be tall and strong when faced with adversity or negative pressures. To provide further guidelines, the Rebbe points to the fact that the platform was in the *azarah*, a holy place. Only to defend holiness can we step out of the inconspicuousness of humility and enter the limelight. Also important is the material out of which the *bima* was made, wood, which connotes temporariness. Our short trip to assertive territory is to conclude with our return to humility.

(Adapted from *Lekutei Sichos chelek 19, pg. 328*)

1. Akeidas Yitzchok, Dvorim, 31, 1

## A TIMELY CONNECTION

### HAKHEL AND ASARA B'TEVES: A TRIAD

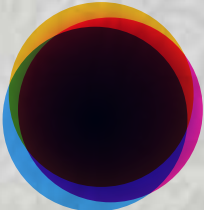


On Asara b'Teves we remember the events of the past and beseech Hashem to bring things back to the way they were. This day sparked the events leading up to Yerushalayim's destruction and we want it to be whole again. Because Yerushalayim is Eretz Yisroel's capital city, with its reconstruction the entire land will be considered complete. This is the hope for *shleimus ha'aretz*, wholeness of the land. *Hakhel* represents the wholeness of the Jewish people, *shleimus ha'am*, as its aim was to gather the nation together. The purpose of assembling the people was to inspire their recommitment to the entirety of Torah. Thus, *Hakhel* represents *shleimus haTorah*—the entirety of Torah—as well. Herein lies the connection between *Hakhel* and Asara b'Teves: the true wholeness of Eretz Yisroel is dependent on the other two in the triad. Only when *shleimus ha'am* is keeping *shleimus haTorah* in Eretz Yisroel, has it in fact reached its *shleimus ha'aretz*.

(Adapted from *Sichas Asara b'Teves 5741*,  
*Lekutei Sichos chelek 20 pg. 532*)

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE



*Hakhel* is something everyone can get involved in. For the adult who already gathered his neighbors and friends, there are always more acquaintances to affect. One such acquaintance can even be himself. *Hakhel* is also introspective, as he 'gathers' lessons learned from others, in consonance with the famous Mishna, "Who is wise? He who learns from everyone." The young boy and girl can also have a part in this endeavor by encouraging their friends to perform more good deeds. And a child has a special influence on his parents as well. After all, which parent wouldn't want to see the cute smile of satisfaction their small son or daughter will have when they agree to do the mitzvah the child requests?

Seems a bit superficial? The child is only revealing what the parent essentially wants, which is to fulfill all of the Torah.

(Adapted from *Sichas Simchas Torah 5748*, *Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 1*, pgs. 329-330)