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A PHOTO FROM CIRCA SHAVUOS 5741\*, PUBLISHED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

# Sixteen Questions on Rashi

SIVAN 5741\*



On Yud-Gimmel Iyar 5741\*, the Rebbe issued a *michtav kloli* that left many wondering. The Rebbe wrote of the world's deteriorating situation, and suggested that Yidden unite in the spirit of Hakhel, especially with gatherings of Torah, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*, and to strengthen *ahavas Yisroel*. Continuing in this vein at the farbrengen the following Shabbos, the Rebbe described leaders of rogue regimes who could bring destruction to the world by the touch of a button, adding that

perpetual unity through the *sefer Torah* would bring about perpetual peace. These words left no doubt that the world was in a precarious state, but many were puzzled as to what the Rebbe was referring to. No particularly worrying events were taking place at that time.

Immediately upon receiving the letter, Chassidim around the world sprang into action, spreading its message and fulfilling its call. As far as *achdus*

was concerned, Chassidim had no doubt that they had to boost their efforts in registering children for the *sefer Torah*, which, as the Rebbe had been stressing in the previous weeks, would unite *klal Yisroel*. These efforts only intensified after the Rebbe's strong words on Shabbos, about making a great *shturem* in the period between Lag Ba'omer and Shavuos regarding signing up children for the *sefer Torah*. The Rebbe also called upon the public to participate in the *taanis shaos* that was declared by Agudas Harabbanim for Tuesday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan.

The Rebbe also specified that in addition to those taking place worldwide, *kinusim* for children should be held at the Kosel Hama'aravi, Me'aras Hamachpeila, and Kever Rochel, as well as in Meron, Tzfas and Tverya.

### WEDNESDAY, 1 SIVAN

A children's rally took place this afternoon. At 3:15, one of the *mazkirim* entered and relayed a directive from the Rebbe to the emcee, Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht. Rabbi Hecht announced that the Rebbe requested for Reb Avrohom Lison, who had arrived from Eretz Yisroel, to perform for the children. The Rebbe added that if Reb Avrohom agreed, the performance should be after he joins the rally.

Before the Rebbe came in, the children were treated to a puppet show depicting various brawls between the *yetzer tov* and *yetzer hara*.

Upon the Rebbe's arrival at 3:30, the children davened Mincha. This was followed by the recital of the twelve *pesukim*. Rabbi Hecht then invited Reb Avrohom Lison to perform his acrobatic stunts. While the children sang, Reb Avrohom enthralled the crowd with his act. The Rebbe clapped along with the *niggun* and smiled a bit. This was followed by a *sicha*.

In the *sicha*, the Rebbe set forth that Tzivos Hashem's order of the day is to unite around the Torah and mitzvos, just as the Yidden received the Torah *k'ish echad b'lev echad*, this also being the message of this year—*Shnas Hakhel*. The Rebbe also explained the *pesukim* of *birchas kohanim*, from that day's lesson in *Chumash*. (After reciting each full *possuk* with Hashem's name, the Rebbe gave its respective explanation.)

After a brief introduction as to why he was going to do so, the Rebbe said a third *sicha* in Russian, for the children behind the Iron Curtain. In this *sicha*, the Rebbe called for all Jewish children to unite under the slogan, "Jewish children around the world—unite!" The Rebbe also reminded everyone to be sure to attend shul for *krias Aseres Hadibros* on Shavuos.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe then began singing "*Nyet Nyet Nikavo*," after which he handed out coins for *tzedakah* to the counselors, to distribute to the children.

### THURSDAY, 2 SIVAN

The Rebbe visited the Ohel.

### EREV SHABBOS, 3 SIVAN

The Rebbe sent an urgent telegram to Eretz Yisroel, in which he again urged that efforts in registering children for the *sefer Torah* be intensified.

Upon arriving at 770 before Shabbos, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Shlomo Cunin who was standing nearby and asked him if in California there remains a child that doesn't yet have a letter in the *sefer Torah*...

### SHABBOS PARSHAS NASO, 4 SIVAN

During Shacharis, at "*Vayehi b'neso ha'aron*," the Rebbe suddenly turned toward the crowd and began clapping. They began singing "*Ana avda*," and the Rebbe clapped along for quite a long time.

At 1:30, the *farbrenge* began. In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe pointed out the uniqueness of this Shabbos as the one that "blesses" Shavuos. Therefore, although the unification of *elyonim* and *tachtonim* didn't occur until Shavuos, and we are not there yet, we can already begin the *avoda* now.

The Rebbe continued to learn a lesson from this: When a Yid is busy with great, lofty things, and a boy approaches him asking which *bracha* is recited on a cup of water, or he cries out "We want Moshiach now!" the Yid may claim that it is not his duty to interrupt his *dveikus* and descend to the child's level. But this Shabbos teaches us that we must bring about the link between *tachtonim* and *elyonim*. When the Yid claims that it is beneath his dignity, that may be true, but "Why didn't he think of it when he was immersed in eating kugel?!"

When the Rebbe listed the questions on Rashi, he turned to Reb Zalmon Jaffe and asked how many were asked so far. When Reb Zalmon produced the number 14, the Rebbe responded that since *birchas kohanim* (the subject matter of that particular Rashi) contains 15 words, he would add another question. The Rebbe added that in order to show that he's not being stingy with questions, he would ask one more... The Rebbe also posed questions on his father's notes on Zohar, and a  *mishna* in Pirkei Avos.

The Rebbe then brought up the fact that the air conditioner was still broken, for the second Shabbos in a row, and he was discussing it because he was worried it wouldn't be fixed in time for Shavuos. If so, it would be the third time in a row that people are suffering from the heat, a dangerous *chazaka*. The Rebbe added that those who think that he wouldn't farbreng as long due to the heat are being delusional. Just as them sleeping in front of the Rebbe doesn't compel him to shorten the farbrengen, the same goes for the heat...

Later in the *sicha*, the Rebbe urged Chassidim to throw themselves into signing up children for the *sefer Torah*, and instructed that a list be compiled before Shavuos of how many children were registered, and another list should be drawn up on Yud-Beis Sivan. The Rebbe added that based on Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai's words, "שמהא מורא דם שמים עליכם כמורא דבשר ודם" ("the fear of Heaven shall be upon you like the fear of flesh and blood"),<sup>2</sup> the list should be sent here, to the Rebbe *Nessi Doreinu's* domain, which is in the same city as his Ohel and *Tziyun*.

## SUNDAY, EREV SHAVUOS

The Rebbe's directive at yesterday's farbrengen strengthened the sense of urgency amongst Chassidim to utilize every moment toward this effort. Indeed, today—Erev Shavuos(!)—Chassidim all over the world scrambled to sign up more and more children for the *sefer Torah*. This afternoon, in the final hours before Shavuos, the Rebbe received the updated figure of children throughout the world who had bought a letter in the *sefer Torah*.

## MONDAY, FIRST DAY OF SHAVUOS

Many guests came for Yom Tov, especially *rabbanim* from around the world. The Rebbe

displayed a joyous aura, encouraging the singing before and after the *tefillos*.

Following Mincha, Chassidim went on *tahalucha* to Boro Park, to help increase the local Yidden's *simchas hachag*. As is the custom, the Rebbe personally came out to see off the procession, clapping along with the singing. Many children stood opposite the Rebbe, and he encouraged their singing for a long time.

## TUESDAY, SECOND DAY OF SHAVUOS

The Rebbe entered the Shavuos farbrengen at 8:15 p.m. and washed his hands for a *seuda*. He then instructed the *gabbaim* to announce that all present should also wash.

In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe explained that the central *chiddush* of *matan Torah* was with *bnei Yisroel*, that Hashem chose them. This stems from Hashem's essence—*atzmus umehuso yisbarech*—which is not limited or constrained in any way. The Rebbe added that the lesson from this is: when we meet another Yid we must remember that this is someone whom Hashem—*atzmus umehuso yisbarech*—personally chose!

In the second *sicha* (which was quite lengthy) the Rebbe elaborated on the idea of *achdus* at *matan Torah*, and presented lessons to learn from this regarding assisting others: To do so in good cheer, and promptly, without "going to *mikveh*" beforehand, for one does not know what will happen to the needy person in the meanwhile.

In the *sicha* following the *maamar*, the Rebbe said that the world is currently in a state of *tohu vavohu*, adding that even among Yidden, upon whom the world's existence depends, there lacks unity. The Rebbe again urged Chassidim to register children in the *sefer Torah*, and added that in order to connect this with something physical, he would distribute three bottles of *mashke*: one for the person in charge of registration here, the second for his counterparts in Eretz Yisroel, and the third for the children behind the Iron Curtain.

When it came time for Eretz Yisroel's representative to receive the *mashke*, the Rebbe loudly declared: "The rav of Kfar Chabad!" upon which Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi came up and received the bottle. The Rebbe also called for "Yirmiyahu ben Devora" (Professor Herman Branover) to come up, and gave him the bottle for those behind the Iron Curtain.

At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe instructed the *gabbai* to announce about the upcoming *kinus Torah*. He then requested for the *Niggun Hachana*, *Daled Bavos*, and *Nye Zhuritz* to be sung, after which the Rebbe began singing “*Nyet nyet nikavo*.” The farbrengen ended at 1:45 a.m. with the Rebbe leading the bentching. Overall, it was an especially joyous farbrengen.

Maariv then took place, after which the Rebbe made *havdala* on the *kos* from bentching and proceeded to distribute *kos shel bracha* to all present. The Rebbe was very joyous during the *chaluka*. He encouraged the singing with the energetic waving of his hand, and instructed many individuals to be more *b’simcha*. When a boy wearing a Tzivos Hashem hat passed, the Rebbe gave him a salute. At the *chaluka’s* end at 3:15 a.m. the Rebbe began singing “*Ki V’simcha*.”

After Yom Tov, news began coming in about Israel’s surprise raid on Iraq’s nuclear reactor on Erev Shavuos. Three weeks after the Rebbe had issued the *michtav kloli*, as he was receiving the numbers of children who had bought letters in the *sefer Torah*, Israel had reduced a major security threat to ashes.

Israel’s prime minister, Menachem Begin, addressed the nation in an emotional speech, asserting that “the air force’s operation saved Eretz Yisroel from a second holocaust. The sword has finally been removed from the neck of the Jewish people...” Only now did people begin to understand what the Rebbe was referring to weeks ago, about the world’s precarious state.

Now that the public became aware of the operation’s surprising success, its direct link to the chain of *ruchniyusdike* initiatives the Rebbe set in motion throughout the last few weeks is plain to see.<sup>3</sup>

### WEDNESDAY, 8 SIVAN

The Rebbe visited the Ohel.

### THURSDAY, 9 SIVAN

At 8:00 p.m. the Rebbe began receiving guests who had come for Shavuos for *yechidus*. The Rebbe saw people until 3:10 a.m. (with a short break to daven Maariv.)

*The following are some snippets from tonight’s yechidus:*



THE REBBE SITS DOWN TO RECITE THE BRACHA ACHARONA AFTER KOS SHEL BROCHA, MOTZAEI SHAVUOS 5741\*.

The Rebbe told Rabbi Sholom Ber Wolpo that, in his great sorrow, all that he had feared about giving up *shtachim*, and “peace” is indeed happening. The Rebbe asked that he publish a second edition of his *sefer “Daas Torah”* (about the prohibition of giving away *shtachim*), and to add that unfortunately we are now seeing all of the concerns materializing!

A boy from France entered *yechidus* with a hat of a ranking officer in Tzivos Hashem. The Rebbe asked him what his rank was, to which he responded that he doesn’t have a rank. The Rebbe smiled and said that in order to wear such a hat, one must attain a number of ranks and points...

Rabbi Kroll of Moshav Chemed was in *yechidus* for about 20 minutes. When he came out he related the Rebbe’s displeasure with the sense of contentment among Chareidi circles from the amount of *yeshivos* for *baalei teshuva* that currently existed. The Rebbe contended that there is no place for satisfaction, because a growing number of Yidden are drifting in the other direction (and even more *yeshivos* are necessary)!

The Rebbe also expressed his concern about the Chareidim’s standing in Eretz Yisroel, intimating that he foresees a decline in *frumme* power in the upcoming Knesset.

The Rebbe also told him that the United States is very happy with Israel’s bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, but for obvious reasons it can’t express its joy openly.



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KOS SHEL BROCHA, MOTZAEI SHAVUOS 5741\*.

## SHABBOS PARSHAS BEHAALOSECHA, 11 SIVAN

The farbrengen began at 1:30. In the first *sicha* the Rebbe discussed the idea of *yemei hatashlumin* of Shavuos. Despite the fact that the *avoda* of Shavuos was completed, we can always increase in *kedusha* during *yemei hatashlumin*.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe said that the *simcha* that certain individuals were lacking over Shavuos must be made up for. These people sat in depression or were just sleeping, nothing could awaken them from their slumber.

The Rebbe declared that we have nothing aside for the Torah, and when the Torah commands us to rejoice, we must be happy!

Following the *sicha*, Chassidim sang a *freiliche niggun*, and the Rebbe energetically clapped along.

At the farbrengen's conclusion, the Rebbe encouraged the Chassidim to intensify their efforts in registering children for the *sefer Torah*, until 15 Sivan. The farbrengen ended at 5:40 p.m.

## SUNDAY, 12 SIVAN

The Rebbe visited the Ohel today.

## MONDAY, 13 SIVAN

At 5:00 p.m. the Rebbe entered the big *zal* and addressed the *talmidos hamesaymos* (Beis Rivkah graduates) for 50 minutes.

In the *sicha*, the Rebbe explained that the idea of vacation exists only in terms of their scholastic schedule. There is no break, however, from Torah and mitzvos, "our life." On the contrary, vacation should be utilized to gain energy for Torah and mitzvos.

The Rebbe also explained the lesson we learn from Yud-Gimmel Sivan, the day following the *tashlumin* of Shavuos: on this day, Torah's greatness is expressed in that it leads to action. So too during vacation, a little Torah study causes a Yid to act totally differently than others around him.

The Rebbe also encouraged the students to make *mesibos Shabbos* and the like during vacation, and to sign children up for the *sefer Torah*.

At 8:00 p.m. the Rebbe began receiving guests for *yechidus*, lasting until 2:30 a.m.

One of those who entered *yechidus* was Yehuda Isk (the man with "electric hands"). The Rebbe told him that he shouldn't limit his work to Chabad, rather he should work with all circles. The Rebbe also discussed his healing program with him. At the end of the *yechidus*, Yehuda asked the Rebbe for a bottle of *mashke* for the Beis Chabad in Cholon (which helped him during his illness). The Rebbe replied that he would give it at the farbrengen on Shabbos.

## WEDNESDAY, 15 SIVAN

The Rebbe visited the Ohel.

The number of children who bought letters in the *sefer Torah* since the Rebbe launched the campaign to date amount to 185,000, 125,000 of whom are from Eretz Yisroel! **T**

1. The previous year, 5740, the Rebbe started the campaign of bringing children to hear the *Aseres Hadibros*. See *Children at the Forefront*, Derher Sivan 5774, for a full account of the *mitvza*.
2. Brachos 28b.
3. For the full story of *mitvza ois b'sefer Torah*, and its connection with Israel's success in the raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, see *Unite the Children*, Derher Teves 5776. See also *Gather to Save the Nation*, Derher Sivan 5776.