

The Weekly *Farbrenge*



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

ELUL (II)

MAKING THE BEST OF THIS TIME

When the Mittlerer Rebbe was five years old, he studied under Reb Ber the *melamed*, in the home of Reb Avraham the doctor. Once he overheard Reb Avraham bemoaning, "We are already far into Elul, but I haven't yet prepared the leeches!" Leeches were used for healing purposes and were only out during the warm summer months.

When the Mittlerer Rebbe came home after *cheder*, he used to spend time in the company of the chassidim who were in the room next to the Alter Rebbe's room. One day he saw them sitting around and talking, when they suddenly began to laugh. Hearing them, the young boy reprimanded them, "We are deep into Elul, you haven't yet prepared the leeches, yet you sit here laughing?!"

And he left the room.

They immediately assumed that this was a *vort* he had heard from his father, the Alter Rebbe, and began to think deeply into its meaning. They concluded that just as leeches are used to draw out a patient's diseased or overheated blood, during the month of Elul one should do away with one's negative desires in preparation for Rosh HaShana.

When word of their discussion reached the Alter Rebbe, he said, "Such is the way of the Baal Shem Tov – to learn a lesson in *avodas HaShem* from every physical thing that one sees or hears. Whoever follows this path and uses all physical things for *avodas HaShem*, will instill in himself and in his descendants a spark of inspiration in *avodas HaShem*."

Chassidim recall: That Rosh HaShana, the floor was wet with tears from the impact of the Mittlerer Rebbe's *vort*, and on Simchas Torah, the shoes of the chassidim were worn out and torn by the exuberant dancing inspired by the Alter Rebbe's promise.

(סה"ש תרצ"ו ע' 5, תו"מ חל"ה ע' 126)

The chossid Reb Foleh Kahn related:

Once, as I was sitting alone, I heard the Rebbe Rashab muttering to himself, "It's Elul in the world and time is just flying away." Hearing these words, a shiver went down my spine.

When I later shared this experience with my fellow chassidim, they all told me, "Don't you understand? The Rebbe was speaking to you."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 145)

During the month of Elul, the Rebbeim would be preoccupied with their personal *avoda*, leaving less time than usual for correspondence. Chassidim would therefore keep their correspondence to a minimum, to allow the Rebbe to prepare for Rosh HaShana.

(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' יא)

CONSIDER

Why would the Rebbeim spend more time on personal *avoda* during the month of Elul? Is caring for the needs of *klal Yisroel* not enough of a holy endeavor?

What constitutes the primary *avodah* during Elul: inner *teshuvah* and *cheshbon hanefesh* or checking *mezuzos* and other *mitzvos*?

PREPARING ONESELF

The month of Elul is called the month of *teshuva*. It is a most auspicious time to make a *cheshbon* and to correct whatever needs to be corrected. For this reason, we sound the *shofar* to awaken us to do *teshuva*.

Though we are assured that during this month HaShem greets us lovingly, nevertheless it is incumbent upon us to reveal those thirteen *midos harachamim* through *davening*, learning and *teshuvah*.

(טור אור"ח סי' תקפ"א, שיח"ק תשל"ח ח"ג ע' 333)

In the year תרצ"ז (1937), at the request of the Pupa Rebbe, the Friediker Rebbe wrote a letter addressed to all *talmidei yeshiva*, arousing them to prepare fittingly for Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur:

"The month of Elul is a time for accounting of the past year, when one regrets whatever was negative, and commits to fulfill *mitzvos behiddur*, to be diligent in one's Torah and *davening*, and to cultivate *middos*

tovos. The Baal Shem Tov taught that the *avoda* of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur depends on one's *avoda* during the month of Elul and the week of *Selichos*. One's emphasis should be on learning *Chassidus* and other *seforim* that will heighten his *yiras Shamayim*."

As to the *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim, the Friediker Rebbe required that they increase their learning of *Chassidus* and *daven* deliberately. "What matters most is not the study, but the *cheshbon hanefesh* at night and in the morning. Every individual should arouse his friend concerning *middos tovos* and commitment to proper conduct."

(א"ק מהר"י"צ ח"ד ע' קלא, אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' ג-ד)

During the month of Elul one should designate more time for *davening* than usual. The Rebbe writes that similarly in the realm of Torah learning, one should learn those areas of Torah which focus on *avodas Hashem*, and those *maamorim* of Chassidus which arouse one to do *teshuvah*.

(מט"א סי' תקפ"א סי"א באל"מ, א"ק ח"י"ט ע' תלב)

SPECIAL PRACTICES

The chossid Reb Avrohom Pariz was in charge of the *pidyon shvuyim* fund in Lubavitch. One day in Elul, the Rebbe Rashab sent him on a mission to Vitebsk, and requested that while there he should buy a *Tehillim* for him. The Rebbe then added with a smile, "Now is the season for it."

We have a tradition from the Baal Shem Tov, who heard it from his Rebbe, Achiya HaShiloni, that each day of Elul and *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* we should recite three *kapitlach* of *Tehillim*, concluding the *sefer* on Yom Kippur.

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 145, היום יום א' אולול)

During this month, it is the custom of *anshei mayseh* to check their *tefillin* and *mezuzos* and any other *mitzva* that needs attention. The Rebbe urged that this directive be widely publicized.

(מט"א סי' תקפ"א, סה"ש תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 610)

During the month of Elul and *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* we *bentch* one another with *berachos* for a *kesiva vachasima tova* and *leshana tova umesuka*. This exchange of *berachos*, which should be done both in speech and in writing, increases the *berachos* that HaShem bestows upon Yidden.

(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' ט)

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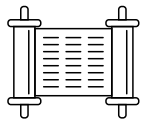


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ERUV WITH NON-JEWISH NEIGHBORS

I live in an apartment building with non-*frum* Jews and (*l'havdil*) non-Jews. What must I do to be able to carry?

In order to discourage sharing a courtyard with non-Jews, (which could lead to mingling), Chazal did not allow the use of *eruv chatzeiros* to permit carrying in the shared space. Instead, Chazal required the Jews to “rent” the non-Jew’s property – making it the Jew’s property where he may carry – something which many non-Jews wouldn’t agree to since they suspected witchcraft.¹ There is no minimum for the “rent” and he can rent a large space for even one penny.

One may “rent” the property from the owner’s family members or workers who have access to the property. Alternatively, by getting permission to put something down in the property, one gains “ownership” over the property.

In city *eruv*, it is likewise necessary to make an *eruv chatzeiros* and to “rent” from the non-Jewish homeowners or someone else who has access to the homes. Some say that one can “rent” from the electric or water companies who have the right to enter the homes to check meters and place their bags down for the time they are there.² However, others question this since that they don’t have access all of the time and to all parts of the home, and it is only for a very short period of time.

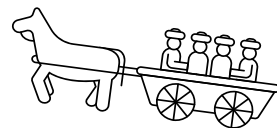
Some say that one can rent from policemen who can block off the streets. This will permit carrying in the street, but not into (non-Jewish) homes.³ However, the Alter Rebbe implies that they must have access to the homes in order to rent at all.⁴ Furthermore, non-Jewish property that is entirely open to the street (i.e. a front yard) and was not “rented,” causes the streets to be prohibited.⁵

Poskim write that government officials who can seize homes in times of war or a sheriff who can enter homes to investigate, are considered to have access to the actual homes, and can therefore “rent” them. Likewise, a building’s superintendent who can enter the apartments without permission in case of an emergency (i.e. a major leak), may “rent” on behalf of all the tenants.

In practice, whenever feasible (such as in a small apartment building), one should rent from each of the non-Jewish residents individually. Otherwise, one may “rent” from the superintendent or police, but then it is preferable not to carry into the yards or homes of non-Jews or non-religious Jews who aren’t part of the *eruv*.⁶

הבית. אלא שיש להעיר שממשעות דברי רבינו בס"י ש"פ יש אפשרות לבטל הרשות או להשכיר החצר ויהא מותר לטלטל שם, אלא ששם לוקח מהבעלים עצמם ולא משכירו ולקטנו. למעשה בשעת הדוחק המנהג הוא להקל בזה.
5. ס' קרית אריאל ע"נ י"ו הע' כ"ב.
6. ס' יסודי עירובין ע"נ י"ו. והוא ע"פ משנת"ל שלמעשה מקילים בזה בשעת הצורך.

1. שו"ע"ר ס"י שפ"ב.
2. ראה ס' יסודי עירובין ע"נ י"ג שהרחיב בזה.
3. ע"פ הרמ"א בס"י שצ"א. וראה ארחות שבת ח"ג פכ"ח הע' קמ"ח שהביא כמה מאחרוני דורינו בזה.
4. שהרי בס"י שצ"א שם השמיט את הרמ"א. ובס"י שפ"ב ועוד כתב שכירו ולקטנו שבביתו ולא התפקד שבחצירו. וכאן הרי למטרה יש להם זכות על הרחוב ולא על



REB YEHUDA EBER

Reb Yuda Eber was born on *Isru Chag Pesach* 5661 (1901) to Reb Avrohom Yaakov, a *melamed* in Krasniluky. He learned in Lubavitch, Schedrin and Rostov. In Kislev 5686 (1925) he married Freida, the daughter of Reb Mendel Schneerson, a great-grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek. He taught in several branches of Tomchei Tmimim in Russia. In 5690 (1930) he managed to escape to Riga, Latvia where the Frierdiker Rebbe was then living. Shortly after, he was appointed as *rosh yeshiva* of Tomchei Tmimim in Warsaw (which later on moved to Otvozk). Eventually he was also put in charge of raising funds for the central *yeshiva* and all its branches. He was a great *gaon*, and his deep *shiurim* were exceptionally clear; several of them were printed by his *talmidim* in the *sefer Sharei Yehuda* at the Rebbe’s request. Being a talented *baal menagen*, he taught many *nigunim* to the *bochurim* in a very orderly fashion. Some *nigunim* he composed himself. He was killed by the Nazis together with his wife and two children in Kislev 5702 (1941), HY”D.

Once in one of the branches of the underground *yeshiva* in Russia, two police officers walked in on Reb Yuda giving a *shiur*, catching him red-handed. Reb Yuda immediately stopped the *shiur*. The officers asked why he did not continue, to which he replied that he was not their teacher, rather he had just answered a question they asked him. They didn’t accept the excuse and he was arrested. His punishment was to clean

the streets of the city. He would do so wearing his Shabbos clothes, demonstrating that one should be proud to be punished for teaching Torah. Although he cleaned the streets by day, he continued to give the *shiur* by night. A non-Jewish woman saw him sweeping and took away the broom, asserting that a rabbi should not do such a task. She did so several times until the officer watching him told him that he was thereby exempt.

(תשורה אקונוב טבת תשס"ט ע"ה)

Reb Nissan Nemenov related:

At a certain point Reb Yuda served as the *mashgiach* in one of the branches of Tomchei Temimim. He requested from the Frierdiker Rebbe to excuse him from this post, explaining: “If I see a learned *bochur* coming five minutes late, although the five minutes will not really affect his learning, I have to rebuke and sometimes penalize him. However, if I see a less learned *bochur* coming on time, I have to pat him on the back!”

The Rebbe responded, “Explain to the talented *bochur* that by coming late he is like a person that comes to the train station with all of his baggage but misses the train. On the other hand, somebody else might not have all his belongings with him but he at least makes the train. The talented *bochur* will be successful in his learning, but he will not merit being on my train!”

(אוצר החסידים ברחבי תבל ע"ה)

A Moment with *The Rebbe*



MATERIALISTIC COMFORTS

In the summer of 5720 (1960), a chossid wrote to the Rebbe to share the good news that he had purchased and moved into a house in Newark, NJ.

In a 5 Elul letter, after giving his *bracha* on the move, the Rebbe cautions him to be wary of what the *Rebbeim* termed “*balebatish hanochos* (material focuses)” which pull a person down.

“Some most-painful evidence has reached me, that you, your brother-in-law, and others have reached this plateau: you are content with

your *nigla* and Chassidus studies and *avodas hatefilah*. You also find your *hafotzas hamayonos* work satisfactory.

“It is just that since a person naturally must advance, you have made sure to progress in every area of bodily luxuries, including a pleasurable afternoon nap...”

The Rebbe concluded painfully: “Is the purpose of your *neshama*’s coming down into her body? Truly for this ‘ascent?’”

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