

# The Weekly Farbrengens



580 • לחמן ישמעו • שופטים תש"פ •  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## ELUL (I)

### A UNIQUE TIME

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai for the final forty days to receive the second set of *luchos*. At the conclusion of those days, on Yom Kippur, HaShem forgave the Yidden completely and that day was designated as a day of forgiveness. For this reason, those forty days are auspicious for *teshuvah*.

(פרקי דר"א פמ"ו, וראה דברי נחמי' השלמה לסי' תקפ"א)

Though the month of Elul is an earnest time of *teshuvah*, it is during this very time that we experience a particular closeness to HaShem.

In a classic *maamar*, the Alter Rebbe explains this by the *mashal* of a king who, on the way to his palace, walks through the fields. There, everyone can approach him and he greets them all with a smiling countenance, until he enters his palace with only his chosen courtiers.

So, too, during the month of Elul, as HaShem prepares to enter his throne room on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, He passes through the mundane world. Thus, we are able to connect to Him more easily than usual. At that time in particular, He inspires us and empowers us to do *teshuvah* and return to Him.

(לקוטי תורה דברים לבא)

In Lubavitch, even though *Shabbos Mevarchim* Elul would still be a clear and sunny day, the air felt different. There was a smell of Elul in the air; you could feel the first stirrings of a *teshuvah-breeze*. Every person there was beginning to grow a little more deliberate, a little more thoughtful, and allowing his weekday affairs to fade from his memory.

From *Shabbos Nachamu* onwards, people would already begin to learn in groups after *Maariv*, in order to "cry out in the night." By the time *Shabbos Mevarchim* Elul came around one could sense the atmosphere of Elul. Anxiously, people now awaited the time when they could say "*LeDovid: HaShem ori*"; eagerly, they awaited the first blast of the *shofar* that would announce that the gates of *chodesh harachamim* had been thrown open. The *maamarei Chassidus* of *Shabbos Mevarchim* Elul, opening with the familiar words *Ani LeDodi*, were permeated with

the spirit of Elul.

Every day of Elul was quite unlike every other day of the year. Lying in bed at six o'clock in the morning, you could hear that the *vasikin-minyan* in the *beis midrash* had already finished *Shacharis*. You could already hear the *shofar*. It woke you up to the fact that the world was now filled with Elul. You dress hastily, a trifle dissatisfied with yourself for having somehow slept in so late. You recall that this was the time that Moshe Rabbeinu spent on the mountain. These are propitious days, days in which you can accomplish more than usual. You tell yourself that you really should become a *mensch*: you cannot let these hours be lost on sleep.

By the time you arrive at the *beis midrash* you find quite a crowd already there. Some are saying *Tehillim*, some are learning *Chassidus*, some are reading *Tikkunei Zohar*, while others, whether standing or sitting, are davening.

(לקו"ד ח"א ע' 230)

correct any problems to ensure the business is profitable, the same applies in *ruchniyus* matters. After having served HaShem, and been occupied with Torah and *mitzvos* throughout the year, we have a month to make an accurate account of the past year, fix that which needs correcting and strengthen our positive traits. Through this excellent preparation, we merit a good and sweet year, *b'gashmiyus* and *b'ruchniyus*.

(היום יום כ"ז מנחם אב)

In the year תשי"ג (1953), the Rebbe gave instructions to the administration of the Yeshiva on how to inspire the *talmidim* with *yiras Shamayim* during the month of Elul: Firstly, they were to impress upon them the seriousness of the month by relating how *chassidim* in Lubavitch conducted themselves throughout Elul. Secondly, for fifteen minutes after *Maariv*, the *talmidim* were to learn *avodah'dike maamorim* relevant to this time of year.

(מיומנו של הר"ד משה לברטוב, וראה סה"מ תש"א ע' 207)

The month of Elul is compared to an *ir miklat*, to which one can escape from the *yetzer hara* who attempts to take revenge on a person.

At a *farbrengen* in תשי"א (1951), the Rebbe delivered the following message which he asked to be publicized in all possible ways:

"HaShem tells the Yidden: 'I am giving you 30 days during which you can escape your old negative habits and follow the Elul lifestyle, thereby correcting the past, and you will be spared from the *kitrugim* of the *yetzer hara*. Through *teshuvah* you will be written and sealed for a good sweet year.'

(לקו"ת להאריז"ל פ' משפטים, לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 623)

During one *farbrengen*, the Rebbe spoke of the joyful attitude to be had during Elul. Though one should be bothered by any wrongdoings they may have done throughout the year, yet thinking of their closeness to HaShem during this month should bring one to tremendous joy. As discussed in Tanya, distress over ones wrongdoings should not detract from the joy of the *neschama*.

(שיח"ק תשל"ד ח"ב ע' 467)

### CONSIDER

How does the joy of HaShem's presence not detract from the seriousness of the time?

How is it possible to feel the "Elul air" today if one's surroundings may not reflect the specialty of this time?

At one *farbrengen* the Rebbe emphasized that the Frierdiker Rebbe told this narrative long after he had left Lubavitch, in order to inspire others to follow this lifestyle. Even today, every Yid is capable of feeling the "Elul air."

(התוודעויות תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2668)

### ELEVATED AVODA

The month of Elul is a month of reckoning. Just as a businessman must take stock every so often and



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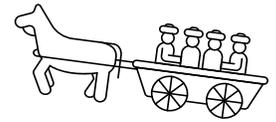
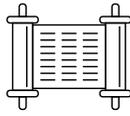
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GOOD NEWS.



## REB ELCHONON SHAGALOV

Reb Yitzchok Elchonon *Halevi* Shagalov was born in the year 5658 (1898) to Reb Yehuda Leib Shagalov. He learned in Lubavitch for a full eight years. He married Maryasha, the daughter of Reb Bentzion Garelik from Zhlobin, and together they settled in Homil. At first he collected money for both Tomchei Tmimim in Homil and *maamod* (support for the Rebbe and his activities). Then the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to become a *shochet* and *mohel*. He was arrested on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei 5698 (1937) and was later shot in prison on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Teves 5698 (1937), HY"D.

headquarters. They wanted to know who runs the underground *yeshivos*, who is still observing *Yiddishkeit* in Homil, and so forth. They tried to trap me with different sorts of questions—they tortured me, broke bottles over my head, jammed my fingers into the wall...but *baruch Hashem* I kept a clear head and denied it all, and they couldn't prove that I was involved in anything illegal."

(*A Life of Sacrifice*, p. 57)

A young man once entered the *shul* in Homil and murmured, "I want to make a *bris*. Where is Reb Elchonon?" His wife Maryasha took down his address, and later when Reb Elchonon came home she told him what had happened. "It could be a trap", she cautioned. "Maybe it's one of the NKVD." Reb Elchonon replied, "This could be a genuine *bris*. As long as I live I will put my life in danger to place the stamp of Avraham Avinu on Jewish children, as this will serve them as a constant reminder of their Jewish identity." Reb Elchonon left the house and only returned home the following morning. "I was taken to the NKVD

Maryasha once sent her daughter Shula to a certain address with a mission to bring her father home. Shula knocked on the door and a *chossid* invited her inside. He bolted the door securely and began moving a large table standing in middle of the room. The man bent down and removed three planks of wood from the floor where the table had stood. Shula could hardly believe the scene that met her eyes; there, under the floor, sat her father Reb Elchonon with a candle, teaching Torah to six children. The space where they sat was so small that it was impossible to rise from a sitting position without banging their heads against the wooden planks of the floor!

(*A Life of Sacrifice*, p. 65)

## A Moment with *The Rebbe*



### THE FULL DEPTH OF TORAH

Reb Nachman Yosef Twersky relates:

When my uncle Reb Itzikel, the Rachevstrivker Rebbe of Borough Park, came to New York for his own *chassuna* in 5714 (1954), he merited a *yechidus*.

The Rebbe asked him if they could talk in learning, and he agreed. When the Rebbe inquired which *masechta* he was learning, he answered that the *yeshiva* was learning Bava Basra, but he personally was involved in Menachos. Again, the Rebbe asked which *masechta* he prefers discussing, and he settled on Menachos.

The Rebbe posed a question on a Rosh in Menachos. My uncle answered two

classic answers that are brought in the commentaries, and the Rebbe added another two of his own.

Then, the Rebbe demonstrated how each of these four answers has a difficulty, leaving a gaping hole in the *sugya*. The Rebbe proceeded to explain the *inyan* in light of Chassidus, through which all the issues were resolved.

My uncle says, "I saw that the Rebbe was literally ready to discuss any area of *Shas*, to prove that Chassidus is a necessity in order to grasp the full depth of Torah."

(*Shemen Sason Mechaveracha*, page 125)

## HAMMOCKS ON SHABBOS

### Can I use a tree hammock on Shabbos?

Chazal decreed that one may not use a tree for any purpose on Shabbos or *yom tov*, as a safeguard against detaching a branch or fruit—even if the particular tree has no branches or fruit. For this reason, one may not even lean on a tree if it will shake.<sup>1</sup>

One may not climb a tree, and one who does so purposely is penalized to remain there the entire Shabbos.<sup>2</sup> Placing an object on the tree or taking something from the tree—e.g. a ball that got caught—is also considered using the tree, and whatever was on the tree when Shabbos began becomes *muktzeh* for the entire Shabbos.<sup>3</sup> (Even if the only available shofar is on a tree, it may not be taken although it means missing *tekias shofar*.)<sup>4</sup> One should not put something on a tree on Friday that he may come to use on Shabbos.<sup>5</sup>

Even something supported by the tree directly—e.g. a hook attached to the tree or a ladder leaning on the tree—may not be used. However, items that are indirectly supported by the tree may be used. Thus, if there is a hook with a basket hanging from it, one may put things in and take things out of the basket, but not remove the basket, which would constitute 'using' the hook itself.<sup>6</sup>

To be considered "indirectly supported," there must be two separate entities—one that is attached to the tree and another that is attached to or leaning on the first. If it is one entity with two parts, the entire entity is considered directly supported by the tree. Therefore, if a hook is nailed into the tree, the hook is considered directly attached to the tree and not merely being supported by the nail.<sup>7</sup>

If a hammock or swing is nailed or tied directly to a tree, it is forbidden to be used on Shabbos since the hammock seat and the rope are one entity that is directly supported by the tree. If, however, the hammock is hung from a hook or peg that is attached to the tree, one may use the hammock provided the tree doesn't shake.<sup>8</sup> If the tree does shake, it is prohibited even with two entities, since that constitutes using the tree. Likewise, hanging it on Shabbos would constitute using the hook and is prohibited.

1. שו"ע"ר סי' של"ו ס"א וסכ"א (ובס"א סתם במוסגר שאסור להישען ולא חילק).
2. שו"ע"ר שם ס"ב וראה שש"כ פכ"ו סי"ג.
3. ראה שו"ע"ר שם ס"ג וראה שש"כ פכ"ו סט"ו.
4. ראה שו"ע"ר א"ח סי' תקפ"ו סכ"א ושש"כ.
5. פכ"ו סי"ח.
6. ראה שש"כ פכ"ו סט"ו וראה שם הע' נ"ה.
7. שו"ע"ר סי' של"ו סי"ב.
8. פסק"ת סי' של"ו סקכ"ג.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

