

The Weekly Farbrengens


**MERKAZ
ANASH**
 מרכז אנאש
 735 • ראה תשפ"ג • לחמן ישמעו
 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*.

(פקי דר"א פמ"ו, וראה דברי נחמ"י 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 *marshal* 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 לב,א)

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 *farbrengens* 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 *farbrengens*, 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 *neshama*.

(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 *farbrengens* 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."

(התועודיות תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2668)

ELEVATED AVODA

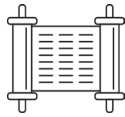
The month of Elul is a month of reckoning. Just as a businessman must take stock every so often and

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SWITCHING THE SEFER TORAH

What is the procedure for taking out a new *sefer Torah*?

While there are rules of what makes a Torah kosher, *rishonim* debate whether a kosher Torah is at all necessary for *krias haTorah*.

In his responsa, the Rambam writes that one may read and recite a *bracha* on an unkosher Torah. Unlike other *mitzvos*, where the *mitzva* object — e.g., *tefillin*, *lulav* — is indispensable, here the *mitzva* is to read publicly, and the kosher *sefer Torah* is merely for *kavod hatzibur*.¹ However, the Rosh and others disagree and contend that reading from an invalid Torah doesn't count for *krias HaTorah*, and one who did must read again from a kosher Torah with all of the *brachos*.²

The Mahari bei Rav offers the following compromise: If a mistake is found in the *sefer Torah* during *kriah*, one must stop and continue onwards in a kosher *sefer Torah*. Yet, the reading until that point, along with the *oleh's* before-*bracha*, is counted, and he recites the after-*bracha* at the conclusion of the reading from the second Torah.³

The Mordechai stipulates that if the mistake is found at a point where stopping isn't permitted — such as less than three *pesukim* into the *aliya* or less than three *pesukim* remaining in the *aliya* — one should continue reading from the first Torah until a permissible stopping point.

In practice, the Tzemach Tzedek rules as follows:

If a mistake is found during an *aliya*, one should end the *aliya* at the first possible stopping point. The *oleh* recites the after-*bracha*, and the Torah is switched before the next *aliya*. If the mistake was found during the final *aliya*, one should continue reading until the end of the *kriah*, and that *oleh* should read the *haftorah* (without an additional *maftir*).⁴

When there is no other *sefer Torah*, one should continue the *kriah* as usual (reading missing words from a *chumash* if needed). All the *olim* should recite the *brachos*, but *shvi'i* should double up as *maftir*. If the mistake is in a different *chumash* than the one being read, one may rely on the Rambam and even take out the *sefer Torah* to read from when no other *sefer Torah* is available.⁵

1. שו"ת פאר הדור סי' ט'
2. שו"ת הרא"ש כלל ג' סי' ח'
3. ראה ב"י סי' קמ"ג, וראה ב"י י"ד סי' רע"ט ס"ב.
4. כאשר השביעי הוא המפטייר יאמרו הקדיש לאחר ההפטרה ולא יפסיקו בין עליית השביעי לתורה לבין קריאתו בבגדי - ראה משגיב סי' קמ"ג ס"ק כג.
5. כל זה מבוסס על פסק ה"צ שער המילואים ח"ד סי' ד ובמהדורה החדשה או"ח סי' עו וכפי שהאריך בזה ש"ב הרב לוי"צ רסקין בנתיבים בשדה השליחות ח"א פ"ד. וראה שם שהדין שונה כשיש שני תיבות חסרים מצד האיסור של דברים שבכתב אי אתה רשאי לאמרום בע"פ.

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

Our Heroes



REB NOCHUM

Reb Menachem Nochum, the oldest son of the Mittlerer Rebbe, was born around the year 5547 (1787) and resided in Lubavitch. Later on, he moved to Niezhin, making frequent extended visits to the *kever* of his grandfather the Alter Rebbe in Haditch. He passed away around eighty-years-old, and is buried in Niezhin.

During the time of the Alter Rebbe, a new fashion in Russia dictated that jackets should henceforth have collars. When his grandson Reb Nochum, son of the Mittlerer Rebbe, was preparing for his *chassuna*, the Alter Rebbe called for him and asked him about his silk *kapota*: would it be made in the traditional way, or would it conform to the new fashion? "It'll have a collar, of course," Reb Nochum replied.

The Alter Rebbe requested that he have it made without one, but Reb Nochum, then still a young *bochur*, argued, "Everyone else will have one, and I'll be embarrassed." The Alter Rebbe then promised him that if he wore a *kapota* without a collar, he would be together with his grandfather in Gan Eden. He then asked Reb Nochum that when his *kapota* was ready, he should come to him

dressed in it. Reb Nochum asked if he must do it wholeheartedly or *kabolas ol* would be sufficient. The Alter Rebbe replied, "Of course it must be truthfully, and with the truth of the 'yechida.'" Reb Nochum was silent and nothing more was said.

Before the *chassuna*, the young man entered the Alter Rebbe's room, dressed in his new *kapota*... which had a collar. The Alter Rebbe then tore off a small piece of fur from the inside of the coat and promised him long life for that. Years later Reb Nochum commented, "I was young and didn't appreciate how great was the promise I had been given." To correct this incident, Reb Nochum would spend much time in Haditch by the Ohel of the Alter Rebbe.

The Rebbe explained that at that time and place, the challenge of fashions was extremely difficult. Had the Alter Rebbe been successful, that challenge would have been removed for generations to come. And that explains why he offered his grandson such a rich reward.

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א עמוד 29, רשימו"ד חדש ע' 97, תר"מ חל"ה ע' 278)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TO CHANNEL ONE'S MOOD

Reb Zalman Gopin, *mashpia* at the Kfar Chabad *yeshiva*, spent the year 5726 (1965-6) studying in 770.

When he entered the Rebbe's room for a *yechidus* on 26 Av, he wrote in his note that he was unsure of the path to choose for himself, *simcha* or *kivutz* (joyfulness or withdrawal), and asked the Rebbe for guidance.

"It is impossible for a person to constantly be in the same mode," the Rebbe responded. "Indeed, in the spiritual world of *Tohu*, there was only one attribute, *chessed* or *gevura*. [The Rebbe lifted his hand while saying *chessed* and lowered it while saying

gevura.] However, in the world of *Tikkun*, both modes exist."

The Rebbe then went on to identify specific approaches on how to utilize each mode:

"When you are in a somber mood, what the Alter Rebbe terms *mará shechora*, it should be channeled towards learning and *davening* in depth.

"However, when you are in a mood of joy, you should channel it in a direction of breadth. Not depth, rather breadth in Torah and *tefila*."

(*Techayeinu* Issue 9, Page 14)

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