

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

למען ישמעו • שופטים תשפ"ג • 736
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, תר"מ חלה"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 או"ח סי' תקפ"א, שיחור"ק תשל"ח ח"ג ע' 333)

In the year תרצ"ז (1937), at the request of the Pupa Rebbe, the Frierdiker 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*

toivos. 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 Frierdiker 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."

(אג"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, אג"ק ח"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' אלול)

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, שה"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.

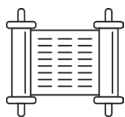
(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' ט)

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MISTAKES IN A SEFER TORAH

Which mistakes in a sefer Torah require taking out a different Torah?

As noted in the previous issue, a *sefer Torah* with a mistake is invalid for *krias haTorah* according to some, and if discovered in the middle of reading, it must be switched for a new Torah. However, not all mistakes invalidate the Torah.

If a Torah has a missing or extra word, it is invalid and a new Torah should be taken out. The same applies if a word was written in the form it is read (“*kri*”) instead of the form it is meant to be written (“*ktiv*”), or if a closed gap (*parsha setuma*) is interchanged with an open gap (*parsha pesucha*). With a missing or extra letter, it is a problem only if it changes the word’s pronunciation (e.g., כבש/כשב, or its meaning (e.g., נמצא/נמצה). But a *cholam* spelled with a *vav* instead of without one (e.g., אבותינו/אבותינו) doesn’t invalidate the *sefer Torah*.¹

If a gap in the middle of a word makes it appear like two words or two words are very close and appear like one long word, the Torah is invalid. However, if there is a less obvious gap and it is unclear whether it appears like two words or one word, halacha dictates that we ask a child who knows the shapes of the letters but not the meaning of the words (since he might figure out based on the context). If there is a final letter at the end of the first word, thus indicating the end of the word, some hold that one may be lenient.²

If letters or words have faded, the Torah is kosher if a remnant of the black shade remains. But if the ink has fallen off, leaving only a brownish-reddish residue, the letters are considered missing.³ The same applies to a crack in a letter (e.g., an *alef* with a detached *yud*).

A letter that touches another letter along its entire height or in a way that alters its form is invalid.⁴ However, if the attachment is slight and does not alter the letters’ shapes, and one can tell that it happened after the letters were mostly formed, the attachment may be scraped away during the week, and there is no concern for creating a letter through scraping (*chak tochos*). On Shabbos, when this isn’t possible, one may read from this Torah. Yet, if the attachment may have occurred while forming the letters, a new Torah should be taken out when possible.⁵

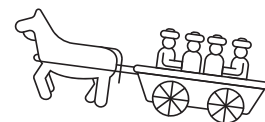
When unsure if a letter is of the proper size (e.g., whether a *vav* is long enough or looks like a *yud*), one can show it to a child and see how he identifies it. The surrounding text should be covered so he doesn’t compare it to the other *vavs*.⁶

If a letter is clearly severed by a hole, and the bottom is invalid due to the requirement of *hekef gvil* (being surrounded by parchment), the remnant below the hole must be covered so that the child doesn’t view the two parts together.⁷

1. ראה שע"א שער ה"ו.
2. ראה שע"א שם ס"ז.
3. א"ר או"ח סי' ל"ב סקמ"ד.
4. ראה שו"ע סי' ל"ב סקמ"ג.
5. שו"ע סי' ל"ב סכ"ח.
6. בכל הנ"ל ראה משנ"ב או"ח סי' קמ"ג סקכ"ה.
7. ראה שו"ע סי' ל"ב ס"כ.
7. שו"ע סי' ל"ב סכ"ח.

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

Our Heroes



REB SHMUEL MICHEL TREININ

Reb Shmuel Michel Treinin was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. He lived in Petersburg and was very rich. He was very involved in communal matters on behalf of the *Yidden* in Russia, and assisted the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe in this realm. He was a smart man with strong beliefs and was not ashamed of his being a chossid even when among unreligious, well-to-do people. If someone commented negatively about *Yidden*, he knew how to respond.

disrespect to the Czar. Reb Shmuel Michel was fined ten-thousand ruble. He bemoaned, “These are the ten-thousand ruble I refrained from giving to the Rebbe...”

(לקוטי סיפורים עמוד קצח)

Reb Shmuel Michel had the rights to building the tracks for the trains near Petersburg. He had a huge factory for this task with thousands of employees. Once when the Rebbe Rashab visited Petersburg, Reb Shmuel Michel asked him to come tour his factory. The Rebbe agreed and visited the whole facility with all its wings and sections, inquiring about every detail. At the end when the Rebbe was ready to leave, Reb Shmuel Michel asked, “Rebbe, what do you think about the factory?” The Rebbe responded, “How do you think you got all this? It’s because in Lubavitch during the *davening* on Rosh Hashana you are thought about.”

Once when visiting the Rebbe Rashab in Lubavitch, the Rebbe told him to give ten-thousand ruble for communal matters. Reb Shmuel Michel however was hesitant and refrained from doing so. Some time later, he was riding in his carriage in the streets of Petersburg, when suddenly the Czar’s carriage came towards them. His driver, not knowing who it was, did not move aside, causing

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE KING IN THE FIELD

When Reb Yaakov Hertzog traveled to the Rebbe from London, UK as a twelve-year-old boy, he merited a personal *yechidus*. After testing him on a *mishna* in *Maseches Shabbos*, the Rebbe asked him whether he had also learned any *Chassidus*.

maamar “*Ani Ledodi*.” The Rebbe inquired whether he had learned the parable of the king in field, to which Yaakov responded in the affirmative.

“So, have you met the king?” the Rebbe asked.

Yaakov replied that he had studied *Likkutei Torah* in cheder. The Rebbe responded with surprise, “*Likkutei Torah* before *bar mitzva*?!”

Yaakov was dumbfounded. The Rebbe continued, “Whenever you make a *bracha* and say the words ‘*Baruch ata Hashem*,’ you meet the King in the field!”

Yaakov said that he had studied the

(As Heard from Reb Yakov)

לעילוי נשמת

מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה שטראקס
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