

# The Weekly Farbrengens



**MERKAZ ANASH**  
מרכז אנאש

791 • לחמן ישמעו • שופטים תשפ"ד  
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 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)

### 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)

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)

### 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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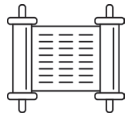
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## REAFFIXING MEZUZOS

**I removed my mezuzos to check them. Do I make a bracha when reaffixing them?**

The bracha upon affixing a *mezuzah* is only recited if the doorway fulfills all the criteria for being obligated *min hatorah*, and it's being reattached after *hesech hadaas* from its previous placement.

If a *mezuzah* was found to be *pasul* and it is being replaced with a new one, a bracha is recited, since this *mezuzah* is new.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, if the *mezuzah* falls off on its own, it is a *hesech hadaas*, since you didn't have in mind to reattach it the moment it came off (like a *tallis* that falls off your shoulders).

However, when you remove a *mezuzah* to check it and put it back soon on the same doorpost, the requirement for a bracha depends on whether a *hesech hadaas* has occurred. The length of time that constitutes a *hesech hadaas* is subject to debate.

Some hold that a break of several hours constitutes *hesech hadaas*, like when removing a *tallis*. Others hold *hesech hadaas* only occurs when the *mezuzah* is reattached the following day, since he removed his mind from it while sleeping, and this is the accepted practice.<sup>2</sup> Some qualify that this time window applies only to a routine check where there is no serious concern that the *mezuzah* isn't kosher, but when such a concern does exist, the very removal to check with doubt in its *kashrus* is enough of a *hesech hadaas*.<sup>3</sup>

If you switch a *mezuzah* to a different doorpost, it is questionable whether this itself requires a new bracha. Some *poskim* compare it to putting on a different pair of *tzitzis* after removing the first, which isn't covered by the original bracha. Others compare it to switching a *shofar* during *tekios*, and it's all one continuation of the same mitzva (unlike *tzitzis* where the new garment is a new *chiyuv*).<sup>4</sup>

Regardless, a *mezuzah* should not be switched from a higher level of obligation to a lower one — such as from a doorway with a door to one without a door.<sup>5</sup> For both reasons, it is proper to number the *mezuzos* to ensure each one is replaced in the doorway it was originally.

## R. REUVEN HASOFER

R. Reuven Hasofer of Yanovitch was the Alter Rebbe's personal sofer. The Alter Rebbe taught R. Reuven how to write the letters and also how to manufacture the ink, and he would only use *parshiyos* written by R. Reuven. The *parshiyos* written by R. Reuven are the primary source for the Alter Rebbe's *ksav*.

Someone once tried to slander R. Reuven to the Alter Rebbe by saying that he mixes some ingredient into his ink to make it shine. The Alter Rebbe replied, "Indeed, I know about that. He mixes *yiras Shomayim* in his ink, nothing else!"

R. Aizil Homiler related:

The Alter Rebbe once told his son the Mittler Rebbe, "I am going to lie down. Stand by the door and wake me up for *Mincha*." Standing by the door, the Mittler Rebbe was surprised to see the bed moving about.

The Alter Rebbe suddenly walked out of the room and said, "Quick! Call Reuven the sofer to come with a *retzuah*." When R. Reuven came, the Alter Rebbe showed him his new method for tying the knot on the head *tefillin*.

When R. Yehoshua Falk Gurary (older brother of the Rashag) was in Lubavitch, someone offered to sell him *parshiyos*

written by R. Reuven for a high price. R. Yehoshua replied that he would like to show them to the Rebbe Rashab, and if the Rebbe confirms that they are R. Reuven's writing, he will consider it.

R. Yehoshua brought them to the Rebbe Rashab who confirmed that they were unquestionably R. Reuven's writing and added, "Take them, you need them! If you don't buy them, I will." Hearing this from the Rebbe, he gladly paid the price.

The Alter Rebbe once sent a messenger to bring a *mezuzah* from R. Reuven. The messenger came to R. Reuven and asked for two *mezuzos*: one for the Rebbe and one for himself.

When the sofer gave him the *mezuzos*, he told him which one to give to Alter Rebbe. The messenger figured that the Rebbe's *mezuzah* was better, so he switched them and took the Rebbe's *mezuzah* for himself.

When the Alter Rebbe received the other *mezuzah*, he looked at it and expressed surprise that this is what the sofer had sent him. The *shliach* was ashamed and told the Rebbe that indeed the sofer had sent another *mezuzah*. The Rebbe took one look at that one and said, "This is a *mezuzah*!"

Seeing the messenger's disappointment with his inferior *mezuzah*, the Alter Rebbe reassured him that they were identical aside from one difference: at the Alter Rebbe's request, his *mezuzah* was not written on a cloudy day.

## A Moment with The Rebbe

ליכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות



## WHEN A NORMAL PERSON FINISHES HIS DAY

Reb Shlomo Zarchi relates:

As a bochur, I asked the Rebbe for direction in the *avoda* of *Krias Shema She'al Hamita*. The Rebbe told me to think *Chassidus* before I begin *Krias Shema She'al Hamita*.

At another *Yechidus*, in response to my question as to how often I should perform this *Avodah*, the Rebbe clarified that there are levels in making a *cheshbon nefesh*:

"The *avoda* of *Krias Shema She'al Hamita* is fitting for specific times, such as *Leil Shishi* (Thursday night), *erev Rosh Chodesh* and *Chodesh Elul*.

"However," the Rebbe said, "a normal person, when he finishes his day, makes a calculation what he has accomplished that day..."

(As heard from Reb Shlomo Zarchi)

1. ראה ס' האשכול מזוזה דף ע"ג ע"ב. 2. ראה ערוה"ש י"ד סי' רפ"ט ס"ד.  
3. ראה תשו"ה ח"ו סי' רי"ד סק"ג. 4. ראה חובת הדר מזוזה פ"א ס"ק מ"ב.  
5. מזוזות מלכים סי' קפ"ו.

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