

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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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, 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 *teshuva*.

(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 toivos* 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, 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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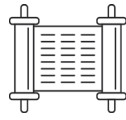
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ASCENDING HAR HABAYIS

Is it permissible to ascend Har Habayis today?

The *kedusha* of the Har Habayis after the *churban* is disputed among *rishonim*. The Rambam rules that Har Habayis retains its sanctity even when the Beis Hamikdosh is destroyed and therefore has *kedusha*,¹ while the Raavad disagrees and holds that the *kedusha* doesn't remain after the *churban*.² (Yet there may still be restrictions on entering the area.)³

Regarding the criteria for entering the area of the Beis Hamikdosh and its surroundings, there are many different halachos about who is allowed and in which zones.⁴ (These zones apply to entering the airspace in an airplane as well.)⁵

Individuals with *tumah* coming from the body itself (*hayotzei alav migufo*, e.g., a woman who gave birth) may not be allowed onto Har Habayis as a whole. A *t'mei mes*, someone who came in contact with a corpse at some point in their life — and, *l'havdil*, a *goy* — may ascend the mountain but not enter a space outside the *azara* called the *cheil*. A *tevil yom*, who already went to mikvah but the night did not yet set in, may go there, but not to the Ezras Nashim.

Today, we are all *t'mei mes* as we do not have the ashes of the *parah adumah*, which are necessary for the purification process. Still, that would only preclude going past the *cheil*. Most people would be required to go to the mikveh before ascending to remove any sort of bodily *tumah* so they could enter the Har Habayis.

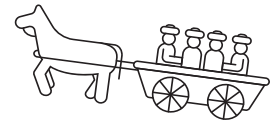
The challenge, however, is that there is debate as to the precise mapping of the various zones on Har Habayis. Since the mountain is larger than the original 500 by 500 *ama*, some perimeter isn't part of the halachic Har Habayis, and it's not sufficiently clear where the location of *azara* is and so on.

Moreover, notes the Rebbe, in the unfortunate current state of affairs, the mere discussion of an allowance to ascend will inevitably cause some people to enter prohibited areas.⁶ In a letter from 5746, the Rebbe responded that the Rabbonim had already prohibited it.⁷ On another occasion, the Rebbe noted that learning Hilchos Beis Habechira is like taking part in the construction; however, to ascend Har Habayis, we need to know where it is allowed.⁸

Interestingly, the Rebbe was upset when the government restricted Yidden's dominion over Har Habayis, which was motivated by weakness in the Yidden's ownership of Eretz Yisroel.⁹

1. הלכות בית הבחירה פ"ו ה"ט.
2. השגת הראב"ד שם.
3. רב קוק במשפט כהן (צו) כתב שגם לראב"ד יש בזה איסור תורה, אלא שאין כרת.
4. רמב"ם הל' ביאת המקדש פ"ג ה"א ואילך.
5. הדינים בפנים בה"ג-ו'. בע"ק ע"פ ספהמ"צ מצווה ל"ט ע"ה.
6. ראה שו"ת יב"א ח"ה ח"ד ס"י כ"ו אות ט'. שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ג ס"י נ"ח. פסקי תשובות ס"י תקס"א אות ה'.
7. כת"י להרב מאיר יהודה גין, רב מקומות קדושים, נדפס במנחם משיב נפשי ח"ב ע' 1080.
8. מענת הרבי תשמ"ו: במענה למכתבו ע"ד לעלות להר הבית וכו' והמצ"ב הרי כבר פס"ד בזה ראשי רבני אה"ק, כמפורסם.
9. מענת הרבי מנחם-אב תנש"א (נדפס בבית חיינו גל' 99 ע' 21). על פי תורתנו הקדושה - הלימוד בהלכות בנין בית המקדש - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו משתתף בבנינו, ואין בזה הגבלות, מה שאין כן בעליה בהר הבית - צריך להיות ברור מקום המותר לעליה.
9. ראה שיחת מוצ"ש ויצא תשל"ג לבני ג' מקומות קדושים של שכמ, חברון, והר הבית שאין מניחים ליהודים להתיישב.

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



REB MOSHE YITZCHAK OF YASI

Reb Moshe Yitzchak (in some sources: Yitzchak Moshe) of Yasi was of the younger chassidim of the Alter Rebbe and later a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was very *mekushar* to the Mittlerer Rebbe, and the Mittlerer Rebbe said that Reb Moshe Yitzchak was one of the three chassidim in whom he fulfilled Hashem's true intention ("*ehr hot oisgefirt di kavana Elyona*"). After the *histalkus* of the Mittlerer Rebbe, Reb Moshe Yitzchak became a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Tzemach Tzedek would recite *ma'amorim* for him in *yechidus*.

The Tzemach Tzedek once asked the son of Reb Moshe Yitzchak if he remembered anything about his father. The son shared a story to which he did not know the meaning.

"One Friday afternoon, when my father was returning from the *mikvah*, he was walking on the street when he suddenly looked up to the sky and became very excited. He asked to sit and a chair was brought from a nearby store. Bystanders thought that the hot bath had hurt him and they asked if he wanted a doctor. 'No need,' Reb Moshe replied, 'Just leave me alone'.

He sat for about half an hour, leaning on his hands with his eyes closed. He then looked once more at the sky, got up, and carried on his way. To this day, we do not know what it was all about."

The Tzemach Tzedek inquired about the date of the event, and the Rebbe started to laugh at the answer. The Tzemach Tzedek explained, "At that time was the *Z'lobiner chassunah* (the famous *chassunah* of the grandchildren of the Alter Rebbe and Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev). While under the *chuppah*, the Alter Rebbe said the *ma'amar* "*Ki Al Kol Kovod Chuppah*". All the *malochim* gathered in *shomayim* to hear the *ma'amar*. Your father merited to hear the *ma'amar* as well..."

At the time of the arrest of the Alter Rebbe, all the chassidim were busy trying various ways to save the Rebbe. Among other things, the chossid Reb Moshe Yitzchak bought potatoes and began making *maskhe* from them. He explained, "It is beyond any doubt that the Rebbe will soon go out of jail and there will be a great and wondrous *geulah*. There will be a great need for *maskhe*, so I am starting on it already..."

A Moment with The Rebbe



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

SHABBOSDIKE CHASSIDUS

Chassidus is comprised of *avodadike maamorim* that are introspective, and *haskala maamorim*, that discuss *achdus Hashem* on various levels.

Reb Bentzion Stein of Detroit MI relates:

The Rebbe once told me to learn *avodadike maamorim* in depth, to commit the *maamorim* or their content to memory, and to think them over periodically.

This is what I began doing. However, after a while, my *maskpia* suggested that perhaps the Rebbe's directive was only for the first stages of my growth, and now the time had come for me to

begin *haskala maamorim*.

In a quandary, at my next *yechidus*, I asked the Rebbe what I was to do.

"If you feel that *avoda maamorim* have more of an effect on you, you must continue learning them," the Rebbe responded. "But since your *maskpia* instructed you to learn *haskala maamorim*, you should learn them on Shabbos, when you have more time."

And then the Rebbe added, "and in general, studying *haskala maamorim*, fits more with the idea of Shabbos."

(*Ovinu Roeinu* p. 42)