

The Weekly Farbrenge


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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 חל"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, שיחוק 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*

tovos. 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, 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.

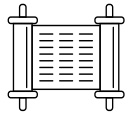
(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' ט)

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PETS ON SHABBOS

I am raising chickens in my backyard. May I close the door of their coop on Shabbos?

Chazal prohibited all non-tools as muktzeh—such as sticks and stones—even if they don't involve a melacha. Since animals aren't a tool, they are muktzeh, and they may not be pet or held. This includes even pets that live in one's home and which the kids play with, since Chazal didn't differentiate between animals.

If one is concerned that a bug may bite him and shaking it off doesn't work, he may take it off with his hands without killing it (unless it is life endangering), since Chazal allowed moving the muktzeh bug to prevent bodily pain. However, the annoyance of a buzzing fly isn't enough to allow muktzeh.

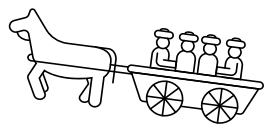
Although we are usually not allowed to have a non-Jew do melacha for us, it is permitted if the purpose is to ease the animal's suffering—which is a Torah obligation. For this reason, one's cows may be milked on Shabbos by non-Jews, since the cows suffer discomfort from an abundance of milk, (the milk is then "bought" from the non-Jew to demonstrate that it was not done for the Jew's sake).

One must ensure that one's animal doesn't transgress Shabbos, except for its own pleasure like pasturing. Therefore, the animal may not carry anything in the public domain, besides clothing and ornaments, (a name tag must be permanently fastened to be insignificant to the animal itself). If the animal requires a leash and it goes out that way during the week, the leash is considered an ornament and is permitted on Shabbos if it is firmly connected so that it can't fall off. While walking the animal, the leash must remain taut and not sag within a tefach (2.5 in.) of the ground, nor may it protrude more than a tefach from his hand.

Trapping or restricting the freedom of an animal on Shabbos is forbidden. Yet a household pet—e.g. cat—that is obedient and doesn't resist being confined is already considered "trapped," and restricting its freedom is permitted. Poskim write that today this includes home-borne animals, like a home chicken, if it is clearly obedient. If the pet is not domesticated or rebellious and is prone to run away, one may not confine it or put on its leash (in an area where it would take more than one lunge to catch it).

- 1. שוע"ר או"ח סי' ש"ח סע"ח, וראה...
2. ראה שוע"ר או"ח סי' שט"ז ס"ח...
3. ראה שוע"ר או"ח סי' ש"ה סכ"ט...
4. ראה ש"כ פכ"ה ס"ג והע"כ"א...
5. שוע"ר או"ח סי' רמ"ו ס"ז. שש"כ פכ"ז

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



REB SHNEUR ZALMAN MOSHE HAYITZCHAKI

Reb Zalman Moshe learned as a tomim in Lubavitch. He served as a shochet and mashpia in Nevel and later in Eretz Yisroel. He was a chossid and oved in the full sense of the word. He was known for the sharp and unapologetic style of farbrengen and demands he made from his listeners. At the end of his life he became paralyzed and could not speak well. He passed away on the 3rd of Shvat, אתשי"ב (1952).

paralyzed and his speech was very unclear. In the middle of the visit, a Tanya was placed on his table. He took it and started kissing it many times as tears rolled down his cheeks...

Reb Yoel Kahan relates:

Reb Zalman Moshe was a special chossid and his davening was unique. When I knew him in Tel Aviv he was already paralyzed and he could barely speak, but every word of his davening was crystal clear. I once visited him one afternoon and found him wrapped in tallis and tefillin and reciting shir shel yom. I wondered why he was davening at such a late hour. Then I found out that he had davened in the morning but when he got to the Shir Shel Yom he had no strength left and he had to take off his tallis and tefillin. In the afternoon, after he regained some strength, he put on his tallis and tefillin again, something very difficult for him being partially paralyzed, just to recite shir shel yom, kavei, and aleinu.

For many years, Reb Zalman Moshe maintained a steady schedule of learning Chassidus. Each morning before dawn he would rise early to learn for six hours straight. When he finished he marked his place with a pencil. At times he was found to have only learned a number of lines, having spent the time internalizing it.

(אנשים חסידים היו ע' 23)

Reb Moshe Naparstak recounts:

We were a group of bochorim and Reb Zalman Moshe came to visit us. He was

A Moment with The Rebbe



SHULCHAN ARUCH REGULATIONS

Reb Binyomin Zippel relates:

assured him that there was no reason for concern.

As a bochor, my father-in-law, Reb Immanuel Schochet, made a trip to Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe instructed him to keep a detailed diary.

Reb Immanuel notified the Rebbe of the response but the Rebbe was not satisfied. "Tell them that it's a serious matter and needs to be corrected."

When he arrived at the airport, he discovered that his suitcase was overweight. With the representative's consent, he removed his heavy wool coat from the suitcase, thereby making it lighter. When he settled on the plane, he began his diary with this incident.

Hearing that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was behind it, they agreed to officially absolve him on the condition that the Rebbe allows them to quote in his name not to evade weight regulations.

When he returned and entered yechidus, the Rebbe asked to see the diary. Upon reading the first story the Rebbe said, "This is not in accordance with Shulchan Aruch." The Rebbe instructed him to call El Al and ask how he could rectify it. His request was met with surprise, and they

Indeed, with the Rebbe's consent, for several years in the 5720's (1960's), there hung a sign at the El Al desk that the Lubavitcher Rebbe says that it is forbidden to evade the weight regulations.

(As heard from Reb Binyomin; see Igros Kodesh Vol. 15, page 451)