

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • כי תצא תשפ"ו • 893
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 ח"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, שיח"ק תשל"ח ח"ג ע' 333)

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

(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 shvuym* 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' אלו)

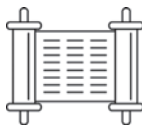
During this month, it is the custom of *anshei mayseh* to check their *tefillin* and *mezuzos* and any other *mitzva* that needs attention. The Rebbe urged that this directive be widely publicized.

(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)





UNMARRIED TEACHER

How may an unmarried man serve as a teacher or tutor?

The Mishnah teaches that an unmarried man should not be a schoolteacher of young children. The concern is that the *melamed's* encountering the mothers who bring their children will lead to inappropriate familiarity and *yichud*.¹ The Rambam and Shulchan Aruch rule accordingly. The *melamed's* wife need not be present in the classroom, and it's sufficient that she's at home while he teaches elsewhere.²

In a place where mothers did not bring their children to the teacher, some *poskim* held that it's allowed.³ Even if a mother occasionally brings her son, some allowed it as long as it isn't a regular occurrence.⁴ Others forbade it regardless, since mothers in any event come to check on their children, bring them food, and the like.⁵

The early *acharonim* already ask why the widespread custom is not particular about this halacha.⁶ Some explain that it was a decree the community could not uphold, for otherwise not enough teachers would have been found.⁷ Indeed, the *poskim* who permit it often note that without this leniency, Torah could *chas v'shalom* be forgotten.⁸ Others add that since the accepted custom is lenient, no protest is made.⁹

Several *poskim* emphasize that the essential requirement is *yiras Shomayim*: a G-d-fearing bochur may teach, while one lacking *yiras Shomayim* is unfit even if he is married.¹⁰ Others question this reasoning, but agree that whoever does teach must certainly be a *yerei Shomayim*.¹¹

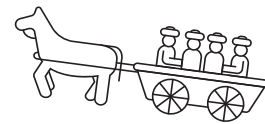
Some suggest that circumstances have changed: in the times of Chazal most trades involved no contact with women, so there was reason to single out teaching, but today, when women are found in every workplace, there is no longer reason to bar an unmarried man specifically from teaching.¹²

Furthermore, schools today operate in public buildings, where staff and other teachers are constantly coming and going, and parents rarely enter the classroom, so the original concern is somewhat mitigated.¹³

The Rebbe, asked about hiring unmarried teachers, responded that one should try as much as possible to conform with the Mishnah that teachers be married, and that even those who accept a position before marriage should be obligated and urged to marry as soon as possible.¹⁴

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14. רמב"ם הל' איסורי ביאה פכ"ב הי"ג.

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



R. SHMUEL SOFER

R. Shmuel Rabinovitch (d. 5675), known as R. Shmuel Sofer or R. Shmuel der Shreiber, lived in Lubavitch where he made a living as a copyist of *maamorim*, like his father, R. Meir, before him. During this period, the Rebbeim's *maamorim* were not published, instead circulating among the chassidim in handwritten copies. R. Shmuel was the considered the premier copyist due to his precision and neat script, and the Rebbeim commissioned his work constantly. Until recently, many of the *maamorim* of the Rebbe Maharash were only available in photocopies of R. Shmuel's handwriting.

Having just spent Shabbos by the Tzemach Tzedek, the chossid R. Leib Moninsohn, asked the Rebbe if he could get a copy of the *maamar* right away, as he was pressed to leave town the next day. The Rebbe agreed and told him to call R. Meir der Shreiber. When R. Meir arrived, the Rebbe showed him where to sit and what to copy from a manuscript.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe sat at another table in the same room and began learning Gemara aloud, with a tune. After learning the *sugya* according to

Rashi's commentary, exclaiming "*dus iz noch Rashi*," he proceeded to learn it according to Tosefos. Then he learned it according to the Rosh and then the Rif and Ran, each time noting which commentary it was. Finally, the Rebbe enumerated all the *halachos* deduced from the *sugya*, and the Gemara's meaning according to Kaballah.

As he ran out of space on the table, the Rebbe spread out more *seforim* on a surface on the ground. With a candle in his hand, he walked around looking through them, clarifying the various opinions and *halachos*. Upon clarifying the entire *sugya*, the Rebbe started singing the Alter Rebbe's niggun and began dancing.

The entire time, R. Meir sat there in awe watching the Tzemach Tzedek. When the Rebbe finished his dance, he approached R. Meir to see how much he's done and discovered that he only wrote a few lines. "*Petach, fool!*" said the Rebbe, "you can go home."

When R. Meir shared with the Tzemach Tzedek's sons what he had seen, they weren't amazed. "Our father does that every night," they told him.

(רשימות דברים חדש ע"י 123)

A Moment with The Rebbe



HOW TO DONATE LIFE TO THE REBBE

Shortly after the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, the Frierdiker Rebbe became extremely ill with typhus, to the point that his life was in danger. The members of Beis Harav and Chassidim responded by donating a year or half a year of their own lives to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The total number of years donated was 30, and indeed, nearly 30 years later, on Yud Shevat 5710, the Frierdiker Rebbe passed away.

In Sivan 5743, Reb Shamshi Yunik, who was then a bochur assisting in the Rebbe's and Rebbetzin's home, heard firsthand the details of this story. He was deeply moved and, after giving it serious thought, decided that he, too,

wanted to do the same.

He wrote a letter to the Rebbe expressing his sincere desire to donate a year of his life to the Rebbe.

"Your intent is commendable, but you should not involve yourself in matters that are entirely not for you," the Rebbe wrote to him, underlining words multiple times for added emphasis. "Instead, you should **cherish** every year, and even every day, **to study Torah with diligence**, etc.

"**This** is the true form of giving to me," the Rebbe concluded.

(As heard from Reb Shamshi Yunik)