



THE MONTH OF ELUL

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 נחמי' 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 *maschal* 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 "*LeDavid: 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)

At one *farbrengen* the Rebbe emphasized that the Friediker Rebbe told this narrative long after he had left Lubavitch, in order to inspire others to follow this lifestyle. Likewise, it is possible for all Yidden in our times to feel the "Elul air."

(התוועדויות תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2668)

Elevated Avoda

The month of Elul is a month of reckoning. Just as a businessman must take stock every so often and 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"ר משה לברטוב, וראה סה"מ תש"א ע' 207)

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 *farbrengen* 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 פי' משפטים, לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 623)

During one *farbrengen*, 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 *neshamah*.

(שיחו"ק תשל"ד ח"ב ע' 467)

CONSIDER THIS!

- 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?

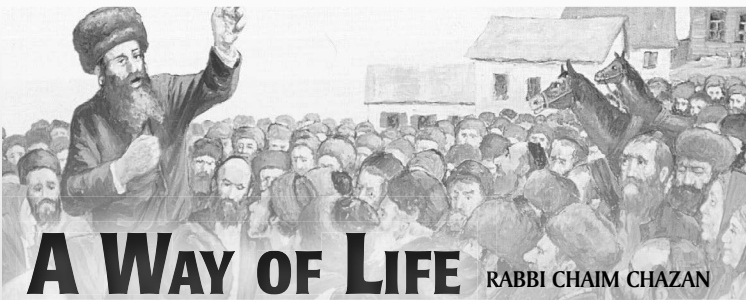
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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Borrowing Shul Furniture

Is one permitted to borrow tables and chairs from a *shul* for a *simcha* being hosting at home?

- A *shul* and *Beis Medrash* (a place dedicated for Torah study) have *kedusha*¹, and therefore certain behaviors and activities are forbidden when in these holy places.
- One may not, for example, act frivolously² or kiss a child³, and a *shul* can only be entered for the sake of fulfilling a *mitzvah*. If one needs to call someone who is inside a *shul*, he should recite a *possuk* or learn something immediately upon entering, or at least wait a few moments (which is also a *mitzvah*) and then call him⁴.
- The furniture of a *shul*, such as the tables and chairs, also has *kedusha* which precludes their use for mundane purposes⁵. Nevertheless, for reasons that will be explained, one may indeed borrow tables and chairs from a *shul* for a *simcha*⁶.
- When a *shul* is being built, a *tnai* (condition) stating that certain behaviors which are usually prohibited in a *shul* should be permitted is generally made, and this suffices to permit these things to be done. Moreover, in some cases, even if a condition was not made explicitly, since such behaviors are common in a *shul*, we consider the condition as having been made implicitly. (The extent of what a *tnai* actually permits is complex and is subject to much debate among *poskim*⁷).
- The same is concerning the furniture of the *shul*: since it is common practice to borrow tables and chairs from a *shul* for *simchos*, it is therefore as if a condition has been made at the outset to allow for this. (Obviously we can only consider a condition to have been made where the local practice is to borrow tables and chairs from a *shul*⁸).
- Needless to say one may only borrow them with permission of the *gabbai*. Even one who pays membership towards the upkeep of the *shul* cannot borrow without permission of the *gabo'im*, because although the entire community are like 'partners' with regards to communal property, an individual desiring to make use of public property nonetheless requires authorization from those entrusted with safeguarding the property on behalf of the community⁹.

1. מגילה כט ע"א.
2. שו"ע או"ח סי' קנא ס"א.
3. רמ"א או"ח סי' צח ס"א.
4. שו"ע או"ח סי' קנא ס"א.
5. ראה שו"ע או"ח סי' קנד ס"ח, ובערוה"ש 9. שם.
6. ערוה"ש שם.
7. שו"ע שם סי' קנא ס"א, וראה בכ"ז בספר משנת יוסף הלכות ביהכ"נ (ליברמן) פרק כז.
8. ספר צדקה ומשפט (בלוי) פרק יב הע' פא.
9. שם.

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

ליזכות ההתן משה רפאל שי גורן והכלה המהוללה איילת חנה תחי גורענסון

In honor of Moshe Raphael Gorin & Ayelet Chana Goranson

לרגל התונתם ביום ב' דר"ה אלול הבעל"ט

ליזכות הילד שניאור זלמן הלוי שי שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים

OUR HEROES

אלול

Reb Pinchas Koritzer

Reb Pinchas Shapira of Koritz was born in the city of Shklov, in the year ה'תפ"ו (1726). He was one of the great talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov, and a contemporary of the Mezritcher Maggid, Reb Michel of Zlotshov, Reb Yaakov Yosef of Polno'ah and many others. He first lived in Koritz and then moved to Ostro'oh. Many of the chassidische Rebbes were guided by him. In the year תקנ"א (1791), he planned to immigrate Eretz Yisroel but passed away en-route, in the town of Shpituvka, on the 10th of Elul.



Reb Pinchas once asked the Mezritcher Maggid, "Why do you have many chassidim whereas I only have a few?"

The Maggid replied, "We know that the *parshiyos* of Chukas and Balak can be together, and so can the *parshiyos* of Matos and Maasei. Parshas Pinchas, however, is always separate, because Pinchas was a zealot and only wanted the truth. The same is with you, for you are always demanding truth and consequently, you have few followers."

A chossid of Reb Pinchas was once traveling when he was suddenly overcome with strong hunger pangs. He stopped at an inn and asked the innkeeper to quickly bring him some food, for he is famished. "I'm very sorry," apologized the innkeeper. "I cannot serve you the scrumptious meal I usually provide my customers with, since it is already three days that my daughter is having trouble giving birth, and my entire household is in great turmoil. All I can offer you is some cake and *marshke*." The chossid took the cake and *marshke* and announced with great fervor, "You are now fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*! And I am the recipient of the actual *mitzvah*, which means that I am now close to Hashem. I therefore *daven* that Hashem immediately help your daughter!" As he concluded his proclamation, voices were heard happily calling, "Mazal tov! Mazal tov! It's a boy!"

When the chossid returned to Reb Pinchas and greeted him with "*sholom*", Reb Pinchas said, "I see on you a 'thread of kindness', the likes of *techiyas hameisim*!" The chossid then related all that had occurred to him. When he finished, Reb Pinchas heartily thanked him, "*Yashar koach*! No tzadik in this world has as of yet thought to give life to a child and his mother in the merit of the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*!"

ליזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

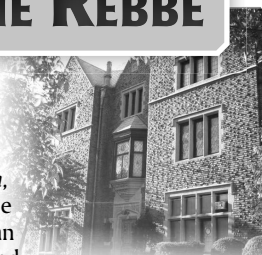
See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch...

Reb Yosef Hartman tells the following story:

"A friend of mine, a fine Lubavitcher *yungerman*, brought his son to Seven Seventy, to celebrate the child's *upshernish*. During davening, the child began to cry, and to calm him, this father gently stroked his son and kissed him on his forehead. Eventually, the child calmed down, and the davening ensued uninterrupted.

The next day, he received a telephone call from Harav Chodakov, asking him to come immediately to the office, as he has a message for him from the Rebbe. When he arrived, Harav Chodakov presented him with the standard letter from the Rebbe for the *upshernish*, and enclosed with it, was a handwritten note from the Rebbe.

The note read: "See *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, siman 13 se'if 1*." Upon opening the sefer he discovered: "It is forbidden to kiss a child in shul, for one may not express love in a shul, other than to Hashem."



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