



לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה' פנחס אהרן יוסף
שיחי
לרגל הולדתו ביום
ו' תמוז ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל
שיגדל להיות חי"ל כרצו"ק
ולנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
גדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יעקב דובער
וזוגתו מרת חנה איטא שיחיו
ליף

Elul

The Shining Month

כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר אומר בא' משיחותיו שמשבת
מברכים חודש אלול מתחיל כבר ענין היראה כו'
("מ'הויבט זיך שוין אן צו שרעקן").

אבל, ביחד עם זה, הרי חסידים אינם מתפעלים ואינם
מתייירים משום דבר, כיון שאינם הולכים בכח
עצמם, אלא על גבי כתפיים רחבות ("אויף ברייטע
פלייצעס")... ולכן, איזו עבודה שנותנים להם - אינם
מתייירים מפני'.

ובכל אופן, שתהי' היראה ממה שצריכים להתירא,
אבל, כדרך החסידים - מתוך שמחה (אע"פ שלכאורה
אין יראה ושמחה הולכים יחד), וכמו כן תהי' התשובה
על הענינים שצריכים לעשות תשובה, ומתוך שמחה.

**The [Friediker] Rebbe says in a sicha that
beginning from Shabbos Mevorchim Elul, the
trepidation sets in.**

**Nevertheless, at the same time, we as Chassidim
are not intimidated or afraid of anything, because
we are not in this alone; we stand on 'broad
shoulders.' No matter what avodah comes our way,
we are not afraid [to tackle the task].**

**And in the instance, when we are required to
have fear [for the right reason], we will fulfill it.
But as Chassidim always do—in a joyous manner.
(Despite the fact that fear and joy may not seem
compatible.) The teshuvah that we need to do for
our misdeeds will be done in a joyous manner.**

(Sicha 2 Elul 5713)

The new year is at our doorstep. The outgoing year is all but finished. Our Rabbeim teach us that this preparatory month of Elul is one of the most significant times of the year.

On the one hand, it is a solemn month, known as "*chodesh hacheshbon*"—the month for stock-taking and evaluating one's progress in *avodas Hashem*. Yet at the same time, we are told, this month is *chodesh harachamim*—a time when Hashem's mercy is bountiful and an opportune time for our *teshuvah* to be accepted.

In the famous *mashal* first told by the Alter Rebbe in Likutei Torah of the "*melech basadeh*," the king in the field, he writes that the king is "מראה פנים"—He greets each one with a gracious and cheerful face.

In our own *avodah* as well, these two positions are manifest. Solemnity on one hand, joy on the other. Proper conduct during the month of Elul had always been an integral part of the *darkei haChassidus*, as taught by our Rabbeim.

The Teshuvah Wind

The most famous description of how a Lubavitcher Elul is supposed to look can be found in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sicha* of Pesach 5694 (תרצ"ד).

He begins with the sudden change of atmosphere on Shabbos Mevorchim Elul: "True, it was an ordinary clear-skied day of sunshine, but the air had changed. One could already feel the Elul-scent. The 'teshuvah-wind' was already blowing in the air. Every Yid became more attentive and introspective, and began forgetting about all his weekday [mundane] activities..."

"Every day of Elul was entirely different than the ordinary days of the year. Lying in bed at six o'clock in the morning, one could hear how the *vasikin minyan* completed their davening and the shofar sound was heard. The sound of the shofar woke you up to the fact that Elul is here! (עם איז אלול אויף דער) (וועלט).

"...With each day we drew closer to Shabbos Selichos. The Chassidus said [by the Rabbeim] on Shabbos Selichos was heard with much more intensity. On the preceding Friday night there was not much time to sleep. One would automatically get out of bed; there was no rest... This Shabbos was different from all other Shabbosim of the year. It was Shabbos Selichos!"¹

Throughout the years, the Rebbe often repeated the Frierdiker Rebbe's description of Elul in Lubavitch, even drawing lessons in *avodas Hashem* from the careful choice of words used in the story.²

But the bottom line was always the same:

The Frierdiker Rebbe did not relate these stories simply in good reminiscence of history.

"These are not stories of the past, applicable only in those times," the Rebbe explains. "The theme of the city of Lubavitch is that it shines light across the entire world ("משם אורה יוצאה לכל העולם"). [*Temimim*, the alumni of Lubavitch] are to be '*neiros le'hoir*'—illuminating candles. We cannot sit in our own *daled-amos* and be content dealing only with ourselves. We need to illuminate the whole world.

"Obviously then, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's words about the atmosphere in Lubavitch during Elul are applicable in every place, at every time. Especially considering the fact that he told this story many years after being exiled from the city of Lubavitch, and

even after he left that entire country—leaving the city of Lubavitch behind the Iron Curtain.

"Nevertheless, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe took the time to retell this story, have it written down, and published. Obviously, it is an important lesson for all generations!"³

A WHOLE DIFFERENT ELUL!

It would be appropriate to ensure that the Chassidus you learn, both on your own and with your *talmidim*, should be timely—discussing the current time of year. This has a great impact on the *avodah* of the day.

For example, when Elul comes around and you study the meaning of Elul as it is explained in Chassidus, and the month of Elul is altogether different!

(*Yechidus, Mikdash Melech* vol. 4 p. 393)

Standing Before the King

It is important to remember that although the month of Elul is compared to the time when the king comes out to the field and is gracious to each and every person, we too must do our part. Especially given the fact that the "King" is so close by, we must work to better ourselves and not remain at the same level we were previously.⁴

In *yechidus* with the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim, the Rebbe explained that during Elul the *bochurim* need to focus more on their personal *avodah* and learn the parts of Torah that speak more to their hearts. "Let them learn Shaar HaTeshuvah and Shaar HaTefillah of the *sefer* Derech Chaim [from the Mitteler Rebbe], Likutei Torah (from Parshas Devarim and on, where it talks about *teshuvah*), and Ateres Rosh," the Rebbe instructed. "Even those *talmidim* who are still in camp or other places should also learn these subjects..."⁵

The Rebbe often quoted an instruction brought in *sefarim* that during the month of Elul, one should focus on *tefillah* and *teshuvah* more than the rest of the year. The Torah subjects studied during this period should also focus on arousal to *avodas Hashem*; like the *sefer* Derech Chayim and Iggeres HaTeshuvah. The Rebbe also added that it is important to learn "*avodahdike*" *maamarim* during this month.⁶ Even those who are generally more inclined to learn Torah diligently are also supposed

to focus more on davening and *avodas Hashem*, as brought in the *Acharonim*.⁷

“This is not to say that we should learn less,” the Rebbe cautioned. “Only that we are to add in *tefillah* and *avodah* so much that it seems as though the learning is less. But in truth, we must increase in *limud haTorah* during Elul as well...”⁸

DERECH CHAYIM

Reb Yochanan Gordon related:

There was a *melamed* in a village who frequently studied from *Derech Chayim*, and it caused him to constantly cry. When he came home to retrieve a *sefer* and he'd see the *Derech Chayim* on the shelf, just the sight of it made him feel a stab in his heart, so he hid it behind the bookshelf. But he would still chance upon the *sefer* from time to time, and each time he felt a stab in his heart again. So he decided to have it bound with a different colored cover.

I also heard from the *mashpia* Reb Michael Blinner that he once learned the *maamar* of Ani L'Dodi in Likutei Torah, sincerely taking its content to heart. It had such a profound affect on him that for seven years, he was unable to look at the *maamar* again!

(*Otzar Sippurei Chabad* vol. 16 p. 91)

It should be noted that in a letter to a *bochur* who felt depressed and at a loss, and he attributed these feelings to learning the *sefer* *Derech Chayim*, the Rebbe advises:

In so many places in Chassidus the notion of depression is absolutely shunned. This is obviously not coming from a good place and needs to be done away with as soon as possible. By increasing in good and light, you will push away much darkness. Learn Torah diligently, for Torah study brings happiness to the heart and soul...

(*Igros Kodesh* vol. 10 p. 33)

Teshuvah - Only of Love

As the final month of the year before Rosh Hashanah, Elul is the *chodesh hacheshbon*—the month to evaluate one's standing in *avodas Hashem* over the past year, to do *teshuvah* and change for the better.

The Rebbe explains why specifically this month was chosen for the *cheshbon hanefesh*:

Everything has its proper time. Not every day is one supposed to make a *cheshbon hanefesh*. Much like a businessman, if he will spend all his days





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calculating balance and income, he will never have time to focus on his business. In *avodas Hashem* as well, it is important to spend most of the time occupied with Torah and mitzvos.

The Rebbe Rashab once saw a Chossid crying on Simchas Torah and he said: “Because you didn’t cry during ‘*Al Cheit*’ on Yom Kippur, you are trying to fill it in now. But now is not the time for that!”

The time for the *cheshbon* is specifically during the month of Elul.

Why?

At times, making an honest *cheshbon hanefesh* can do more harm than good. Realizing how low one has fallen, he may just give up altogether on ever getting back up and doing the right thing again. But in Elul, Hashem’s mercy is shining. Like the king in

the field, He greets each and every one no matter their standing in *avodas Hashem*. Feeling this love from Hashem, no one will have the thought of giving up or the feeling of being too far gone. We can be certain that our *teshuvah* will be accepted and we will continue on a straight path, with Torah and *avodas Hashem*.⁹

STOP THINKING MAN ON THE MOON!

In Elul 5729, less than a year after the first moon landing, the Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to focus on what's important during this time of year and forget about worldly occurrences:

The hardest part is removing yourself from ordinary everyday life.

When Shabbos Mevorchim Elul arrives, a time when you should be awakened to *teshuvah*, you are unable to pause your everyday life “in the big city.”

For example, you still can't get over the fact that man landed on the moon!

It is already Shabbos Mevorchim Elul. The month of Elul is almost here. It is a time that you should be focusing on the *avodah* of *אני לדודי ודודי לי*—coming closer to Hashem with your own effort. Why do you care about man reaching the moon; or if they are now planning to reach even further, to planet Mars (just because one Goy or another decided so)?

You should focus on the *avodah* of the month of Elul.

(Shabbos Parshas Re'eh, 5729)

The Rebbe is Here

The Alter Rebbe's *marshal* of the king in the field serves as an indication for us Chassidim as well.

The Rebbe explains that even those who think they are too faraway to connect to the Rebbe; they think they are stuck in a field—out of the spiritual “civilization”—they too can connect to the Rebbe during the month of Elul.

“Not only is the Rebbe not upset about having to come to you in such a lowly place,” explains the Rebbe. “On the contrary! The Rebbe greets each one graciously and shows a smiling face.”

Whoever wishes to do so is welcome to come and greet the Rebbe in the field. We need not even to push, because the Rebbe will greet each one and shower *brachos* to each one individually.

One needs only not to be a fool, just utilize the opportunity. Call out “אבא הצילני, אבא רחמני” *One, sincere, heartfelt cry: “Father, save me! Father have mercy on me!”*¹⁰ **T**

1. Likutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 230
2. Likutei Sichos vol. 4 p. 1344; vol. 19 p. 158
3. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 5 p. 2668; see also 5746 vol. 4 p. 297
4. See Toras Menachem vol. 14 p. 276
5. Likutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 632
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 19 p. 432; vol. 21 p. 227
7. See Matteh Efraim 581:11
8. Shabbos parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5726
9. Likutei Sichos vol. 9 p. 304
10. Sichs Chai Elul 5710

TIME FOR A SMILING FACE

Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, shliach in Milan, Italy relates:

I recall one Elul when I was in New York, after moving on shlichus to Italy, rumors circulated that a chartered airplane full of Chassidim would arrive in New York just before Tishrei.

You can only imagine how I felt. The atmosphere of Tishrei was approaching, so many Chassidim would be coming to the Rebbe to spend these precious moments in his holy presence. I on the other hand, was bound to return to Italy that day. I felt dejected, to say the least.

I stood there outside 770 lost in thought, when suddenly I was approached by the Rebbe's *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein. Noticing my down face, he rebuked me: “Why are you so downcast?” he asked.

A short while later, the Rebbe arrived at 770 and I was summoned to the Rebbe's room.

The Rebbe looked at me with the most fatherly, loving smile, and said:

“ס'איז דאך חודש אלול; דער מלך איז בשדה, ומראה פנים שווקות לכולם!”

“It is the month of Elul; the King is in the field, and He shows each one a smiling face!”

I left the Rebbe's room overwhelmed by what had just transpired. I remember thinking to myself: We always learn about these *giluyim* in Chassidus; describing how the king comes out into the field and uplifts the simple people. But now I have actually experienced it! The feeling was unbelievable.