

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 נחמ"י 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 *mashal* 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 Frierdiker 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."

(התוועדות תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2668)

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 מנשה לברטוב, וראה סה"מ תש"א ע' 207)

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, תיו"מ חל"ה ע' 126)

CONSIDER THIS!

- How does the joy of *HaShem's* presence not detract from the earnestness 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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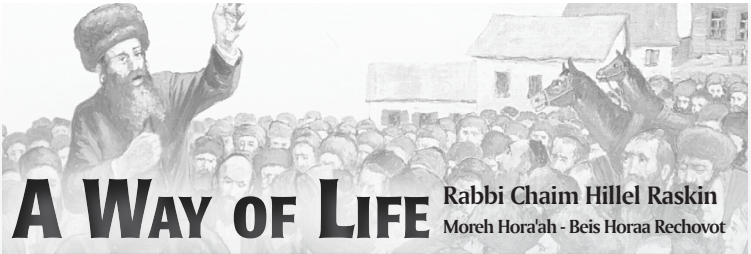


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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Pet Parrot

Are there any *halachic* concerns regarding owning a pet parrot?

- *Halacha* states¹ that one may not do business with a food item² or animal which is forbidden to eat *min hatorah*, even if it permissible to derive pleasure from it. Rishonim are divided as to whether this prohibition is *min hatorah*, or *midrabanan* as a safeguard from eating them (though the *gzeira* has certain parameters).
- What about selling bug infested fruits? Some say that it's permitted since he isn't profiting from the bugs,³ and the fruits can be made edible by removing the bugs. Though some are stringent,⁴ one can be lenient if necessary.⁵
- One who doesn't intend to do business with these things but by chance received them (such as one who *shechted* an animal and it wasn't kosher, or received it as payment of a loan, or one bought a large lot which included the non-kosher products), may sell them without delay.⁶
- *Acharonim* point out that work-animals (e.g. horse or donkey) were allowed to be kept since the majority of that animal is owned for work and not for eating.⁷ Based on this reasoning, some *poskim* permit raising rabbits for their furs.⁸
- *Poskim* discuss whether pets are permissible as well since they are likewise not eaten.⁹ Some¹⁰ limit the permissibility to pet birds whose flesh is inedible, however other non-kosher pets are prohibited (other sources raise objection to raising all types of birds, even kosher ones¹¹). Contemporary *poskim* write that one who wants to own a non-kosher bird for educational purposes or for company may be lenient.¹² Some prefer a finch which is a kosher bird.
- Based on several sources, the Rebbe said that visual and emotional attachment to non-kosher animals has a negative spiritual effect on a person, and children in particular should be shielded from viewing even images of non-kosher animals.¹³ However, seeing these animals in a zoo is permissible as it educates the child to appreciate the works of Hashem.¹⁴

1. פסחים כ"ג ע"א, שו"ע יו"ד סי' קי"ז ס"א.
 2. להוציא חלב (שו"ע שם), וכן דם ועורות הטמאים (כף החיים שם ס"ח ק-ט).
 3. כף החיים יו"ד סי' קי"ז סק"ג.
 4. ב"ה סימן פ"ד.
 5. חלקת בנימין סי' קי"ז סק"ב.
 6. רמ"א שם, וביארו האחרונים שא"צ להפסיד ממון במכירתם.
 7. ש"ך שם סק"א.
 8. ראה רשמי שאלה מהגרצ"פ עמ"פ פ"ג שמכרעו להתיר בארנבת אבל יש שחלקו עליו.
 9. ראה ב"י סי' קי"ז בשם האורחות חיים. לבוש יו"ד סי' קי"ז ס"א. וראה ברכ"י שם ס"ב.
 10. ראה הגהות מוהר"א אזולאי על הלבוש שם.
 11. בס' חסידים אות תתלה שלל גידול צפרים מפני בזבוז. והארז"ל הזהיר מאד מנגידול תורים ובני' בבית (ס' הגלגולים בליקוטים ובס' נגיד ומצוה בשם האריז"ל).
 12. ובשו"ת אפרקסתא דעניא ח"א סי' סג שאין אנו יודעים טעמו ואם הוא דוקא בתורים ובני' או בכל עופות. עוד כ' שם לשלול צפרים ע"פ סוטה מ"ח ע"א ומהרש"א שם.
 13. היכל הוראה ח"ב עמ' שפט.
 14. ראה תו"מ תשד"מ ח"א ע' 487 ע"פ קב הישר פ"ב וקונטרס העבודה פ"ב רמ"א יו"ד סי' קצ"ח סמ"ח.
 15. שם הערה 4 וע' 517.

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Yehoshua Eizik Baruch



Reb Yehoshua Eizik Baruch was born in Zhitomer in 5650 (1890), and learned in Lubavitch for many years. After his marriage he served as the *mashpia* for *Anash* in the city of Kovno. He was admired by the whole city, and even those that were not chassidim attended his *farbrengens*. Later on he was appointed by the Frieddiker Rebbe to be the *mashpia* in Tomchei Temimim of Vilna. He was killed in the Kovno Ghetto on Shabbos, Tes Cheshvan 5702 (1941).

Reb Yehoshua Eizik was an extremely sincere person. When he received a letter from the Rebbe, he was overjoyed to the point that if he met someone in the street, even a non-chossid, he would dance with him. He would study the Rebbe's letter many times, analyzing each word like a Gemara. Once, the Frieddiker Rebbe wrote him a letter and at the end requested him to give regards to *Anash*. Afterwards, he gave regards from the Rebbe to any *Anash* member he met. If he wasn't sure if he already gave that person regards, he would give them regards a second time.

One year on Rosh Hashana, the Frieddiker Rebbe requested that extra Tehilim should be recited, suggesting the *kapitlach* 20, 22 and 69. Reb Yehoshua Eizik didn't hear about this until after Rosh Hashana. That Yud Tes Kislev during the *farbrengen*, he banged on the table and said the *kapitlach* of Tehilim, proclaiming that it was also Rosh Hashana.

Before he was murdered he called everyone together and instructed them to prepare for the *mitzva* of *kidush Hashem*. Before the wicked ones took him away, they confiscated all his belongings. He saw this as a favor, since then he did not have to carry on Shabbos...

לזכות יהושע העשל בן חנה שי' לרפו"ש וקרובה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Alef-Beis Rebbe

During one of the *farbrengens* of 5718 (1958), the Rebbe announced that all who were involved in *chinuch* should say *lechaim*.

Reb Elya Chayim Roitblat, the founding *melamed* of Oholei Torah Cheder, was also present at the *farbrengen*, but he did not say *lechaim*. Even as others encouraged him to do so, he refused, saying that he had his reasons.

The Rebbe noticed that Reb Elya Chaim had not said *lechaim*, and turned to him:

"When a *rosh yeshiva* says a *pilpul*, there is reason to doubt the accuracy of the *pilpul*. We could therefore never be sure that he is actually teaching the true Torah of Hashem. But when one teaches a child '*Kometz-Alef-OH*,' we could be certain that he is indeed teaching Hashem's Torah.

"Therefore," the Rebbe concluded with a smile, "say *lechaim!*"