ELUL (II)

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.

**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 teshuvah. 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 teshuvah.

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 teshuvah.

**In the year 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.”

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 maamarim of Chassidus which arouse one to do teshuvah.

**SPECIAL PRACTICES**

The chassid 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 Tehillin 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 Tehillin, concluding the sefer on Yom Kippur.

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

During the month of Elul and Aseres Yemei Teshuvah we bench one another with berachos for a keiva suschisam 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.
REUSING A HOT CUP

Can I reuse my cup with remaining droplets to refill with hot water from the urn on Shabbos?

Hot water in the original utensil in which it was heated (k’li rishon) has the ability to cook other foods, and doing so on Shabbos is an issur d’oraia. After being transferred into another utensil (k’li sheni), it can no longer cook liquid. Hot water poured (irui) from a k’li rishon is generally treated like a kli rishon.

What about the small drops that remain in a cup after use? Can one use such a cup to fill directly from the urn, or must one seek out a dry k’li sheni to fill from the urn and pour it into the wet k’li shishi?

The halacha is that cold liquid is subject to bishul even if previously cooked (see article 681), and the drops usually cool down quickly. Yet, poskim are lenient based on several reasons:

1. There is after all a debate amongst poskim whether cold liquid is subject to bishul, and although we rule stringently, it seems that this stringency is miderabanan and not mide’oraisa.

2. There is no intention to cook the water, and even though it is inevitable (p’sik reishei), it is not desired (lo nicha lei), since one would prefer that the cold drops not be there altogether. Although we do not permit melacha because of p’sik reishei lo nicha lei, here it can be combined with other mitigating factors.

3. The drops are so minimal and have no significance in bishul. Although it is prohibited to perform melacha even for a partial amount (chatzi shiur), these drops are so insignificant some hold it does not constitute bishul at all. This can be relied upon here, where there are additional grounds for leniency as well.

4. The Alter Rebbe rules that the bottom substance in a k’li sheini is more powerful (tata’a gavar) and it can cool off the hot liquid poured into it before it has a chance to cook. It’s unclear if there is a minimum amount if or if it applies even to a drop of cold water on bottom.

In practice, if one shakes the cup to empty it out, one can refill it with hot water and need not worry if some drops remain.

TELL STORIES

The renowned teacher at Beis Yaakov Yehudah of Detroit, Reb Shmuel Kaufman, had come to the Rebbe concerning a personal matter. However, after addressing his issue, the Rebbe suddenly shifted the conversation to his classroom.

“Do you tell your students stories of tzadikim?” the Rebbe asked.

Reb Shmuel replied that he did not, because he considered it a waste of precious time that could be utilized with learning Torah.

The Rebbe answered, “Telling stories of tzadikim is in itself Torah. Tell stories!”

“Indeed,” says his former student Reb Leizer Avtzon, “Reb Shmuel became known as a master storyteller, impressing yiras Shamayim, Torah values, and good midos upon thousands of students.”

(As heard from Reb Leizer Avtzon)