

תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

SEFER DEVARIM - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE MERON AND SURFSIDE TRAGEDIES,
AND AS A ZECHUS FOR THE YESHUA OF KLAL YISROEL

TORAS AVIGDOR

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

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Preparing for Elul

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פרשת ראה

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Preparing for Elul

Contents:

Part I. Looking Back - 3

Part II. Looking Around - 8

Part III. Looking Forward - 12

Part I. Looking Back

Preparing for Elul

In the ancient times – by ancient, I mean a hundred years ago – when they *bentched* Rosh Chodesh Elul in the synagogues, there was a trembling, a *tzitternish*. That's how it was when the Jewish street was still saturated with *yiras shomayim* – as soon as they mentioned Elul, there was already a *tzitternish* among the people. Elul! The *yom hadin* is coming! The day of judgment is approaching. And the whole month was a month of preparation.

Some of the great men in the not-so-long-ago had the practice of going to certain places even *before* Elul in order to be elevated spiritually and prepare themselves for these important days leading up to the *yom hadin*.

The Alter of Slabodka *zichrono levrachah* used to go to Kelm in the middle of the month of Av to prepare for Elul. Others too; that was the

custom of many of the great ones. But great ones or not, by the time Rosh Chodesh Elul came along *everyone* got busy preparing. And so if we see that Elul is right around the corner then we too have to start readying ourselves for the *yom hadin*.

Praying and Thanking

And so the question is what do we do now? Of course, you'll say, we prepare with *teshuva*. People will get busy, I'm sure, learning *seforim* that teach them the way to repentance. People will be thinking of more *mitzvos* now. They'll give more *tzedakah* than they give all year. They'll behave with better character traits. I'm sure the good people are aware of the impending day of judgment and they're all going to utilize Elul to prepare.

But there's something that we're forgetting about. Because before anything else, before we approach that day when we're going to plead with Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "כְּתֹבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים" – Inscribe us into the book of life," the first thing is: *what about thanking Hashem for what He has given to you up until now?*

It's always with the hand stretched out, "Give me! Give me more." What about saying thank you for what He already gave you? Is thanking Hashem such a small thing?

The Number One Obligation

Actually, it's the *biggest* thing! We're in this world for one purpose and that purpose is what Dovid Hamelech teaches us: טוֹב – Do you know what's good in this world? Not a good thing – what is *the* good thing in this world? לְהוֹדוֹת לַיהוָה – to give thanks to Hashem. That's what's good in this world. And it's so good, so important, that it's expected from everybody.

Even an Eskimo or a man in the Congo, can't ignore that obligation. *Shekein chovas kol hayetzurim*, it's the duty of all living people, *l'hodos u'lihalel* (Tefillas Nishmas). You hear that? It doesn't say *kol haYehudim* – all the Jews. It says *yetzurim*. Everybody. An old Eskimo should call together his wife and his children once in a while into the igloo and tell them, "We're here together now; let's spend an hour or two thanking Hashem."

And so, if a person will go into the new year without having set aside time to thank Hashem for the one that just passed, then he has failed in the most important obligation, not only of a Jew but of a human being. You have to start the career of doing like a good Eskimo is supposed to do – at least that. It's not merely a *midas chassidus*, an act of additional extreme piety. It's the number one obligation.

The Seforim Shlepper

Only because people are not trained – the concept of genuine *hakaras hatov* is so far away from their minds – so they don't even think about such things. Let me tell you a little story that happened recently. I was walking on Kings Highway and I saw a Jew with a nice black hat. It wasn't like mine, bent in the middle; it was round on the top – a real *frum* Jew. And he had a big grey beard and a *kapote* of course.

Now, I saw him looking around like he was lost and so I asked him if I could help him. He tells me that he comes from Eretz Yisrael and he's trying to find the bus to go to Seagate so I told him that I'd walk him to the bus stop and show him the way.

He was carrying a heavy suitcase so I said, "Let me carry it for you."

He told me, "It's *seforim*." He made sure to let me know what he's carrying – "It's *seforim*." Important information for me to know. So I'm walking with him, carrying his *seforim* a couple of blocks.

Getting A Ride

Now, Seagate means the Coney Island bus and then he'll have to transfer to another bus – it's a whole business – so as we're walking, when I saw a man who I know who has a car, I stopped him and told him, "This man wants to go to Seagate."

"I'll take him with my car," he said.

So the man takes the suitcase from me and leaves me; he gets into the car and finished. He doesn't say thank you. I'm older than he was – I'm older and I was carrying his suitcase two blocks. And then I got him a car to Seagate. He didn't say thank you. Nothing!

Before the Seforim

Now this man, I'm sure, is impressed by Elul and the necessity to prepare for the Day of Judgment. And I'm sure that in certain things he's a *talmid chacham* – he's not an *am ha'aretz* – and he has a certain stereotype of what *teshuva* is. And it could be he'll fulfill that; very good! All forms of *teshuva* are important!

But if he never learned the fundamental principle of saying thank you – if he can't even say thank you to an old man who carried his suitcase – he'll never be able to make genuine *teshuva*! Because the *yesod hayesodos*, the foundation of being a Jew, is to be a person who is grateful for things that are done for him and because Hashem is the One doing everything it means that the most important function of a Jew in this world is to

recognize the *chasdei Hashem* to him. It's such an important statement that I'm going to repeat it. *Of all the things that's expected of us in this world, the foremost is the obligation to thank Hashem!*

Don't misunderstand me – there are many obligations. It's important for people to be ambitious to learn *Bava Kamma*, absolutely; and *Bava Metzia* and *Gittin* and *Kiddushin* and *Kesubos* too. Absolutely you should learn *gemara*. And *bein adam lachaveiro*; of course that's something to think about during Elul – if we have time, we'll talk about that. Be ambitious to be a *midakdeik b'mitzvos*; very good! Many things are important to consider during this month. But on top of the list is the requirement to give gratitude to Hashem for the past year.

A Guaranteed Year

And so when we begin to think about what Elul means for us, our first obligation is to look back on the past year and to thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu that last year He inscribed us for a year of life.

Suppose that *motzei Yom Kippur* last year, you walked out of the *beis haknesses* to go home to eat and you would find a telegram on your table sent *min hashamayim* informing you that you were *zocheh badin*; a telegram from Hashem telling you that you're going to get a new year. You'd be overjoyed; you'd be delirious with happiness to know that there's waiting for you a year of life. Because nobody knows; nobody knows. I've seen so many cases where people suddenly left the world, *lo aleinu*, and here you're getting an assurance *min hashamayim* that you are guaranteed a year of life. How happy you would have been!

But you didn't know about it. So therefore you're going to miss that opportunity to be happy? Now you see that there *was* a telegram, only you didn't know about it. So therefore the first thing we'll do is we're going to be happy retroactively, *igla'i milsa lemafreia*, we were happy people. It's a very important point by the way.

Breaking Down the Year

Let's say you're a man of 50 years old, for example. "Oh! Boruch Hashem, the 50th year I lived." Now, a year is not just a year – it's many things. Remember how after *Yom Kippur*, we sat down at the meal at *motzei Yom Kippur*, how good the food tasted. Did you think about that? That's how it started off *motzei Yom Kippur*. Ah! It was a pleasure to eat then. Think of all the good that has happened after that! A whole *Tishrei*!

And then *Cheshvan* came and *Kislev*. Think of all the months that passed by, one after the other, and each month has so many days. You

lived the first day of Kislev and the second day and the third day. Days upon days you lived!

And Hakodosh Boruch Hu says to you: “I gave you more than life. All the needs of your life I gave you. You ate meals almost every day. You slept in a bed almost every night. You didn't sleep on the railroad tracks. And most of them were pleasant nights. You put on garments and shoes every day, and you took baths once in a while. What didn't you do?! You went to the bathroom every day; every day a few times and everything functioned without any mishaps.”

You cannot prepare for Rosh Hashana unless you look back to the last Rosh Hashana, what happened from then until now. How many times did you go to the doctor in the past year? Even if you're a hypochondriac who likes to give business to physicians, there are some people like that, but still in between there were days you didn't go. And most of us, sometimes months or years pass without going to a physician. All this has to be considered.

Back To Rosh Hashana

“Look at everything I did for you,” says Hashem, “and as a result of thousands of benefits you're still here. Your kidneys were working. Your pancreas was working. Your heart was pounding away every day. Your blood circulation was working. Do you know how many miracles there are in your blood? And it's only because of those miracles that you made it so far in the year.

Every process in the body is miraculous. And it's so deep and profound that if you'd take some time to think about it, it's astounding what Hakodosh Boruch Hu is doing for us all the time. We should be flabbergasted at the constant miracles that have taken place in our daily lives since last Rosh Hashana.

Now all this, if you tell it to others, they'll laugh at it, because they didn't learn these things. They learned, you have to prepare with *shmiras haloshon*. They learned, you have to prepare with doing *ma'asim tovim*. You have to add more Torah. All that's true, but they never learned the *hakdamah*, the preface to everything. Before everything else, number one is to say, “Thank you, Hashem, for the last year!” That's *teshuva*!

Thinking and Thanking

And so, that's going to be our first *kabbalah* going into Elul; gratitude! People call me up on the phone, “What should I do for Elul?” What's the question?! Our hands are full; there's so much work to do because Hashem

is looking at us and saying, “What about the past year? You forgot about all the happiness I gave you?”

So we're not going to forget! That's going to be number one on the list for Elul – we're going to set aside time for thinking and thanking. Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave us all kinds of happiness over the past year – more than three hundred days of happiness and miracles – and before we're able to have the *chutzpah* to ask for another year, we're going to get busy during Elul expressing to Hakodosh Boruch Hu our appreciation for all those things.

Part II. Looking Around

Blessings On The Mount

Now, as important as this subject of *tov l'hodos* is when we talk about approaching the Yom Hadin, it is important to introduce another major element of what should be included in our mindset; another attitude of the mind that it pays to acquire during the month of Elul. And that is, when we come to stand before the Melech Hamishpat on Rosh Hashana we don't want to come on our merits alone; we want to come together with the Am Yisroel. I'll explain that.

In this week's *sedrah* the Am Yisroel is commanded to take part in an especial procedure upon coming into Eretz Yisroel: וְהָיָה כִּי יְבִיאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ – When Hashem your G-d will bring you to the land which you come to inherit, וְנָתַתָּה אֶת הַבְּרָכָה עַל הָרַ גְּרִזִּים וְאֶת הַקְּלָלָה עַל הָרַ עֵיבָל – then you shall deliver the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Eival (Re'eh 11:29). And so it was. When they crossed the Yarden the whole Klal Yisroel was assembled around these two mountains and certain public blessings and public curses were said by the people, blessing those who would follow in the ways of Hashem and cursing those who would stray.

So the question arises. Why do we need this ceremony of saying *brachos* and *klalos*? It seems entirely superfluous because whatever was said there was said in the *chumash* already before, and we know that those who obey Hashem will be blessed and those that disobey will be unblessed; that's axiomatic of the entire Torah.

Blessed By The Nation

So we'll understand that there's an important principle here. Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted it to be the *people* who say the blessings and

curses. When they came together at Har Gerizim and Har Eival and saw their fellow compatriots pronouncing their pleasure and displeasure with their behavior, it was for the purpose not only that people should do what Hashem says, but that they should be able to be influenced and affected by the great gravity of the blessings and the un blessings of the Klal Yisrael. It's a great lesson that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is teaching us in our *sedrah*: what the Am Yisroel thinks about you, that's also very important!

That's another lesson of Elul, to understand the greatness of the Am Yisroel and to desire to be connected with them. Because there's nothing more important to Hakodosh Boruch Hu than the Am Yisroel, and our connection to our fellow Jews is of utmost importance to Him.

Two Principles

You know, in the Torah there are two main principles. One is *bereishis bara Elokim* – that Hashem created the world out of nothing. It means that there's no such thing as a world; it's just Hashem's imagination. *B'dever Hashem shamayim na'asu* – it's only the word of Hashem that causes reality to exist.

It means that Hashem is the only reality. *Hashem Elokim emes*, the Rambam says, means *hu levado emes* – He's the only one *emes* in the world; He's the only intrinsic reality. We're not *emes*. We're carbon dioxide. We're hydrogen. A few other ingredients added in. That's why we melt away; our bodies disappear and nothing remains. A hundred years from now – unless you're less than twenty years old – nothing will remain from you. The *neshamah* is something else; it goes back to Hashem, but it's a fundamental truth that all of us, in a hundred years from now will be nothing. And that's because there is only one true reality. Only Hashem is real. Everything else is only His imagination. That's principle number one of *yahadus*, *Hashem Echad* – Hashem is everything.

The Important Ones

But what's number two on the list? What's the second greatest principle of the Torah? It's the Am Yisroel! Hashem's Mind is concentrated only on one thing in the universe, on the Am Yisroel. We read it last week in the shul: הֵן לַהֲשֵׁם אֱלֹקֵיךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם – Behold the heavens belong to Hashem, וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ, וְשָׁמַי הַשָּׁמַיִם – and all the space above the heavens as well, וְיִבְחַר בְּזֶרְעָם אֲחֵרֵיהֶם, וְיִבְחַר בְּזֶרְעָם אֲחֵרֵיהֶם – Only in your forefathers did Hashem delight to love them, וְיִבְחַר בְּזֶרְעָם אֲחֵרֵיהֶם – and He chose their children after them. Which children? בָּכֶם – you, הַיּוֹם – as of this day. (Devarim 10:14-15)

If you're loyal to His Torah then Hakodosh Boruch Hu says to you, "All of space is Mine, all the billions of star worlds belong to Me, but it's you that I'm thinking about." Who's "you"? It means the men and women and boys and girls of the Jewish Nation – each one of them is more important than the entire creation. Hakodosh Boruch Hu loves Chaim and Dovid and Berel and Yerucham and Elazar. He's thinking only about Yenta and Chana and Pelta and Chava!

So Mr. Greenberg – Hashem loves you more than He loves all of space. Mr. Katz, Mr. Rubin, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Shama and everybody else, you're all that Hashem is interested in. "Each one of you," Hashem says, "is to Me a beloved child!"

Keep Your Deeds Clean

Now, if that's true, if His thoughts, His interest and His love, are directed at us, so you can understand why it's so important to gain for yourself the blessings of the Am Yisrael. And therefore our *parsha* teaches that although we know that Hashem requires certain things of us, and that He blesses us when we obey, still it's essential to gain the blessing of the Am Yisroel as well. The Am Yisroel is being compared here to Hashem! The first principle is Hashem, but the second principle is our great nation.

By the way, that's why it's so important to avoid *mar'is ayin*. Not only do we keep far away from misdeeds because we want to find favor in the Eyes of Hashem but even when we're doing nothing wrong, we're careful not to raise suspicion in the eyes of our fellow man. Let's say you want to make a telephone call. Don't go into a *treife* restaurant to use the telephone because it looks to the eyes of people as if you're disloyal. Although it's not true; you're a loyal man – you even wipe off the receiver before you pick it up to talk into it, nevertheless, people see you going in and maybe they'll think something.

So you'll say, "What of it if that person misjudged me, if he suspects me? I know the truth; I'm innocent. And Hashem knows too. So who cares what my neighbor thinks?"

No. **וְהָיִיתָ נְקִיִּים מִהֶשֶׁם וּמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל** – you have to be innocent not only from Hashem but also in the eyes of Yisrael. The Am Yisroel should have a good opinion of you because your connection to the people chosen by Hashem means everything.

Together With Them

That's why a person who forsakes his people, a *poresh min hatzibur*, who knows what's going to happen to him. Even if you're a very big *tzaddik*,

but if you decide, "I'm going away from my people, I'm going in the wilderness all by myself. I have no connection with anybody else, only I and Hashem alone," so we say to him, "Good bye. You're a failure."

We're only interested in being together with the Am Yisroel. We want to get along with *frum* Jews, to think along with *frum* Jews, to live among *frum* Jews as much as possible. Don't move away to other neighborhoods, where there are more trees and more grass and less Jews. As much as possible everyone should try to live in thickly populated *frum* neighborhoods because our future is dependent on being one with the Am Yisroel.

Ticket to Olam Habo

I'm going to share with you something you may have never heard before. If you hope for *Olam Habo* eventually after 120 years, you have to know that you'll never get in on your own merit. Of course, once you get there, your own merits will determine your seat – will you be sitting in the back or closer to the front? – but your ticket to *Olam Habo* is only because you're a member of Yisroel and **כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא**. Any Jew who belongs to the *frum* Jewish people, on him you can say **כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא**. He might have to go for a little visit in Gehinom; could be he'll have to make a stop there for a little while to cleanse himself of the faults that he acquired by his wrong ways but eventually he'll land up together with his nation in *Olam Habo*.

It's a very important thing you're hearing now. You can never earn *Olam Habo* completely on your own merit. Only by behaving properly and being connected to the *kol* Yisroel you remain a full member in the membership of Am Yisroel and you're *zocheh* to the promise of **כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא**. And therefore those who are happy in the fact that they are members of the Am Yisrael, they say *shelo asani goy* every day and they're proud of being *frum* Jews, they have a connection to *frum* Jews, these are the people who will be victorious on the great Day of Judgment.

A Method of Preparation

Now if that's the case so we have to realize that just like the Great Day of Judgement, the *Yom hagadol v'hanora* in the afterlife, depends on your connection to the Am Yisroel, so when we talk about Elul and about preparing for the day of judgment in this world, it's no different.

Our whole future, in this world and the next, depends on our connection with the Am Yisroel and so if you want to appear properly before Hashem on Rosh Hashana your only hope is to appear together

with the Klal Yisroel. You won't do it by yourself. You want to appear before Him together with the object of His greatest affection, the Am Yisroel.

That's very important! We can't afford to be judged as individuals! If we hope to be given another year, which we all do, you should know you won't get it on your own merit. We need the merit of the entire Klal Yisroel.

That's why when you stand on Rosh Hashanah and you beg Hashem, "Please *kasveinu besefer hachaim*," you don't say *kasveini*, inscribe me; it's inscribe us. We're thinking about the nation on a whole; the *teireh* boys in Yeshiva, the holy Beis Yaakov girls, the mothers and fathers, the *tzadikim* and the *chassidim* together with all the *yeshivos*, together with all the *batei kenessios*, all the *frum* Jews, all the *yeshivah* men, all the *kollel* people, all the *frum* women, all the *frum* girls. All together, as *am echad*, that's how we stand before Hashem on Rosh Hashana and therefore He says, "I am going to judge you not as individuals but as Klal Yisroel; as My *am segula* whom I love to no end."

Part III. Looking Forward

Getting Real

Now, in order to make this idea more realistic, it would be worthwhile to consider some practical applications of this principle. Until now we've spoken about the general outline of the attitude of being together with the Klal Yisrael when we appear before Hashem on *yom hadin* but if we could use the month of Elul to apply this principle in our day-to-day lives, that would be a most profitable way of preparing for Rosh Hashana — not just to talk about being one with our people, but to take steps to bring the ideal to fruition.

Now, everybody knows that *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* is a *klal gadol baTorah* — we know it's one of the most important *mitzvos* — but don't deceive yourself; it's not a simple matter at all. And if you don't practice it you will never fulfill this *mitzvah* all your life. You might say it, you might talk about it, but you'll never do it because it doesn't come by itself.

Love is Contagious

So here's what I heard from a *gadol b'Yisroel* many, many years ago. Choose one person, he said. Don't tell him about it but you should begin to love him from a distance. Look at his face — "Ah, I love that *frum* Jewish

face.” You don't have to say anything to him. You don't have to become a friend of his. You don't even have to associate with him. Just practice loving him. Men should practice on men and women should practice on women. Love one woman. Don't tell her about it. Don't call her up and speak to her. Just love her.

Little by little your heart becomes full of love to one Jew. And it's contagious – after a while it will spread to others too. You'll find that you'll be able to expand it to include other people too. Once you get the hang of it, it's easy to spread the love. It's something you can practice all the time in the street, even with strangers.

When you see a fellow Jew, there's so much to love. His head is covered! Whether it's a black hat or a yarmulke, or a woman with a sheitel, you're already sold out to that person. “He's ours! I don't care what kind of yarmulke he wears, he's still my brother. And even though he follows a different Rebbe, or a different set of political objectives, nevertheless, I'm going to begin loving him right now.”

The Holy Nation

After all, he belongs to Am Yisrael. He's a *frummeh*; he's from the *am kadosh*. He keeps Shabbos? It means that he's holy. **לֹא תִבְשֹׁל גִּידִי בַחֲלֵב אִמּוֹ** – Don't eat milk and *fleishigs* together, **כִּי עִם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לְהֵשֵׁם אֱלֹקֶיךָ**. Yes, every Jew who refrains from mixing milk and meat together, is a holy person, men and women, they're all holy. Anybody who refrains from eating forbidden foods and eats kosher is a holy person.

Women are very careful. They tell the husband, “Don't touch that!” “That's *fleishig*.” “That's *pareve*.” “That's *milchig*.” She's like the *kohen gadol* managing all the affairs of the house *al pi din*. That's *am kadosh*. So number one, you can love him because he's a *kadosh*.

Now look for other good points. He has children and he's supporting them with tuition. They're going to *yeshivos*. His girls go to *frum* girls' schools, Bais Yaakov, other places. He's raising a family of *frum* children.

A mother who is busy raising a family of *tzaddikim*, boys and girls, it's a tremendous achievement! You see a Jewish mother pushing a baby carriage, inside the carriage are two babies and alongside the carriage five or six running alongside all together, there's so much to love there! She's raising a future generation of *ovdei Hashem*. You should think, “They're all *kedoshim*!” The *shechina* is above the head of that lady. And it's not exaggerating at all. That's the case. It's the truth. And the more you practice up thinking these thoughts, the more you're connected to the

second most important principle of the universe, the Am Yisroel, and the more you're achieving for Yom Hadin.

Becoming One

Now, that's a whole new *avodah* you can work on – how you look at your fellow Jews. You know a *yeshiva bochur* is a beautiful thing. If you look at him with superficial eyes you don't realize what an exception he is. Among all the nations of the world, they don't have anything like a *yeshivah bochur*. He spends his day learning Hashem's Torah, not wasting his time, not fooling around with *narishkeiten* or wicked things, immoral things. A *yeshiva* boy has nothing to do with girls; *frum* girls have nothing to do with boys. They don't talk to each other. It's an *am kadosh*. You have to appreciate that.

Frum girls are diamonds. The *frum* girls are unusual in the world today. They always were unusual, but today especially. And if you think of all the *frum* girls' schools, thousands of *frum* girls, and all of them ambitious to raise Torah families. They want to get married and have beautiful children, *shomrei mitzvos*, boys and girls. Each girl, the future mothers are diamonds. A diamond is nothing compared to them.

Now don't think these thoughts are a small thing. Because when you're on the street and you see the *frum* fathers and mothers, the Beis Yaakov girls and the *yeshiva* boys, and you practice loving them, that makes you tied up together with them. By means of thinking well of them, by feeling an affection, we're together with them. You're one with the Am Yisroel now!

So now we have two suggestions *lema'aseh* in order to become one with the Am Yisrael. We're going to practice loving fellow *frum* Jews and we're going to think well of them in order to increase our affection and *achdus* with them.

Bless and Be Blessed

Now one more point, a practical point. Not only are we going to love our fellow Jews and appreciate them and see their greatness but we're going to make a habit of blessing them. In order that we should identify with the Klal Yisroel, one of the *eitzos* is to do what Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Avraham (Bereishis 12:3), וְאָבְרַכָּה מְבָרְכֶיךָ – I'll bless those who bless you. And Bilam says (Bamidbar 24:9) מְבָרְכֶיךָ בְּרִיךְ – those who bless you, will be blessed by Me.

So let's say you're walking by Satmerer Yeshivah or the Bobover Yeshivah or Mirrer Yeshivah or Chaim Berlin, as you walk by you say like

this: “Hakodosh Boruch Hu should give long life to all the children learning here. They should all be happy and healthy and be *matzliach* in their learning.”

Don't stop there. “And Hakodosh Boruch Hu should give *parnasah berevach* and *nachas* and happiness to the *rosh yeshivah*” – mention his name – “and his *rebbeztin* and his sons and daughters, and his *eidems* and *shnurs* and his grandchildren.” As you walk by, say these words. “And also to all the *magidei shiur* and all the *kollel* people and their wives and children and *eidems*, their fathers and mothers, all should live long and all should be perfectly well and have *parnasah berevach*.”

Women Blessings

When you see as you walk on the street a whole group of Jewish girls coming from the Beis Yaakov school. They're dressed with long dresses and long sleeves. Their hair is made up decently. You see them; it's a pleasure to look at them! And you bless them, **בְּרַכְּם טוֹהָרִים וְרוּחָמִים צְדָקָתְךָ יְמִיד** – **גְּמוּלָם** – “Hashem, please bless him with all good things.”

Imagine you're doing that now *lema'aseh*. Not merely that you're listening to me and you appreciate the idea, you'll consider it one day. No, no; forget now about considering it. Do it. Elul is here now so there's no time for procrastination.

Beautiful Kosher Homes

And so, when you walk down the street, keep your eyes peeled for the big *mezuzos*. And when you see one, “Ah, a *bracha* on that house. “*Yivoreich es beis Yisroel!*” They're not just homes. They're holy homes. Beautiful kosher homes. So make sure to stop for a moment and bless those inside. And be specific. Say the words. “*Ribono Shel Olam*, please keep everyone in this home healthy. Let them all get along with each other and live happy and safe lives and they should have plenty of *parnasah*. Please Hashem, let there be no mishaps in the home.”

The next house, another big *mezuzah*. “Let the children all be *matzliach* in yeshiva and they should all find good *shidduchim*. And the parents should see *nachas* from their children. Everyone in that home should be well for many happy years. They should all have a comfortable livelihood and pleasure and satisfaction from their children. In that home there should be only *simchos* and happy occasions.”

A Good Business

Now suppose you don't walk by; you could say it anyhow. You could say, “*Rav Aharon Shechter*, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Chaim Berlin*, and his *rebbeztin*

and his sons and daughters, *eidems* and *shnurs*. All his *kolleleit* and his *ramim*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu should bless all of them with *arichus yamim*, *parnasah berevach* and *nachas* from children, and *hatzlacha* in Torah.” You say, “Harav Pam *zol zein gezunt* and his *rebbetzin* and his children, his sons and daughters, all should live long. All his *ramim* should live long. All his *kollel* people should live long.”

And you should know first of all it's very good business. It's a good deal because Hashem told Avrohom, “I'll bless those who bless you.” Whatever you say to them, Hashem will bless you.

But there's a bigger blessing than that. Because by means of becoming a blesser, you're not the same person anymore. You become a different personality altogether. You become bound up now with a certain attitude of affection, not only for the Am Yisroel, but for the *gedolei Yisrael* and for the *talmidei chachomim* and for the *lomdim* – that's the heart of our nation. You're bound up with the Satmerer Rav, the Bobover Rav, with the *roshei yeshivos*, all of them.

A Good Preparation

Now you can't do it all the time, but once in a while, once a day from now until Rosh Hashana make it your business to spend about two minutes saying these words. Practice it every day from now until Rosh Hashana. That's your homework. And not merely in general. Mention names. Specify.

As you walk out from here tonight make the first installment. Say about some *gadol haTorah* or some *rosh yeshivah* or some *rosh kollel*, a big *bracha*. Do it right away. Otherwise you'll forget and you might not even remind yourself till Rosh Hashana and you will have missed out on a glorious opportunity.

But if you do it, if you do these things we spoke about here tonight, you should know you embarked on a course of *shleimus*, and on the *yom hadin* when you appear before Hakadosh Boruch Hu, He's going to look at you in a different way entirely. I guarantee it – it will make a tremendous difference. When you appear before Him on the *Yom Hadin*, He says, “By living the way you did during Elul you made a good preparation for the next year. You're one with the Am Yisroel. You belong together with the *tzadikim* and the *chassidim*. You love them, you honor them and you praise them and you bless them; and therefore I'm going to judge you together with them for a *kesivah vachasimah tovah*.”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Five Minutes A Day

I will use all thirty days of the month of Elul to prepare myself for the Yom Hadin by means of the ideas we spoke about tonight.

I will spend four minutes every day thinking about all of the kindnesses that I received from Hakodosh Boruch Hu over the past year. I will also spend one more minute every day becoming one with the Am Yisroel by means of loving my fellow Jews, seeing their greatness, and blessing them.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

520 - Looking Back — Messages From Hashem

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Continued from back cover

become a *lamdan*? It's very important. Everyone can become a *lamdan* if he wants to. And Hashem requires that of you. He demands of you that you should become a *lamdan*.

Also, when you hear the shofar you should think, "We are recognizing Hashem as our King with the shofar blast." **אשרי העם יורעי תרועה**. When you hear the shofar blow, you know that it means that the king is coming. It should remind you that Hashem is the *melech ha'olam*. You should think about that when they blow the shofar. Hashem is the *melech ha'olam*. He's the owner of the world; it's so important to feel that nothing is ours really – it's only temporarily loaned to us for a short time. It's always important to think about that.

And therefore there are many lessons of the shofar, very many lessons. But whatever it is we should make use of it and not merely let it blow for nothing.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

What should we think about during Chodesh Elul when we hear the shofar?

A:

When you hear the shofar being blown there are many things to think about; not one thing. First of all you have to think **היתקע שופר בעיר ועם** – **לא יחרור** – *Could it be that they blow a shofar in the city and the people are not afraid?!* You have to be afraid right away! You have to be afraid; *eimas hadin* – fear of the judgement. It's very important. The day is coming and you have to be afraid; you *must* be afraid.

Now, being afraid however has to have some practical results. You're saying in *slichos* all the time something that you never do. **נחפשה דרכינו** – *We will search out our ways*. Do you search your ways? You never do it! Did you sit down for five minutes once in your life and search out your ways? Never! Oh, but he's saying *slichos*; “*nachpisa diracheinu v'nachkora*.” Mmmuh mmmuh. He's mumbling the words. What a pity. So when you hear the shofar, think about your ways. *Nachpisa!* If you search you'll find. Oh yes, there's plenty to find.

Another thought when you hear the shofar; the shofar has to remind you that *b'chol yom v'yom bas kol yotzeis mei'har Sinai*; every day a voice comes out from Har Sinai to remind you to learn Torah. The shofar blast reminds you of the shofar that we heard on Har Sinai. That's one of the *remazim* of the shofar. Are you learning Torah? Are you interested in learning Torah? Are you reviewing what you learned? Even the *daf yomi* is not enough. It's better than nothing but are you learning and trying to

Continued on page 21

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