

Rebbe Responsa

The Rebbe's English Letters

Elul/ Parshas Shoftim/ Newly Released

Issue 14

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FOREWORD

We are proud to present the 14th installment of *Rebbe Responsa*, a selection of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's English letters. The letters found in this publication were originally authored by the Rebbe in English.

In this week's edition, we present letters on the auspicious days of the month of Elul. Being that in this week's Parshah there is the commandment to "be whole-hearted with G-d" we present one of the implications which the Rebbe's derives from this in regard to Shidduchim. Published at the end of the booklet is a newly released letter.

The letters in this week's booklet, unless otherwise noted, are taken from photocopies of the original sent letter or from secretarial copies. All footnotes to the letters were added by the publisher, unless otherwise noted.

The Rebbe's English letters contain a wealth of guidance and perspective on myriads of topics in a style relatable to Jews from all walks of life. To view over 5,000 of these letters, download the Rebbe Responsa app.

The Rebbe Responsa Team

1

I Turn to My Beloved, and My Beloved Turns to Me

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos-Kodesh
Mevorchim Chodesh Elul, 5740
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the
Annual Bais Chana Scholarship Dinner
Minnesota

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Annual Dinner, celebrating the first decade of Bais Chana. May G-d grant that the event should be crowned with much Hatzlocho in every respect.

There is a special relevance in the fact that this event is taking place in the month of Elul, the last month of the outgoing year, which serves as a preparation for the New – and better – Year.

The significance of the month of Elul is alluded to in its very name, which, as our Sages point out,¹ is an acrostic of אני לדודי ודודי לי – “I turn to my Beloved, and my Beloved turns to me” (Song of Songs 6:3). It is the time of year when Jews turn to G-d (“my Beloved”) with a resurgence of love, and take the initiative to strengthen the bond with our Heavenly Father, through special efforts in Torah, prayer, and acts of loving kindness – the Three Pillars on which the world at large, and the small world of the individual, rests.² It is also the time when “my Beloved turns to me” and promptly reciprocates and requites this love, and graciously bestows His blessings on all of us, as we are about to enter the New Year on a new dimension of mutual attachment.

¹ See *Avudraham*, Seder Tefilas Rosh Hashana Upeirusa chapter one; *Pri Etz Chaim* Shaar Rosh Hashana chapter one; *Shaar Hapesukim* on this verse.

² See *Avos* 1:2.

And since G-d's love knows no bounds, His blessings are boundless in all our needs, both spiritual and material.

In light of all the above, I am confident that all friends of Bais Chana will – in the spirit of Elul – make a special effort in behalf of this most worthy educational institution, where Jewish daughters are educated and inspired to be worthy of our Jewish Mothers – Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, the Founders of the House of Israel, and will proudly fulfill their preeminent role of **Akeres Habayis**, the Foundation of the Jewish home: a home permeated with love of G-d and filled to overflowing with Torah, prayer, and Mitzvos, to illuminate also its environs.

May G-d grant that the spirit of Elul will truly be reflected in your support of Bais Chana, both in terms of your own generosity as well as in active personal involvement, to enlarge the circle of friends and supporters of Bais Chana as it enters the next decade of service to the community and to our people as a whole.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlacha in all above, and wishing each and every one of you, and yours, a Kesivo vachasimo toivo for a good and sweet year.

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schneerson

2

Ledovid Hashem Ori

[Telegram]

Aug. 7 1964³

Kahal Chasidim c/o Jaffe
105 Cavendish Rd.
Salford, Lancs (England)

Delightfully received information re commencement services temporary premises preparatory to new home Beis Knesses and Beis Midrash Kahal Chasidim [on] Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Elul

³ Corresponding to the Hebrew date of 29 Av, 5724. This telegram is referenced in a letter to Zalmon Jaffe dated 21 Menachem Av, 5724.

Auspiciousness of occasion enhanced by auspicious day inaugurating twice daily Tillim 27 "G-d is my light and salvation etc. one thing I request etc. my dwelling in G-d's house" being Beis Knesses and Beis Midrash in golus time

May G-d grant fulfillment of this and all prayers of all Mispalelim and their families in midst all our people as psalm concludes, trust to G-d repeated twice for emphasis and certainty

With blessing for hatzlocho and shono toivo umsuko.

Menachem Schneerson

3

Historical Significance of Elul

By the Grace of G-d
13th day of Elul, 5749
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the
Thirty-third Annual National
Founders Dinner of the
Rabbinical College of America Morristown, N.J.

Greeting and Blessing!

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming Annual National Founders Dinner. May G-d grant that it should be blessed with Hatzlocho.

It is significant that this event is taking place in the auspicious month of Elul, the last month of the outgoing year, which is a time of preparedness for Rosh Hashana and the entire new year.

Historically, the month of Elul dates back to the third ascent of Moshe Rabbeinu on Mount Sinai on Rosh Chodesh Elul for yet another forty days, returning with the second **Luchos** (stone tablets engraved with the ten Commandments) on the 10th day of

Tishrei – the first Yom Kippur.⁴ In connection with that occasion, this period was designated by HaShem as a time of special Divine grace and mercy.

It is, therefore, a special Zechus to have a share in this event, and being an active partner in its dedicated activities and programs for the advancement of Yiddishkeit, Torah and Mitzvos of all our fellow Jews - especially at this time of the year, and thereafter.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlocho in all above, and for a good and sweet year, both materially and spiritually,

With blessing

M. Schneerson

4

Special Spiritual Actions for Elul

FREE RENDITION⁵

By the Grace of G-d
15th of Elul,¹ 5734
Brooklyn, New York

...

Greeting and Blessing:

In reply to your inquiry (shared by many) as to what specific spiritual actions would be appropriate in the present days of Elul,

⁴ See *Rashi* on *Devarim* 9:18.

⁵ This letter in Hebrew is printed in *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 29, letter 11,221 (pp. 240-243). Although this letter is titled “Free Translation,” such letters which were typed on the Rebbe’s stationary were usually looked over by the Rebbe who often corrected them (see, for example, the Rebbe’s edits on the letter to the Annual Governor’s Dinner of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim Montreal (Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5736) on the Rebbe Responsa app). The Hebrew footnotes are from the original. Regarding this letter see also Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo of that year (*Sichos Kodesh 5734*, vol. 2, pp. 435ff.).

In connection, also, with the general situation in the world, and in regard to Jewry in particular -

The essential thing, which is obvious and clear, is to foster a resurgence of commitment to the general Divine imperative (with all that it implies to the last detail): "In My statutes² you shall walk and keep My commandments";

For, then - as the Torah goes on to assure us - G-d bestows His blessing in all that is needed for the individual and the community and, indeed, for our Jewish people as a whole,

Including much Hatzlocho in all efforts and actions which must be undertaken in the natural course of events, since the Torah declares that one must not rely on a miracle,³ and specifically requires "that you should **do**."⁴

The months of Elul and Tishrei⁵ are "sated"⁶ with many matters of Torah and Mitzvoth of **timely** relevancy. Hence, a special effort is indicated to implement and fulfil them in every detail with **hidur** and **simcha** (meticulously and with joy).

* * *

It would, further, be worthwhile, proper and good – in view of the special Hatzlocho that accompanies actions carried out in concert by many,⁷ and of the merit of the many (Zechus Horabim) –

To convene assemblies for the purpose of participating and uniting in: Torah-study⁸ **Tefilo beTzibur** (praying in congregation), and Tzedoko-giving,⁹ all three¹⁰ at the same gathering,

In which case we have the assurance that "the triple¹¹ cord will not easily break";

These being the three¹² things upon which the world (in the plain sense, as also the "small world," namely, man¹³) exists. And since all this will be done and inspired by Teshuva¹⁴ with eagerness¹⁵ and love¹⁶, which began with Rosh Chodesh Elul,¹⁷ these Torah

and Mitzvah actions will be particularly beneficial and illuminating. Including boys and girls of pre-Mitzvah age, indeed especially these children "by whose pure and innocent breath of mouth the world exists."¹⁸

* * *

In these propitious days, when, in the words of the Alter Rebbe,¹⁹

The King (King of the Universe) is "in the field", and
"everyone who desires may go out to welcome Him, and
He receives everyone graciously and with a smiling face,"

May G-d grant that the above be the actual experience of every Jew and Jewess, particularly in carrying out the above mentioned activities with Hatzlocho, including the setting of an inspiring example to be emulated by many,

And may G-d grant also the fulfilment of the prophecy: "G-d does only good to Jews. .I place in the L-ord G-d my trust,"²⁰...

And "some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we shall call in the Name of G-d, our G-d," and as written before this, "He will send your help from (His) holy place.. we shall rejoice through Your help."²¹

With blessing for good tidings in all above, and with prayerful wishes for a kesivo vechasimo toivo,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/

(1) דקיימא סיהרא (דחדש אלול) באשלמותא כו' אנפיהו דישראל (זח"ב פה,א). (2) בחוקותי כו, ג. ובהמשך שם: ונתתי משכני (זה ביהמ"ק. תו"כ הובא בפרש"י עה"פ גו' ואתם תהיו לי לעם. ובתיב"ע: לאומא קדישא. ולהעיר מאו"ח להה"מ עה"פ. 3) זה"א קיא,ב. ופלונתת אביי ורבא (פסחים סד, ב) הוא בנוגע לביהמ"ק שראו בו נסים. וי"ל שהפלוגתא תלוי' בפיה"מ (אבות פ"ה, מ"ה) שלא הפילה אשר מריח כו' מפני שתמיד אילחשא (יומא פב,ב) וזהו הנס, או כפשטות הל' וכפי' התויו"ם שם. 4) דברים טו, יח ובספרי שם. וראה סהמ"צ להצ"צ מצות תגלחת מצורע ס"ב. קונטרס ומעין מי"ו. ועיין הקדמה לס' דרך חיים. 5) ראה לקו"ח תצא עה"פ ובכתה גו' ירח ימים. לקומי לוי"צ לתנ"ך ס"ע מס. 6) תשרי - כבויק"ר פכ"ט, ח. ואלול ה"ה חרש החשבון וההשלמה לכל החדשים שלפניו ומרומים בר"ת שלו כל הג' דברים דלקמן במכתב תורה ותפלה וצדקה וכן ענין התשובה (ראה מכ' דתחלת אלול. וש"נ). 7) ראה תו"כ (הובא בפרש"י שם) לבחוקותי כו, ח. קונטרס החלצו תרנ"ט. 8) מה טוב ענין שלם כולל גם המסקנא, שאז יש בזה גם המעלה שבהלכה דוקא (ראה אגה"ק סכ"ט. ד"ה וידבר גו')

5

G-d is My Light, Salvation, and Strength

Free Rendition⁷

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos Kodesh Tovo
18th of Elul, 5730
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the Annual Dinner
of the Yeshiva "Achei Tmimim" in Newark, N.J.
G-d Bless you all

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Annual
Dinner of the Yeshiva on the 22nd of Elul.

The month of Elul has a distinction of its own in that it is the
month of spiritual stock-taking for the outgoing year and
preparation for the incoming year.

The significance of this month is expressed also in the fact that
from Rosh Chodesh Elul we begin to recite twice daily Psalm 27,
beginning: "G-d is my light, and my salvation . . . the strength of
my life."

אנכי, תרכ"ז (תר"ל). 9.) מסתימת ל' השו"ע או"ח סו"ס צב משמע דגם קודם תפלת ערבית
כן הוא (והיל בחר טעמא). ולא כ"כ בפע"ח שט"ו ספ"א. ובדוחק י"ל דהיינו רק להמתנהגים
ע"ד הסוד. וראה ירוש' שקלים פ"ה ה"ד. רש"י סגה' לה, א (ד"ה כל). ברכ"י לאו"ח סרל"ה
וליו"ד ר"ס רמו. 10.) ראה ברכות ת, רע"א. וראה רשב"א בע"י שם. הצ"צ לתהלים נה, יט.
11.) קהלת (דיב) ובפרט נשכולם באותו מעמד (במכש"כ מכתובות סב, ב). 12.) אבות פ"א
מ"ב. וראה ד"ה זה הש"ת. 13.) תנחומא פקודי ג. וראה חתר ש"ט ספ"ח, רנו. 14.) וכל' הרגיל
בחז"ל "תשובה ומע"ט" כי ע"י התשובה המעשים טובים וכו' (תו"א ריש מג"א). 15.) שהרי
מר"ח אלול התחילו מ' יום האחרונים שענינם תשובה (משא"כ הראשונים) ברצון (משא"כ
האמצעים) - ראה רש"י עקב ט, יח. ומור או"ח סתקפ"א. 16.) ראה ב"ח למאו"ח סתקפ"א
ד"ה והעבירו. 17.) ברמב"ם הל' תשובה פ"ב ה"ו מיוחד מכל השנה רק העש"ת, משא"כ
במור (שם) ובכתהאריו"ל וכו'. 18.) שבת קיט, סע"ב. וראה תניא קו"א סד"ה להבין מ"ש בש'
היחודים. 19.) לקו"ח ראה לב, ב. 20.) תהלים עג, א. עג, כח. 21.) תהלים כ, ח. כ, ג-ו.

⁷ See note to previous letter.

The meaning of these three attributes - light, salvation, strength - is as follows:

A human being has a choice of two ways in life, the right way and the wrong way, the way of the good and the opposite way. In order to be able to make the proper choice, he needs illumination, so that he would not be groping in darkness. This is why we turn to G-d as "my light."

Having chosen the right way in life, a person often finds that it is not without trials and difficulties. He must, therefore, again constantly rely on G-d to save him from pitfalls, and help him overcome difficulties. This is the meaning of "my salvation."

Finally, perfection demands that a person constantly go "from strength to strength." There is always room for advancement in matters of goodness and holiness, as well as in the degree of joy and vitality with which the good deeds are performed. Once again he must turn to G-d "my strength."

In the light of the above reflections on Elul, and in the spirit of this month as indicated above, I am confident that the annual function of the Yeshiva will be carried out most successfully and accomplish its goals, particularly in helping to strengthen and expand the Yeshiva. Indeed, the Torah-true education provided by the Yeshiva may be said to reflect and implement the "Elul spirit" through helping its students attain perfection in accordance with the said three foundations, as expressed in the verse: "G-d is my light, my salvation, the strength of my life."

With felicitations and prayerful wishes to the Yeshiva administration, the distinguished guests, participants and friends, who are fortunate to have the great Zechus of supporting the Yeshiva and enabling it to grow, flourish and produce good fruits, and

With esteem and blessing for Hatzlocho and good tidings and a Kesivo v'Chasimo Tovo,

Signed: /Menachem Schneerson/

6

The King in the Field

By the Grace of G-d
13th of Elul, 5727
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Although it is a long time since I heard from you, I take the opportunity of the present significant and auspicious days of Elul to write to you a few lines, in the hope that you will read also between the lines.

The special significance of the month of Elul is explained by the Alter Rebbe who, in addition to being the founder of Chabad, possessed an all-embracing mind which, as is well known, already from his early youth embraced not only all parts of the Torah, but also the sciences of mathematics, etc. Family tradition transmitted from generation to generation, relates various episodes wherein his brilliant scientific mind came to the fore. I mention this by way of introduction, to his explanation that follows, because this gives the assurance that his words are valid not only on the basis of his extraordinary Torah knowledge, but also on the basis of a scientific mind.

This is what he said in regard to the month of Elul, which is the period of preparation for the new year:⁸

There are times when a king leaves his palace and goes out to meet his subjects in the field, when everyone, regardless of his state and station, can approach the king, and the king receives everyone graciously and fulfills their petitions. The days of Elul are such a period when the King of Kings is, as it were, "in the field."

Thus the month of Elul offers a wonderful opportunity to make up for the past months, and to do so not through trial and

⁸ *Likkutei Torah*, Re'eh 32b.

suffering, but with joy reflecting the graciousness of the King. All that is necessary is to resolve to go in the right direction, and then one will find the going much easier than expected.

May G-d grant that each one of us should do all that is necessary in the right direction, and to do so with a firm resolution coupled with true joy, and this will certainly bring a greater measure of happiness in the new year.

I hope and pray that I may receive happy tidings from you.

With the blessing of Kesivo vaChasimo Tovo,

P.S. To add a further point in an area which is familiar to you. As you know various scientific experiments have been made to produce artificial diamonds. This entailed the need for tremendous pressure and temperatures in order to transform a very simple and common element that can be found everywhere into a precious stone.

In the world of the spirit we find corresponding accomplishments, except that these can be achieved much easier, since it is not necessary to achieve it under tremendous temperatures and pressures. In other words, a Jew can easily transform his mental and spiritual capacities into "precious stones." All that is necessary is to have the firm resolution and desire, for in that case one no longer is limited to one's own resources, but becomes attached to the limitless Source of strength that one derives from the One Above.

I was particularly gratified to receive some time ago a report from...

7

Always in the Presence of the King⁹

By the Grace of G-d
12th of Elul, 5728
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. . . .
c/o Lubavitch House
London N.16, England

Greeting and Blessing:

It is quite some time since your previous letter. However, I trust that in the meantime you have advanced in strength to strength both spiritually and materially, which go hand in hand together, and insofar as a Jew is concerned – with the preponderance of the spiritual over the material. This means, above all, the daily conduct in accordance with the Torah and Mitzvoth, as explained in the Shulchan Aruch, starting the day, right after arising from bed, with prayer and Tefillin, and thus creating the channels to receive G-d's blessings in all material needs.

The present days are particularly auspicious, as you have no doubt heard about the parable by which the Alter Rebbe explains the significance of the month of Elul. This is it briefly:

When a king is in his palace, it is not so easy to approach him in person and deliver a petition. On the other hand, when the king goes out in the field to meet his people, everybody can easily approach him, even in work clothes, and present a petition to him personally, which the king accepts and grants graciously.

Similarly, the month of Elul, the last month of the year, has been set aside as a period of special Divine grace, in preparation for Rosh Hashono and the new year.

⁹ This letter was published in *Letters From the Rebbe*, Vol 6 (OSL, 2005), pp. 79-80.

At the same time one must also bear in mind that although one is “in the field,” and engaged in mundane affairs, one is still in the presence of the King. And even if one is not immediately able to “change one’s work clothes,” nevertheless, the conduct must be quite different in the knowledge of being constantly observed by the King. It is surely unnecessary to elaborate to you on the meaningful aspects of the parable.

Wishing you and yours a Kesivo V’Chasimo Tovo, for a truly good and sweet year,

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

8

The Man of the Field

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos Kodesh
Chai Elul, 5747
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the
Dinner Celebration of the
Friends of Colel Chabad

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming event, taking place on the 27th of Elul. May it be blessed with Hatzlocho in every respect, especially as it is taking place in this month of special Divine Grace and Mercy.

The significance of the month of Elul, the last month of the outgoing year, is explained by the Alter Rebbe, Founder of Colel Chabad (whose birthday is on the 18th of Elul), by the parable of “A King in the Field.” The point of it is that at certain times the king goes out to meet the ordinary people working in the field and gives them a unique opportunity to greet their king personally and present their petitions. At such a time the king is

particularly gracious and benevolent and is pleased to grant their requests.

The parable, meaningful in all its details, calls attention not only to the "King in the Field," but also to the "Man in the Field". Here is a humble person engaged in the vital activity of planting seeds, with the fullest confidence – Bitochen, we call it – in the creator that He will make the seeds grow into a rich harvest.

Colel Chabad, as is well known, is a time-honored institution that serves the needy in the Holy Land, both materially and spiritually. Colel Chabad, in the spirit of the aforementioned parable, is "particularly gracious and benevolent and is pleased to extend assistance to all those who are in need." At the same time, like all other Chabad institutions in all parts of the world, it works for a better society through its representatives and active friends and supporters.

I feel confident that all of you who actively support the various programs of Colel Chabad, consider it a privilege as well as an obligation to be **partners** in this vital cause. A "partner" is, of course, more than a "supporter."

With prayerful wishes to each and all of you, and the Guests of Honor in particular, for a **Ksivo vachasimo toivo** for a good and sweet year, both materially and spiritually, and

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schneerson

Parshas Shoftim

9

Often the Right Zivug Doesn't Come First; Be Wholehearted with G-d

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Teveth, 5720
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 3rd of Teveth, in which you write about your difficulties to find your right Zivug.

Since the Torah tells us that the matter of a Zivug is in general a complicated thing which only G-d through his individual Providence can accomplish,¹⁰ it is clear that in most cases the right Zivug is not the one which comes at the first meeting, and it often happens that a person has to go about in search of his right Zivug, "as one goes about searching for something he has lost,"¹¹ as our Sages say. For when one has lost something and looks for it and does not find it right away, he will not give it up but will continue his search. The same in the case of a Zivug. And when the first meeting does not materialize, it is no basis for discouragement, and certainly not for any misinterpretation that one has destroyed his chances, and the like.

It is written in the Torah "Thou shalt be whole-hearted with G-d, thy G-d."¹² This means that you should not go about trying your luck through גורל. Besides, our Sages have said "One should not rely on miracles."¹³ Therefore, you should go about looking for your Zivug in the normal and natural way which is fitting for a

¹⁰ See *Sotah* 2a.

¹¹ *Kiddushin* 2b.

¹² *Devarim* 18:13.

¹³ See *Pesachim* 64b.

Yeshiva-Bochur, and then G-d sends His blessing, as it is written, "And He will bless you in all that you will do."¹⁴

I would suggest that you observe carefully the three daily Shiurim of Chumash (studying the daily portion of the weekly Sidra), Tillim (saying the daily quota of Tillim as it is divided according to the days of the month, after the morning prayer), and Tanya (as it is divided according to the days of the year).

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing,

By (Secretary)

Newly Released

10

Blessing an Advice for Parnassah¹⁵

By the Grace of G-d
2nd of Elul, 5744
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mrs. . . .
P.A., Ca.

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter of the 29th of Av, in which you write that, although there has been an improvement in Parnosso, you are still not in a position to live as comfortably as you would desire.

¹⁴ *Devarim* 15:18.

¹⁵ Note: The above letter, found in the archives of the Rebbe's Secretariat, was dictated by the Rebbe and transcribed by a secretary. The final version of the letter, however, was not reviewed or signed by the Rebbe and was never sent to the intended recipient, for reasons unknown. The above should be taken into account while studying this letter.

As requested, I will again remember you, and your husband and children, in prayer.

There is surely no need to remind you that all blessings come from G-d and the channel to receive them is through the everyday life and conduct in accordance with His Will. Therefore, every additional effort in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth, though a "must" for their own sake, widens these channels. And, of course, there is always room for advancement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvoth.

In other words, Parnosso in the ordinary sense is connected with spiritual Parnosso, including the Mitzvo of Tzedoko and generally helping others, as HaShem reciprocates "in kind."¹⁶

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all above. Especially as we are now in the auspicious month of Elul, as explained by the Alter Rebbe by means of the parable of the King in the Field, of which I trust you have heard.

Wishing you and all yours a Kesivo vaChasimo Tovo for a good and sweet year,

With blessing,

P.S. It is customary, especially in the month of Elul, to have the Tefillin and Mezuzoth checked to make sure they are Kosher.

¹⁶ See *Sanhedrin* 90a; *Sotah* 8b.

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