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ב"ה

## The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל  
יום ד' פ' ואתחנן אור לאדר"ח אלול תשל"ב ד"ה אני לדודי מוגה קונטרס ר"ח אלול תשמ"ט

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### FROM ELUL TO ROSH HASHANAH

**T**HE WORD ELUL, TAKEN AS AN ACROSTIC, SPELLS THE WORDS 'I AM TO MY BELOVED AND MY BELOVED IS TO ME', **אני לדודי ודודי לי**<sup>2</sup>. Rabbi Shneur Zalman explains that during Elul there is the arousal from below, from Israel towards Hashem, hence 'I am to my Beloved', and then on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur there is a flow from above, from Hashem to the Jewish people, expressed in the words 'My Beloved is to me'<sup>3</sup>. But it is intriguing that the acrostic for the word Elul includes *both* these aspects. 'I am to My Beloved' relates to Elul, but 'My Beloved is to me' relates to the next month, Tishrei. So why are both in the word Elul?

We will understand this by considering deeper aspects of this subject. Rabbi Shneur Zalman continues by explaining that Elul is a time of the revelation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, a revelation which takes place for each individual, even one who is most remote from Jewish life. To explain this he presents a parable of a King who is approaching a city. The citizens, who normally cannot gain access to the King, come out of the city to greet him in the

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<sup>1</sup> Maamar Ani Ledodi 5732. Published in 1989 edited by the Rebbe, named Kuntres Rosh Chodesh Elul.

<sup>2</sup> Song of Songs 6:3.

<sup>3</sup> Likkutei Torah Re'eh 32a ff.

fields, the countryside. The King receives all of them with a warm expression, smiling to each of them.

The Rebbe points out that this sounds like a very warm loving relationship with the King. But how does that fit with what it says in halachic literature that the fact that we blow the Shofar during the weekdays in the month of Elul is to warn everyone to repent, as it says ‘if a shofar is blown in a city, will the people not tremble?’<sup>4</sup> Given what Rabbi Shneur Zalman says about the King in the field, one would have thought that the atmosphere is one of love, and even if the people are going to repent, it would be ‘Repentance from Love’ rather than from fear.

The Rebbe explains that the difference between love and awe is that love comes from a revelation of radiance from above. Awe (or fear) generally comes from the effort of the person. The individual accepts G-d as his or her King, and therefore feels awe of G-d. Hence the service in Elul, when the person is advancing towards Hashem, is with the mood of awe.

In fact, the main service of Elul is to accept Hashem’s Kingship, Kabbalat Ol. This is really why the people go out of the city to greet the King: they want to express their acceptance of His Kingship. That’s why we blow the Shofar in Elul, to manifest this sense of awe of the Divine.

There are several levels of awe, or fear of the Divine. In Elul, there is the lower level. But on Rosh Hashanah itself, when we hear the Shofar being blown, it induces the higher level of awe, ‘Yirah Ila’ah’.

What do these different levels mean? The lower level of fear comes from our awareness of the greatness of the Divine in that He creates all the worlds and keeps them in existence from moment to moment. [Note that this awareness can also promote intense love of the Divine<sup>5</sup>]. The higher level of awe comes from awareness of G-d as being completely beyond the worlds. This needs a level of revelation from Above, and this is what we can experience when we hear the Shofar sound on Rosh Hashanah itself.

However, in order to progress from the lower level of Fear to the higher level of Awe, one also needs to experience Love of the Divine. Because Chassidic

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<sup>4</sup> Amos 3:6. See Tur Orah Chaim Laws of Rosh Hashanah, 581:1.

<sup>5</sup> [See Tanya ch.3]

teachings explain that there is a progression: Lower Fear, lower Love, greater Love, Higher Awe.

The discourse explains that the fact that the person goes towards the King, outside the city, expresses his or her selflessness towards the King, their *bitul*, a lower level of awe. The King welcomes the people, and smiles at them, which can be understood as the revelations from above which lead to the two different levels of Love. Then when the Shofar is blown on Rosh Hashanah, one is able to reach the higher level of Awe.

But in fact the discourse is making a further point. The humility in our reaching towards Hashem in the month of Elul draws the Essence of the Divine. This revelation contributes to the special experience on Rosh Hashanah.

What happens on Rosh Hashanah? During Elul, we might be thinking of quite negative errors in our past, for which we try to repent. This repentance in the days of Elul has the power to change deliberate error into accidental error. Then on Rosh Hashanah we reach a higher level of repentance, [and the errors cease to exist<sup>6</sup>].

Further, the blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana is a Mitzvah, an important Mitzvah. But the blowing of the Shofar in Elul is not a Mitzvah at all, it is a custom. Because it is not a Mitzvah, it has the power to reach beyond the Mitzvot.

As a result, the subtle intensity of our relationship with Hashem during the month of Elul adds its power to our bond with Hashem on Rosh Hashanah.

This is why the acrostic for Elul includes both the service of Elul, I am to my Beloved, and also the service for Rosh Hashanah, ‘and My beloved is to Me’.

Our service during Elul, with humility and simplicity, reaches the Essence and draws down the revelation from above from above which will take place on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This will bring blessing for the entire year, and especially the blessing of the ultimate Redemption.

**Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care**

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<sup>6</sup> See Likkutei Sichot vol.4 p.1360, explaining that for this reason we do not say ‘Confession’ (Viduy) on Rosh Hashanah.