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Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

The Month of Elul

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

The last month of the year on the Hebrew calendar is called Elul. This month is unique in character as well as in its name.

Elul is a time for taking stock; a time when one could correct his behavior and deeds from the past eleven months. It is also the month which prepares us for the new year. Elul is a time when the Almighty G-d is closer to us.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of the Chabad movement, explained with a parable the nature of Elul. "The citizens of a city, before the king enters it, go forth to meet him and to greet him in the field; then all who wish are permitted and are able to go forth to greet him, and he receives all of them graciously and shows a benign countenance to them all... So too is the month of Elul: We go forth to greet G-d in the field... (As it says) G-d makes His countenance shine upon you.

What does this mean? G-d is with a Jew all year round. But in the month of Elul, He is especially close, for then the king (G-d) is in the field, receiving everyone graciously and with benign countenance. Hence everyone can then request their needs from the king and he will most certainly fulfill them.

That the king is in the field is especially important. When people come to see the king in his palace, they dress in fine clothes worthy of approaching the king. In the field, the people are dressed in ordinary work clothes.

The former, the fine clothes with which it is proper to approach the king, corresponds to the time when a Jew engages in Torah and obser-

vance of Mitzvot. Work clothes correspond to the times when a Jew is occupied in mundane matters, eating and drinking, for example.

At such time, the Yetzer (evil inclination) claims, there is no difference between a Jew and other people, for they are all involved in "field" matters. In Elul, however, G-d is together with a Jew even when he is in the field, dressed in his work clothes. Moreover, G-d, the king, receives him graciously, enabling him to request for all his needs which will certainly be fulfilled.

Elul is also an acronym of the following Hebrew words: "Ani L'dodi V'dodi Lee", "I am to G-d and G-d is to me". This is a time when I become closer to G-d, because G-d is close to me.

During this month we sound the Shofar every morning (except on Shabbat and on Erev Rosh Hashanah) to awaken us to return to G-d. As Maimonides explains, the prime purpose of blowing the Shofar is to awaken us from our slumber and return to our Father in heaven with all our heart.

On the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul we begin reciting psalm 27, which begins: "By David: The Lord is my Light and my salvation". "Light" corresponding to the idea of G-d's countenance shining upon a Jew — which is the idea of the king in the field.

It is also customary to increase in acts of charity and other good deeds, and also in the study of Torah. May we merit through the proper return to G-d during the month of Elul to be blessed among Klall Yisroel with a happy, healthy and prosperous year.

Tzivos Hashem Club Succeeds Day Camp

Members of the Tzivos Hashem youth club held their first meeting on Sun., Aug. 2, at the Chabad House. The group was formed as a result of the success of Gan Israel Day Camp. "We have received so many requests for ongoing programs, we felt compelled to do something year round," said Rabbi Binyomin Weiss, leader of the club. "This way we are constantly connected with the children throughout the year."

On this occasion old relationships, which were first made during camp, were reinforced with new and exciting programs. This also provides an opportunity for new children to get involved and enjoy pure camp spirit and enthusiasm.

Some of the children ex-



Tzivos Hashem members enjoyed an afternoon of bowling.

claimed that it was like having camp all over again. They sang their favorite camp songs and in fact that very afternoon, the children went on a wonderful bowling trip as a club activity.

Tzivos Hashem, an international youth club which has over 90,000 members worldwide, was created by the

Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita several years ago as a way to bring together children in a spirit of Judaism.

The Charlotte chapter plans to meet every 4-6 weeks with many exciting programs for the rest of the year. It is open to every Jewish child under thirteen years of age.

"Jewish Sound" Brings Holiday Songs to Charlotte Radio

The new Jewish radio show entitled "The Jewish Sound" will bring special holiday songs to Charlotte airwaves during the month of September in honor of the upcoming High Holidays.

"The Jewish Sound" is a locally produced show, which airs in Charlotte on WSOC-93 on the AM dial every Sunday morning at 9:00. It is produced by Lubavitch of North Carolina with Jake Bogan at WCOS Studios in Columbia.

"The unique feature of the show is that we bring together a variety of Jewish music ranging from Chassidic to popular Israeli songs" says Jake Bogan. "We include Yiddish and English songs as well.



Jake Bogan producing "The Jewish Sound" in his Columbia studio.

"During the weeks before the Holidays when everyone in the Jewish community is preparing for those auspicious days, it is fitting that we air Cantorial and holiday music."

The Jewish Sound also plans to air special drama, to il-

lustrate holidays and other Jewish matters. Every week one can hear "Reflections on the Torah Portion" and "The Jewish Person in History" with other thoughts by Rabbi Yossi Groner who is host of the show.

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