

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

פרשת  
שופטים

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## An Approach To Elul For Our Generation

*Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh*

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי  
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In previous generations, most people were gripped with intense fear by the mere mention of the word - Elul. This is best illustrated by a story told about Rav Yisrael Salanter in which he fainted when they bentched Rosh Chodesh Elul. Fast forward to our generation, where most people are non-pulsed at the thought of Elul and go about their daily activities oblivious to the seriousness of the day of judgment. "Wake up from your sleep those that slumber," is the call of the hour. Opportunity knocks for Teshuva and closeness to Hashem. If we don't take advantage now, that decision may spell the difference between life and death. The seriousness is real, however the great motivator of fear no longer wields its mighty power. We are a generation that tunes out fear, as it is too overwhelming and we can't bear its pressure. Therefore, we need to carve out a new approach, an approach that will inspire and motivate change in this generation.

This new approach can be found in Tehillim 27, which we say everyday starting from Rosh Chodesh Elul. Dovid Hamelech says, "Hashem is the strength of my life, who should I fear?.. If I am attacked I won't be afraid, if an army rises upon me in this I trust." Rashi explains that the words, "In this I trust" are referring to the words - "Hashem is the strength of my life." Meaning, Dovid is saying, since I live with the reality that Hashem is my source of strength in everything I do, I

am not afraid. This feeling of trust is not something he is generating and creating within himself at this moment due to the present danger. Rather, Dovid is telling us that if you want to access Bitachon when danger comes, the reality that Hashem is the source of your strength has to permeate your entire existence well before the danger comes.

This idea echoes the theme of Elul which is, "I am to my Beloved and He is to me." This theme communicates that Elul is all about connection to Hashem. Reb Meir Simcha tells us that the ultimate way to connect to Hashem is through Bitachon. Which means that if we want to connect to Hashem we need to focus on the fact that He is our strength. This focus will allow us to always see ourselves standing in the presence of Hashem, which will surely deter us from sinning.

We live in a time in which we often focus more on statistics and nature rather than see Hashem in everything that we do. It is clear from here that if we wish to access our Bitachon in hard times we need to live with a different reality. We need to live with the reality that Hashem is the source of all our strength. This is our Avodah in Elul - to work on living with Hashem!



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

“And when you lift up your hands, I will turn My eyes away from you; Though you pray at length, I do not hear (Rashi - because) Your hands are filled with blood.”

(Yeshayah 15:1)

Hashem tells us that when Klal Yisroel’s hands are filled with blood, He does not simply ignore our prayers, rather, He turns His eyes away from us so as not to see nor hear (so to speak) us altogether. Why can’t He simply ignore us?

Perhaps we can explain this based upon the following Pasuk in Shir HaShirim (6:5 with Rashi) where Hashem says to Klal Yisroel:

Turn your eyes away from me for they have made me haughty - *Like a young man whose betrothed is dear and pleasing to him, and her eyes are comely, and he says to her, “Turn away your eyes from me, for when I see you, my heart becomes haughty and proud, and my spirit becomes arrogant, and I cannot resist.” The Holy One, Blessed Is He, said, “In this Beis Hamikdash, it is impossible to restore to you the Ark, the Ark cover, and the cheruvim, which excessively endeared you to Me in the first Beis Hamikdash, to show you great affection, until you betrayed Me.”*

Hashem cannot merely ignore our pleas when we call out to Him, as He tells us, “Turn away your eyes from me, for when I see you... I cannot resist.” Rather, He must, “Turn His eyes away from us,” for if not, upon seeing His beloved’s hand lifted to Him in prayer, His love will overcome Him. For even while those very hands drip with blood, their hearts are, “Dear and pleasing to him, and their eyes (which are reflective of the true nature of the depth of their hearts) are comely.” Such is the extent of Hashem’s burning love for His children regardless of the depth of depravity they may have currently fallen to.



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

*A Westwood Realty Initiative*

As I was thinking of what to write for this week’s column, my sister called me. I tried to hurry the conversation telling her, “I have to think of something to write now.” She said, “Why don’t you write this story that just happened to me last night!”

Here it is:

“It seemed hopeless. My fourteen and eleven-year-old arrived at Newark airport at 6:30 with their four huge pieces of luggage 30 minutes after the deadline to check in luggage. They called to inform me of the situation and their hopeless attempt to still make the flight despite the long security lines. As soon as I got off the phone, I received an email with a short recording on Bitachon from R’ Michael Safde that started with the following words, “There’s been no change in management! Hashem is still in full control! I immediately turned to Hashem and said, ‘Hashem you’re the manager of Newark Airport, You’ll make sure my kids get on the plane!’ I thought to myself, ‘Imagine the manager of the airport was so-and-so (a relative of mine who’s exceptionally kind and compassionate). I have no doubt he’d make sure my kids make the flight. How much more so that the manager is my very own Father-in-Heaven who is the source of all compassion; He Will definitely make sure they make their flight!’ My kids ran to the long security line and asked the official what they could do. He said, ‘You can’t cut the line unless you ask permission from everyone in front of you.’ The length of the line precluded this, but suddenly they saw a big gap near the front of the line and the official said that they can go there. Needless to say, the Manager made sure they were on the flight 20 minutes after they arrived in the airport.”

Don’t you wish you were close to the manager of every place on earth?

Well... you are!