

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
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FREE RENDITION

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
2nd Day of Weekly Portion:
"You¹ are standing firmly this day,
all of you" (Deut. 29:9)
18 Elul,² 5736, Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Sons and Daughters of
Our People Israel, Everywhere -
G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

The Month of Elul,³ as is well known, is the month of honest self-assessment for the outgoing year, and, at the same time, the month of preparation for the new year - which is, clearly, also a purpose of the honest assessment: Not only to try to make good the deficiencies, but also to know, and to resolve with proper determination, what should be the daily conduct henceforth, which will make the coming year a good and sweet year spiritually, hence also a good and sweet year materially.

In the month of Elul itself, the 18th ("Chai") Elul comes as a special reminder, with encouragement and exhortation, in the said two aspects, self-assessment and preparation. Its message is: With this day begin the last 12 days of the year; hence the selfsearching must now be more intensive and embrace the months of the year - each day corresponding to a month,⁴ the start being with Chai Elul. Moreover, according to our Rebbes - Nessim, the day of Chai Elul must infuse vitality⁵ ("chai"=life) into all details⁶ of the Divine service in the entire month of Elul and in its two general aspects of assessment and preparation.

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One may wonder what has "vitality" to do with such a thing as an honest assessment which deals with "hard" facts? But it has, and it is as follows:

There is the well known instruction⁷ that, just as one must not forget one's shortcomings, in order to rectify them fully, so must one not forget one's good qualities, in order to utilize them in the fullest measure.

In order that this should be accomplished as behooves one - and in the greatest possible degree - the assessment must be done with real vitality.

An honest assessment of one's shortcomings might sometimes induce discouragement,⁹ or worse, despair. An honest evaluation of one's achievements might lead to complacency¹⁰ and to the conclusion that one has already attained a state of perfection.

However, the sign and effectiveness of vitality is in growth, and

Not the growth of a vegetable, which remains in the same place (and situation), but of a living creature - moving from place to better place.

And not only changing places, but also growing through personal change¹¹, changing one's nature, habits and entire being¹² from good to better and still better.

This is the true vitality of a Jew, who has been commanded to refine and change his character attributes,¹³

The capacity to attain all the above has been given to every Jew, or, using the quotation in the dateline above, to "all of you," from "the heads ¹⁴ of your tribes" to "the hewer of your wood and the drawer of your water."

For, the vitality of every Jew derives from, and is bound up with, the Source of Life, as is written, And ¹⁵ you who are attached to G-d, your G-d, are all of you living this day - by virtue of your attachment to G-dliness, the Source of life and vitality, through the Torah, Toras-Chayim, and the Mitzvos whereby Jews live. ¹⁶

Moreover, it is a matter of common experience that everything done with vivacity can be achieved with greater success and more completeness. And - what is no less important - such activity makes the proper impact on others to be inspired with the same spirit, for the best influence is a living example.

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May G-d grant that everyone, man and woman, take full advantage of the great opportunity of the last days of the year, and those following, all the days of the coming year - with true vitality in fullest measure, as above,

And in the merit of it everyone, in the midst of all our Jewish people, should be inscribed unto a good and sweet year for good life and for peace, ¹⁷

Unto the coming of our Righteous Moshiach, and the fulfilment of the Divine prophecy: "The strength and glory of the Righteous shall be uplifted," ¹⁸ very soon indeed.

With esteem and blessing,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson /

- (1) ראה לקו"ת עה"פ דהיום קאי על ר"ה. וראה זה"ב ר"פ בא.
- (2) יום הולדת שני המאורות הגדולים מורנו הכעס"ט (בשנת חנ"ח) ורבנו הזקן (בשנת תק"ה). וראה בארוכה ס' השיחות ה'תש"ג ע' 141. (3) ראה ליקוטי מהרי"ל במקומו. סווא"ה ר"ס תקפ"א. ל"ה להאריז"ל ר"פ תצא עה"פ וראית גו' ירח ימים. לקו"ת ד"ה אני לדושי (וכן בסידור וכו' ד"ה זה). באוה"ת שם. ובפנים יפות (לבעל ההפלאה) פ' אחרי ד"ה ביד איש עתי דהם ימי כפרה על כל השנה ונרמז במשנה (כחובות נז, א) נותנין לבתולה (אלול מזלו בחולה) י"ב חודש. (4) ס' השיחות ה'תש"ג ע' 177, 179. (5) ס' השיחות ה'תש"ה ע' 122. נחבאר בלקו"ש כרך ב' ע' 388 ואילך; שם כרך ד' ע' 1352. (6) שכללות ג' העמודים דתורה עבודה וגם"ח, וענין החשובה (ליקוט אלול. ובכ"מ). (7) ראה לקו"ד כרך ד' ע' תקפא. היום יום ע' קז. (8) ראה כחובות סז, א. (9) ראה הניא פכ"ו ואילך. (10) ראה צוואת הריב"ש סי"ב. קונטרס ומעין כס"ו-טז. (11) שאז כל העליות (הנסיחות) שלפני זה הן באופן אחר לגמרי. וע"ד החילוק דבומה וחי לבומה וחי שבאדם (ענין ס' הקס"ח לאדה"ו ע' קכג). ובחלקה (זבחים זא, א) אסו שבת למוססין אהני לחסידין לא אהני (בשמי'). וראה צפ"נ ר"פ קורה דמסיק עזהו עיקר באמונה מירוש' סנהדרין דפ"י. (12) ראה סד"ה לך לך תרס"ו, תרס"ז. (13) ה"פ להרמב"ם פ"ג. הו"א תולדות יס"ב. ואילך. לקו"ד כרך א' ד' נו ואילך. (14) נצבים כס, פ-יו"ד. - וראה תנחומא. אוה"ת עה"פ (ע' א'ר"י). דברים י"ד. וראה אדר"ג ספ"ד. לקוטי לוי"צ לוח"ב (ע' קלב). (15) אהרי ית. ה. וראה חור הורה שם (גמ' באות"ה שם). (16) להעיר מסיום והיות השם מים ר. (17) חרלי"ט עה. יא. וברש"י: צדיקו של עולם ישראל דהם שנינו "עם".