

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

Thursday, September 13, 2012

So how do I know if I have had a good Elul - NO PRESSURE!!

A good Elul leads to a good Tishrei, which leads to a good year, may we all be inscribed and sealed in the book of Life for a year of peace, health, prosperity and redemption.

So how do I know if I had a good Elul? NO PRESSURE!!

The good news is it is still Elul and the brand new year, which was born with the first day of Creation on 25 Elul, is still forming.

Rebbetzin Heller suggests that we make a cheshbon hanefesh, a chart of our years. There are two columns, the left with the ages, like 0-4, 4-8, 8-10, 10-15, 15-20, 21-30 etc. and on the right, the positive things that happened and what positive middos were involved and then what negative things happened and what middos or qualities they reflected. By taking a look at this, we begin to see patterns and can ask ourselves a key question. In what way can I move myself from point A to my next step toward point B? That then becomes the focus of our spiritual business plan. Rebbetzin Tzipora Harris has posted on www.clarityseminar.com a [spiritual business plan overview](#) to help form your goals for 5773 after you have done the cheshbon hanefesh.

Rabbi Aryeh Nivin www.newchabura.com in his personal development chaburas has brought those in the chabura community through Elul with his consistent approach of lovingly and gently helping us understand the importance of Rosh Hashana and the month of Elul leading up to it. On Rosh Hashana, Hashem creates man, including you and me for a whole year. The entire year is built into how we crown Hashem King. The most important thing to remember at all times is that we are judged on our effort to serve Hashem, even if we are not succeeding with the task. Success is up to Hashem, so if we are constantly focusing on His Kingship and our desire to serve Hashem every moment, no matter what is happening around us, we can feel that we are accomplishing our mission. The simple question is how Hashem do I serve you with this? What is my next step in serving Hashem? Is this precious in the eyes of Hashem? Hashem is looking to see our response to what is occurring around us.

Imagine the impact that we can have if when we are in the midst of emotional tornados of negative emotions we can turn to Hashem and say "Hashem thank you for the opportunity to spiritually bond with You by bringing into this matter Your attribute of bearing insult and casting sins into the sea. I wish to be like You, to bond with You because that is the greatest pleasure there is, so I choose to overlook this and remain patient and loving. And may it be a zechus for all Klal Yisrael, and may Hashem clean off of the soul of the Jewish People any harsh decrees because if I can overlook, You Who are King can overlook our mistakes and willful sins." To do so is to partner with Hashem and bring the forgiveness and mercy that is His into this world.

Our willingness to crown Him King over every part of us and to realize we are here to serve Him sincerely every moment is the measure for knowing if we have had a good Elul. If we are processing our pain, if we are harboring negative feelings, if our own personal goals are what we are serving, there are still several days to work these through, to come to understand that we need a basic paradigm shift to bring us to reality. Reality is responding to the circumstances in our lives (which represent Hashem's Will) in a manner that serves Hashem, not our egotistical goals. Let us not leave empty Hashem's longing for us to serve Him by utilizing the gifts He gives us to kick Him in the shins and run with His blessings to serve an agenda that may be His only in part or may not be His at all, hoping it all comes out ok for us without realizing the true spiritually destructive ramifications of our not being sincerely focused on serving Hashem in the moment every moment. Let us take this to heart and remember as we strip away last year and crown Hashem King that we are here to bring His Attributes of mercy, which we have been saying for all of selichos, into this world, the lowest world, the world that He wishes to dwell in, the world which through us can be brought these attributes of mercy.

Let us do this teshuva in Elul, let us stand before Him on Rosh Hashana as His nation, the soul of His Kallah, and may we be zocheh to crown Him King and see the redemption immediately.