The Secret of Elul

Contributed by Tzvi Fishman
Saturday, 18 August 2012
Last Updated Saturday, 18 August 2012

From the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov in the book, "Likutei Moharan," on the Hebrew month of Elul.

[Editor's note: To understand this essay, one needs to know that according the secrets of the Torah, if, G-d forbid, a person masturbates or has a seminal emission under circumstances where it is not a mitzvah, then his semen gives birth to "spiritual children" which gravitate against him as negative spiritual forces. As described below, through tshuva (remorse and repentance), one may redeem these spiritual children and end their damaging influence upon himself and his loved ones.]

If a person merits to truly feel pain over his sins, so that he circumcises the foreskin of his heart - for as long as his heart is sealed closed, he cannot truly feel this pain - then, when his heart is open within him, he will truly experience this great anguish, and he will feel true sorrow and remorse. This powerful remorse will also be felt by all of the hearts of all of the drops of seminal seed that went forth from him, in whatever place they may be, and they will feel in their scattered places, both in the hearts of those who became his actual children in the physical world, and also in the hearts of those disembodied souls who became trapped in the spiritual world of impurity and evil, G-d forbid, for even in this Other Realm (of evil), these drops that emanated from him possess a heart and all of the other organs.

Thus, when the penitent removes the foreskin of his heart and feels genuine anguish and true sorrow and remorse, then the hearts of these drops will feel too, in whatever place they may be, and they will become aware of the truth that they are doomed in a polluted place in the abyss of the netherworld. For until then, it seemed to them that things were fine in their being the princes of the underworld. But afterward, when their hearts were circumcised because their father circumcised his own heart, then they felt with full force their horrendous station, and they began to rise up and cry out in remorse, causing a very great noise and tumult amongst them.

And this is what is meant by the Torah verse: "And the L-rd your G-d will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, so that you may live" (Devarim 30:6). This is to say that Hashem will circumcise the heart of the person and also circumcise the heart of his offspring. This is the case wherever the drop of seminal seed went forth, if to his actual physical children, then they will also experience thoughts of repentance through the remorse in their father's heart. And if the drops went forth to the Other Realm, G-d forbid, then in that place, their hearts will be circumcised and they will feel the anguish and remorse, as we have described.

And the time most appropriate for this is the month of Elul, for the letters of Elul (ÐÜÕÜ (are the beginning letters in the verse, Ðê ÜÑÑÚ ÕÐê ÜÑÑ, "your heart and the heart of your seed," meaning that Hashem will circumcise your heart and the hearts which depend upon you, wherever they may be, both the hearts of the seed that became one's physical children and the hearts of the seed that were cast forth to the Other Realm, for they are also his children whom are dependent upon him.

This is the reason that when a man dies, these spiritual children follow after his coffin and rise up in complaint against him for his misdeeds, just as his actual children follow his funeral bed, but because they follow and rise up against him in

complaint against him, this is a terrible humiliation and shame, may the Compassionate One have mercy.

May the Compassionate One have mercy from this punishment, as is known (to those initiated in the secrets of Torah).

An Awesome, Awe-Inspiring Prayer For The Month Of Elul

[Composed by Rabbi Natan of Breslov, foremost disciple of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov]

Print this prayer in PDF

May it be Thy will the L-rd my G-d, and G-d of my forefathers, that you assist me and grant me the merit in Your great compassion and your awesome kindness, that I speedily merit to truly feel the pain of my many abundant and awful sins, transgressions, and willful violations of the Torah that are piled up high to the sky, as innumerable as the sands of the earth - especially the sexual sins that I committed which blemished the Covenant of the Brit, the blemishes to the seminal drops that issue forth from the brain, that I spilled in vain, whether accidentally or knowingly, whether against my will or willfully.

If I were to begin to feel the depth of the anguish of this awesome and terrible blemish, I do not know if I could continue to exist, even for an hour, since You have taught us through Your righteous Tzaddikim the magnitude of this stain which prolongs the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, and delays the Redemption, and causes the Shechina to descend into exile, G-d forbid, and dooms the disembodied souls to the realm of the klipot, where from each drop of wasted semen a destroying agent is created, may the Compassionate One have mercy. And many other vast and terrible blemishes result from this, for all of the Torah is dependent on the Rectification of the Brit, which is the foundation of everything. For this transgression damages all of the twenty-two letters of the Torah, because the seminal drop is composed from them, as is known.

Truly, my heart is closed, and confused, and crooked, to such an extent that I don't feel at all the pain over my numerous and weighty transgressions, even when I speak about them.

O, what is with me, what is with me? Even if I were to say a thousand times, "O, what is with me?" I still feel nothing at all. What can I say? What can I claim? What can I ask for? How can I justify my deeds?

Nonetheless, You are compassionate with all mankind, and You see to the end of all generations, and you will perfect all of us one day as You have promised. Therefore, to You I raise my hands in supplication. O mighty Redeemer, help me! Teach me and instruct me at every moment, in whatever manner, in whatever way, how I can merit to return to You in truth, from evil to good, from death to life, for my existence is very bitter.

My Father, my Creator, and my Redeemer, help me and save me quickly, that I merit to truly return to You with a whole heart. Circumcise the evil foreskin of my heart, and open my heart in a manner that I will be able to feel the anguish of my innumerable transgressions, so that I will be able to cry out from my heart a great and bitter cry, fitting to my station - to cry out again and again Oy, Oy, Oy, over these weighty and terrible sins, to scream out in truth with a full and broken and saddened heart, from its very depths, until the hearts of all of the souls of the seminal drops that emanated from me,

wherever they may be, will also feel my anguish, both the drops that went forth in a permitted manner and became my real children, may they live a long and healthy life, and, on the contrary, the drops that I spilled in vain, whether accidentally or willfully, and became what they became, each and every one of them, woe is me, woe is me.

May my cry awaken them and cause the foreskins of their hearts to be circumcised also so that all of them, wherever they may be, will feel the depth of their pain and sorrow, understanding that they are imprisoned in the abyss of the underworld, in polluted places so frightening that it cannot be spoken, that such a thunderous noise be raised amongst them, that all of them be awakened to return to the Blessed One in truth, to begin to yearn, and to feel genuine sorrow, and to truly desire to be rectified and to return to G-d in truth, until Your benefiting compassion is awakened, Your hidden mercy, Your great and goodly compassion, over me and over them.

Please act to heal us and redeem us speedily from the depths of the grave, and from all of the impure and polluted realms into which we have fallen. Save us, redeem us, extract us from all of these place in safety. Rectify us. May the King quickly return His scattered outcasts, for Your providence extends over everything. Circumcise our hearts to love Your Name, as is written, "And the L-rd your G-d will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed to love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."

Our Father, our King, the living G-d, our Maker, our Portion, save our beloved remnant from destruction for the sake of the Covenant that You stamped in our flesh. Grant me the merit to quickly circumcise the foreskin of my heart and that of my offspring, especially during these holy days of Elul. Grant me the merit that I may now truly prepare myself spiritually so that I may merit that these special holy days of Elul work in my behalf to help me completely circumcise the foreskin of my heart and the hearts of my offspring in truth, so that I may merit in this present lifetime to completely rectify my wrongdoings and blemishes in the merit of the true Tzaddikim (Righteous Jews), myself and my offspring and all those who are dependent upon me, that I not be ashamed and embarrassed and fail forever, being left in my initial shame, so that my transgressions have no power to hover in waiting over the opening of my grave, G-d forbid. Rather, allow me to rectify everything in this lifetime, in the power and merit of the true Tzaddikim, for I have no hope or support without them, for we are still waiting for the good and promised salvation that will come in their merit and strength.

You who is full of mercy, consider me in kindness and have compassion upon me and rescue me from shame and humiliation, that no destructive or evil agent will have the power to approach me at the time of my death, and that they should not follow after my coffin, G-d forbid. Please in your great mercy, cast them far from me, and totally wipe them out, now and forever more. Have mercy on me in Your abundant pardon and mighty forgiveness that I merit to rectify in my lifetime everything that I damaged with my sins. Forgive me for everything in this lifetime, so that I will not have to face any judgment and sentence in the world to come. Even though I know that in truth I am far from deserving this kind of salvation, for through what do I merit such a thing? Nevertheless, I trust in Your great compassion and I rest on Your kindness, on Your forgiveness I wait, and on Your salvation I yearn, through the merit and power of the true Tzaddikim of our time, and through the merit of the true Tzaddikim who rest in the earth, on them we lean for support, and in their merit I have come before You with my plea.

Therefore, I stand and anticipate and hope for Your mighty salvation, that I speedily merit the fulfillment of all that I have asked for in Your Presence, for You look toward the evil doer and desire his repentance and his return to the righteous way. And if I have greatly delayed in returning to You, and even added more and more frightful transgressions each day, nevertheless, I still anticipate each day that my salvation will come with my soul's redemption, that I may quickly merit to awaken from my slumber, and to rise from my fallen state, to rise up from my descent, and to return to life from the death that has seized me, to return to You in truth and with a whole heart, me and my seed, and my children's offspring, and all the seed of Your nation the House of Israel, from now until forever, Amen, Selah.

Click here to print this prayer in PDF format