



## NEW LIGHT ON ELUL

**Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita**

I sit looking out as dawn rises. It is early morning and the sun is softly breaking through the clouds, piercing the heavens with its rays of light. One of my favourite pastimes whilst on holiday is getting up early to witness the sun breaking through the darkness and bringing forth a colour display that touches the soul. It seems that each ray of light plays against another cloud, enlightening its inner softness whilst adding to the sum total of what is Hashem's awesome creation. What was seemingly dark and threatening turns into golden shafts of inspiration, Hashem's eternal drama written in the heavens for us mere mortals to marvel at. This magnificent pageant plays across the skies in total silence; only those awake to its beauty will ever know of its existence.

Recently we are all bewildered and broken. The skies over Eretz Yisroel are roiling with streaks from murderous rockets aimed at the hearts of Klall Yisroel. Here in Chutz L'Eretz those rockets reap the poisonous fumes of anti-semitism. With all this pain many may feel burnt out, distraught with the anxiety of hopelessness.

During the hustle and bustle of the everyday we don't often have the chance to savour moments of stillness; after all, there is so much to do and no time to do it in. Holidays are meant to de-stress our weary minds, and allow our hearts to get back into sync with our neshomas.

The time allotted for most of us for breaks from the mundane is just as summer is waning and the Chodesh of Elul is about to begin. What better way to introduce us to this special month than taking off some time to contemplate and recharge our batteries. The month of Elul is one that brings great hope, its very spelling brings a message of total redemption "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me..." (Shir Hashirim 6:3). The first letters of the four Hebrew words comprising this verse spell the word Elul. In this month Klal Yisroel begins to

בס"ד



## Adass Aish Kodesh

Harav Y. R. Rubin Shlita  
36 Bury Old Road  
Prestwich – Manchester  
M25 0FT



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strengthen itself through the process of teshuva, and thereby draws close to their beloved, Hashem. At this time Hashem, as it were, also draws close to Israel, extends His hand to her, and draws her close. We are taught that this reflects on Hashem's true and constant relationship with His children the Bnei Yisroel. His love for us is eternal, and ours for Him is no less so. After the darkness that was the month of Av with its sadness and memories of past mistakes, we come to this new month with the message of hope. Yes, we will soon be facing the Heilige Tag, the days where everything will be remembered and measured, where our future will be decided and inscribed hopefully into the Sefer of Life. But if we enter this period with the realisation of Hashem's love for us, then although there may be clouds that threaten our future, we can seek and find the sunlight that awaits us to break through those barriers that are all too often self-imposed.

Each one of us sometimes faces stormy clouds that seem to be drenched in heavy rain that pelts down on us without end. At such times we can lose hope and descend into a dark pool of despair. How can we ever come back to Hashem? How can we truthfully face our reality?

However, if we wake up early, we can look out from the trap we find ourselves in and see the streaks of light and marvel at the ability of life to overcome all darkness and bring clarity. Elul is about hope; its very identity speaks of Hashem's love for us. Despite our own foolishness and forgetfulness, we are told that we should never lose sight of the brilliance of Hashem's illumination.

As we begin this vital month, we should all take heart, hearing the call of the Shofar, allow our hearts to open and reconnect with the bond of love that unites us with Avinu Shebashomayim.

This connection can pierce all the clouds that threaten to leaden our horizons. Wake up, stand in awe at the majestic light that Hashem rains down on us, and never give up.

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