

בעזרת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar
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Netzavim



The Way of Emunah

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אַתֶּם נִצָּבִים הַיּוֹם כְּלָכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם רִאשֵׁיכֶם שְׂבִיטֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם
וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: (כט, ט)

You are all standing this day before Hashem, the leaders of your tribes, your elders, your watchmen, every man of Yisroel. (29:9)

Preparing for Rosh Hashanah With Achdus:

My ancestor, Rav Mord'chele of Nadvorna zy"l (quoted in Maamar Mordechai) explains that there is an important reason why Parshas

Netzavim is read on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah. This teaches us what we must do in these days, as we prepare for the awesome Day of Judgment. In the first *pasuk* of Netzavim it is stated: "You are standing today

all of you before Hashem your G-d.” This teaches us that **we must be united as one as we prepare to enter Rosh Hashanah.**

The Merit of Achdus:

Sefer Aron Eidus also sees a hint from this *pasuk* to the importance of *achdus*. The word “*netzavim*” can be seen as a reference to the Avos, as the Zohar Hakadosh states on the verse in Parshas Vayeirah: “‘And behold three men were approaching (*netzavim*)...’ Who were these three men? Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov.”

Accordingly, the words “*atem netzavim hayom kulchem*” can be read to mean that when we are “*kulchem*” – united as one – we are comparable to the “*netzavim*” – the holy Avos. **If**

we do this, we too will be able to be “*netzavim*”, i.e., standing firmly and strongly.

This is also seen from the Yalkut that says: “‘*Atem netzavim.*’ When? ‘Today all of you.’ When you are all united as one group.” Again, we see that *achdus* is the best way to prepare for the Day of Judgment.

Achdus Like at Kabalas Hatorah:

Rav Moshe of Kozhnitz zy”a (Sefer Daas Moshe) writes similarly that Parshas Netzavim is always read before Rosh Hashanah to teach us that we must stand united before Hashem on the Yom Hadin, just like we stood as one at Har Sinai.

In this vein, he explains the subsequent verse (29:12): “In

order to establish you today to him as a nation and He will be to you your G-d.” “Today” refers to Rosh Hashanah. If we are a singular, united nation on Rosh Hashanah, then He will be our Master **who will push away all harsh judgments and protect us.**

Judging Everyone Favorably:

Sefer Tiferes Shmuel also writes that we see from Parshas Netzavim that **the main preparation for Rosh Hashanah is to increase love and brotherliness amongst Klal Yisroel.**

He cites the *pasuk* in Tehillim (98:6): “With trumpets and the sound of the shofar, you blow (*‘hari’u*) before the King Hashem”, and explains that the

word “*hari’u*” also connotes “*rayus*”, brotherliness. The *pasuk* is saying that if we are united as brothers during the sounding of the *shofar*, we will be “before Hashem”, meaning that we will reach great heights of holiness and will be safe from danger.

He further explains the *pasuk* in Tehillim (96:12-13): “The field and all that is therein will sing; then all the trees of the forest will sing praises before Hashem, for He has come, for He has come to judge the earth.” “The trees of the forest” are trees that bear no fruit. Thus, this is a reference to people who possess no Torah or mitzvos. The *pasuk* is saying that we must love and include them as well and judge even such people favorably. If we do so, we will be “before Hashem” – we will reach the

level of being in His presence. “For He has come to judge the earth” – **and in this merit, we will be judged for the good on Rosh Hashanah.**

For this reason, the *pasuk* in Netzavim says that we all should gather as one “today”, i.e., on Rosh Hashanah. It continues: “Your leaders...the wood choppers and water drawers” – every member of Klal Yisroel should be part of the united nation and everyone should be included in the bond of love and brotherhood.

Annulling Midas Hadin:

The *pasuk* states (Tehillim 44:6): “Raise up Elokim with blowing (*teruah*).” The Chozeh of Lublin *zy”a* (quoted in Lechem Shlomo, Ois 5) explains that the word “*teruah*” refers to “*rayus*” (brotherliness).

The *pasuk* is saying that through *rayus* on Rosh Hashanah, when everyone blesses all of his friends from the heart to have a good year, Hashem gets up from his chair of strict judgment and sits down on His chair of mercy. The name “Elokim” refers to the *middas hadin* (the Divine attribute of strict judgment), and the *pasuk* is saying that through the *rayus* shown when everyone sincerely blesses each other, He rises from this *middah* and switches to the Divine attribute of mercy.

Greeting The Day of Judgment With Friendship:

On the night of Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe of Karlin *zy”a* once said (quoted in Bais Aharon on Rosh Hashanah) that it is impossible to

greet Rosh Hashanah without “*rayus*”, as is stated (Bamidbor 29:1): “It will be a day of *teruah* (blowing) for you.” (He also understands the word “*teruah*” to be a reference to *rayus*.) This is also seen from the verse (ibid): “*B’echad lachodesh hashvi’i*” (on the first of the seventh month). **The word “*b’echad*” indicates that it must be with *achdus*.**

Crowning Hashem With The Power of Achdus:

The reason why increasing *achdus* is the best way to prepare for Rosh Hashanah is because the main *avodah* of the day is to crown Hashem as our king, and this can only be done through the power of unity. The Karliner Rebbe (quoted in Bais Aharon) discerns this from the *pasuk* (Zechariah 14:9): “On that day,

Hashem will be one and His name will be one.” Everything depends on oneness. If we are one, we can crown him as the One.

The Bais Avrohom of Slonim *zy”a* sees this idea from the *pasuk* (Devarim 14:15) that states: “From amongst your brothers, you shall appoint a king over you.” **This means that when Yidden act like brothers who all love each other, we will merit appointing Hashem as our king.**

We see that when we are united, Hashem will emerge as our king, and He will mercifully annul all decrees against us.

One Who Values His Friend Has His Prayers Accepted:

Sefarim Hakedoshim say that the power of *achdus* is so great that it allows our *tefillos* to be accepted and for us to receive an abundance of goodness and blessing.

The *pasuk* states (Malachi 3:16): “Then the G-d-fearing men spoke to their friends, and Hashem listened and heard it.” The Aryeh D'Brei Ilai *zy”a* (quoted in Devash Hasadeh, Ois 80) explains this to mean that when Yidden speak to each other as friends and value each other by considering every friend to be “G-d-fearing”, then **Hashem will listen and accept our *tefillos*.**

The Benefits of Achdus:

We also find that we can merit an abundance of goodness and blessing through the power of

achdus.

The Kобрiner Rebbe *zy”a* learns this from the *pasuk* in Tehillim (116:10): “*He’emanti ki adaber.*” (I believed so I spoke.) He says that “*emunah*” can mean dragging something down from above. Thus, the *pasuk* can be understood as saying that through the power of holy speech said by a united group of people, one can drag down all types of blessing from above.

Similarly, Yaakov Avinu told his sons (Bereishis 49:1): “*H’asfi v’agida lachem.*” (Gather and I will tell you.) Rav Osher Yeshaya of Ropshitz *zy”a* (quoted in Ohr Yesha, Parshas Vayechi) explains that “*agidah*” can mean to drag down (as in the expression “*gud agid*”). **The *pasuk* is saying that through *achdus* one can drag down all of his needs from above.**

Ahavas Hashem and Ahavas Yisroel:

We further find that if someone loves his fellow Jews, it is a sign that he loves Hashem.

The Maharal (Nesivos Olam, Ahavas Hareya, Perek 1) writes: **“Loving people is also a form of loving Hashem. One who loves someone loves all that He creates. Therefore, one who loves Hashem loves His creations. But if one hates people, it is impossible for him to love the one who created those people.”**

Knowing What a Friend Needs:

It is related (in Sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh) that Rav Dovid of Lelov zy”a would learn lessons regarding *middos* and *mussar*

from all people, in fulfillment of Chazal’s statement (Avos 4:1): “Who is wise? He who learns from every man.” He would say that he learned a lesson about how friends should relate to each other from a conversation between two non-Jews that he overheard.

He related that he once heard one non-Jewish farmer ask his friend, “Do you love me?”

The friend answered that he did.

The farmer replied, “You are lying. If you really loved me, you would know what I am lacking right now. You would know which teeth hurts me right now. If you don’t know this, you clearly don’t love me.”

From this story, we see what true love between friends is. A

true friend must know what his friend is lacking so that he can help him.

It is similarly related that Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir zy" a once went to visit Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy" a. When he went to take leave of Rav Bunim, the Rebbe escorted him for quite a distance, until they reached the outskirts of the city. Rav Yechezkel then turned around to escort Rav Bunim back towards his house. As they were walking, Rav Yechezkel took out his box of tobacco and gave it to Rav Bunim to sniff. Rav Bunim asked, "How did you know that I needed '*a shmek tabak*' right now?"

Rav Yechezkel answered, "When you pick up the tobacco to your nose, how do you know that your nose needs '*a shmek tabak*'? Obviously, it is because

it is part of your body, so you know what it needs. So too, when two people love each other they become like one body, and they feel what their friend needs."

Seeing The Good in Every Man:

An important part of loving one's friends is seeing their positive aspects, rather than their deficiencies. When one does this, he is able to form a close bond. But if one pays attention to his friend's negative qualities, he won't be able to connect with him.

This idea is found in Sefer Me'ohr V'Shemesh (Parshas Vayelech), who writes: "**The main shresh of avodah is to love every Jew**, both old and young, and even people who have

turned away from the good path should be loved for the good qualities found in them...and then the impure forces will be unable to harm us and fear of Hashem will be increased as a result."

Establishing Rosh Hashanah:

Rav Yisroel of Tchartkov zy" a

(Sefer Ohr Yisroel) explains the *pasuk* of "*Atem netzavim hayom*" to mean: "You establish the day!" (The word "*netzavim*" means to stand up or establish, and the word "*hayom*" is a reference to Rosh Hashanah.) He explains that when Klal Yisroel establishes Rosh Hashanah as a day to accept the *ohl malchus shomayim* and they do *teshuva*, then **"they are all before Hashem"**, and they will **all be blessed with a good year.**

טַפְּכֶם וְיִשְׁיָכֶם וְגו' בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֵיךְ מִחֹטֵב עֵצִיךְ עַד שְׂאֵב מִיָּמֶיךָ (כט, י)

Your children your wives... in the midst of your camp, from the woodchoppers to the water drawers. (29:10)

Good Advice is Better Than Chiddushei Torah:

The Chiddushei Harim zy" a once asked Rav Menachem Mendel of Vorka zy" a why the *pasuk* says "from your woodchoppers to your water drawers." Why are woodchoppers mentioned before

water drawers?

Rav Menachem Mendel answered, "*Chotev aitzecha* (woodchoppers) actually refers to people who give '*eitzos*' (advice) to help their fellow Jews in times of need. That is a more distinguished thing to be than 'a water

drawer', which refers to those Torah by creating *chiddushei* who draw out the waters of *Torah*."

וְשֵׁב ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְשֵׁב וְקִבְּצֶךָ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְגו' (ל, ג)

And Hashem, your G-d, will bring back your exiles, and He will have mercy upon you. He will once again gather you from all the nations... (30:3)

Hashem Does Teshuva For Us:

The Rebbe of Kuzmir zy"l explains this *pasuk* by quoting the Gemara (Sukkah 52B) that states: "Hashem regrets four things every day..." One of those things is creating the *yeitzer hara*.

Charatah (regret) is one of the ways of doing *teshuva*. The Gemara is saying that Hashem "does *teshuva*" for creating the *yeitzer hara* by helping us do *teshuva*. The *pasuk* says: "*V'shav Hashem Elokecha es shevusecha*", which can be understood to mean that Hashem will do our *teshuva* for us. "And

He will have mercy upon us" in the sense that even though He did our *teshuva* for us, He will still love us as if we did it.

He adds that this is also the explanation of the verse in Tehillim (126:4): "*Shuvu Hashem es shevuseinu*." (Hashem, return our captives.) This can also be translated to mean that we ask Hashem to do *teshuva* for us. If so, what is left for us to do? The *pasuk* answers: "*Ka'afikim banegev*" (like streams in the desert). We should be like the desert sand when water flows onto it and soak in the *teshuva* that Hashem does for us.

העידתי בכם היום וגו' החיים והמוות נתתי לפניך וגו' ובחרת בחיים למען
תחיה אתה וזרעך (ל, יט)

I testify before you today... life and death I have given before you... And choose life
so that you shall live...and your offspring. (30:19)

The Avodah of Being B'Simcha:

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz zy"e says that serving Hashem with joy and enthusiasm is called "*chaim*" because it makes a person lively and happy. However, if a person serves Hashem without joy and enthusiasm, the opposite is true.

The difference between serving Hashem with joy and serving Him without joy is that when one serves Hashem with

simcha, he passes down his tradition to future generations, who gladly will follow in his ways. On the other hand, when one serves Hashem with no joy, his children won't want to emulate him and they won't follow in his way. This is hinted to in this *pasuk*. It says to choose "life", i.e., a life of serving Hashem with *simcha*, so that you and your offspring shall live, as this type of *avodah* will be passed on to future generations.

כי קרוב אליך הדבר וגו' בפיה ובלבבך לעשותו (ל, יד)

For the thing is close to you... it is in your mouths and hearts to do it. (30:14)

Thanking Hashem For Helping a Friend:

once cried to Rav Moshe of Kobrin zy"e that he had very little *parnassah*. He said that

It is related that a shopkeeper very few customers came into

his store. On the other hand, the neighboring store sold inferior merchandise but had a lot of customers and made a big profit.

Rav Moshe told him, “I guarantee you that if you are happy for your friend when you see that he has a lot of customers and you thank Hashem for

giving him *parnassah* then you too will have an abundance of livelihood. **It may be hard you to do this with a full heart, but once you do it once, it will become easier. Once you start saying it with your mouth, your heart will begin to truly feel it.**”

אִם יִהְיֶה נִדְחֶךָ בְּקֵצָה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשֶּׁם יִקְבְּצֶךָ ה' וְגו' וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ (ל, ד)

If your exiles will be at the end of the heavens, Hashem your G-d, will gather you from there, and He will take you from there. (30:4)

Serving Hashem Shelo L'Shma Has Value:

The Baal Shem Tov zy”a says that this *pasuk* contains a source of encouragement for the time of the “*ikvesa d’meshicha*”, the generation immediately prior to Moshiach’s arrival, when it is very difficult to draw close to Hashem, do *teshuva*, and properly observe the Torah and mitzvos. During this generation,

even serving Hashem in a less than perfect way is beloved by Hashem. If someone serves Hashem and does *teshuva* fully *l’sheim shomayim*, it is certainly wonderful. But even if one’s *avodah* and *teshuva* is only 50% *l’sheim shomayim* - for example, if one also has in mind that he will receive honor and glory if he learns Torah – as long as one has partial thoughts *l’sheim*

shomayim, his *avodah* will be accepted by Hashem.

This is hinted to in the words of this *pasuk*: “*Im yihiye nidachecha*” (if your exiles will be). The word “*nidach*” can be translated to mean a far-flung person whose *teshuva* is not 100% sincere. Regarding such a person, it states that he is “at the end of heaven”, meaning that he only manages to be partially *l’sheim shomayim*. **Still and all, Hashem says that He will “gather him from there” and accept his *teshuva* as if it were fully *l’shmah*.**

Preparing For Rosh Hashanah With Tzedakah:

The *pasuk* (Devarim 16:20) states: “*Tzedek tzedek tirdof l’ma’an yichyeh v’yarashtah es*

ha’aretz.” (Seek out a lot of righteousness so that you shall live and inherit the land.)

Rabenu Efraim (one of the great commentators on the Torah) writes: “This is as is stated (Mishlei 10:2): ‘*Tzedakah* saves from death’, as is seen from the story of the daughter of Rav Akiva (Shabbos 115B) and the story of Shmuel and Avlet (ibid), as well as the story of Binyomin Hatzadik (Bava Basra 11A).”

He adds that this is hinted to from the word “*v’yarashta*”, which has the same letters as the word “*v’Tishrei*”. This teaches us that **one should give *tzedakah* before Tishrei so that he is sealed in the book of life.**

Hashem Forgives One Who Gives Tzedakah:

If one gives *tzedakah* and is compassionate to others, Hashem treats him with mercy and compassion, *middah k'neged middah*, and He grants him a good year.

The *pasuk* states that Ezra told the people of his generation (Nechemiah 8:13): “And send gifts (*manos*) to those who are not deserving of it because this day is sanctified to our Master.” Rashi says that the day mentioned in this *pasuk* was Rosh Hashanah.

Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy”a explains that the people were anguished because they felt that they felt that they hadn’t properly prepared for Rosh Hashanah. Ezra told them not to cry or be sad. Instead, they should send gifts...

He was saying that Hashem fulfills all of His mitzvos,

including *tzedakah*. **Therefore, you should give *tzedakah*, even to those who don’t deserve it. If you do so, Hashem will reciprocate and give you *tzedakah* by forgiving your sins and accepting your prayers, even if you don’t deserve it.**

Sefer Imrei Noam adds that the word “*manos*” can be an acronym for “*v’hitzaltah nafshi m’sh’ol tachtiyah.*” (And save my soul from the depths of purgatory.) **This is a hint that giving *tzedakah* saves a person from the worst punishments.**

The Final Shabbos:

Chazal say (Rosh Hashanah 2:2): “One day of a year is considered to be a full year.”

The Bais Avrohom states: **If during the course of an entire**

year, one only spent one day serving Hashem, his entire year is saved. This is true even if it is the very last day of the year, and certainly if it is the last Shabbos of the year. This one day can uplift the entire year.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, One Can Still Save Himself:

The Rov of Freiman *zt"l* (quoted in Sefer Erez Balevanon) relates that one year, during the recitation of Selichos on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Minchas Elazar of Munkatch *zy"r* turned around to face the *kehillah*. Several times, he repeated the words of Selichos: "If only you would all return with heart and soul to your legion", and said, **"Now is the time. We can still save ourselves from purgatory."**

Later on, when they were reciting the words: "If you arrange your atonement over the many times and days", he said: "If you arrange your atonement... But it is only because of the 'many times and days.'"

In other words, the only reason why people do not do *teshuva* properly is because of the lengths of *golus*.

Minchah on Erev Rosh Hashanah Can Bring the Geulah:

We even find that at the time of Minchah on erev Rosh Hashanah, when the day is almost over, one can still do *teshuva*.

My grandfather, the Kreitchnifer Rebbe *zy"r* (Kol Emunah, Parshas Eikev 5747) quoted the *pasuk* (Devarim 11:12): "The

eyes of Hashem your G-d are on it from the beginning of the year (*hashana*) until the end of a year (*shana*).” He said in the name of his grandfather, the Yitav Lev zy”a (Parshas Bo) that this means that at the beginning of the year, people tend to believe that this will be “the year” (*hashana*). They are certain that this will be the year for salvations and redemption. But when the end of the year arrives, they see that it is only “a year” (*shana*) that was the same as all other years.

My grandfather explained the verse in an alternate way. He understood the words “the end of the year” to be referring to the final Minchah right before Rosh Hashanah. The *pasuk* is saying that one should not stop doing *teshuva* and davening for the *geulah* until the year is completely over. It is still

possible that this will be “the year” when we merit the redemption.



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