



# OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI  
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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## ***Thoughts on Parashat***

### ***KI TAVO***

***Year 23***

***by Dayan Abraham David***

The Parasha starts with the words "Atem nitzavim Hayom" you stand before me today. Rashi explains this with a midrash that when the Bnei Yisrael heard the 98 reproaches 'Klaloth' in the previous Parasha together with those they had heard in Parashat Bechukotai, they became pale with fear at not being able to survive such harsh punishment. Moshe reassured them saying, see you are alive and well today even though you have angered G-d many times in the past. But what did Moshe mean with such words of appeasement, was he saying that the warnings were not to be taken seriously? The Yalkut throws light on this subject with a question, why is it that when the other nations are punished they are destroyed completely as we have seen at the time of the flood, and with Sodom and Amorah, and with the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Even later in history, great nations have risen and disappeared but Am Yisrael have remained even after all that has happened to them? The

Yalkut answers that the nations do not know how to read the message of the punishment given to them, they do not recognise the source of these punishments and just continue in their wickedness until they have to be destroyed. But Am Yisrael, when they receive punishment humble themselves and turn to G-d. As we say in the Hallel "Tsarah veyagon emtsa ubshem Hashem ekrah", when troubles and unhappiness find me, I shall call upon the name of G-d. It is in fact these harsh punishments which bring us back to G-d and keep us going as a nation. For the punishments mentioned are not of vengeance but to correct us so we are not corrupted to the point of no return, they save us from spiritual decay. These punishments are given to us in doses so we can survive, as it says in Haazinu "Chetsai achale bam", I will finish my arrows upon them; my arrows will finish and they will still be there. After all the Tsarah Klal Yisrael will return forever.

With this we can answer what seems like a contradiction. In the Tochachot it says "Veheshev becha et kol madwe mitzrayim", and I will bring upon you all the illnesses that I brought upon the

Egyptians, and yet previously we were promised “Kol hamachalot asher samti bemitzrayim lo asim alecha”, and I will not visit upon you all the sicknesses I put upon the Egyptians. We can understand this to mean that the punishments, even when they will be brought upon you, will not be to destroy you, as the illnesses brought upon the Egyptians were to destroy them, for yours will be to correct and chastise you. Moshe was telling them, you have sinned in the past and made G-d angry but since the punishment was to correct you when you did wrong you are forgiven and you are all here now.

## **TORAH GEMS**

The Ramban explains the pasuk *‘Ki hamitzvah hazot asher Anochi metzavecha hayom lo niflaat he mimecha’*, for this commandment that I command you today is not beyond you, is referring to the mitzva of *‘Teshuva’*, repentance. The next pasuk continues, *‘lo bashamayim he . . .’*, it is not up in heaven ‘for you to wonder who will go up there to bring it for me’. Sometimes a person may wonder how *Teshuva* can really help return him to being close to G-d again. A person who sins in the extreme and pushes his Maker away from him, how does he reach out to Him again? Does he have to do the impossible like ascend to heaven which might be possible only after leaving this world. The Torah answers that, *it is not up in heaven. ‘Befecha vuBilbavcha la-*

*asoto’*, it is close to you, in your heart and your mouth for you to do. If you regret your sin and accept not to do it again, say the *Viduy*, confession, with your mouth sincerely, G-d will return to you in this world and be close to you again.

*‘VeLo me-Ev-ver layam he’*, *Teshuva* is not across the seas. One may wonder if his *Teshuva* will help only if he is tested in the same way and place as he sinned. If he sinned in a far away place, he might think that he has to do repentance there in the same circumstances. The Torah tells us that *Teshuva* is acceptable wherever we are. If you regret sincerely in your heart and accept not to do it again and say the *Viduy*, G-d will accept your *Teshuva*.

Sometimes a person might think that it is too difficult to change his ways and keep what he has undertaken and fear that he will fall back. The pasuk tells us, *‘VeShavta aad HaShem Elokecha veShama-ata bekolo’*, and you shall return to HaShem, your G-d, and listen to His voice, do His commands today, *‘VeShav HaShem Elokecha et shevutecha’*, when you return with *Teshuva* and do what He has commanded you today, HaShem will come towards your effort of *Teshuva*. It continues: *‘Umal HaShem Elokecha et levavkha’*, HaShem, your G-d, will circumcise your heart. As the Ramban explains, He will help to remove the *‘Arlat haLev’*, the covering on your heart, to let His light enlighten your thinking, to give you spiritual

vision. *'Haba leTaher Mesiyan oto'*, one who makes the effort to cleanse himself is helped from heaven and especially in these special days of awe. And even though we might have slipped back in the past, we might make it this time because we might be a bit more sincere. *'Avinu Malkenu HaChazerenu bitshuva shelema lefanekha'*, Our Father our King, we are making the effort for *Teshuva*, You help us to complete it so we should return to stand before you. Sometimes we become disheartened because we did try to do *Teshuva* last year but it did not seem to have helped at all for here we are again in the same position. The subject Moshe mentions in the beginning can throw some light on this. *'Pen yesh bachem ish or isha . . . vaHaya beSham-oh et divrei ha-alah hazot veHitbarech bil-vavo . . . ki beshrirut libi elech'*, when a person hears all the oaths of the covenant mentioned before and think in his heart: I do not accept this covenant and I can do as my heart wishes. Such a person is promised the worst punishments and even those sins done unwittingly will be punished severely, *'Lesapot haravah et hasemeah'*, and his sins are not forgiven. Why does such a person, who does not accept the covenant and transgresses, get punished more severely than someone who has accepted the covenant and transgresses? We could explain that a person who has accepted the Oath of the Covenant, even when he sins, would do it with a heavy heart and with less pleasure

because the words of the Oath weigh heavily on him, hence he is less culpable and closer to *Teshuva*. Whereas one who denies it all and thinks he is free to do what he wants, will sin with pleasure and will enjoy the sin pushing himself further from repentance. The residue of our *Teshuva* of the previous year is not lost and even when we fall back, some of it remains, and at the very least, will weigh on our conscience causing some pangs of regret even when our evil inclination overpowers us. So we are closer to true *Teshuva* and hence less deserving of punishment. We must not give up but try to do better, *'Avinu Malkenu HaChazerenu bitshuva shelema lefanekha'*.

### **STORIES OF TZADDIKIM**

Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu z"l, the son of Rabbi Mordecai Eliyahu says over about the consideration and thought of his father, not only about great things, but even about the small.

"When I was a child, my father would take my brother and myself in the morning to selichot (before dawn). He would prepare us and animate us for this; he would tell us to prepare our torches for the way since it was dark and the street lighting was poor, so as to keep in our minds we were getting up for selichot before we went to bed. This would make it easier to wake us up in the morning. When he woke us up it was very gently and silently so as not to disturb my mother and steal her sleep. All the

way to the Beth Haknesset he was careful not to make a noise so as not to disturb others from their sleep. He would not bang the door of our flat, not to awaken the neighbours, not to talk loudly down the stairs and even in the street we were careful for stealing sleep cannot be repaid. Great people do not only think about and appreciate the big subjects and favours but even the smallest. If we could take some lesson to excite and animate our children to mitzvot from a young age, we could reap great benefit for them later in life. But of course this comes at a price, time and effort, less sleep for the parents and some aggravation but it is worthwhile.

## **Shabbat Shalom**

### **HALACHOT**

1. We should make the effort to try and fast half a day from dawn until 1:30pm on erev Rosh Hashana to help our teshuva. This needs an acceptance from the evening before.
2. We make Hatarat Nedarim after Shaharit on erev Rosh Hashana so as not to be burdened with transgressing oaths.
3. Men should go the mikvah on erev Rosh Hashana to enter the New Year in purity.
4. One should not eat before the 'Tekiof' but a weak, old or sick person who cannot remain fasting for so long, may eat something small before tefillah. If he eats after Shaharit before the 'Tekiof' he has to make kiddush.
5. Even though women are not obligated in the mitzvah of Shofar from the Torah they have taken it upon themselves and therefore if

they cannot come to the synagogue to hear the 'tekiof' they must arrange for someone to blow for them, this is done without a beracha. If they cannot arrange this they need to make 'Hatarat Nedarim'.

6. We did Tashlich on the first day of Rosh Hashana, if we cannot manage it, it can be done the second day or during the aseret yeme teshuva. We should be careful not to gather as a social event and detract from the spirit of Rosh Hashana.

**We have a regular Youth  
Minyan organised by Jason  
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses  
followed by a kiddush**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush  
Please contact  
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749  
For Seuda Shlishit  
or to rent the  
Nancy Reuben Hall  
for a Simcha  
Please contact  
Yanky David 07725 408724*

### **SHABBAT TIMES**

Shabbat commences	7:18 pm
Shabbat terminates	8:23 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat for the summer	7:05 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 pm
Shiur Pirke Avot	5:45 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	6:45 pm
Erev Rosh Hashana Selichot	6:00 am
Aseret Yemei Teshuva Selichot	5.45 am
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit	6:55 pm