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A WELLSPRING OF CHIZUK

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Rav of Pardes HaTorah



חודש אלול
פרשת נצבים וילך - סליחות

WEEKLY PARSHA • TWO MINUTE TAKE-AWAY
DEEPER INSIGHTS • WAYS OF OUR TZADIKIM

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פרשת נצבים

Wake Up for Selichos

THE TRADITION OF WAKING FOR SELICHOS

The call of the *shamash*, used to rouse the community for the first day of *Selichos*, has famously remained its symbolic call. In the *shtetls* of old, the *shamash* would wake the villagers by knocking on their windows and proclaiming, "שטייטס אויף צו סליחות, שטייטס אויף צו סליחות..." – "Wake up for *Selichos*, wake up for *Selichos*..."

The wording of this phrase is intriguing; one would typically expect "וועקסט" ("Wake up for *Selichos*"), yet the phrase used was "אויף צו סליחות," which literally translates to "Stand up."

OVERCOMING SHAME AND UNWORTHINESS

When a person realizes it is time to daven and recite *Selichos*, they often face a wave of tension and conflicting emotions. They might wonder, "Am I truly worthy to recite *Selichos*? What

merits do I actually have?"

As we begin *Selichos* with "רבנו של" "עולם לך ה' הצדקה ולנו" we acknowledge that He is righteous, while with "בושת הפנים מה נאמר מה" – "נדבר מה נצתדק" – what can we possibly say, or how can we justify ourselves? Can we claim any personal righteousness?

We continue with "כדלים וכרשים" "דפקנו דלתך" – we knock on Your doors like paupers. These are the precise feelings of every *Yid* during *Selichos*, leaving us wondering how to proceed when we feel so broken and ashamed.

This feeling of shame is actually a healthy sign. It serves as the starting point and the first step toward being *gebentched* with a great year.

At the same time, we must not *daven* out of depression or dejection. The *Arizal* teaches that a *tefillah* offered in

a state of depression, Heaven forbid, does not ascend; instead, the *Sitra Achra* grabs it.

If that is the case, what is the correct way to approach *davening* and *Selichos*?

THE SECRET OF STANDING TALL: NITZAVIM

The solution lies in those traditional words passed down through the ages: "שְׁטַיִיטס אויף צו סליחות" – "Stand up for *Selichos*."

The instruction was not merely to wake up, but specifically to stand up. We are called to stand tall. Appropriately, on the *Shabbos* of *Selichos* right before *Rosh Hashanah*, we read *Parshas Nitzavim*.

What is the significance of "*Nitzavim*," – of standing?

Rashi, in *Bamidbar*, explains that "*Nitzavim*" implies standing with an upright and firm posture. This is the essence of "אתם נצבים היום כולכם" – you are all standing today, where "*hayom*" refers to *Rosh Hashanah*.

On the *Shabbos* preceding *Rosh Hashanah*, we are taught how to prepare for *Selichos* properly. Yes, one must *daven* and shamefully acknowledge his *aveiros*, but he must also stand tall – *Nitzavim*. This is why the *shamash* urged the community to "stand up and be strong."

STANDING AS CHILDREN OF HASHEM

The question remains: on what basis do we stand tall?

The *sefer Ravid Hazahav* cites the *Ropshitzer Rav*, who references a posuk in *Yeshaya* (chapter 43): "סֹפֵר אֶתֶּהּ" – State your case, that you may be justified. This indicates that Hashem invites us to speak and present our defense.

The *Ropshitzer Rav* taught that a *Yid* must remain strong and say, "*Ribbono Shel Olam, I am going to speak to You.*" To what end? "למען תצדק" – to argue that I am right and that I have rights.

The *Rav* insisted that this must be said with strength.

The *Ravid Hazahav* questions the basis of this claim: what did the *Ropshitzer Rav* mean by telling the *Ribbono Shel Olam* that we are right?

He explains that even if a *Yid* is at his lowest point, he forever remains a child of the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. We should say, "*Ribbono Shel Olam, regardless of my situation, I am still Your child.*"

This realization is the greatest source of encouragement and the strongest motivation to stand tall and begin *davening*.

BALANCING HUMILITY AND STRENGTH

We read *Parshas Nitzavim* before *Rosh Hashanah* to reassure ourselves. As we enter the profound days of *Selichos* feeling broken and questioning our worth, we must also find the strength to stand with an upright posture.

Just as the *Ropshitzer Rav* suggested, we should say, "*Ribbono Shel Olam, I want to speak to You and justify myself.*" Our justification is that we are children of Hashem; therefore, we have the

right to speak to Him, to *daven*, and to return through *teshuvah*.

When waking for *Selichos*, we must recall the words the *shamash* used for our ancestors: "Stand up for *Selichos*!"

We should balance our humility – saying "ולנו בושתי הפנים" – we are *ashamed* – with standing tall on the other. As "*Atem Nitzavim*" reminds us, we are children of Hashem. By holding both perspectives, we will merit to have our prayers accepted and be blessed with a good year.



DEEP INSIGHTS

Why Daven? Hashem Does Everything for the Good

DAVENING DURING ELUL

The Tur, in *Hilchos Rosh Hashanah*, notes that whoever *davens* extensively during these days gains incredible *zechusim*. Since the thirteen *middos* of *rachamim* are revealed during this period, *Klal Yisrael* intensifies their *tefillos*. While our Sephardic brothers begin reciting *selichos* from *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, Ashkenazim only start

shortly before *Rosh Hashanah*. However, we all recite "*L'Dovid Hashem Ori*" after *davening*. That *kapitel* mentions Hashem's name thirteen times, corresponding to the thirteen *middos*. As the *Chida* and the *Siddur Reb Shabsi* explain, by reciting these thirteen names, we draw those divine attributes of mercy upon ourselves.

During these extraordinary days, many people increase their individual prayers- some add more *tehillim*, while others may complete the entire *sefer tehillim* daily. Though our methods may differ, the essential goal remains the same: to reach out to Hashem with increased intensity.

Yet, a question often arises during Elul: why must we *daven* at all? If the *Ribbono Shel Olam* directs everything and we declare our complete trust through *Ani Ma'amin*, why should we intervene in His divine calculations with our own requests?

THE CONSTANT TEFILLOS OF THE AVOS

In *sefer Drush Chasam Sofer for Adar*, the *Chasam Sofer* cites the *Chovos Halevavos* regarding the perspective of ancient philosophers on prayer. The secular philosophers argued that if one has trust in God, praying is unnecessary. Since the *Ribbono Shel Olam* governs the entire world, they claimed there's no need to petition Him. Furthermore, everything Hashem does is ultimately for the best; thus, *davening* seems like a lack of *bitachon*.

The *Chasam Sofer* asks: if so, why do we *daven*? He explains that as descendants of the *Avos*, we follow their legacy and final will, which mandates prayer.

This is why we begin *Shemoneh Esrei* with the first *brachah* which focuses on

the *Avos*. Because when a person begins to *daven*, they might wonder why it's necessary. If Hashem runs the world and everything He does is for my benefit, why should I intervene? Why *daven* at all?

The answer can be found in the opening of *Shemoneh Esrei*, where we address the *Avos*. Throughout *Sefer Bereishis*, we see that our forefathers were perpetually engaged in *tefillah*. Despite representing the pinnacle of *emunah* and *bitachon*, the *Avos* never stopped davening. This is the sacred legacy and final will they bequeathed to us.

THE BOND OF PARENT AND CHILD

The *Chasam Sofer* continues by examining the underlying reason: if we possess *emunah* and *bitachon*, why is prayer required? Granted, it's our heritage, but what's the logic?

He compares this to a father who wishes to bond with his child. He might hide a treat behind his back, prompting the child to chase him and call out, "Totty, I want the candy!" As the child seeks out his father, a deeper connection is forged through that interaction.

The *Chasam Sofer* presents three foundations. First, the *Ribbono Shel Olam* wants us to *daven* because He derives pleasure and satisfaction from it.

Second, just as the father hid the treat to prompt the child to seek him out,

he's initiating a new form of connection. When the child cries out, he's awakening a deeper relationship.

Similarly, Hashem desires a bond with us, His beloved children. When a *Yiddishe* kind *davens*, they establish a new connection and bring a force of love into the world. This new relationship is so powerful that it can tear up harsh decrees. Even if we were not originally worthy, the act of *davening* creates a level of closeness that allows us to be *zoche* to blessings we otherwise might not have received.

THE THIRD FOUNDATION: OUR PRECIOUSNESS TO HASHEM

The third foundation mentioned by the *Chasam Sofer* is that when Hashem asks us to *daven* - despite our *emunah* - He's sending a clear message of how precious we are. He's showing us our importance and the high esteem in which He holds us. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, the King of kings, says, "Although you know I can provide you with anything, right now I simply want to hear your voice."

This realization should provide us with immense *chizuk* and self-confidence. It should make us break out in a joyful dance - knowing that the *Ribono Shel Olam* cares about what I have to say. He wants and waits to hear my voice.



2 MINUTE TAKE-AWAY CHIZUK FOR YOUR TABLE

*Stop Asking Questions and
You'll See Miracles*

STRENGTHENING BELIEF AND DISCARDING UNCERTAINTY

As human beings living in this world, we all have questions. Even those with strong *emunah* might find themselves questioning aspects of their lives. While they may profess faith in

Hashem and believe that everything is for the best, they still seek to understand the logic behind His ways.

Such individuals may not realize that by seeking these answers, they are succumbing to the traps of the *yetzer hara*. The *Komarna*, in *Parshas Ki Sisa*, quotes the *Baal Shem Tov* as follows: As long as a person remains steadfast in their *emunah* and *bitachon* – refraining from feeling the need to interrogate the *Ribbono Shel Olam* – it is impossible for any harm to befall them.

A Child of Hashem

TWO EXTRAORDINARY PERCEPTIONS OF A YIDDISHE CHILD

Reb Moshe of Kobrin teaches that every *Yid* should carry two extraordinary perceptions. The first is the realization that they are a child of Hashem. Unlike the nations of the world who come from the earth and return to the earth, a *Yiddishe* child originates from the *Kisei Hakavod*. We lead a life of magnificent royalty and return to *Gan Eden* after a journey of fulfillment.

The second realization is that whenever we find ourselves in need within this physical world, we have the immediate privilege of opening a *sefer tehillim* and speaking directly to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

This profound connection explains the *posuk*, *אשר ישרא* – Fortunate are

The *Toldos*, one of the primary *talmidim* of the *Baal Shem Tov*, documented his *rebbe's* words: When a judgment is set against someone from Heaven, the first step is often to strip away their *emunah*. Yet, if that person remains steadfast and refuses to question, nothing will harm them, and any existing decree will instantly vanish. Genuine *emunah* and *bitachon* have the power to dissolve every negative decree and difficult situation.

you, *Klal Yisroel*." We are truly blessed with the incredible *brachos* of this world. *מי כמוך* – "Who is like you?" Who could possibly compare? As children of Hashem, the King of the universe, we hold a unique status that sets us apart.

The *posuk* continues: if we require assistance – *עם נושע בה* – we are a nation saved by Hashem. In times of need, we simply open a *tehillim*, lift our hands toward Heaven, and say, "*Ribbono Shel Olam, I thank You for everything I have, and I ask for Your help with this.*"

THE PRIDE OF BEING A CHILD OF HASHEM

Furthermore, the *posuk* describes Hashem as *מגן עזרך*, "The shield of your help." These two concepts – turning to Hashem and knowing our heritage – serve as our protection. The

ability to commune with the Creator is our shield, while the knowledge that we are His children is the "sword of your majesty." This is the sword that allows us to walk with our heads held high, representing dignity, pride, and inner confidence.

In ancient times, generals carried swords in scabbards adorned with

precious gems, reflecting their immense self-respect and confidence. Similarly, as *Yidden*, we carry a sword of our own: the inherent truth that we are children of Hashem.

This holy pride and self-assurance keep us upright, providing us with a powerful sense of purpose and strength in every moment.



WALKING IN THE WAYS OF OUR TZADIKIM

Rosh Hashanah by the Vilna Gaon

THE TRADITION OF TRAVELING TO A TZADDIK FOR ROSH HASHANAH

It has been a long-standing tradition for *talmidim* to visit their *rebbe* on *Yom Tov*, especially *Rosh Hashanah*. This practice was universal across the Jewish world, observed by both *Chassidim* and those in the *Litvishe yeshivos*. In the *Litvishe* communities, *talmidim* revisited their *yeshivos* to *daven*, which awakened them to *daven* intensely. *Chassidim* would travel to their *rebbe's* town, to spend the *Yom Tov* in their presence. They sought to observe the *tzaddik*, his manners and his *davening*, to gain inspiration.

There is strength in communal prayer, as
ברב עם הדרת מלך - "King's glory is in

the multitude of people." Especially on *Rosh Hashanah* - the day of crowning *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* - gathering in large numbers honors Him to a greater extent.

The *posuk* states, *ויהי בישראל מלך* - we crown Hashem as King, *בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד שבטי ישראל* - this occurs when the *gedolim* gather alongside the rest of *Klal Yisroel*. This is why, historically, people from small villages would congregate in the large *shuls*. *Chassidim* would journey to their *rebbe's*, while those in the *Litvishe* world returned to the *yeshivos* of their youth.

They wanted to be near their *Rosh Yeshiva* and *gedolim* of *Klal Yisroel*, and participate in *tefillah* with the vast community.

Throughout the generations, the *Yidden* who *davened* with these great *tzadikim* left behind numerous stories. These accounts remain for us so that we can have the opportunity to tap into the atmosphere of those times, and bring those incredible moments to life.

THE RADIANCE OF THE VILNA GAON WHILE BLOWING THE SHOFAR

The *talmidim* of the *Vilna Gaon*, whose greatness is beyond our comprehension, described what he looked like during the sounding of the *shofar*. They noted that his joy was so radiant, and his face shone until it filled the entire *Beis Midrash*. He was *והוא כחתן יוצא מחפתו* - like a *chossan* emerging from his *chuppah*.

Such was the brilliant light that the *Vilna Gaon* projected onto all those around him.

These feelings were not described by the *Vilna Gaon* himself; rather, this was what his *talmidim* experienced in his presence (it was impossible to fully comprehend the *Vilna Gaon's* feelings as his *medraigos* - spiritual levels were beyond our comprehension). These were the sensations they picked up while spending *Rosh Hashanah* with their *rebbe*. Although we may not reach that specific spiritual level during the *shofar* blowing, by recounting these stories, thinking about them, and feeling their significance, we are able to draw closer to that level of *kedusha* - holiness.





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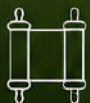
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Deep
Insights



WEDNESDAY

Chovos
HaLevavos



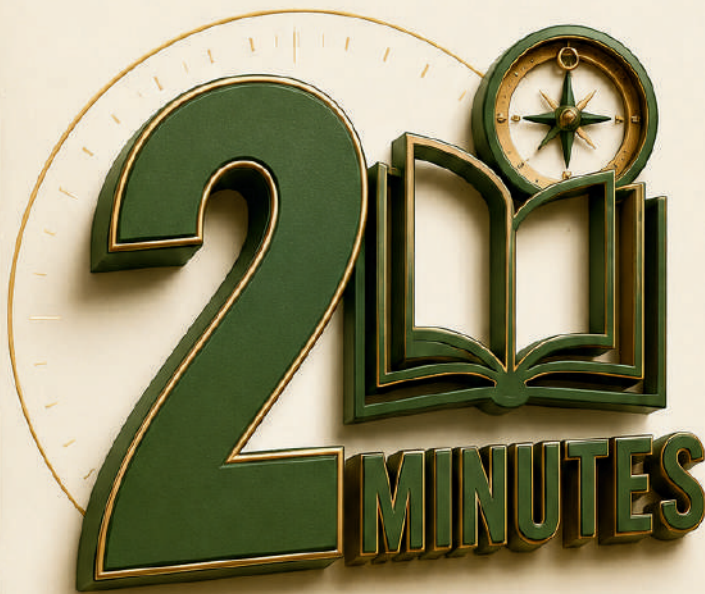
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