



Parshas Nitzavim, working until we achieve

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim and Shlomo Ben Edward. As well as in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Shaul Ben Berta, Sasson Bezalel Ben Batia, & Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Tova Basha.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of Moshe and Ohr Miriam Pershin's anniversary. May Hashem bless them with many more years of happiness, health, and nachas.

Our Parsha begins with Moshe emphasizing that when we stand before G-d, we are equal and identical in His eyes. He enters the Jewish people for all of eternity into the covenant that was made with Avraham Avinu. As Pasuk writes clearly (29:13-14) *"I make this covenant with its sanctions not with you alone. But with those who are standing here with us today before Hashem, and with those who are not here with us"*. Accordingly, this covenant is relevant, applicable, and essential to us in 2021.

Moshe then reiterates and echoes the fact that the Torah is not far from any single Jew. It is not in heaven, where we can't reach or far away on the other side of the ocean. In reality, the Torah and its lessons are incredibly close to every single Jew. As Moshe exclaims, (30:14) *"Rather, the Torah is very close to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can fulfill it."*

Moshe concludes by calling the heaven and earth witnesses as he pleads with us to choose Hashem and the Torah. As the Pasuk writes (30:19) *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, so that you and your children may live."*

However, a question comes to mind: Moshe begs the Jewish nation to turn back and retreat into the open embrace of Hashem after they sin. For then Hashem will gather us and bring us to our promised land. Moshe uses an unusual term to describe returning to Hashem. He says (30:2) "וּשְׁבֹתָ עַד־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ" -you should return **UNTIL** the lord your G-d." But why does Moshe say "עַד-until," rather than "אֶל" which means "to or towards G-d"? What does returning until the Lord your G-d mean?!

The Rabbeinu Bachya (*Rav Bachya Ben Asher, a Spanish commentary*) answers this question by looking at the context of what Moshe is saying. He writes that Moshe is referring to the ultimate redemption when G-d will gather us from all around the world. As the following two Pasukim detail (30:3-4) "*then Hashem will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. He will gather you from all the nations where He has scattered you. Even if you are stuck in the corner of the world, He will collect you from there and bring you to His land.*"

The Rabbeinu Bachya explains that this prophecy can only happen "**until**" after all Jewish people return to their Father in Heaven. He quotes the Talmud in Avodah Zarah (5a) that the descendant of King David would only come "until" all the souls have returned to their rightfully place near G-d. Meaning, the work of searching, uncovering, and elevating G-dly sparks is finished. Now, the world is ready for the complete revelation of G-d's holy essence.

However, the Sforno (*Rav Ovadiah Sforno, an Italian commentary, and doctor from the early 1500s*) brings a deeper and more profound explanation. He agrees that Moshe is prophesying about the ultimate redemption. He adds that it will only come when the Jewish people do complete Teshuva - repentance. Only when the entire Jewish nation fully returns to their father in heaven, will Moshiach come.

The Sforno explains that the type of repentance Moshe is referring to is Teshuva that reaches **until** G-d's holy throne. A Teshuva that is not just turning towards G-d, rather, a Teshuva that goes **עַד-until** G-d.

A Teshuva that is transformative and life-altering for the sake of G-d's holy name. A Teshuva that entirely reframes and revitalizes your relationship with your creator and father in heaven.

Moshe is saying that when we are not satisfied with just a shallow and superficial connection with G-d, we can start our journey to G-d. Which begins with **fulfilling His Commandments with emotion and intention**, deepening our relationship with Him. **Learning His Torah with intensity and focus**, showing us a sense of His endless wisdom and understanding. These actions set us in a direction that we do not stop until we have a relationship with G-d that we intimately experience.

In our daily life, it is imperative to know that many people stop when they start to see initial success, not realizing their journey is just beginning. For there is a significant difference between someone who has achieved vs. someone who is successful. One has only put in initial effort thinking it will suffice. The other is constantly working and striving until they reach their goal. Only then to realize that they can truly accomplish far more than they thought possible.

“Success is the sum of small efforts - repeated day in and day out.”

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*