

Nitzavim (29:9) – Rav Elya Meir Bloch ztl. noted that Netzavim is a blessing. Sometimes in moments of transition there is a choice between crisis and opportunity. The secret to success is to sit with the quiet and pay attention to one's thoughts at those times. My colleague **Dr. David Pelcovitz** often points to a famous prayer of **Rabbeinu Bachaya** who prayed HaRachaman Hu Yatzilenu MPizur HaNefesh – may Hashem save us from being scattered in our souls. The ability to be Nitzavim is the secret to safety from that torture.

And He will be a God for you (29:12) – Rashi comments that when Bnei Yisrael heard the Tochacha they turned white and were scared. They wondered if anyone could withstand the wrath of Hashem. Moshe calmed them down reminding them of the fact that they had already angered him plenty and still "Atem Nitzavim Hayom". **Kli Yakar** asks that if this is the case, why offer the Tochacha at all? The **Eretz Tzvi of Khozvinglov** explains that while they feared utter annihilation, Moshe reminded them that the Tochacha would be on the bad parts within them. As far as the good in them? Atem Nitzavim HaYom.

Those who are here and for those who are not (29:11) – The Behag counts the Bris of Har Grizim and Har Eival as a Mitzva but the **Rambam** does not. The Rambam argues that the Bris was a single event and how could it count. **Ramban** defends the Behag by explaining that he counts even Horaas Shaah if they have Halachic ramifications. **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that the ramification of the Bris mentioned here was that it included all future generations. This is why in opposition to the Tochacha in Bechukosai which is written in the plural, the one here was written in the singular for it was to the entire nation as one. Why then did it not begin immediately? Rav Schachter explained that Eretz Yisrael is a further attachment that united the people into a nation. That would not happen until they crossed the Yarden. However, since Hashem wanted Moshe to exact the Bris on His behalf, he had Moshe do it now.

For I will follow my heart's desires (29:18) – Here the word "Kee" implies a translation of "even though". It should be pointed out that we NEVER find "Kee" translated that way anywhere else. How can we understand the Possuk with a more acceptable definition of "Kee"? **Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl.** cautioned that Pharaoh also wanted to use the same argument – that there was no reason to be punished for not following Hashem's word for it was pre-ordained. ("We were born into a Galus and it is a weak world – you need to understand that") Pharaoh made the same argument when he argued that Hashem hardened his heart. However, it was Pharaoh who chose to give up his choice and we too, who need to choose to change. It is in our mouths and hearts to do so.

And you shall return to Hashem (30:2) – The Chida asks how Charata and Vidui will work if we are of the opinion that words cannot undo actions? **Rav Asher Ansel Jungreis ztl.** explained that the Gemara (Yoma 86a) notes that when one does Teshuva it is considered as if he has offered the Korbanos. This is considered an action. Teshuva isn't just words – it is change – real change.

I have placed before you life and good and death and bad (30:15) – Rav Noach Weinberg ztl. explains that when the Torah speaks of death, it does not mean the process of not being alive. The Torah warns us about what death represents. If life refers to the process of growing in one's service of Hashem and developing his or her own character, then death is the choice not to improve. Rav Noach added that one can be observant of Mitzvos and choosing to coast – this too, is death. If we do not choose to push ourselves then we are choosing death. Faced with these contrasts – between challenge and comfort – the Torah warns us that there is no real choice – choose life or everything stops.

Haftorah : Until He establishes and makes Yirushalayim a praise in the land (Yeshayhu 62:7) – If one looks at the Trup for the words Yirushalayim Tehillah, one will see a Svir and a Tipcha. The implication, notes **Rav Nebenzahl Shlita**, is not that Hashem will make Yirushalayim a praise but rather that it is already a praise but that it will be finally in the land. In other words, we await the beautiful Yirushalayim Shel Maala to be brought to the status of being a reality in this world.