

*“TESHUVA WITH LOVE”*

Not by coincidence, but rather by design, this parsha is always read just before Rosh Hashana, as it contains the mitzvah of Teshuva. “Veshavta ad HaShem Elokecha” (30:2) and further, “This matter is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart to achieve” (30:14). The Ramban states that this refers specifically to the mitzvah of Teshuva, and the Netziv adds that it refers specifically to Teshuva M’ ahava, repentance out of love rather than out of fear.

Now, Teshuva out of love would seem to be a most difficult task to achieve, how then can Torah state that we may accomplish this with ease? The Netziv suggests, that the way we come to love a person that’s the way we can learn to love GD and return to Him with love; by getting to know them. Knowing another person means to understand and develop a strong attachment with that person. “V’ha’adam yoda ET Chava ishto”, Adam “knew” his wife Chava, (Bereishit 4:1) meaning they were intimate, and had a child.

HaKodesh Baruch Hu is not only “our GD”, but “our father” as well. And we are considered not only “His nation”, but also “His Children”, “Banim Atem La’Ha’Hasem” (Devarim 14:1). A father can love his child; a mother can love her child, even if they have never seen each other. The first time they meet they will be immediately drawn to one another. The natural connection between parent and child will bridge any gap that may exist.

It was recently reported that her adoptive parents told a 49-year-old adopted woman in California, that she originally came from Israel. The woman had always noticed that she looked different from her parents, and she began to investigate her background. At about the same time, an Israeli journalist was doing an investigative article on a scandal involving Moroccan Jews who first arrived in Israel in the early 1950’s. Many Moroccan mothers, who could not speak the language and had no connections in the country, were told that their children died during childbirth. But in fact, these children were sold for adoption, mostly overseas. The woman from California traveled to Israel and met with the journalist. They uncovered certain documents, and found their way back to the hospital where she was born. The DNA testing enabled the woman to find her Moroccan mother, who had been told that her child had died during delivery, 49 years earlier.

These two women came from completely different cultures, obviously, had nothing to do with each other for almost 50 years. Yet when they met for the first time, they fell into each other’s arms and began kissing each other and crying uncontrollably. The mother did not know the daughter, and the daughter did not know the mother. They did not know each other’s language and could not communicate verbally, only through tears, hugs and kisses. How were such feelings possible? They reacted simply because they were mother and daughter.

What is true about flesh and blood relations is also true between the reunion (Teshuva) between Avinu Sheh’ba’shamyim, our Father in Heaven and His wayward children. I have seen people in Israel, at the Kotel or elsewhere, who have had nothing to do with Judaism, break down with uncontrollable tears when they put on Tefillin for the first time in their lives. The matter is

readily comprehensible. The bond between parent and child is easily repaired and can never be permanently broken.

This is true for all of us. We can always improve our relationship with Avinu Sheh'ba'shamayim, and He is always ready for us with an outstretched hand to meet us

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

WISHING ALL A GUT GEBENCHT AND HEALTHY YEAR

כתובה וחתימה טובה

.....

**QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT NITZAVIM**

**1-Pasuk 29:28 , has dots on the words “Lanu U’levaveinu”. What is the significance of these dots?**

**2-Pasuk 29:14- Moshe states that the covenant will be binding not only for those standing here but also for all generations. How could a covenant or treaty be binding upon future generations who did not accept this covenant?**

**3-Pasuk 29:10- speaks about “wood choppers”, and “water carriers”. Who were these people? (see Rashi)**

**4-The opening statement in Rashi on 29:9, the first pasuk, is that Moshe gathered all the people together on the day that he was about to die- in order to obligate the nation into a new Brit, Covenant with GD. What new element was introduced in this covenant that was not stated earlier on Mt. Sinai?**

**5-The opening pasuk in our parasha states: “You are standing today, all of you, before HaShem...” It goes without saying that to stand before GD we must be perfectly truthful. Which Hebrew word in that pasuk can be read as “truthful” by changing the letters around?**

.....