

PARSHAS NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH – YOCHANAN FRANKLYN

According to Rav Dessler, there are two ways to be successful in judgement on Rosh Hashanah. The first is to be a tzaddik; a person who has reached the level where he *chooses* to serve G-d, who has a striving of the heart to keep mitzvos and have a relationship with G-d. Such a person can merit to be written for life on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. The second is an individual who keeps mitzvos, although he lacks an element of precision and inwardness in his service, but has learnt to serve Hashem from his upbringing. However he too can merit life on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, if he makes himself indispensable to tzaddikim and help them to serve Hashem through his work for the community.

As we don't know who the tzaddikim are, it stands to reason that it is in our interest to increase Torah and mitzvos observance amongst all of Klal Yisroel. In fact according to the Ohr HaChaim we find the mitzvah of Arvus (that we are guarantors for each other's observance) in the first of this weeks parshiyos:

Atem nitzavim hayom koolchem lifnei H' Elokeichem rosheichem shivteichem zikneichem v'shotreichem col ish yisroel... L'ov'racho b'vris Hashem Elokeicha.. "You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d: Your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers – all the men of Israel..for you to pass into a covenant of Hashem, your G-d.."

The Ohr HaChaim has two questions:

- 1) Why does Mosheh need to explain all the different categories, when he could of merely said "all of you"?
- 2) What is the purpose of this new covenant, which he deduces is clearly different than the bris in parshas Ki Savo?

He explains that this bris introduces the concept of Arvus; that every person should try to prevent his fellow from transgressing the word of G-d. Whereas the previous bris obligated a person to keep the Torah himself, this bris makes him responsible for others.

In this vein we can now understand the subdivision into different categories: "Your heads, your elders.." This teaches us that every person is obligated to stand up for Torah observance according to his station and influence. Your Heads are the Gedolim who are responsible for the entire Jewish nation down to "all the men of Israel" the general populous who are responsible for Torah observance in their household.

As we approach the Yomim Noraim let us motivate ourselves and others to increase our concentration and attention to detail in our mitzvah observance.

Good Shabbos.