



Targeting 'Today'

"Re'eh Anochi noten lifnechem hayom, brachah u'kelalah – Behold I set before you today a blessing and a curse." (Devarim 11:26) Our *parashah* begins with a simple statement; 'today' we are given the opportunity to choose blessing or curse, contingent upon our observance of Hashem's mitzvot. The word 'today' seems unnecessary. Yet, since we know that no element in Torah is extraneous, it must carry a deep, important truth.

The Slonimer Rebbe ztz"l in *Netivot Shalom* explains that the objective of our verse is to remind every Jew of his daily obligation to fulfill his inherent potential. The *Ari Hakadosh* ztz"l teaches that from the beginning of time until the end of time, there will never be two people who are exactly the same. Similarly, every day is different from

the one before and the one after. Each of us must take advantage of the unique opportunities that any given day affords, to utilize its gifts and challenges in the best possible way. We must maintain an awareness that every detail of every day is uniquely designed from Above to help us fulfill our potential to the fullest. When we succeed, we are indeed worthy of Hashem's abundant blessings.

The following question was once presented to Rav Moshe of Kobrin. What is the most important mitzvah for a person to do? We might have responded learning Torah, keeping Shabbat, or strengthening our *emunah*. Rav Moshe responded, "whatever mitzvah the person finds before him at that moment." This includes any and all mitzvot, both positive and negative commandments. When one desists from speaking *loshon hara* or from viewing inappropriate content, that is the foremost mitzvah of that moment. Living with this awareness enables us to view our relationship with Hashem as dynamic and ever growing. Hence, notes the *Netivot Shalom*, Hashem is described as, "*Hamechadesh be'tuvo bechol yom tamid* – with His goodness, He renews each day always." As each day is totally new, everything the day contains is new as well, even us! With this perspective, we must see each day as offering new opportunities to become the person Hashem envisions us to be.

The Tosher Rebbe in *Avodat Avodah* explains that the word '**today**' conveys a crucial message for this time of year. The



yetzer hara is cunning, and will tell us, “Yes, of course it is important to do *teshuvah*, but not today.” It will convince us that we must approach *teshuvah* with the proper focus and invest the right amount of time and energy into the process. Better wait until we are fully prepared! It is no coincidence that one of the words for *teshuvah* is “*ve’ata - and now!*” We must do what we can to eliminate this voice and grab the moment to make appropriate changes, beginning the *teshuvah* process as soon as we realize the need to improve. Pushing off an opportunity for change and growth is a manifestation of Amalek who epitomizes “*machar -tomorrow.*”

“*Hayom im be’kolo tishma’u* – if you heed my voice **today**,” the ‘present’ is the greatest ‘gift’ of connection. ■



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