



קונטרס

# The Ways of My Heart



נתיבות לבי

Adapted from the shiurim of

**R' Dovid Steiman** shlit"א

*What Do We Need to Know Before Rosh Hashana?*



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THE WAYS OF MY HEART · WEEKLY SERIES

נתיבות לבי — The Ways of My Heart

A WEEKLY MAAMAR · ADAPTED FROM THE SHIURIM OF R' DOVID STEIMAN SHLIT" A

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

*Nesivos Libi — The Ways of My Heart* is a weekly maamar on emunah, bitachon, and avodas Hashem, adapted from the shiurim of R' Dovid Steiman shlit" a in the derech of the *Nesivos Shalom*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R' Dovid Steiman shlit" a teaches emunah, bitachon, and avodas Hashem in the derech of the *Nesivos Shalom*, and for nearly two decades has shared his Torah — in English and Russian — with talmidim and readers around the world. He taught at Ohr Somayach and today teaches at Yeshiva Toras Dovid, both in Monsey, New York. He is the author of the sefer *The Ways of My Heart* / נתיבות לבי.



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## What Do We Need to Know Before Rosh Hashana?

*Three sefarim open — and which one we are written into is our own decision; what makes that decision real is desperation, and bittul*

**R**osh Hashana is almost here, and everybody is talking about the most powerful mussar there is: that three sefarim are opened. The sefer of the tzadikim, the sefer of the resha'im, and the sefer of the beinonim. The tzadikim — *nichtavim miyad*, written in right away. The resha'im — also written

in right away, chas v'shalom. And the beinonim, the middle ones, are left hanging until Yom Kippur. And then Yom Kippur decides.

So the question is the only question there is. **How do we become written into the sefer of the tzadikim?**

### ..... First — we go in together .....

Before anything else, there is something we have to say.

There is an unbelievable Gemara. It tells us that if we want our tefillah to be *ritzuyah*, that it should be accepted by the Ribbono shel Olam, we have to be *mispallel* together with the resha'im. And we find the same thing by Yom Kippur, when we stand at Kol Nidrei and we ask to be *mispallel im ha'avaryanim*.

The avaryanim. The sinners.

Who are the sinners? Somehow, somewhere we did many mistakes and some other people did less or more of those mistakes. We live here all together, and if we want it should be accepted, if we want Hashem should want it — we have to learn how to go in together. At the end of the day we are all Yidden, and we have to learn how to accept another Yid together with us — *Veohavto Lereecho*

*Komocho, Ani Hashem.* We can say that this is the meaning of *Ani Hashem*

joined to *Veohavto Lereecho Komocho.* That is for sure.

Now we can ask our question.

### ..... **It is a decision** .....

Says the Nesivos Shalom — and this is an unbelievable thing.

If you decide that you are a tzadik, you will be written in the sefer of the tzadikim.

And if a person decides that he is a rasha, that is what happens to him too.

And if a person decides that he is a beinoni — I don't know if I'm a tzadik, I don't know — then he will hang until Yom Kippur.

It is not easy. It is not easy at all to make this decision. But that is the fact. **It is all up to our decision.**

So then everything depends on one thing: how does a person make a decision like that and mean it? Because to say the words is nothing. Anybody can say the words.

Two things make it real, and the first one we have spoken about before.

### ..... **Would you jump in?** .....

Some of you will remember the Yid who followed the Ribnitzer Rebbe zechuso yagein aleinu, begging for a yeshuah, and who hid himself by the mikveh; and the Rebbe told him, if you will be in the water before me, you will get your yeshuah — and the man jumped the gate straight into the water in all his clothing, until the Rebbe stood there laughing, and telling him "Host Gepoiled A Yeshua"

This time, leave out what it was that he needed, because the moment it has a name it becomes his story and not ours. We all need a yeshuah — and every one of us knows exactly what it is. Decide — *would you jump?* It is the same jump as by Krias Yam Suf: the same desperation, and the same belief that Hashem is in charge and will surely help.

Hear the word he used. *Desperate.* Consider for one moment what it takes

to walk in on a person that way: it is a chutzpah beyond a chutzpah, and if you needed something from somebody, you would surely never follow him into the shower to ask for it. That is exactly why it worked.

And now that we stand just before Rosh Hashana — our avoida is to be *mamlich* Hashem a whole day. Reb Moshe Wolfson zt"l mentioned once to someone that we are not allowed to ask anything for ourselves; only to be *mamlich* Hashem.

So how do we get all the yeshuos we need, if this is the very day when everything is *nigzar* for a year? The same question is with Shabbos: all the *hashpa'os* come from Shabbos, and yet we cannot ask for anything of chol — so how are we zoiche to hashpa'os and to yeshuos?

The answer could be this. If we are *mamlich* Hashem out of desperation, out of a clear recognition that everything comes from Him and only from Him — that He is the King of all kings and He is the One in charge of everything — then Hashem will surely care for us, out of the ahavah He has for every single Yid separately, like an only child, and give every child the yeshuah he needs.

So here is the question, and it is not one you have to answer to anybody but yourself. *Do we have this desperation?* Because that, and nothing softer than that, is what it takes to be written into the sefer of the tzadikim. Do not say *sure, why not, what's the big deal* — it is a very big deal, and it is truly not so pashut. If he is desperate, it is going to happen.

Look what a person turns out to be capable of, once he is desperate enough.

### ..... A new creation .....

The second thing is the *koach* of bittul.

What is Rosh Hashana? Says the Nesivos Shalom: it is a new agreement. A new connection. We are starting a whole new creation.

We know that every Shabbos a new week is born. And every Rosh Hashana a new year is born. What does that mean, a new year is born? It means that right now a new *koach* is being created

to make this year — every hashgachah pratis that will come to a person, to every single person in the world, from now on. It is happening now, on Rosh Hashana.

So what is the ikar? What is the thing we actually need to do?

We are missing dveikus. Because we are so into gashmiyus, so deep inside the physical world that we do not even know how deep in we are. And this world is becoming more physical every single day. So it is so hard to connect.

We see it plainly. The tzadikim of the previous generations were able to do things mamish above nature, and we almost do not find that today; the tzadikim who knew the whole Torah, we do not find either. So what happened? The physical world simply keeps taking over, more and more and more.

So our job on Rosh Hashana is to be *mechadesh* the dveikus, the connection to the Ribbono shel Olam. And to be *mevatel* ourselves.

And when a person nullifies himself, all the judgment simply goes away. It is removed.

Why? A person did something wrong. Why should the judgment be removed?

Because if you are nullifying yourself — imagine you are not existing. I am no one. I need to nullify myself completely to the will of Hashem. Then the judgment has nothing to hang on. *Who am I hanging on? There is a new creation now. A new creation, a new person. Whatever was — finished. Wiped out.*

But only if a person is really nullifying himself.

And bittul does not mean *I don't exist*. Of course I exist. It means I am becoming a part of the *mashpia* — and the mashpia is HaKadosh Baruch Hu. A person fills himself with the feeling that **I have no existence, no life, no nothing, without Him.** He has it so clear that he nullifies himself, because he has no existence in this world without HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

### ..... Like the way we hold a phone .....

So how does a person get dveikus? Let us be honest, because we know exactly

how to be connected to the physical world.

A child does not need to be taught. He knows he has to eat, because if he does not eat something hurts, he feels he is losing. A grown person knows it just as well. Every one of us knows precisely how it feels to be attached to this world — each one in his own way.

Here is a small example, and it is not certain it should even be said — but it should.

Look how a man is connected to his phone. Really look at it: how often he checks it, how completely he knows every program on it and every possibility inside it. That is a real connection, and he is altogether ready to be attached to that phone.

Now, lehavdil: *be connected to the Ribbono shel Olam on that level*. Sit and learn on the same level as you are connected to the phone. Go through the sefarim and look for every possibility

of how you could connect to Him, the same way you go through everything that is available on that phone.

That is what it means to love Hashem with your whole heart.

And do not compare yourself to the whole world. One person is building a yeshiva, another is running a chesed organization, and you have no idea how busy that person is or what level he is on. That is not your cheshbon. Look at *your* connection to the physical world — and then think for one second: how do I connect to the Ribbono shel Olam on that same level?

Because when a person connects that strongly, the root of the sin is erased from his heart. He can mamesh drop the gashmiyus — this is not important to me, I want to be connected to Him — and it falls away.

### ..... What the day is really for .....

So this is our avoida on Rosh Hashana.

**Rosh Hashana is not the time to cry about our sins.** We made mistakes, we did this, we did that — and that is not what the day is for.

Rosh Hashana is the time to say to the Ribbono shel Olam: *You are the King of all kings. You are the Only One in charge of everything! You are the Balabos. And out of real desperation I am mevatel myself to You — I am ready*

*to drop all the gashmiyus so that I can be connected to You completely.*

Let's decide now. Do not hang.

Take one thing this Rosh Hashana and hold it lehavdil the way people hold that phone in your hand — and say it: *Ribbono shel Olam, I have no life with-*

*out You. I am Yours. Write me in the sefer of the tzadikim.*

May we all be matzliach with this on Rosh Hashana, and may the Ribbono shel Olam write us all in the sefer of the tzadikim — a kesivah vachasimah tovah, and be zoiche to **Yerushalaim Yir Hakoidesh bekorov beyomenu!**