



# CLASSIC DAF KESHER

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## פרשת נצבים PARSHAT NITZAVIM

### DVAR TORAH

## THE THREE-PART NATIONAL TESHUVAH

The Or Hachaim Hakadosh, Harav Chaim ibn Atar, זצ"ל (1696-1743), points out what seems to be a triple repetition in our parshah. The 30th chapter of Devarim foretells Israel's national teshuvah in the end of days. After the blessings and curses play themselves out on the Jewish People over the ages, we finally repent. The Torah says, "You will return to Hashem your G-d and listen to His voice" (Devarim 30:2) – the long-awaited national repentance. Why, asks the Or Hachaim, does the Torah later say (verse 6), "Hashem will 'circumcise' the 'foreskin' of your heart (allow you to do teshuvah) and the heart of your children to love Hashem your G-d ..." and once again (verse 8), "And you will return and listen to the voice of Hashem your G-d and do all of His commandments ..."?

There are three separate verses about national teshuvah, says the Or Hachaim, because it has three components.

1. First Israel will return to Torah study. We will return to Hashem our G-d "and listen to His voice" – that is, we will learn His Torah. "Why was the land destroyed?" asks Hashem (Yirmiyahu 9:11), "Because they deserted My Torah" (Yirmiyahu 9:12). Because abandoning Torah study brought about the land's destruction, bringing back Torah study will bring us back to the land. The very next verse of our parshah begins, "Hashem will return your captivity, have mercy on you, and once again gather you in from all of the nations where Hashem your G-d dispersed you" (Devarim 30:3). This connection is supported by the Zohar (Part III page 72), that says that Israel will be redeemed in the merit of their involvement with Torah study.

2. 'Circumcision of the heart' (verse 6) refers to the second aspect of national teshuvah, repenting from sin, from the negative commandments. Negativity creates a barrier between us and G-d. We need Him to remove it so we can be freed up to return to our true connectedness with Hashem. We have within us a natural love of G-d that remains covered up if we still cling to prohibited activities. Teshuvah from sin enables us to then love Hashem with all of our heart. And there is a reward for freeing ourselves of negativity – being freed from our enemies; Hashem will place all the curses – all that negativity – on our hated enemies who pursue us.

3. The third aspect of national teshuvah is returning to the positive mitzvot. "You will return and listen to the voice of Hashem and do all of His commandments" (Devarim 30:9). This will result in the rewards that follow in the next verse: abundance, fruitfulness, bounty. The resources we will be blessed with for our mitzvot will give us the wherewithal to continue to keep all of His commandments. Our focus on doing the Will of G-d will result in receiving the raw materials we need to be able to do it more and more.

National teshuvah will restore the joyful relationship between Hashem and His People Israel: "Hashem will then rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your forefathers" (Devarim 30:9).

## SOURCE GUIDE:

## ETERNAL ROYALTY: THE SFORNO ON TEHILLIM 93

The Malchuyot section of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf contains ten verses relating to Hashem's royalty: three from the Chumash, three from the Ketuvim (Writings), three from the Neviim (Prophets), and a final one from the Chumash. The fifth of those verses is the opening of the 93rd Chapter of Tehillim. G-d as the King is the theme of that entire chapter.

The commentary of Harav Ovadiah Sforno, זצ"ל (1475-1550, Italy), makes every word and expression of that chapter come alive. In this source guide we'll follow the Sforno's commentary verse-by-verse, enriching our understanding of Malchuyot through understanding this perek of Tehillim. It also serves as the Shir Shel Yom (chapter of Tehillim said daily in the Beit Hamikdash by the Leviim) of the sixth day of the week, and is included both in Kabbalat Shabbat and the Shabbat morning Pesukei Dezimra. [The comments below are based on the Sforno's commentary.] We begin with his introduction to the chapter:

<p><b>1. The Sforno's Introduction to Tehillim 93</b> This psalm is a prayer to G-d about the future redemption.</p>	<p><b>ספורנו על תהילים צג - הקדמה</b> זה המזמור הוא תפילה לקל על הגאולה העתידה.</p>
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## Verse 1 – The Splitting of the Sea

Even though the psalm is about the future redemption, it begins in the past tense:

<p><b>2. Tehillim 93:1</b> Hashem ruled. He was clothed in loftiness. Hashem was clothed in the strength with which He girded Himself. You will even establish the world so it should not fall.</p>	<p><b>תהילים צג:א</b> ה' מלך גאות לבש, לבש ה' עז התאזר, אף תכון תבל כל תמוט.</p>
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Israel's first great experience of G-d as the King was at קריעת ים סוף, the splitting of the Sea. The crescendo of אז ישיר, the Song of the Sea, was when Moshe and the People of Israel cried out, "ה' ימלוך", "Hashem will rule for ever and ever" (Shemot 15:18 – the opening verse of Malchuyot). At that point, as He vanquished the powerful Egyptian army, He was clothed in loftiness. We sang, "אשירה לה' כי", "אשירה לה' כי" – "I sing out to Hashem for He is exceedingly lofty" (Shemot 15:1). In the future Hashem will once again 'wear' that strength that He girded Himself with at the Sea.

However, Hashem is not, G-d forbid, a destructive force. So the first verse of our psalm ends that as He destroys Israel's enemies, He continues to control and direct the world and all of existence.

## Verse 2 – When Did He Become King?

Though Israel saw Hashem as King at the Sea, and the world will witness His Kingship at the future redemption, His rule will not be a revolution, imposing a new rule upon the world. On the contrary:

<p><b>3. Tehillim 93:2</b> Your Throne is established from then; You are eternal.</p>	<p><b>תהילים צג:ב</b> נכון כסאך מאז, מעולם אתה.</p>
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Hashem was always King; His Throne was established from time eternal. He has not changed at all. But for most of world history His rule was hidden from the world. The world was seemingly in control of human powers and Israel's enemies seemed to control them.

### Verse 3 – The Noise of the Rivers

David Hamelech likens the enemies of Israel to noisy rivers:

<b>4. Tehillim 93:3</b> The rivers lifted up, oh G-d, the rivers lifted up their voice; the rivers will lift up their waves.	<b>תהילים צג:ג</b> נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת ה' נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם יִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת דְּכָיִם.
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Israel's enemies make a lot of noise as they wreak destruction upon G-d's People. Nevuchadnetzar and the Babylonians were like a noisy river as they destroyed the Beit Hamikdash: "קול נתנו בבית ה' כיום מועד" - "They made noise in the House of G-d like on a holiday" (Eichah 2:7). Titus and the Romans were like a noisy river as they destroyed the Beit Hamikdash: "שׂאגו צוֹרְרֶיךָ בְּקֶרֶב מוֹעֲדֶךָ" - "Your enemies roared in the midst of Your holiday" (Tehillim 74:4 refers to Titus destroying the Temple – see Gittin 56b).

### Verse 4 – Above the Noise of the Rivers

Even though Israel's enemies will raise their volume:

<b>5. Tehillim 93:4</b> From above the sound of many waters, mighty breakers of the sea, You are mighty above, Hashem.	<b>תהילים צג:ד</b> מְקַלְוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי יָם אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם ה'.
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Hashem is above their cacophony of destructiveness. In the era of the final redemption He will judge all of these enemies, these noisy rivers, as He did the Egyptian armies at the Sea. He will thus reveal his eternal Kingship, His Royalty, to the world.

### Verse 5 – This Will Certainly Happen

How do we know this will come about?

<b>6. Tehillim 93:5</b> Your testimony is very trustworthy; Your House is fitting for holiness. Hashem, for long days.	<b>תהילים צג:ה</b> עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מֵאֵד לְבֵיתֶךָ נֶאֱנָה קִדְשׁ ה' לְאָרְצֶךָ יָמִים.
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Hashem has already told us in His Torah that this will transpire (in last week's parshah): "It will be, when all of these things will befall you, the blessing and the curse that I placed before you ... and you will return to G-d and listen to His voice ... and He will gather you from all of the nations ... and Hashem will place all of these curses on your enemies ... who pursued you" (Devarim 30:1-7). His testimony is very trustworthy.

Hashem's palace, the Beit Hamikdash, was already sanctified by Avraham and Yitzchak and is His fitting eternal dwelling place. G-d was King, always remained King, and will continue to reign forever.

זה המצבור הוא תפלה לאל על הנאלה  
העתידה : ואמר  
צב (א) ד' מלך גאות לבש. הנה האל  
יתנרך לבש גאות על  
הים על פריעה שיהיה גדול במלכו ארץ  
כאמרו אל מי דמית בגדלך והתגאה  
האל יתנרך עליו כאמרו כי גאה גאה  
סוס ורוכבי רמה בים : עתה בגאולה  
לבש ה' עוז התאזר . לבש גאותו  
העז אשר התאזר אז על מצרים כאמרו  
לבשו עז ורוע ה' הלא את היא  
המחצבת רבנ מחוללת תנין בו : אף  
תכון הכל כל חמוט . ואף על פי  
שילבש עז למלך על כל הארץ וינערו  
רשעים ממנה לא יחריבו. בזה העולם  
כמו שעשה במבול אבל בהסך כי תכון  
תכל על אופן יותר גאות באופן שלא  
תמות עוד : (ב) נכון כסאך תאזר .  
וכאמרי ה' מלך . אין הענין שחכמה  
תלכות מחדש כי אמנם ככון כסאך

מאז לעולם היית מלך עולם . וכן  
כאמרי עז התאזר אין הענין שחכמה  
כלל כי : מעולם אתה . לא שנית אבל  
אמתי שידע תלכותך ועוד לכל כפעלך:  
כי אמנם (ג) נשאו נהרות ה' . האומות  
נשאו קול נחשו נחשו ראשו נשמתם  
כאמרו קול נחשו נחשו ה' כיום מימד:  
נשאו נהרות קולם . נחשו נחשו כאמרו  
שאנו נוריד בקרב מואדין : וכך ישאו  
נהרות דכיס . שברון שלהם מגורת  
נשבר ונרעה : ובהיות כי (ד) ארור  
נמרום ה' . ועל כל קול נהרות ואדירים  
ולו ימות לשפט נדק לכן גאות לבש  
נמצרים וילבש ויתאזר עז לעתיד לבא  
ובזה יגלה תלכותו ועז אשר מעולם  
המה ואין ספק שיהיה זה : כי אמנם  
(ה) ערוהך נאמנו מאד : כאמרו ויהי  
כי יבאו אליך כל הדברים האלה ונתן  
ה' אלהיך את כל האלות על אויביך  
וכמו כן ראוי להיות זה כי : לביתך  
גאות קדש . שקדש המקום בעקדת  
יתקן ונחה : לאורך ימים בלתי מוגבל  
לביטולו נחמי :

The Sforno's Commentary on Tehillim 93

## QUALITY OF LIFE BY RABBI YITZCHAK HIRSHFELD

"Three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah. The absolutely righteous are written and sealed immediately to life; the absolutely wicked are written and sealed immediately to death; those who fluctuate between those two poles hang in the balance until Yom Kippur" (Rosh Hashanah 16b). These words of Rav Kruspedai apparently contradict both experience and common sense. Some righteous don't live out the year, and some evil doers enjoy comfort and prosperity for years and years (see Tosafot "V'nechtamin" on Rosh Hashanah 16b).

What is "life"? We think we know what it is. It can be measured physically, even halachically – breathing, brain function, pulse.

From the words of Rav Kruspedai thunders forth a fundamental truth: "The righteous in 'death' are called 'living'; and the wicked in their 'life' are called 'dead'" (Berachot 18).

Animals live in one dimension – their "liveness" is truly a function of brain, breath, and pulse alone. And, unfortunately, many people live in that same one dimension. But when the Torah proclaims, "And you who cleave to Hashem, all of you are 'alive' today," (Devarim 4:4) the Torah has another dimension of life in mind.

To be alive in this new sense means for the soul to be connected to the Divine source of eternal life. One can be as alive and healthy as an Olympic superstar, and be dead, dead, dead. And one can be as physically weak as the Chazon Ish, זצ"ל, who could barely drag his exhausted body to bed after a day of intense learning, and be bursting with endless spiritual energy.

But how are the intensity and quality of this connection determined? Who decides? Can we just hook ourselves up, plug ourselves in?

This is Rosh Hashanah – the Day of Judgement, according to Rav Kruspedai. Hashem maintains control. He decides

how much life of connectedness we will enjoy. For the righteous – a full measure; the wicked are shut out - and then ... there's the rest of us (hopefully).

How does He decide? What are His criteria?

Our Rabbis have taught (Siftei Chaim et al.): The decision rests on our commitment and desire to further His goals for creation. If the first, lower type of life fades away into the background of our consciousness as we crave a life of connection, of dveikut, then Hashem responds in kind. We then merit the gift of eternal life, as the boundaries between This World and the World to Come too fade away – even to the background of our consciousness.

Remember us to Life, King Who desires life,  
And inscribe us in the book of life,  
For Your sake, King of Life.

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