

ROSH HASHANA EDITION

THANK YOU HASHEM!



# THE NEKUDA TOVA

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לזכות עלקא דבורה בת מרים רבקה חנה

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# A Year of Vitality



R' Chaim Davies

There are times when we are alive without *feeling* particularly alive. We wake, move through the routines of the day, daven, work, learn, make Shabbos. Everything is functioning. And yet, somewhere within, something has gone quiet. The Gemara that once drew us inward feels, somehow, flat. Words of *tefillah* leave the mouth without quite reaching our heart. The actions remain, but the electricity has been dimmed.

This is one of the deepest things we can impact on Rosh Hashanah.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16b) famously describes three books opened on Rosh Hashanah. The completely righteous are immediately inscribed and sealed for life; the completely wicked, for death. Those in the middle, their judgment remains pending for Yom Kippur.

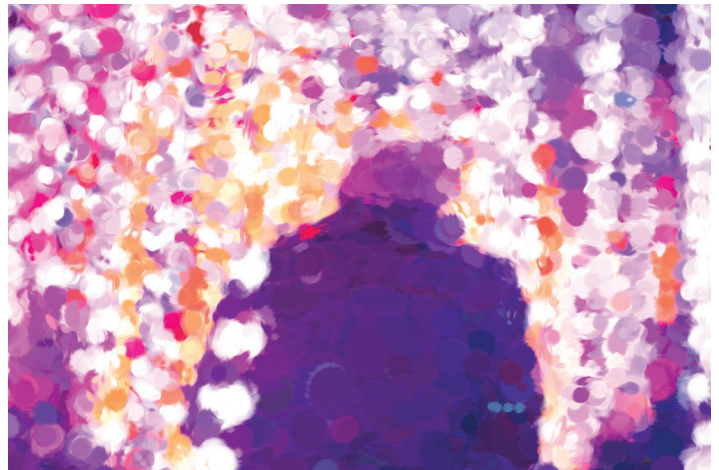
Taken simply, this idea is difficult to accept. As the Raavad (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:2) points out: Righteous people die, while wicked people sometimes live long lives.

The Rishonim offer several approaches. The Rashba (Rosh Hashanah 16b) says it refers to quality of life; the Akeidas Yitzchak (Shaar 67:6) understands it as reference to the presence or withdrawal of *hashgacha pratis* in one's life. Yet Tosafos offers the most surprising approach of all: the “life” and “death” of which the Gemara speaks refer to *Olam Haba*.

On the surface, this approach is shocking. Why should there be a new judgment every year over a distant world we may not enter for decades?

Yet the words of the holy Piaseczner Rebbe, Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, illuminate a new path of understanding the depth of Tosafos.

The Gemara in Berachos (17a) records how, when the Sages would part from one another, they would bless each other: “עולמך תראה בחיך” — *May you see your world in your lifetime*. What were they referring to? The



Piaseczner explains (Hachsharas HaAvreichim Ch. 3) that the moments of spiritual sweetness a person experiences in this world — the warmth of one's davening, the longing awakened by a *niggun*, the pleasure of a *sugya* — are not merely pleasant feelings. They are flashes of light from one's own Gan Eden. To *see your world in your lifetime* is to taste the light of Olam Haba, right here in this world:

“ההתרגשות והענג שאתה מתרגש ומתענג בעבודתך בעולם הזה הארת עולמך של עולם העדן היא.”

“The feeling and pleasure you experience in your avodas Hashem in this world are an illumination of your own world of Gan Eden.”

Perhaps this is the depth of Tosafos. Olam Haba is not entirely waiting on the other side of life. Its light can reach us exactly where we are right now. To be written *lechayim* is not only to receive another year of heartbeat and breath. It is to receive access to life: to *mesikus* in Torah, to yearning in *tefillah*, to delight in Shabbos, to the capacity to be moved by *kedusha*.

These forty-eight hours hold the power to revitalize our entire year. As we stand before Hashem on Rosh Hashanah and ask again and again for life — *Zochreinu l'chayim. Kasveinu b'sefer hachayim* — let us beg the Ribbono Shel Olam not merely for another year, but one of true vitality: a year in which our Torah and *avodah* are alive with His presence. 👑

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