



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 19 | Nitzavim | Sichah 3

Choose What Is Already Yours

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## 1.

“YOU SHALL CHOOSE LIFE”

The verse at the end of our *parshah* says:<sup>1</sup> “I have placed life and death before you... and you shall choose life so that you will live, you and your offspring.” Rashi quotes the words, “and you shall choose life,” and makes three comments: (a) He explains the meaning of the words, “*and you shall choose life* — I instruct<sup>2</sup> you to choose the portion of life”; (b) Rashi offers an analogy — “like a person who says to his son, ‘Choose for yourself a nice portion in my estate,’ and he directs his son to the nicest portion, and tells his son, ‘This is what you should select for yourself’”; (c) Rashi brings a proof from a verse — “Of this it says,<sup>3</sup> ‘Hashem is my allotted portion and my cup; You guide my lot.’ You placed my hand upon the good lot, as if to say, ‘Take this for yourself.’”

We need to clarify: What is problematic about the clause, “you shall choose life” that compels Rashi to clarify its meaning at all, and at such great length, with so many details? Ostensibly, the meaning of the words, “you shall choose life” is quite simple (as the other commentators<sup>4</sup> who based their commentaries on *pshat*<sup>5</sup> understand it): Hashem (gives good advice, and) tells the Jewish people to choose the portion of life by {adhering to the verse}, “to love Hashem, your L-rd, to listen to His voice....”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Devarim* 30:19.

<sup>2</sup> {In the original Hebrew, “*moreh*.” Thus, “instruct” is meant in the sense of “to teach” — *not* in the sense of “to command.”}

<sup>3</sup> *Tehillim* 16:5.

<sup>4</sup> See Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and others.

<sup>5</sup> {The plain meaning of Scripture.}

<sup>6</sup> *Devarim* 30:20.

## 2.

### HASHEM SHOWS US THE LIFE

Apparently, Rashi's intent was to clarify immediately that “you shall choose life” is not an **order** (a commandment, or good advice) to choose **life**.

— It makes no sense to order us that “you shall choose life” — whichever way we look at it. If a person does not know that this path is life, then we would **only** need to **show** him, and he will **automatically** choose it; an order is unnecessary. But if, on the other hand, a person is not convinced that this is the path of life, what good will it do to tell (or advise) him that “you shall choose life,” if it makes no sense to him?

Therefore, “you shall choose life” means, “I **instruct** you.” By immediately saying, “to love Hashem, your L-rd...,” Hashem shows the Jewish people that “you should choose the portion of life” because this is life. Since our fleshly eyes do not always perceive how life depends on a person being good (and death, on a person being bad),<sup>7</sup> we need to be **shown** the true and correct life. [As the verse continues, “(so that you will live, you and your offspring.) To love Hashem, your L-rd... for **He** is your life and the length of your days.”]

To this end, Rashi cites: (a) an analogy — “like a person who says to his son....” It does not suffice for the father to say, “Choose for yourself a nice portion in my estate,” but “he **directs** his son to the nicest portion”; and (b) a proof-text that Hashem “directs” the Jewish people “to the nicest portion” — “Of this it says, ‘...You placed my hand upon the good lot, as if to say, *Take this for yourself.*’”

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<sup>7</sup> See *Devarim* 30:15-18 and Rashi, loc. cit.

### 3.

#### THREE QUESTIONS ON THE LENGTHY INTERPRETATION

The lengthiness of Rashi's explanation, however, is still not altogether smooth:

1) Why does Rashi, at all, need to cite the **analogy**, “like a person who says to his son...”? Rashi could have expressed this idea immediately in the analogue (Hashem directs the Jewish people to the nicest portion). **Moreover**, in the analogue, this concept is seemingly easier to understand than in the analogy:

Regarding the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos (the analogue), we can appreciate why it is necessary for Hashem to show the Jewish people that **this** is life and this is the “nice portion.” When a person looks at the world, often it seems that “the way of the wicked prospers,”<sup>8</sup> and “the righteous people... suffer in this world.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Hashem needs to inform us that the wicked “in the end, will be rebuffed,” and the righteous people, “in the end, will rejoice.”

However, when choosing a nice portion of a **material** estate, it is much easier to see which portion is good and which is not, and it is not (so) necessary to “**direct** him to the nicest portion.”

2) After remarking, “and he directs his son to the nicest portion,” Rashi says, “and {the father} says to his son: ‘This is what you should select for yourself.’” This implies that even after “a person [...] says to his son, ‘Choose for yourself a nice portion in my estate,’” i.e., he directs his son to the nicest portion, the father still needs to perform **another** action: The father must say, “This is what you should select for yourself.” This is difficult: (a) Why is this step necessary? (b) Where do we find **this** statement alluded to in the verse (in the analogue)?

3) Rashi concludes, “Of this it says... You placed my hand upon the good lot...” (a) Rashi chooses the wording, “Of this it says” (implying an explanation

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<sup>8</sup> *Yirmiyahu* 12:1.

<sup>9</sup> *Sifri*, “*Re'eh*”; see **Rashi** on *Bereishis* 27:29.

of a verse in ***Tehillim***), and not, “as it says,” or the like (which would indicate that Rashi is citing a proof for his interpretation of the verse here). (b) Rashi explains that the step, “and he directs his son to the nicest portion,” is done in the manner depicted by the verse, “You placed my hand upon the good lot....”

{The questions that arise on Rashi’s concluding remarks, as laid out above:}

a) Rashi’s commentary explains the *pshat* **in its place**; why does Rashi quote, “Of this it says (in *Tehillim*)...”?

b) What is the point made by the words, “You placed my hand”?

#### 4.

HE STILL NEEDS TO SAY “CHOOSE THIS”

The explanation:

In his remarks, Rashi seeks to answer the following question: The message of this verse, “I have placed life and death before you... and you shall choose life so that you will live, you and your offspring” [and similarly, the verse that follows, “To love {Hashem, your L-rd}, to listen to His voice..., for **He** is your life...”] already appears **in detail** in previous passages:<sup>10</sup> “See, I have placed before you today life and good and death and bad.” Meaning:<sup>11</sup> “The two things are interdependent. If you do good, see now, you have life; and if you do bad, see now, you have death.” As the verse continues:<sup>12</sup> “That which I command you today to love... and you will live and multiply... and if your heart will turn... I tell you today....”

Why does Scripture repeat this idea here?

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<sup>10</sup> *Devarim* 30:15.

<sup>11</sup> Rashi on *Devarim* 30:15.

<sup>12</sup> *Devarim* 30:16-18; Rashi, loc. cit.

Rashi, therefore, explains that the novelty in our verse is emphasized by the words, “you shall choose life” (which do **not** appear previously).

What is the novelty? Rashi cites an analogy to explain: “Like a person who says to his son {‘Choose for yourself a nice portion in my estate’}, and he directs his son to the nicest portion, and tells his son, “This is what you should select for yourself.” This analogy allows us to understand that there may be a situation in which, even after “he directs his son to the nicest portion,” a father still needs to say, “This is what you should select for yourself” (as will be explained).

The same holds true in our case: The message, “I instruct you to choose the portion of life” of our verse corresponds to {what the father advises his son:} “and tells his son.” And this advice comes **after** “he **directs** his son to the nicest portion.” Meaning, after the Torah had already clarified in the **previous** verses, “If you will do good, see now, you have life,” the Torah now needs to say, “you shall choose life.”

## 5.

IT IS HARD TO SEE

From the fact that even after the father tells his son (in the analogy) to choose a “nice portion” (of his estate), the father still needs to “direct” his son “to the nicest portion,” it is understood that we are referring to an estate in which it is difficult to ascertain (by a quick glance) which is the nicest portion. Therefore, the benefactor must point out the “nicest” portion.

[On this basis, we can also explain the nuance in the analogy, “like a person who says to his **son...**” (as opposed to “his friend”).

The recipient of the gift is certain that his benefactor has shown him the nicest portion because (the recipient knows) two things: (a) that the benefactor knows which portion is the nicest; and (b) that the benefactor seeks wholeheartedly what is in the recipient’s best interest. For this reason, the

benefactor is ready to give the recipient the **nicest** portion of the estate. The **certainty** of these two points is emphasized in the analogy: (a) The estate is “**my** estate” – it belongs to the benefactor, so he is fully knowledgeable about it; and (b) he gives this portion to **his son**. A father (more than any other person) willingly gives the nicest portion of his estate to his son.

The same holds true in the analogue regarding Hashem and the Jewish people: In order for a Jew to realize that “life” and “goodness” are interdependent – although to the human eye, this does not always appear to be the case – the Torah tells him to consider two ideas: (a) The world is “My portion” – it is Hashem’s. He created the world and He manages it. Therefore, He knows the correct way of life; and, (b) the Jewish people are “children... of Hashem your L-rd,”<sup>13</sup> so they can be sure that Hashem seeks only what is in their best interest.]

In the end, the recipient cannot ascertain which portion is the “nicest,” and he relies on the benefactor’s word. Therefore, the benefactor is not satisfied merely to direct the recipient to the nicest portion; he further urges him and tells him again to choose the nicest portion. This is the reason he adds, “select for yourself.”

The same applies in our case: Even after Hashem informs a Jew that goodness and life are interdependent, and He directs the Jew to the “nicest portion” – He must again spur a Jew from On-High – “you shall choose life so that you will live, you and your offspring.” This is so that the Jewish people will rely completely on Hashem and choose the portion of life.

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<sup>13</sup> *Devarim* 14:1.

## 6.

### YOU PLACED MY HAND

But the following is still not understood: Seemingly, the analogy and the analogue are not analogous:

In the analogy, we can appreciate why the father's extra encouragement — “This is what you should select for yourself” — convinces the son. This is because the son knows nothing about the quality of his father's estate that would enable him to determine the choicest portion. Therefore, the son satisfies himself {with what his father tells him}, and acquiesces to the assurances and encouragement of his father, who gives him the portion.

(Additionally, the analogy involves a **physical** father urging his son to choose a part of a **physical** estate. Therefore, although the son cannot verify with his own eyes that this suggested portion is the nicest, he can sense, nonetheless, that his father is speaking honestly.)

This differs from the analogue. First, we do not (always) see how Hashem directs us to the nicest portion **physically** (“If you will do good, see now, you have life,” because this could, sometimes, even mean life in the **World to Come**).<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, to the human eye, the reality seems (at times) to be **opposite**. Namely, “the way of the wicked prospers,” and “the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey.”<sup>15</sup> With his bodily senses, a person can experience the pleasure of materialism, and he merely **believes** or (at best) understands intellectually that “her end is as bitter as wormwood.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, how can Hashem's urging (imparted by Moshe) — “you shall choose life” — persuade a person to **set** aside matters of **physical** life, and instead, choose the goodness and the life of Torah and mitzvos?

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<sup>14</sup> See *Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel* on *Devarim* 30:19.

<sup>15</sup> *Mishlei* 5:3.

<sup>16</sup> *Mishlei* 5:4.



To address this conundrum, Rashi continues, “Of this it says, ‘Hashem is my allotted portion and my cup; You guide my lot.’ You placed my hand upon the good lot, as if to say, ‘Take this for yourself.’”

“You shall choose life” is not merely a statement. Rather, by Hashem saying so, He (also) implements what the verse says: “You **guide** my lot.’ **You placed my hand** upon the good lot...” Hashem shows the Jewish people (“I instruct you”) **physically**, the “good lot” so that a person sees with his physical eyes (at least, on occasion) how he receives “life” **literally** by doing good.<sup>17</sup> This way, it becomes possible to have **one’s hand placed** on the “good lot” (so it can be felt with one’s hands). This confirms for the Jewish people that doing good is its “good lot” and the “portion of life.”

## 7.

### SELECT AND TAKE

On this basis, we can also appreciate the **change** in Rashi’s wording. In the analogy, Rashi says, “and tells his son, ‘This is what you should **select** for yourself,’” but in the analogue (when explaining the verse, “Hashem is my allotted portion and my cup,”) Rashi says, “as if to say, **Take** this for yourself.”

The father can only encourage his son (after directing his son to the nicest portion) by speaking to him. Thus, the **choice itself** is attributed **entirely** to the son. Therefore, Rashi says that the father tells his son, “This is what you should **select** for yourself.” The **son** (of his own accord) should **choose** the nicest portion, which the father shows him.

In contrast, Hashem says, “you shall choose life.” The mechanism that brings this about is that “**You placed my hand** upon the good lot.” The “good lot” is already designated and connected with the Jewish people. The person only needs to **take** the (already designated) “good lot” — “**Take** this for yourself.”

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<sup>17</sup> Alternatively, he senses that true life is (not fleshly and physical life, rather) a life of Torah and mitzvos.

[For this reason, Rashi uses the wording, “You placed my hand..., as if to say, “Take this for yourself” (as opposed to the wording used in the analogy, “and **tells** his son”). Because the most important element here is that “You placed my hand...” And the advice to take the portion (“as if to say”) is just the intent of this — a result of “You placed my hand.”]

## 8.

### HASHEM OPERATES DIFFERENTLY

This nuanced difference in Rashi’s wording also alludes to a **halachic** matter. By way of introduction, another nuance: In the analogue, the good lot is called (by the verse)<sup>18</sup> “**my lot**, גורלי”; “the good lot, גורל הטוב.” The intention here is to allude to how the Jewish people choose the portion of life; it is similar to making a division of property by lottery.

With this in mind, we can also explain the above-mentioned difference in wording between the analogy and the analogue (“select for yourself” and “take for yourself”). This difference alludes to the difference between the impact of “a person who says to his son” and a lottery done in the manner of, “You (**Hashem**) placed my hand on the good lot...”

When partners divide their assets by a lottery, many *Rishonim*<sup>19</sup> maintain that the lottery only serves to **select** the portion belonging to each person. But in order for the {selected} portions to actually become theirs, they must **subsequently** perform an act of acquisition.

This is in contrast to the division of the land of Israel which was also done by lottery, “through a receptacle {in which lots were placed} and the *urim vetumim*”<sup>20</sup> (by means of **Divine inspiration**).<sup>21</sup> However, all opinions<sup>22</sup> concur

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<sup>18</sup> {*Tehillim* 16:5.}

<sup>19</sup> {Sages from 1000 to 1500 CE.} See *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, s.v., “goral” (vol. 5, p. 418-419).

<sup>20</sup> *Bava Basra* 106b. {Within the fold of the *Kohen Gadol*’s breastplate were the *urim vetumim* (lit., “lights and perfections”) through which Divine guidance was communicated to the Jewish people.}

<sup>21</sup> *Rashbam*, *Bava Basra* 106b.

<sup>22</sup> See *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, s.v., “goral” (vol. 5, p. 419).

that this lottery actually triggered every Jew's **acquisition** of his designated portion.

The same holds true in our context: In the case of “a **person** who says to his son...,” the statement merely **clarifies** for the son which portion is the nicest, “and tells his son, “This is what you should **select** for yourself.” Not so in the analogue. When Hashem says, “You shall choose life” (Hashem not only **clarifies** which part is the portion of life, but) He causes the “good lot” to become acquired by the Jewish people. (However, the Jew must still actually take it.) “**You placed my hand** upon the good lot, as if to say, “**Take** this for yourself.””

## 9.

### TWO PATHS OR ONE PATH

From the “wine of Torah”<sup>23</sup> in Rashi's commentary:

These two ideas — “the nicest **portion... select** for yourself...,” and, “the good **lot... take** this for yourself” — represent two ways a Jewish person can bring himself to choose life.

The first method: A person makes a calculated choice. In this case, goodness and life are called “the nicest **portion**” [as known,<sup>24</sup> portion, חלק, refers to *avodah*<sup>25</sup> based on logic and reason]. **This** choice is done in a manner alluded to by the phrase, “**select** for yourself.” Meaning, a person sees two paths and portions; each has an advantage over the other (were this not the case, **selecting/choice** would be applicable), and he chooses one portion over the other.

The second method: A person chooses goodness and life (not based on reason but) from a place beyond reason. In this case, life is called “the good **lot**.”

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<sup>23</sup> {The deeper dimension of Torah.}

<sup>24</sup> See *Sefer Hamamarim Kuntreisim*, vol. 2, s.v., “*ashreinu*,” explaining the passage, “Fortunate are we, how good is **our portion**.”

<sup>25</sup> {Divine service.}

[As known<sup>26</sup> — and obvious — a lottery is not a logical process; rather, it is something beyond reason.] **This** choice entails only that a person takes the item, as it says, “take for yourself.” Meaning, the other option and path, from the outset, is not a consideration. The *avodah* consists of merely **taking** the “good lot.”

## 10.

### ABUNDANT *KELIPAH* OR MINIMIZED HOLINESS

We will understand this idea based on the teachings of Chassidus,<sup>27</sup> which explains why “the way of the wicked prospers.” The source of vitality to *kelipah*<sup>28</sup> is the transcendent<sup>29</sup> {loftier, G-dly light}. For this reason, it flows in **abundance**, without calculations. In contrast, the flow of vitality to holiness comes from the immanent, G-dly light, *or* in a *keili*<sup>30</sup> specifically; consequently, its flow is calculated.

This explains the great virtue of a Jew choosing Hashem, holiness. He forgoes the abundant flow of energy that descends to *kelipah* and chooses the **constrained** flow of energy of holiness.

Why, in fact, do the Jewish people choose this? There are two general explanations:

a) The abundant flow of vitality to the wicked is only temporary; after a time, it ceases.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the heavenly flow of vitality to the righteous

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<sup>26</sup> *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaKodesh*,” end of epistle 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Torah Or*, “*Beshalach*.”

<sup>28</sup> {*Kelipah* — *Kelipah* translates literally as “a shell” or “a peel.” The term refers to anything that conceals, and thus opposes G-dliness, just as a shell or a peel conceals the fruit within. *Kelipah* is often used to refer to evil or impurity. (See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 7; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 67 and fns.; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 22, fn. 20; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 14, pp. 160-1, sec. 6.)}

<sup>29</sup> {In the original, “*makif*.”}

<sup>30</sup> {*Oros* and *keilim*, lit., “lights and vessels.” In Kabbalah, the *sefiros* (Divine emanations) consist of “lights,” channeled through “vessels” that define and modulate their effect upon Creation.}

<sup>31</sup> *Kuntres Umaayan*, *maamar* 6, sec. 3; *maamar* 7, sec. 4; *maamar* 11, sec. 2.

will eventually become abundant.<sup>32</sup> As in the saying:<sup>33</sup> “If to those who transgress Hashem’s will {are rewarded} such, how much more so those who perform His will {are rewarded}.”

This is a logical choice. (A person makes a calculation and realizes that choosing the side of holiness is **worthwhile**.) This is alluded to in the first part of Rashi’s remarks: “the nicest **portion... select** for yourself.”

b) Since the condensed flow of energy emanates from the side of holiness, it represents the Supreme inward will — unlike the heavenly outflow to *kelipah* given “in the manner of one who {unwillingly} throws something over his shoulder.”<sup>34</sup> For this reason, a person chooses holiness. Meaning, the heavenly outflow to holiness is given in the manner depicted by the verse,<sup>35</sup> “In the light of the king’s countenance, there is life.” Although much smaller, the flow is more precious than the abundance that goes to *kelipah*.

This is not a calculated choice; there is neither rhyme nor reason. A Jewish person, **in his core**, desires G-dliness as a result of the soul’s aspect of “lot, גורל.” Therefore, “choose for yourself” does not apply here (because at this level of the soul, everything, aside from G-dliness, is valueless). Rather, “the good lot... **Take** this for yourself.” He should internalize the aspect of גורל until it imbues his thoughts, speech, and actions.

## 11.

### ROOTS AND EXPRESSIONS

Nonetheless, the verse says, “I have placed life and death before you... and you shall choose life.” This means that Hashem presents the choice to the Jewish people, telling them to “**choose** for yourself” (between life and death). This is also apparent from Rashi’s nuanced wording — “**of this it says**.” Meaning, when Rashi says, “You placed my hand upon the good lot, as if to say, ‘Take this

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<sup>32</sup> *Kuntres Umaayan, maamar 10, sec. 3.*

<sup>33</sup> *Nedarim 50b.*

<sup>34</sup> *Tanya, “Likkutei Amarim,” ch. 22.*

<sup>35</sup> {*Mishlei 16:15.*}

for yourself,” this is not an **explanation** of the verse, “you shall choose life.” Rather, “you shall choose life” **also** includes this idea, which is **explicitly** written elsewhere.

The explanation: Regarding the scenario, “I have placed life and death before you... and you shall choose life” — a Jew chooses the portion of life thanks to his free choice — there are two points:

The **root cause**: The reason a Jewish person chooses G-dliness is because the essence of his soul is, so to speak, one entity with Hashem’s Essence.<sup>36</sup> On this level, **free** choice means — although the essence of a Jewish person’s soul cannot choose anything other than G-dliness, Heaven forbid — that the choice and connection between the Jewish person and G-dliness is not compelled (by any reason or advantage).

— Were this the case, then (a) the bond with G-dliness would be limited (according to the reason and advantage); and, (b) it would not be a genuine **free** choice, since the reason and advantage behind the decision compel the choice. —

The reason is simply because this is the desire and choice of the essence of the soul **on its own**. Since this choice is not due to any reason or advantage, choosing anything other than G-dliness is **absolutely** impossible.

b) The **manifestation** of a person’s choice of G-dliness happens in the person’s intellect.<sup>37</sup> When is it visible that the Jewish person’s true desire for G-dliness is his free choice? When he, practically, faces two paths — “life” and “death” — and he chooses life. This process can only occur in the person’s intellect, because mortal intellect can find advantages in both paths, and still, the person chooses **life**.

For this reason, the verse says, “I have placed life and death before you... and you shall choose life.” This is because in actual *avodah*, the (rational) choice is carried out in the manner of “**select** for yourself.”

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<sup>36</sup> Maamar “Kevod Malchuscha,” 5660.

<sup>37</sup> Maamar “Kvod Malchuscha,” 5660.

However, Rashi — {whose commentary includes} “the wine of Torah” — reveals the **deeper** meaning of the directive to “choose life.” “Of this it says... You placed my hand upon the good lot, as if to say, ‘Take this for yourself’”: The deeper and true dimension of an intellectual choice for G-dliness (the actualized choice) is **itself** (also) the choice for G-dliness made from the aspect of גורל in the soul (the soul’s **essence**). This choice absolutely precludes “death” and “evil.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently, the only thing needed is for a person to “take” it (as elucidated above).

## 12.

### PARSHAS NITZAVIM

Based on all the above, we can also appreciate the connection between the above discussion and *parshas Nitzavim*. *Parshas Nitzavim* is always read before Rosh Hashanah. According to the principle that “everything follows the conclusion,”<sup>39</sup> the connection between *parshas Nitzavim* and Rosh Hashanah can be found not only at the beginning of the *parshah* (“You stand here today, etc.”)<sup>40</sup> but also at its end:

On Rosh Hashanah, we arouse Hashem to choose the Jewish nation. As we recite and request (before the shofar blowing), “**He will choose** our heritage for us, the pride of Yaakov whom He loves, forever.”<sup>41</sup> This choice also contains two elements (similar to the discussion in Section 11):

The **root** of the choice: Hashem’s Essence chooses the Jewish people’s souls for no reason; rather, it is out of His free choice. Concerning a choice made on this level, it says,<sup>42</sup> “I cannot exchange them for another nation”; “Israel and the King, alone,”<sup>43</sup> and there is no room, G-d forbid, for others.

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<sup>38</sup> {See *Devarim* 30:15.}

<sup>39</sup> *Berachos* 12a.

<sup>40</sup> {“Today” alludes to “the day,” i.e., the great day of judgment, Rosh Hashanah.} See *Likkutei Torah*, beg. of *parshas Nitzavim*.

<sup>41</sup> *Tehillim* 47:5.

<sup>42</sup> *Pesichta* to *Midrash Rus Rabbah*, sec. 3; see *Pesachim* 87a (end) ff.; et al.

<sup>43</sup> *Zohar*, vol. 3, p. 32a.

The **revelation** of this choice, in this lower realm, is in a manner expressed in the verse, “You will be a treasure to Me **from among all the nations...**”<sup>44</sup> Meaning, there are, in fact, “others along with you”;<sup>45</sup> nevertheless, in My eyes and in My presence, they are “**as nothing.**”<sup>46</sup> Consequently, “**My love of you is evident.**”<sup>46</sup>

On Rosh Hashanah, everything returns to its original state.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, we need to elicit His choice of us from its source and root — Hashem’s Essence. This is accomplished through the *avodah* of the Jewish people, who bring themselves to **choose** life — not only because it is reasonable but also because the גורל of the soul, the **essence** of the soul, desires this.

When the Jewish people reveal within themselves how “they chose Hashem to be their L-rd,”<sup>47</sup> this arouses and reveals the fact that “Hashem chose them to be his treasured nation.”<sup>48</sup> May this manifest physically in our world, in goodness that is clear and evident.

— Based on talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Nitzavim* 5725 (1965) and the second day of Rosh Hashanah 5726 (1965)

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<sup>44</sup> *Shemos* 19:5.

<sup>45</sup> Rashi on *Shemos* 19:5.

<sup>46</sup> *Pri Eitz Chaim*, “*Shaar Rosh Hashanah*,” ch. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah*, sec. 14, par. 10.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*