Jewish Tribune – Netzavim Vayeilech

**The Key is in the Community**

*“You have two hours to do this exam. Anyone still writing after I ask you to put your pens down will be disqualified. You may begin.”*

*There was total silence in the exam hall until the invigilator told the students to put their pens down two hours later. All did apart from one young man at the back of the hall. He continued writing for some time after the exam had finished and when he finally finished there was just him and the invigilator in the room. The student nonchalantly made his way to the front.*

*Without even looking up, the invigilator said: “You heard me. Anyone writing after the exam finished is disqualified.”*

*The student looked the invigilator in the eye and said: “Do you know who I am? Do you know my name?”*

*“No” said the invigilator.*

*“Good” replied the student and thrust his exam paper in the middle of the pile of papers on the desk and ran out.*

Sometimes we can get away with things as a tzibbur that we wouldn’t be able to do as individuals.

Whilst this anecdote probably never happened, it at least brings the point out well. As we approach Rosh Hashana, the leining on the last Shabbos of the year gives us good advice as to how to enter the days ahead of us.

The Nesivos Sholom explains that the word “*hayom* - *the* day” in the opening possuk of our sedra refers to the day of Rosh Hashana and gives us an important insight in how to prepare for this momentous day.

The key is “kulchem – all of you”. As the Midrasha Tanchuma on this possuk explains, we merit Divine assistance on Rosh Hashana when we are “כולכם באגודה אחת”. To the extent we attach ourselves to the tzibbur, we merit this Divine assistance.

The Nesivos Sholom cites the Zohar which explains that the incident with Elisha and the Shunamite woman also took place on Rosh Hashana. When Elisha asks her how he can be of help and should he speak to the king on her behalf, he was actually referring to the King of Kings.

Her answer is illuminating: בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי אָנֹכִי יֹשָׁבֶת - I dwell among my people. She also knew that the key is in the community.

To this extent we attach ourselves to the tzibbur, we merit Divine assistance. What can I do to help my community? What can I do to help my neighbour, my school or my shul?

Many years ago, inspired by the above idea, I ran a chavrusa agency. It was a simple and free service for anyone looking for a chavrusa. People would call me and let me know what they were looking for and I tried to help them find a chavrusa.

BH many chavrusas were made and some are still learning today, several years later. My wife has persuaded me to re-launch this service. Anyone who is looking for a chavrusa is welcome to visit the new website chavrusaagency.com or contact me on j.golker@gmail.com.

This week’s parsha tells us that Torah is accessible. : “ki hamitzvah hazos lo nifleis hee mimcha, v’lo rechoka hee – for this mitzvah is not hidden from you and it is not distant”. Well it just got even nearer…

**Rabbi Golker is the Menahel of Hasmonean High School. To listen to his shiurim, go to TorahAnytime.com or JewishPodcasts.Org**