

Dear Chavraya,

Here we are, standing at the gate of a new year, the last Shabbat before Rosh Hashannah. The Torah portion this week is a double portion, *Parashat Nitzavim/Vayelech*. It begins, *Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem - - you are standing today, all of you, before God.... Today is understood to be Rosh Hashannah*. The Slonimer Rebbe imagines that we are standing all together within a gate. He offers a beautiful image for this moment in time, this Shabbat before the new year:

There is a gateway into each month and into each Shabbat. The nature of our rising in the morning is a gateway into the day. The essence of a person is seen in their way of going forth through gates.... A gate is a place in which to consider where one is going and toward what purpose. This is our task on Rosh Hashannah, to give an accounting. It is not an accounting of the past, but rather of the future. How shall I enter into this gate?

It is a very personal question for each of us, but we can also help each other. The letters of the first word of the Torah portion, *atem*, meaning *you*, can be rearranged to spell *emet, truth*. Though each with our own hopes and goals and challenges, as a community we can find the way together.

May you come through the gate of a sweet Shabbos and into a sweet year.

Shabbt shalom,
Rabbi Victor