

Parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech in a Nutshell

(Deuteronomy 29:9–31:30)

The Parshah of Nitzavim includes some of the most fundamental principles of the Jewish faith:

The unity of Israel: "You stand today, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d: your heads, your tribes, your elders, your officers, and every Israelite man; your young ones, your wives, the stranger in your gate; from your wood-hewer to your water-drawer."

The future redemption: Moses warns of the exile and desolation of the Land that will result if Israel abandons G-d's laws, but then he prophesies that in the end, "You will return to the L-rd your G-d . . . If your outcasts shall be at the ends of the heavens, from there will the L-rd your G-d gather you . . . and bring you into the Land which your fathers have possessed."

The practicality of Torah: "For the mitzvah which I command you this day, it is not beyond you, nor is it remote from you. It is not in heaven . . . It is not across the sea . . . Rather, it is very close to you, in your mouth, in your heart, that you may do it."

Freedom of choice: "I have set before you life and goodness, and death and evil: in that I command you this day to love G-d, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments . . . Life and death I have set before you, blessing and curse. And you shall choose life."

The Parshah of Vayelech ("and he went") recounts the events of Moses' last day of earthly life. "I am one hundred and twenty years old today," he says to the people, "and I can no longer go forth and come in." He transfers the leadership to Joshua, and writes (or concludes writing) the Torah in a scroll which he entrusts to

(continued next column)

the Levites for safekeeping in the Ark of the Covenant.

The mitzvah of Hakhel ("gather") is given: every seven years, during the festival of Sukkot of the first year of the shemittah cycle, the entire people of Israel—men, women and children—should gather at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where the king should read to them from the Torah.

Vayelech concludes with the prediction that the people of Israel will turn away from their covenant with G-d, causing Him to hide His face from them, but also with the promise that the words of the Torah "shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their descendants." ❖

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Israeli Division:

Rabbi Yudi and Chana Eisenbach

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Sep 8 / Elul 22

Candle Lighting 7:00 pm

Mincha 7:05 pm

Shabbos Day – Sep 9 / Elul 23

Tehillim Reading 8:30 am

Shacharis 10:00 am*

Torah Reading 11:00 am

Kiddush 12:10 pm

Bais Midrash 5:35 pm

Mincha 6:35 pm

Farbrengen 6:55 pm

Shabbos Ends 7:57 pm

*The latest time for saying the morning Shema is now **9:40 AM**. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

*This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
The Berman Law Office .*



תהלים

Tehillim - Psalms

Join us this Shabbos morning
Sep 9 at 8:30 AM for
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.
The Tehillim reading
is dedicated for
a refuah sh'laima for
Moshe Yosef
ben Esther.

Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Sep 9, 2023
Eastern Daylight Time

Earliest Tallis 5:33 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:40 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) .. 1:26 PM
Plag Hamincha 6:00 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 7:44 PM

Chassidic Masters

The Longer Shorter Way

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

Said Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah: "Once a child got the better of me."

"I was traveling, and I met with a child at a crossroads. I asked him, 'which way to the city?' and he answered: 'This way is short and long, and this way is long and short.'

"I took the 'short and long' way. I soon reached the city but found my approach obstructed by gardens and orchards. So I retraced my steps and said to the child: 'My son, did you not tell me that this is the short way?' Answered the child: 'Did I not tell you that it is also long?'"

(Talmud, Eruvin 53b)

Also in life there is a "short but long" way and a "long but short" way.

In his Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi sets down the fundamentals of the Chabad-Chassidic approach to life. On the cover page of this "Bible of Chassidism" he defines his work as follows:

"[This book is] based on the verse, 'For [the Torah and its precepts] is something that is very close to you, in your mouth, in your heart, that you may do it'-- to explain, with the help of G-d, how it is indeed exceedingly close, in a long and short way."

The Torah and its commandments are the Creator's blueprint for

creation, detailing the exact manner in which He meant life to be lived and His purpose in creation to be fulfilled. But is a life that is ordered by Torah indeed feasible? Can the ordinary "everyman" be realistically expected to conduct his every act, word and thought in accordance with the Torah's most demanding directives?

The Torah itself is quite clear on the matter: "For the mitzvah which I command you this day, it is not beyond you nor is it remote from you. It is not in heaven... nor is it across the sea... Rather, it is something that is very close to you, in your mouth, in your heart, that you may do it." Torah is not an abstract ideal, a point of reference to strive toward, but a practical and attainable goal to achieve.

But how? In the Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman develops the Chabad approach — a holistic approach to life in which the mind and intellect play the leading and pivotal role. First, a person must study, comprehend and meditate upon the quintessential truths of existence: the all-transcendent, all-embracing, all-pervading reality of G-d; the root and essence of the soul and its intrinsic bond with its Creator; man's mission in life, and the resources and challenges that are extended to him to fulfill it. Since these concepts are extremely subtle and abstract, one must toil "a toil of the soul and a toil of the flesh" to grasp them and relate to them.

The next step of this approach is to translate this knowledge and comprehension into emotional feelings. Because of an innate superiority of the mind over heart that the Creator has imbued in

human nature, the understanding, assimilation and meditation upon these G-dly concepts will compel the development of the appropriate emotions in the heart: the love and awe of G-d. "Love of G-d" is defined by Rabbi Schneur Zalman as the unquenchable desire to cleave to Him and be unified with His essence; "awe of G-d" is the utter abhorrence towards anything which erects barriers between Him and man.

Finally, when a person has so oriented his mind and so transformed his heart, his observance of the Torah's precepts becomes not only possible, but a compelling need. He craves the fulfillment of the mitzvot with every fiber of his being since they are the bridge between him and G-d, the means — and the only means — by which he can connect to his Creator. And any transgression of G-d's will, no matter how attractive to his material nature, is literally revolting to him, since it disrupts his relationship with G-d and runs contrary to his own true self.

But a person may argue: Why spend a lifetime pursuing this demanding regimen of mind and heart? Why must I toil to understand and feel? Why not take the direct approach — open the books and follow instructions? I'm a simple Jew, this person may maintain, and the attainment of such lofty spiritual states as "comprehension of the Divine", "love of G-d", and "awe of G-d" are way beyond my depth.

(Continued next page)

I know the truth, I know what G-d wants of me — the Torah spells out the do's and don'ts of life quite clearly. I have a material and egocentric nature? An inborn inclination towards evil and self-destructive desires? I'll control them. My faith, determination, and willpower will do the job.

This, however, is the short but long way. As the most direct and simple line between two points, it is misleadingly the surest way to town; but in truth, the direct approach is a dead end. As with the route which Rabbi Yehoshua first chose, it seems to lead straight to the city — only somehow it never quite makes it. For it is a path of never-ending struggle, the scene of perpetual duel between the self-oriented animal soul of man and his upward-reaching G-dly soul. True, man has been given free choice and furnished with the necessary fortitude and spiritual staying power to meet his every moral challenge; but the possibility of failure, G-d forbid, also exists.

No matter how many times he will triumph, tomorrow will bring yet another test. On the short and long road one may win battle after battle, but there is never a decisive victory in the war of life.

On the other hand, the long but short way is winding, steep, tedious, and long as life itself. It is full of ups and downs, setbacks and frustrations. It demands every ounce of intellectual and emotional stamina the human being can muster. But it is a road that leads, steadily and surely, to the aspired-to destination. When one does finally acquire an aptitude and intellectual taste for the G-dly, when one does develop a desire for good and abhorrence for evil, the war has been won. The person has transformed himself into someone whose every thought, deed and act is naturally attuned to his quintessential self and purpose in life. ❖

On Rosh Hashanah we eat apples and honey for a sweet new year. My question is, why specifically apples and honey? There are many sweet foods. Is there anything significant about them?

There is a difference between the sweetness of an apple and the sweetness of honey. An apple is a sweet fruit which grows on a tree. There is nothing surprising about that — many fruits are sweet. But honey comes from a bee — an insect that is not only inedible, it actually stings. Nevertheless the honey that it produces is sweet. In fact, honey is sweeter than an apple!

Similarly, there are two types of sweetness in our lives: we have times of family celebration, successes in our careers, personal triumphs and harmonious relationships. These are sweet times like the apple is sweet. But then there is a different type of sweetness; a sweetness that comes from times of challenge. When things don't go the way that we would like them to, when tragedy strikes, when our job is in jeopardy, when we fail to reach the goals we expected of ourselves, when our relationships are being strained and tested, when we feel alone.

At the time when we are facing these challenges, they seem bitter and insurmountable, like the sting of a bee. But if we are strong and withstand the difficult times, and overcome the obstacles to our own happiness, we reveal layers of our personality that we would never have tapped into if we weren't challenged. Something deeper is brought out when we are tested. Tension in a relationship is painful, but there's nothing better than reconciling after that tension. Losing a job is degrading, but how often it is that we find bigger and better things to move on to. Loneliness can eat us up, but it can open us to higher levels of self-knowledge too. We have all experienced events in our lives that at the time were painful, but in retrospect we say, "Thank G-d for the tough times — imagine where I would be without them!"

So we eat apples and honey on the first day of the new year. We bless each other and ourselves that in the year to come the apples should bring sweetness, and what the bee stings bring should be even sweeter! ❖

Slichos

While most Jewish services are held during the day or early evening, High Holiday Selichos are the exception, held in the wee hours of the morning. Drawing from a plethora of biblical verses and rabbinic teachings, they are a soul-stirring introduction to the Days of Awe.

In Ashkenazic tradition (the focus of this article), the first night of Selichos is the biggie, held after midnight on a Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah. In some larger congregations this service is led by a cantor and choir, and can take well over an hour. In smaller, more informal congregations, it may take less time than that. All subsequent Selichos are conducted just before morning prayers, generally with less fanfare.

The liturgy for the High Holiday Selichos is not found in most prayerbooks; rather, it is found in special Selichos booklets, with a different selection for each day.

The actual Selichos are a collage of Torah verses and poetically written Hebrew works in which we ask G-d to forgive us on a personal and communal level. An oft-repeated phrase is the "13 Attributes of Mercy," which G-d revealed to Moses at Sinai as the key to forgiveness. This is the core of the entire service, and since it is considered a communal prayer, you may say this line only when praying with a congregation. (When praying alone, some also omit the Aramaic paragraphs toward the end of the service, unless they are reading a translation, in which case all agree that they may be said.)

For most of Selichos, the leader chants the first and last line of each paragraph, allowing the congregation to read most of the paragraph to themselves.

Here are some landmarks:

As we will discuss, there are certain hymns, known as pizmonim, which are read responsively, with the congregation reading a line and the leader chanting it after them. There is a different pizmon at the heart of the service each day.

Toward the end, the ark is opened, and a series of verses, beginning with the words Shema koleinu ("Hear our voice"), are recited responsively, first by the leader and then by the congregation.

Close to the end, there is the Ashamnu confession, in which we list an alphabetical litany of sins that we (as a community) have committed. We strike our chests when saying each of these sins.

When Are Selichos Said?

We start saying Selichos several days before Rosh Hashanah. According to Ashkenazic custom, the first Selichos are recited on Saturday night after "halachic midnight," and a minimum of four days of Selichos must be observed. Therefore, if the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Thursday or Shabbat, Selichos start on the Saturday night immediately preceding the New Year. If Rosh Hashanah falls on Monday or Tuesday, Selichos commence on the Saturday night approximately a week and a half before Rosh Hashanah. Starting on the Monday morning following the first midnight service, Selichos are recited daily before the morning prayers until Rosh Hashanah (except on Shabbat, since the penitential prayers are inconsistent with this peaceful, joyous day). **Join us on Motzei Shabbos, Saturday night, at 12:50am as we pray selichos together in our shul. And beginning at 11:30pm is our Pre-Selichos Farbrengen. Men and Women Welcome! Refreshments will be served!**

Most Jewish communities continue reciting Selichos throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. According to Chabad custom, however, Selichos are not said during these days, with the exception of the third of Tishrei, when Selichos are recited as part of the commemoration of the Fast of Gedaliah. ❖

Rosh Hashana

The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah actually means “Head of the Year.” Just like the head controls the body, our actions on Rosh Hashanah have a tremendous impact on the rest of the year.

As we read in the Rosh Hashanah prayers, each year on this day “all inhabitants of the world pass before G-d like a flock of sheep,” and it is decreed in the heavenly court “who shall live, and who shall die ... who shall be impoverished and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise.”

It is a day of prayer, a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity and blessing. But it is also a joyous day when we proclaim G-d King of the Universe. The Kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe depends on G-d’s desire for a world, a desire that is renewed when we accept His kingship anew each year on Rosh Hashanah.

Hearing the Shofar

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the shofar, the ram’s horn, on both days of the holiday (except if the first day is Shabbat, in which case we blow the shofar only on the second day).

The first 30 blasts of the shofar are blown following the Torah reading during morning services, and as many as 70 additional are blown during (and immediately after) the Musaf service, adding up to 100 blasts over the course of the Rosh Hashanah morning services (some communities sound another round of 30 blasts after services as well). For someone who cannot come to synagogue, the shofar may be heard the rest of the day. If you cannot make it out of your home, please contact your closest Chabad center to see about arranging a “house call.” (or you can sound the Shofar yourself!)

The shofar blowing contains a series of three types of blasts: tekiah, a long sob-like blast; shevarim, a series of three short wails; and teruah, at least nine piercing staccato bursts.

The blowing of the shofar represents the trumpet blast that is sounded at a king’s coronation. Its plaintive cry also serves as a call to repentance. The shofar itself recalls the Binding of Isaac, an event that occurred on Rosh Hashanah in which a ram took Isaac’s place as an offering to G-d.

Greetings: *On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, wish a male, “Leshanah tovah tikatev vetichatem;” for a female say, “Leshanah tovah tikatevee vetichatemee” (“May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year”). At other times, wish them a “Gemar chatimah tovah” (“A good inscription and sealing [in the Book of Life]).”*

Candles: *As with every major Jewish holiday, women and girls light candles on each evening of Rosh Hashanah and recite the appropriate blessings. On the second night, make sure to use an existing flame and think about a new fruit that you will be eating (or garment that you are wearing) while you say the Shehechyanu blessing. Click here for candle lighting times in your area and here for the blessings.*

Tashlich: *On the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah (provided that it is not Shabbat), it is customary to go to a body of water (ocean, river, pond, etc.) and perform the Tashlich ceremony, in which we ceremonially cast our sins into the water. With this tradition we are symbolically evoking the verse, “And You shall cast their sins into the depths of the sea.” The short prayer for this service can be found in your machzor. ❖*

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From Our Sages – Nitzavim-Vayelech

You stand upright this day, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d: your heads, your tribes, your elders, your officers and all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives, and your stranger that is in your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water (Deuteronomy 29:9–10)

The Talmud (Pesachim 50a) tells the story of Rav Yosef the son of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who fell ill and was at the brink of death when his father's prayers brought him back to life. When he came to, his father asked him: "My son, what did you see (in heaven)?" Rav Yosef replied: "I saw an upside-down world. Those who are on top here are on the bottom there; and those who are here regarded as lowly are exalted in heaven."

That the leader or the sage is superior to the wood-hewer or the water-carrier is only from our earthbound perspective, which sees a "hierarchy" of roles. But when "you all stand before G-d," there is no higher and lower—what seems "low" here is no less lofty and significant in G-d's eyes.

(Alshich)

Like the various organs and limbs of a body, each of which complements, serves and fulfills all the others, so too the Jewish people: the simple "wood-hewer" or "water-carrier" contributes something to each and every one of his fellow Jews, including the most exalted "head."

(Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

Our sages have said: "All Israel are guarantors for each other" (Talmud, Shevuot 39a). But a person cannot serve as a guarantor unless he is more resourceful in some way than the one he is guaranteeing. For example, a poor man obviously would not be accepted as a guarantor for a rich man's loan. So if the Talmud says that all Jews serve as guarantors to each other, this means that in every Jew there is a quality in which he or she is superior to all others.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

It shall come to pass . . . (Deuteronomy 30:1–10)

The Melech HaMoshiach ("anointed king") is destined to arise and restore the kingdom of David to its glory of old, to its original sovereignty. He will build the Holy Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel. In his times, all laws (of the Torah) will be reinstated as before; the sacrifices will be offered, the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year instituted, as outlined in the Torah.

Whoever does not believe in him, or does not anticipate his coming, denies not only the other prophets, but also the Torah and Moses. For the Torah testifies about him: "G-d shall return your captivity and have compassion upon you, and He will return and gather you from all the nations amongst whom the L-rd your G-d has scattered you. If your outcasts shall be at the ends of the heavens, from there will the L-rd your G-d gather you, from there He will take you. . . . G-d will bring you . . ." These explicit words of the Torah encapsulate all that has been said [regarding Moshiach] by the prophets . . .

(Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings 11:1)

The events prophesied in this chapter are still destined to be fulfilled, as they had not yet been realized in the days of the the First Temple, nor in the days of the Second Temple; it is the sum of our comfort and our hope, and the cure for all our troubles.

(Abarbanel)



Community Announcement -- The parking behind Shomerei Torah is reserved exclusively for the women using the Mikvah. After dusk, PLEASE DO NOT PARK THERE!! Please respect their privacy.

Haftorah for Parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech in a nutshell

Isaiah 61:10-63:9

This week's haftorah is the seventh and final installment of a series of seven "Haftarot of Consolation." These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

The prophet begins on a high note, describing the great joy that we will experience with the Final Redemption, comparing it to the joy of a newly married couple.

Isaiah then declares his refusal to passively await the Redemption: "For Zion's sake I will not remain silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be still, until her righteousness emerges like shining light..." He implores the stones of Jerusalem not to be silent, day or night, until G-d restores Jerusalem and establishes it in glory.

The haftorah then recounts G-d's oath to eventually redeem Zion, when the Jews will praise G-d in Jerusalem. The haftorah also contains a description of the punishment G-d will mete out to Edom and the enemies of Israel.

Isaiah concludes with the famous statement:

"In all [Israel's] afflictions, He, too, is afflicted, and the angel of His presence redeemed them..."

Like a loving father who shares the pain of his child, G-d, too, shares the pain of His people, and awaits the redemption along with them. ❖



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שבת שלום גוט שבת!



L'Shana Tova and Good Shabbos to all!