

LAMPLIGHTER

27 Elul
Parshas
Netzavim
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Nitzavim, G-d makes a covenant with the Jewish people just prior to their entering the land of Israel. After enumerating the troubles that will befall them in exile if they sin, G-d promises that He will ultimately bring them the true and complete Redemption.

A closer study of these verses reveals that G-d's pledge of Redemption actually contains two distinct promises: One, that every single Jew will eventually do Teshuva (return to G-d). The second, that as part of the Final Redemption, "The L-rd your G-d will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul."

The sequence of these promises, however, is problematic.

Maimonides explains that the first step in the process of Redemption is repentance: "The Torah has promised that when Israel does Teshuva at the end of the exile they will be redeemed immediately." But if the Redemption will have already occurred, what can possibly be added by this "circumcision of the heart"? Furthermore, what does the phrase itself really mean?

In order to understand, we need to examine the two ways a Jew can remain distant from Torah and mitzvot (commandments): The first occurs from within, when the heart itself becomes "opaque" - impervious to G-dliness. The second factor is external, the result of outside negative influences, as our Sages stated, "The eye sees, and the heart desires."

The first factor is entirely within the person's ability to control. Every Jew has the power to open his heart to G-d; all he needs to have is the will. This is the mitzva of Teshuva, which every person must do for himself. The second factor, however, is entirely up to G-d. A person cannot will himself not to be tempted by things he finds alluring.

This, then, is what is meant by the "circumcision of the heart" that will take place after the Redemption:

Once the Jewish people will have done Teshuva to the best of their ability, G-d will "circumcise" our hearts, i.e., the connection between what our eyes see and our subsequent desire to sin will be severed. In this second stage of the Messianic era, the very possibility of external influences exerting a negative pull will be permanently abolished.

Moreover, this "circumcision" will serve to uncover the innate and essential love every Jew has for G-d, enabling us "to love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul" without impediment, either internal or external. Thus we will reach a state not only of physical Redemption, but of spiritual Redemption from everything that once obscured the true, underlying G-dly reality.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 29

While We're in Exile, Where's G-d?

By Naftali Silberberg

In our Parshah, Moses prophesies regarding our nation's exile as well as our ultimate redemption, regarding which he says, "G-d will return your exiles and He will have mercy upon you. He will once again gather you from all the nations, where G-d, your G-d, had dispersed you" (Deuteronomy 30:3).

Though *galut* (exile), by definition, is a time when G-d's presence in our lives isn't manifest and palpable as it was - and will soon again be - during the Holy Temple glory days, it by no means signals a hiatus in our relationship with Him. This idea was expressed by Joseph prior to the first time that our nation was dispatched into exile, when he informed his brothers that they would spend many years exiled in Egypt, but "G-d will be with you" (Genesis 48:21).

G-d is omnipresent, He's with everyone at all times, so Joseph's special assurance that G-d would be with the Jews was referring to G-d's overt presence and protection. Indeed, though our exiles have been times of great national difficulty, persecution, and worse, it is these very travails that testify to the fact that G-d is still "with us." For is there any other explanation for the fact that a small, displaced, and defenceless nation outlives all the superpowers that endeavour mightily to annihilate her?

But lest we think that G-d is a master conductor who keeps a watchful eye over us while He Himself remains serenely unaffected by our suffering, the verse (Psalms 91:15) quotes G-d as saying, "I am with him [Israel] in distress." This was the message that G-d conveyed by choosing to appear to Moses in a thorn bush when the Jews were being oppressed by the Egyptians. When we suffer, it's as if He is being pricked by thorns. After all, is there a father that is not distressed when his child is in pain?

The verse cited above, from this week's Parshah, takes this idea a step further. The Hebrew wording employed in this verse is rather unusual. Rather than the standard *v'heshiv*, which translates as "He [G-d] will cause you to return," the word *v'shov*, which translates literally as "He will return," is used. On this our Sages comment: "From here we learn that the Divine Presence resides among Israel, as it were, in all the misery of their exile. And when they are redeemed, G-d writes [here in the Scriptures], redemption for Himself-for He, too, will return with them!"

This is not simply a father who is commiserating with his son. This is a father who accompanies his son into exile. A king who voluntarily joins his son in captivity.

And when the time of the redemption arrives, He will return together with each and every one of us, as Isaiah prophesies (27:12), "And you will be gathered up, one by one, O children of Israel."

Slice of LIFE

The Healing Cry

By Tzvi Jacobs

Dr. Howard Saul poked his head in the hospital room. "May I come in and blow the shofar?" Dr. Saul whispered to the nurse, just in case the patient was sleeping. Dr. Saul had an infectious smile, pardon the pun, and the nurses at Cherry Hill Kennedy Hospital were already familiar with his yearly practice of blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah for the Jewish patients.

"There's no point in blowing the shofar for Mr. Greenberg," the nurse said. "He slipped into a coma six weeks ago, when he came out of surgery. He doesn't respond to anything."

The nurse sighed. "Yesterday the family put him on DNR (do not resuscitate). He doesn't have much longer. Down the hall is Mrs. Cohen. She told me yesterday how upset she was that she couldn't be in synagogue to hear the shofar. She'll be so happy to see you."

Dr. Saul's face lit up. "Thank you, I'll be there in five minutes. Even if Mr. Greenberg doesn't hear anything, his soul will hear."

Nothing could stop Dr. Saul, also known as Chaim Meir, from walking to Cherry Hill Hospital every Rosh Hashanah to blow the shofar for the patients. Not rain, nor heat waves, and certainly not the 3-mile walk. Of course, on Rosh Hashanah, he didn't take the elevator - he ran up the stairs to each floor.

Dr. Saul might have been unique in the Cherry Hill Hospital, but he was one of thousands who had the custom of blowing the shofar for those who could not be in a synagogue on Rosh Hashanah. When most shuls, synagogues, and temples were

overflowing on Rosh Hashanah, the synagogue of the Rebbe, "770," would be half empty most of the morning. Hundreds of students, and even married men with their children, would spread in a coordinated fashion throughout Brooklyn and even to Manhattan and Queens. They would blow the shofar in hospitals, nursing homes, and private homes and apartments of those who requested. The Rebbe inculcated in his followers the importance of making sure that others hear the sounding of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. The hearing of the shofar is as precious as life.

Dr. Saul himself had heard the "sound of the shofar" ten years earlier, at a Chabad House in downtown Philadelphia, where he heard the parable of the Baal Shem Tov. The prince had left his palace and strayed to distant lands, where he eventually forgot everything about his culture and customs, even his native language. One day, after many years, he had a powerful urge to return home to be with his father, the king. But the officers at the palace gate denied entrance to this beggar in tattered clothes. The prince didn't even remember the language to explain to them who he really was. Just then the prince saw himself through the eyes of the officers and realized how low he had fallen. He burst out with a deep, inner cry. All he wanted was to be again with his father, the king.

"That's me," Dr. Saul thought when he heard that parable. "I have achieved my goal - I am a doctor. I should be happy, but I feel so empty inside. I'll never get into the palace."

The parable took a sharp turn. "That's the voice of my long lost son," the king said. The king himself ran the palace stairs and brought his son into the palace, into his inner chamber, where he belonged.

When Dr. Saul blew the shofar for the patients in the hospital, the voice of the lost prince came through the shofar. Many patients, already broken-hearted

by their lack of health and the angel of mortality that hovered over the end of their beds. The cry of the shofar drew out from the depths the cries of the patients. For almost all of them the tears were tears of joy.

"For 2,000 years we have travelled through some rough times and yet we have always carried the Torah scrolls with us and still remain Jews. We deserve to be treated like royalty and be granted a good, sweet and healthy new year!" Dr. Saul would exclaim with a voice that healed.

After the holidays, Dr. Saul would return to his other job, and deliver babies and perform other procedures. One day, while about to leave the hospital, two women called out, "Rabbi, rabbi, will you please help us." With his full-grown beard and the tzitzit strings dangling over his belt, it was not the first time he had been called a rabbi.

"They want to discharge our father and he insist on going back to his apartment," one of the daughters said.

"But he can't, he needs to be in a nursing home, until he fully recovers," a daughter said. "Thank G-d, he's alive. It's nothing short of a miracle, everyone says."

Dr. Saul explained that he's an obstetrician and cannot see patients of other doctors, "But I'll go as a friend of the family. After all, all Jews are one family."

Dr. Saul followed the daughters to their father's room. "Good morning," Dr. Saul said with a warm smile, "you don't know me-"

"Oh, yes," the old man interrupted, "I know who you are."

Dr. Saul looked surprised. He works in a different department in a different wing of the hospital.

"I know you. You're the one who blew the shofar for me."

Dr. Saul looked up and saw the name of the patient: "Arnold Greenberg."

The call of the shofar....

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ISSUE 1208

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The shofar foreshadows the jubilant proclamation of freedom, when Israel's exiled and homeless are to return to the Holy Land. It calls us to believe in Israel's deliverance at all times and under all circumstances. (*Ninth of the ten reasons that Rav Saadia Gaon gives for the sounding of the shofar on Rosh Hashana*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

25th of Elul, 5735 [1975]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter in connection with the forthcoming new year, together with a copy of a previous letter. As requested, I will remember you and your family, as well as those mentioned in your letter, in prayer, for the fulfillment of your hearts' desires for good.

With reference to your writing about doubts and the difficulty of making decisions, and about a feeling of insecurity in general trust, it is unnecessary to elaborate to you at length that such feelings arise when a person thinks that he is alone; and can only rely upon himself and his own judgment, and therefore feels doubtful and insecure about each move he has to make. And while he also trusts in G-d, this trust is somehow superficial without permeating him, and his way of life in every detail; and only on certain days, such as the High Holy Days, he feels more close to G-d.

But when a person's faith in G-d is deep, and when he reflects that G-d's benevolent Providence extends to each and every person, and to each and every detail, and each and every minute, surely he must develop a profound sense of security and confidence.

The concept of "Divine Providence" is better understood in the original term of Hashgocho Protis [individual supervision], for Hashgocho means careful watchfulness, for which reason the term Hashgocho is used also in connection with the laws of Kashrus [Jewish dietary laws], where every detail has to be carefully watched. Nor is another translation which is sometimes used in connection with Hashgocho Protis, namely "supervision," entirely satisfactory in this case, because supervision implies "overseeing," that is to say, seeing from above, whereas Hashgocho in the sense of G-d's watchfulness means knowing matters through and through.

The belief in such Hashgocho Protis is basic in our religion and way of life, so much so that before every new year, and during the beginning of the year, we say twice daily Psalm 27, "G-d is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? G-d is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" From this it follows that even if things happen not as desired according to human calculations, and even if it seems that even according to the Torah it should have been different, a Jew still puts his trust in G-d, as the said Psalm concludes, "Hope to G-d; be strong and strengthen your heart and hope to G-d."

In other words, it is sometimes necessary to be strong and strengthen one's heart to achieve full confidence in G-d, but there is also the promise of being able to achieve it.

The above comes more easily through strengthening the adherence to the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments] in daily life. And however satisfactory this may be at any particular time, there is always room for improvement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvos, which are infinite, being derived from the Infinite. Indeed, I am pleased to note that despite the doubts that you have, you devote time and effort to be of help in your field, and may G-d grant that it should be with Hatzlocho [success], especially as it surely does not interfere with having regular periods of Torah study each day. In this connection it is well to remember the words of the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad, that true Kvias Ittim ("fixed times") for Torah study implies not only in time, but also in the soul.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all above.

Wishing you and all yours a Kesivo VeChasima Tovo [may you be written and sealed for good], for a good and sweet year,

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Shofar Blowing

It is a custom to blow the Shofar after Shacharit during Elul. Amongst the reasons is in order to motivate Bnei Yisrael to do Teshuva before the High Holidays. The Chabad custom is to start on the second day of Rosh Chodesh. [Some have the practice to start on the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul].

A WORD

from the Director

The main mitzvah (commandment) of the upcoming holiday of Rosh Hashanah is to hear the blowing of the shofar. More than the apples dipped in honey, more than the beautiful prayers, more than the festival meal, we must hear the shofar blown.

Following the shofar blowing, we mention several other historic soundings of the shofar. The first of these was at Mount Sinai. There, the Torah was given in the presence of an intense, constantly increasing, shofar blast.

Another renowned shofar blowing mentioned in our prayers is that of the "Great Shofar," which will be blown upon the arrival of Moshiach.

What is the connection between these two events, and why do we mention them in our prayers on Rosh Hashanah?

The Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai was an experience that pulled people out of their previous state of existence. The G-dly revelation was so intense that "their souls flew out of their bodies"; they were taken out of their worldly boundaries and elevated to a much higher plane.

The Era of Moshiach will precipitate a similar restructuring of our lives, enabling us to achieve a higher level of existence.

This is a common thread joining the revelation at Mount Sinai with the days of Moshiach - the element of change and the improvement of the world at large. The shofar, central to both events, inspires one to abandon one's previous level in order to reach higher levels.

May we hear, this year, the sounding of the Great Shofar in the rebuilt Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

On behalf of the Chabad House of Caulfield, I wish all our readers and Klal Yisrael a Shana Tova U'Metukah - a year of good health and prosperity. May the new year bring true peace and tranquillity to Eretz Yisrael and to our fellow brothers and sisters throughout the world.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Reb Yissachar Dov of Radoshitz took longer than usual on Rosh Hashanah to join the congregants for the blowing of the shofar. When he finally came out of his room, he told his Chasidim the following:

"Let me tell you a story about my Rebbe, the Chozeh (Seer) of Lublin.

"One Rosh Hashanah the Chozeh remained an extra-long time in his study. He felt unable to leave and join his Chasidim for the blowing of the shofar; he was heartbroken at the thought that he had to his credit no single merit which would give him the strength to go ahead this special mitzvah. Finally he remembered that he had, in fact, one merit in his favour: in the course of the previous year he had not spoken one angry word.

"On one occasion, it almost happened that he lost his temper. His attendant had forgotten to prepare water next to his bed so that he would be able to wash his hands in the prescribed manner in the morning. He had decided to reprimand the attendant for his negligence - until the Chozeh recalled the warning of the Sages, "He who is angry, it is as if he worshipped idols."

The Chozeh thought to himself, "For the sake of the mitzvah of washing my hands in the morning I am going to allow myself, G-d forbid, to become an idolater?" He had therefore said nothing.

"When the Chozeh reminded himself that he had this one merit to his credit, he went ahead with the blowing of the shofar."

Upon completing the telling of this story, Reb Yissachar Dov proceeded to lead his own congregation in reading Psalm 47 which speaks of the majesty of the Creator and which serves as the introduction to the blasts of the shofar.

Reb Zvi of Portziva used to lead the Musaf prayer on Rosh Hashanah in the synagogue of Reb Yosele of Torchin, the Chozeh of Lublin's son.

He was once asked by Reb Yitzchak Meir of Ger: "Perhaps you could repeat for me a teaching which you heard from Reb Yosele?"

"I do not recall any words of Torah," Said Reb Zvi, "but I do remember a story. One Rosh Hashanah, just before the blowing of the shofar, Reb Yosele entered the shul and told his Chasidim, some of whom were undoubtedly thinking at that moment of their own requests to the Almighty for the coming year, "I am not going to rebuke you, nor am I going to teach you Torah. I am only going to tell you a story.

"In a certain city a learned and wealthy wine-merchant lived who was honoured one day by a visit from the local rabbi. The host went out of his way to show the rabbi great respect. The merchant quickly sent his servant down to the cellar, where he was to fill a bottle of wine from the middle barrel of the third row - for this was the best wine he owned. All the while, he engaged in a scholarly conversation with his distinguished guest.

"When the merchant had waited quite a while for his servant to return, he excused himself and quickly descended to the cellar to find out what

had happened. He was shocked at what he saw there. Some of the barrels were uncovered; others were being drained as their taps had been left open; broken bottles were lying in the puddles of wine on the floor; and the servant was nowhere to be seen.

The merchant returned upstairs from, very upset at the serious damage which his servant had caused him. He began to look for the servant, calling him by name. The servant finally answered, from a comfortable place over the fireplace, where he was sprawled at his leisure. The servant called out to his master, "Listen here! I want you to increase my salary by so and so much. It isn't nearly high enough..."

Reb Yitzchak Meir of Ger thanked Reb Zvi warmly. "Now that is what I call a fine parable!" he exclaimed.

It was the custom of Reb Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch on the first night of Rosh Hashanah to deliver a discourse on the philosophy of Chasidism, followed by fiery words of inspiration to his Chasidim.

One year, when he had completed his discourse on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, he turned to his Chasidim and said, "Today we have to make ourselves ready to greet Him Whom we address in our prayers as "our Father, our King." A father likes to see a pure heart; a king likes a clean garment."

The Reb Menachem Mendel went on to explain that the Divine mission appropriate to the New Year season was for every person to purify his heart, and cleanse his "garments," for this word in Chasidic usage signifies the soul's three means of self-expression - thought, word and deed.

"Every man is accompanied by two angels," he continued. "When, after the evening prayers of Rosh Hashanah, the angels hear each person sincerely wishing his neighbour, 'May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year,' they soar aloft and appear as defence attorneys in the heavenly Court. There, they plead that the well-wishers be granted a good and a sweet year."

Reb Menachem Mendel concluded his own words with the blessing, "May you all be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS NETZAVIM • 27 ELUL • 11 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.49 PM
	MINCHA:	5.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6.25 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILLIM:	8.00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.21 AM
	FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING	
	MINCHA:	5.45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.46 PM
WEEKDAYS:		
SUN		
EREV ROSH HASHANA:	SLICHOS:	7.10 AM / 8.20 AM
	SHACHARIS:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.50 PM
	MINCHA:	5.55 PM
	MAARIV:	6.40 PM
MON 1ST DAY:	SHACHARIS:	9.00 AM
	SHOFAR:	11.15 AM (APPROX)
	MINCHA:	5.50 PM FOLLOWED BY TASHLICH
	MAARIV:	6.40 PM
	CANDLE LIGHTING:	AFTER 6.48 PM
TUE 2ND DAY:	SHACHARIS:	9.00 AM
	SHOFAR:	11.00 AM (APPROX)
	MINCHA:	5.50 PM
	YOM TOV ENDS/MAARIV:	6.49 PM
WED TZOM GEDALIAH:	FAST BEGINS:	5.01 AM
	SHACHARIS:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.45 PM
	FAST ENDS/MAARIV:	6.38 PM
THUR:	SHACHARIS:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	6.00 PM
	MAARIV:	6.45 PM / 9.00 PM
FRI:	SHACHARIS:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM

CANDLE LIGHTING: SEPTEMBER 11, 13, 14, 2015

BEGINS		ENDS	
11th	13th	14th	15th
5:49	5:50	6:48	MELBOURNE 6:46
5:46	5:47	6:43	ADELAIDE 6:42
5:21	5:22	6:15	BRISBANE 6:14
6:25	6:25	7:14	DARWIN 7:14
5:19	5:20	6:13	GOLD COAST 6:12
5:48	5:49	6:44	PERTH 6:43
5:26	5:27	6:22	SYDNEY 6:21
5:33	5:35	6:31	CANBERRA 6:30
5:38	5:40	6:40	LAUNCESTON 6:38
5:50	5:52	6:49	AUCKLAND 6:47
5:48	5:50	6:50	WELLINGTON 6:48
5:37	5:39	6:40	HOBART 6:38
5:18	5:19	6:12	BYRON BAY 6:11
6:47	6:46	7:35	SINGAPORE 7:35



Light candles on September 14th after the time given, and only from a pre-existing flame