

LAMPLIGHTER

24 Elul
Shabbos Mevorchim
Parshas Nitzavim -
Vayeilech
1313
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Nitzavim and Vayeilech. The portion of Nitzavim is always read on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashana.

It begins: "You are standing this day, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d, your heads, your tribes, your elders... all the men of Israel, your children and your wives ... that you should enter into the covenant of the L-rd your G-d."

With these words, Moses brought the Jewish people into a state of collective and mutual surety. Indeed, our Sages declared, "All Jews are guarantors for one another."

Let us examine the concept of surety more closely.

What exactly is a guarantor, and who is eligible to act as one? According to logic, only a person who is superior to another in a certain respect can provide a guarantee. Consider the example of the poor man who has requested a loan. The lender cannot rely on the poor man's ability to pay him back, so he asks for a wealthy guarantor as collateral. This way, the lender is assured that he will be repaid.

Conversely, it would be illogical to expect a poor man to act as guarantor for a rich man's loan. This would not make sense, as the poor man has less money to begin with.

What, then, are we to make of the fact that "All Jews are guarantors for one another"? How is it possible that even the lowliest individual can act as guarantor for the greatest?

Commenting on the verse "You are standing this day, all of you," Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidut, explained that Jews comprise a single entity. Metaphorically speaking, the Jewish people form one body, with each individual Jew being an integral part of the whole.

A physical body is composed of many organs and limbs, each one of which serves its own unique function. That the head is superior to the foot is obvious, but without the foot, the body is incomplete. A defect in the foot affects the entire person; the head suffers if any of the body's limbs are flawed. In order to exist as a healthy entity, the body requires all of its organs to be in prime condition and to work in consonance.

So too is it in regard to the Jewish people. There are many different types of Jews. Some are like the "head," while others may be said to be the "feet." Nonetheless, each and every Jew is of inestimable value, an essential part of the Jewish people without whom the "body" of Jews would be incomplete. For this reason, all Jews are "guarantors for one another," as each individual possesses unique qualities which are necessary for the health and integrity of the whole.

True unity is only possible when all Jews stand together as one. Not only does this require the participation of our "heads," "tribes" and "elders," but the "hewers of our wood" and "drawers of our water" are no less important.

The Second Level of Choice

By Tali Loewenthal

The title of this week's Torah reading is Nitzavim, which means "standing," is always read on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah. In this reading, Moses addresses the entire people standing together, whether leaders, elderly sages, or water-carriers. All were gathered to listen to what Moses had to say.

Towards the end of his talk Moses says: "Look, I am putting before you today life and goodness, and death and evil... You should choose life, so that you and your children should live." Moses was saying that the path of Torah brings life and wellbeing.

There are two levels to this idea. One is that a person can see a variety of ways to live. Thinking through the possibilities and probabilities, it seems to him or her that a life guided by Torah teaching is likely to bring a more profound level of happiness, a greater degree of personal fulfillment. So he or she chooses the path of Torah, the path of life. This is one level of choice. It is guided by one's understanding, and by the feeling that Judaism brings harmony and other positive values to one's life.

The second level is when the harmony is not apparent. When there is crisis, opposition and struggle, and one's observance of authentic Jewish teaching – or simply the fact that one is a Jew – seems to lead to extra problems.

In this challenging situation, every Jew still has the power to choose the path of "life" and "goodness." However, it might well seem a choice which is higher than conventional reason and understanding. The person is choosing what they can see as true life and goodness. Other people may not understand this. Apparently well-meaning and reasonable people might advise their Jewish friend: "Why bother? Take the easy way out."

Nonetheless, Moses tells us to choose life, authentic Judaism. His instruction is based on a wider perspective of who we are and where we are going.

Chassidic teachings explain that this choice is the expression of the essence of the soul, which is inseparably united with G-d. It must choose the life of Torah, despite the adverse conditions of the moment. Because from the point of view of one's inner essence, no other road is possible. Why not? Because one's essence is concerned about reality. Not just what seems good at the moment, but what really is good.

Moses' words, telling us to "choose life," include both these levels. And this is a suitable introduction to Rosh Hashanah. For on this festival we express our dedication to G-d as King, and He in turn "chooses" us anew, as His people.

G-d's choice of the Jewish people is not based on our good deeds, the first level of choice. Rather it is a choice of the essence of the Jew within us, the point at which we are united with G-d, independent of our actions at the time: the second level.

Given this deep inner bond with G-d, it is up to us to try to bring consistency to our lives, to make our outward behavior a reflection of the love hidden in the essence of our heart. Then the inner and outer realities merge, both for the individual person and, ultimately, also for the world, and the two levels of choice become one. To choose the path of Jewish teaching means to choose life and goodness and joy.

Slice of LIFE

Miracles Come In All Sizes

by Yossi Overlander

People around the world speak of miracles. While some are small occurrences that one might pass off as "luck," here is my story that I believe was truly a miracle.

In the Winter of 2011 I was a student in a yeshiva in a little village just outside of Paris, France. The yeshiva has about 300 students attending. There is a dormitory and all students board.

My story begins on a Friday afternoon, when your typical Chabad-Lubavitch yeshiva student is out and about. He is finding Jewish people with the intent of encouraging them do a mitzva (commandment), such as putting on Tefilin.

As it was still many hours until Shabbat and I had already visited the people I regularly meet in their offices, my friend and I decided that we would try something new. We would combine site-seeing with helping our fellow Jews do mitzvot.

We rented bikes and off we went around Paris asking Jewish people we met if they would like to do a mitzva to help change the world for good.

We rented different bikes at various locations throughout the city. We exchanged bikes about a dozen times.

Finally, after many hours, it was time to go home, a.k.a. back to our yeshiva dormitory to start preparing for Shabbat.

I parked the last bike I had used. When I reached into the basket on the front to get my belongings, I saw that my jacket was there, but under my jacket there was NOTHING! No Tefilin, no bag and no Shabbat

candles.

For those who do not know, Tefilin cost about \$1000 U.S. You can imagine why I started to panic. Could they have been stolen? Did I misplace them? Did I leave them on a table after helping someone put on Tefilin? I had no idea.

The only thing to do was go to the French police and report my loss. They did not seem very interested in helping me and were annoyed that I spoke only English and was not responding to any of their questions asked in French.

After filling out a report and hoping for the best, I headed back to yeshiva for Shabbat. On Shabbat, one is supposed to remove all stressful thoughts from his mind and focus on enjoying the holiest day of the week. Relieving my mind of thinking about the Tefilin would be a real challenge!

A week went by with no word from the police. I called the lost and found bureau but they also did not come up with anything. I decided to try a different approach. I printed 100 signs requesting that if anyone found the Tefilin they should return them. My fellow yeshiva students posted them around Paris.

Throughout this time, I borrowed someone else's Tefilin for prayers. Eventually, I came to the realization that my Tefilin were gone forever. I called a Parisian scribe and asked him to please get me a new pair.

Feeling a little depressed I resigned myself to the situation and prepared for the ordeal of revealing the awful news to the person who had so graciously and generously sponsored my original pair - my father.

Another week passed. The administrator of our yeshiva, a rather serious and strict man, personally requested that I visit him in his office. I was understandably a little nervous. As I walked in, he said three words: "We found them!" I had not told him that I had lost them, but I knew exactly what the "them" were. My Tefilin!

In the retelling, this seems like a simple story of lost and found. However, when considering the details one comes to realize that it was truly a miracle that I got my Tefilin back safe and sound. I had mistakenly left my Tefillin in the

basket of a bike. The next person who rented the bike must have removed them from the basket and placed them on the ground near the docking station. They lay there unnoticed - by street-cleaners and passers-by who should have been concerned about an unattended, nondescript bag - for two whole weeks.

(The area they were left in was comparatively Paris' version of Times Square. Rue Rivoli is well known for its Museum le Louvre and has thousands of people travelling on it daily.)

During those two weeks it had rained a number of times, but the scribe to whom I took them when they were found assured me that there was no water damage.

The docking (parking) station was directly outside a Jewish store. When the owner (finally) noticed the bag, he looked inside, saw the Tefilin and thought, "Tefilin? Oh, for sure they belong to someone in Chabad." He then called my yeshiva to notify them that he had found Tefilin.

As I headed back to Paris to get my almost-forgotten Tefilin, I wondered to myself, "Why did this happen? G-d directs the steps of man. Where were my steps being directed?"

I found the answer to the question - including why it had taken the Jewish store owner two weeks to notice them - as soon as I had retrieved my precious Tefilin. Moments after I took possession of them again, I bumped into an Australian man who asked me where was the Jewish quarter. After answering his question, I asked him if he had put on Tefilin that day. A few minutes later, this Aussie Jew, who had not put on Tefillin since his Bar Mitzva, was winding the straps and reciting the Shema in the middle of this bay metropolis of Paris.

Now it all fit in. I happily headed back to Yeshiva with the knowledge that it was all for the good.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Greeting and Blessing:

...We will briefly dwell here on a point which distinguishes this year's Rosh Hashanah from others, namely, that this year Rosh Hashanah is the "head" of a Leap Year. And herein, too, a further distinction:

Not all Leap Years in our Hebrew Calendar are the same. This year has the distinction of having the maximum number of days that any Leap Year can have - 385 days.

On a previous occasion, it has been pointed out at some length that the purpose of a Leap Year in our Torah-Calendar is to make up for the "deficiency" in the days of previous years, in order to bring into harmony the Lunar year with the seasons of the year (determined by the Solar year), though the annual seasons are also, of course, determined by the Creator, as Torah declares: "(The seasons of) sowing and reaping, cold and heat, summer and winter, shall not cease."

Moreover, not only does the Leap Month make up the deficiency of the past, but it also gives an "advance" on the future.

This year, as noted above, the Leap Year is of maximum dimension.

It is a well-known principle that all that we see or find in the realm of matter, in the physical world around us, are replicas of the spiritual counterparts in the sublime Supernal Worlds from which they descended. The same is especially true also in this case.

The order of having to make good and equalize the number of days, in the plain sense, in the material world, is due to the fact that this is the order in the spiritual realm, where "each day has its task to perform." This is also the special instruction for us in respect of the task each has to accomplish in the areas of "Man unto toil is born," "All your actions should be for the sake of Heaven," and "Know Him in all your ways"

...In light of the above it is clear that the preparations and service expected of a Jew for the new year-in the days before Rosh Hashanah, particularly during the days of Selichos [penitence]; on Rosh Hashanah itself; and during the Ten Days of Teshuvah (Repentance), especially on the Holiest Day (Yom Kippur) - have to be on the order of the Leap Year: To make good those aspects of the service where there has been a deficiency in the past year, and bring perfection into the other areas, indeed even to the extent of an "advance" on the future.

And all this should be carried out in the fullest, maximum measure.

Moreover, as has often been emphasized - since G-d requests and expects a Jew to do a certain task, it is certain that He has provided him with all the necessary capacities and means to carry it out in actual fact, and, furthermore, to do it with joy and gladness of heart, and all matters of Divine service should be carried out.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Onions

Question: What Blessing do I recite on onions?

Answer: Perhaps at the Passover Seder, as you were about to dip an onion into salt-water, someone posed this question. Indeed, this blessing is different from all (or most) other blessings. Let's peel back the layers of this issue.

The default blessing we say before eating all foods is Shehakol ("Blessed are You . . . by Whose word all things came to be"). However, the sages deemed some foods—such as bread, wine, fruits and vegetables—worthy of their own specific blessings.

So on fruit we make the blessing of Ha'eitz ("Blessed are You . . . who creates the fruit of the tree"), on vegetables we say Ha'adamah ("Blessed are You . . . who creates the fruit of the earth"), and so on.

Now, fruits and vegetables are only considered worthy of these blessings when they are eaten in their "optimal form," as dictated by cultural norms. Therefore, produce that is normally eaten cooked loses its special status when eaten raw, and reverts back to the default blessing of Shehakol (assuming it's edible).

The reverse is true regarding produce that tastes better raw (i.e. cooking diminishes its flavor); when cooking and eating these foods, we say Shehakol. What about onions? Is it normal to eat them raw? We don't ordinarily eat raw onions alone, but we do eat them, for example, in sandwiches. So does a raw onion warrant a Shehakol or a Ha'adamah?

Some halachic authorities are of the opinion that, since raw onions aren't usually eaten by themselves, we make the blessing of Shehakol on them. However, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi rules that since it is common to eat raw onions with bread, the onions still have the status of a food item that is normally eaten raw. Therefore the appropriate blessing is Ha'adamah, even when the onions are eaten alone.

A WORD

from the Director

With the High Holydays upon us, it is time to take stock of the year that was and to look forward to the coming year.

Individually, each person will assess their own triumphs and disappointments and make resolutions for the future. But as a community, who will be the arbiter of what was and what will be?

A local community is no more than its constituent individuals, and Am Yisrael - world Jewry - no more than the communities of which it is comprised. Here, in relatively comfortable and peaceful Melbourne, where do we stand on both counts?

May I suggest that we have plenty to be proud of on both counts, but at the same time, plenty more to strive for. As a community we have vibrant organizations, shules, schools and a multitude of service facilities. But at the same time, we have thousands of children bereft of any formal Jewish education, families whose Jewish involvement is a three day a year experience and rising incidents of family hardship, poverty and isolation.

On a world scale, Melbourne Jewry is not immune to increasing Jewish apathy and the threat of assimilation. The centrality of Israel in our lives is being eroded by media sentiment and unbridled bias, and our one time friends are beginning to distance themselves from the Jewish cause and our right to our homeland - and with increasing tempo even our right to exist as a nation. From Paris to Brussels, Charlottesville to Melbourne - Jews are being attacked and maligned simply for being Jewish. And the world looks on...

So where to in 5778?

Chassidut teaches that "man is a small world" and that a single act by a single person can alter the world. Let us unite in our efforts to bring goodness and G-dliness into our world by taking on that one additional mitzvah, that one extra act of kindness that will make a difference to the life of a fellow human being. And through this, better ourselves, our community and indeed the world. Let us stand up as proud Jews to world symposiums and forums that would do us harm; proud of our heritage, proud of our homeland and defiantly confident in our standing in the world.

Over the next few weeks of Chagim, resolve to experience the joys and richness of Judaism in its fullness; from the solemnity of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur to the joyous festivities of Sukkot and Simchat Torah. If you do not have a regular Shule to attend, we warmly welcome you to our Chabad House of Caulfield, or drop in to any Chabad House in Melbourne whose doors will always be wide open to you.

On behalf of all at the Chabad House of Caulfield, I wish you a Shana Tovah - a year of goodness, health, prosperity and real peace and tranquility in our Holy Land.

J. I. Gutnick

Here's my Story

Personal Encounters
With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's
'My Encounter' Project

Matchmaker

In the early 1950s, I came to the Rebbe with a group of young girls from Junior Hadassah. At that time Hadassah was a very popular women's group, and Junior Hadassah was made up of the teenage daughters of the women who belonged to Hadassah.

Although I was a newly-married bride at the time; not much older than these girls, I became the leader of the group in Worcester, Massachusetts. They used to come to our house, and I would teach them about Judaism.

I had told them about the Rebbe, and they wanted to see him in person, to hear him speak. At one point, we decided to go visit the Rebbe as a group. And one girl's mother decided to come along with her daughter. The girl's name was Estelle Greenberg, and her mother, Mrs. Greenberg, said that she, too, wanted to see the Rebbe.

It was a large gathering. Other groups of young people came that day as well, and the Rebbe spoke to all of them together. When there was a break in the program, Mrs. Greenberg requested a private audience with the Rebbe. She went in, and she was there for quite a while. When she came out, the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Hodakov, approached me and said, "Please, the Rebbe wants to see you. Go in and see the Rebbe."

I was surprised that the Rebbe should want to see me, and I went in wondering, "What could it be?"

The Rebbe greeted me with a broad smile and said, "Mrs. Greenberg came to ask for a blessing so that her daughter should find a husband. I gave her a blessing, but she doesn't believe me." At that he laughed. And then he said to me, "Please see to it that you find a match for her daughter, and then your sister will find a match also."

At that time, I had been bothering him to give my sister a blessing to get married. She was so choosy that it looked like there was no young man in this world who could ever meet all her qualifications. So I kept asking for a blessing for her.

When the Rebbe told me, "Find a match for her daughter and then your sister will find a match," I immediately resolved to do so. But how?

I asked the Rebbe, "Where should I look?"

The Rebbe smiled at me and replied, "Perhaps you'll find her a match in one of the towns nearby or around Worcester."

When I came out of the Rebbe's office, Estelle and her mother were standing there, and Mrs. Greenberg was looking at me very sternly. She had asked the Rebbe for a blessing, she had received it, and now she wanted to see results. She was a wonderful lady; she really did believe in the Rebbe's power to bring this about. And she expected her future son-in-law to materialize right there before her.

As soon as I returned to Worcester, first thing in the morning, I came to my husband's yeshiva and I looked around. And all of a sudden I realized that he was right there. I had found Estelle's husband.

A young man, Rabbi Weinberger, was teaching one of the classes. He was a rabbi in the nearby town of Clinton, Massachusetts. And I remembered the Rebbe's words: "Perhaps you'll find her match in one of the towns nearby..."

This had to be him!

I could hardly wait for the recess; I had to speak to him.

When he came out, I was waiting in the yard. I ran over to him and said, "Rabbi Weinberger, have I got a girl for you!" And I began to rave about her, urging him, "You must call her, you must go out with her, it's a good match for you..."

He believed me. He took her name and number. He called her that night, and they started to go out. They liked each other, and by Yud Tes Kislev, they were

engaged.

They came to the Rebbe for Yud Tes Kislev, because they were so excited. And I kept telling them, "The reason I introduced you is because the Rebbe told me to look for someone in a town near Worcester."

They were very overwhelmed and impressed and happy.

I went to the Rebbe after that, and I said, "The Rebbe promised that my sister will find a match if I find a match for Estelle Greenberg."

And the Rebbe smiled and said, "Yes, she'll find a match."

Not long after that, she met the man who would be her husband.

Mrs. Rochel Fogelman and her husband Rabbi Hershel Fogelman, of blessed memory, were Chabad emissaries in Worcester, Massachusetts, since 1947. She was interviewed in her home in July, 2008.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

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 the Levites for safekeeping in the Ark of the Covenant.

The mitzvah of hak'hel ("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."

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

SHABBOS MEVORCHIM PARSHAS

NITZAVIM - VAYEILECH • 24 ELUL • 15 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT: MINCHA: 6.00 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 6.30 PM

SHABBOS DAY: TEHILLIM: 8.00 AM
LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9.15 AM
SHACHARIS: 10.00 AM
WE DO NOT BLESS THE MONTH OF TISHREI!
FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING
MINCHA: 5.50 PM

WEEKDAYS: SHACHARIS: 8.00/9.15/10.00 PM
MINCHA: 6.00 PM
MAARIV: 6.45 PM

WEDNESDAY EREV R"H: SLICHOS: 40 MIN BEFORE SHACHARIS
SHACHARIS: 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
MINCHA: 6.00 PM
MAARIV: 6.40 PM

THURSDAY 1ST DAY R"H: SHACHARIS: 9.00 AM
SHOFAR: (APPROX) 11.15 AM
MINCHAH: 5.45 PM
FOLLOWED BY TASHLICH

FRIDAY 2ND DAY OF R"H: SHACHARIS: 9.00 AM
SHOFAR: (APPROX) 11.00 AM
MINCHAH: 5.45 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 15 - 16 September		Rosh Hashanah September		
	15th Begins	16th Ends	20th Begins	21st Begins*	22nd Shabbos Beggins*
Melbourne	5:53	6:50	5:57	6:55*	5:58*
Adelaide	5:49	6:45	5:52	6:49*	5:54*
Brisbane	5:23	6:16	5:25	6:18*	5:26*
Darwin	6:25	7:14	6:25	7:14*	6:25*
Gold Coast	5:21	6:14	5:23	6:17*	5:24*
Perth	5:51	6:45	5:54	6:48*	5:55*
Sydney	5:29	6:24	5:32	6:28*	5:33*
Canberra	5:37	6:33	5:40	6:37*	5:42*
Launceston	5:43	6:43	5:48	6:48*	5:50*
Auckland	5:54	6:51	5:58	6:55*	5:59*
Wellington	5:52	6:52	5:57	6:57*	5:59
Hobart	5:42	6:43	5:47	6:48*	5:49*
Byron Bay	5:20	6:14	5:23	6:16*	5:24*

*Light after the prescribed time, from a pre-existing flame