

LAMPLIGHTER

27 Elul
Parshas
Nitzavim
1364
7 September
5778/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read the portion of Nitzavim. The portion contains a description of the ingathering of exiles to take place when Moshiach ushers in the Redemption. "Then G-d will restore your captivity... and will return and gather you from all the nations." Our Sages comment on the word "and will return - va'shav": "From this we learn that the G-dly Presence is in exile together with the Jewish people." G-d will only be redeemed when the entire Jewish nation is restored, as "He has dictated the terms of His own Redemption - when He will return with them."

What is so radical about the concept of G-d being in exile together with the Jews? Had not G-d already promised, back in the days of the Patriarchs, that He would accompany the Jewish people throughout their travails - "I will be with you" - "And behold, I am with you"? G-d specifically stated that He would accompany the Children of Israel during the Egyptian exile. What then, are we to learn from the above verse?

The fact that G-d is always with the Jews, even in their exile, implies two different things. On the one hand, G-d stands above the exile and its limitations, guarding and protecting His flock, who are likened to "one sheep among seventy wolves." Yet at the same time, the term "and will return" reflects the fact that G-d, too, is affected by the exile, having been banished from His dwelling place in the Holy Temple. G-d suffers together with the Jewish people and will continue to do so until G-d and the Jewish people are simultaneously restored to their rightful place.

Yet this explanation presents a paradox. According to the principle that "a prisoner cannot free himself from prison," how can G-d, Who is Himself in exile, bring about the Final Redemption? Our Sages addressed this problem by explaining that G-d "dictated His own Redemption." Even before the exile occurred, G-d determined how long it would last and fixed the date of the Final Redemption for Himself and for the Jewish people.

Our Sages further explained that, contrary to what one might think, G-d will not first redeem Himself and then redeem the Jews. "He will return together with them" - both will occur concurrently. The Divine Presence is in exile as long as even one Jew remains in exile.

Rashi, the great commentator, continues: "Great and difficult is the day of the ingathering of the exiles, for it is as if G-d will take every single Jew by the hand, wherever he may be." The redemption of the Jewish people is the redemption of the Divine Presence. May we speedily witness the rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the ingathering of the exiles through Moshiach.

Standing Firm

By Mordechai Wollenberg

This week's Torah reading begins Atem nitzavim, "You are standing here today, all of you... from the heads of tribes... to the woodcutters and water-drawers."

The commentaries explain that nitzavim in Hebrew means "standing firm." This verse teaches us that our standing firm is conditional upon it being all of you standing together. Each of us, from the highest to the lowliest, has our part to play and our own potential to fulfill.

The Talmud's Ethics of the Fathers tells us, "Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot." Rather than worrying about why we are not standing in somebody else's shoes, our task is to fulfill our potential at the level we are at, in the situation where we are now, knowing that even if it may seem insignificant, each of us contributes on our own level and in our own way to the greater picture. In order to "stand firm" as a nation, we need the contribution of each person, on every level.

The story was told of Rabbi Aryeh Levin (known as "the tzaddik from Jerusalem") who informed the doctor that "my wife's leg is hurting us." This idea applies to all of us, as a community. When one person suffers, another feels the pain, even at a distance. When an event takes place in a distant country, this affects us as much as if it were to happen next door.

There is no "us and them." Anything which undermines decency and the sanctity of human life, the very fabric of our community, has an effect on all of us, whether we are directly involved or not. Each person needs to be intact, in order for us to achieve our communal potential. If one person is suffering or is otherwise affected by something, this has an impact on all of us.

Slice of LIFE

To Melt a Heart

By Tuvia Bolton

One of the holiest holidays in Judaism is the two day holiday of Rosh HaShanna (Jewish New Year). Jews spend much time in Synagogue asking G-d to make the world into a good, blessed, happy place and the peak of the holiday is when the Ram's Horn Shofar is sounded.

This commandment of 'Blowing the Shofar' is perhaps the most 'Jewish' commandment in the Bible. There are many heart - rending stories of Jews risking their lives throughout the generations to perform this commandment; smuggling shofars into concentration camps etc.

On Rabbi Bryski's first Rosh HaShanna in his then brand-new Chabad House in California some fifty people attended services. He was overjoyed with the success and happily announced that after the meal and afternoon services, anyone that wanted could accompany him in the ritual of 'Tashlich' (which consists of walking to the nearest river or lake and saying a short prayer).

About half of his new congregation agreed to go with him, some from nostalgia (perhaps they remembered grandpa doing it) others from curiosity and several hours later they met at the Rabbi's house and set off.

It was about an hour's walk but it was a pleasant day and half way there one of the group claimed he knew of a 'shortcut' they could take through a housing development.

It ended up not being a shortcut at all and as they were trying to find their way out they noticed an old woman on crutches standing in the street waving and saying something to them.

As they approached her feeble voice became audible. "Ahhh! Thank G-d!! Thank G-d!! You are a miracle!! Just what I prayed for!! Boruch HaShem."

They all greeted her with a happy holiday and she related that she had just undergone an operation on her legs and it was the first Rosh HaShanna in her life that she had been unable to walk to Synagogue to hear the blowing of the Shofar. So she prayed to G-d for a miracle and "Here you are!! G-d sent me a Rabbi so I could hear Shofar!

But Rabbi Bryski didn't have a shofar! He

didn't think he would need it and He had left it in the synagogue!!

He began to feel bad. He should have thought of this! What type of 'Shliach' was he?! Emissaries of the Rebbe all over the world take to the streets with Shofars on Rosh HaShanna and give hundred's of thousands of Jews a chance to hear the G-dly sound. And he Forgot!

But what could he do? It was too late to walk back to get a Shofar in time to do the commandment (which is only done in the day). He wouldn't make it.

So he apologized profusely, gave the woman all sorts of blessings; for a speedy recovery, for a good, happy, healthy new year, for much good news etc. etc. and explained that really she is exempt from the commandment anyway because it's impossible for her to attend services etc. etc.

The woman understood, blessed the Rabbi in return and they bade each other a happy new year and parted ways.

But Rabbi Bryski felt really bad. He had failed! It was like a soldier forgetting his gun! He had to make it up.

The next day after morning services instead of going home to eat the holiday meal he told his wife what he had to do, took a Shofar and went back to the housing project to find the woman.

It wasn't easy. He didn't know her name, he forgot to ask her, and it was the first day she had been out of the house since her operation so saying she was on crutches wasn't much of an identifying sign but after almost an hour of asking and searching he was directed to her door.

But he was in for a very unpleasant surprise.

An old man with a scowling face opened the door, took one look at him and almost yelled "Whad-ya-want!"

"Hi! Happy Rosh HaShanna!" the Rabbi said, forcing a smile. "I'm Rabbi Bryski and I met your wife on the street yesterday. She's on crutches, right?"

"WHADAYAWANT!" the old man yelled.

"Well!" The Rabbi answered timidly pulling out the small ram's horn from his pocket. "I just wanted to sound the Shofar for"

"Go home!!" He mumbled and slammed the door in the Rabbi's face!

Rabbi Bryski couldn't understand what happened but with no alternative he hung his head and turned around to leave. He had failed again!

Suddenly he heard a window slide open and an old woman's voice creaked. "Rabbi! Ohhh! Am I glad to see you!! Did you come to blow the Shofar for me?"

The Rabbi walked to the window and almost whispered.

"Yes... but someone, I think it was your husband, just told me to leave! He even slammed the door in my face. Maybe I should just..."

"Ahhh! That's my husband Max. I'll talk to him. Just don't go away. Max is angry but I'll talk to him."

Sure enough, a minute or two later the

door opened and Rabbi Bryski entered. He tried to be as pleasant as possible to Max, who was standing there looking to a side. As soon as the Rabbi was completely in Max just went into the kitchen and closed the door.

The Rabbi took out his shofar, the woman covered her head, said the blessings and the ancient sounds of the Shofar filled the room.

The old woman dried her eyes, thanked him profusely and explained.

"Listen Rabbi, please don't be angry with my husband. He's very mad at you religious people and, well, I don't know but maybe he's right. You see, we have a son. A handsome boy, brilliant! He's the apple of our eye! Max is crazy about him. But a year ago our son got religious.

"That's right, he started getting really serious about being Jewish and.... Well.... now he won't even come to eat by us! He says we aren't kosher for him and now we never see him anymore. We tried to talk to him, to his friends, to his Rabbis but they don't want to talk. So Max got really mad. That's why he didn't let you in!"

Rabbi Bryski got a brainstorm. He asked the woman to call her husband out. Max came out of the kitchen and the Rabbi asked him,

"Listen, if your son brings his own dishes and his own food and eats with you... is that okay?" Max shook his head yes. "Listen, Max. I promise that tonight immediately after the holiday I'll talk to your son and convince him to come here. What do you say?"

Max was happy. He almost cried as he pumped the Rabbi's hand in gratitude.

"Now" Rabbi Bryski said "I'll blow the shofar for you too, good?"

Max thought a few seconds, pulled his car keys out of his pocket and said. "Listen Rabbi, I got a brother that lives a few blocks down the street. He didn't hear Shofar either. Let's go to his house. If you want, you can drive" and tried to hand him the keys.

But the Rabbi explained that it is forbidden to drive a car on the Jewish holidays, convinced Max to walk and twenty minutes later they arrived at his brother's home.

When his brother heard what had happened and how the Rabbi promised to fix things up he excused himself, left the house and returned ten minutes later with some twenty Jewish neighbors none of which had heard the Shofar!

If the Rabbi had 'remembered' his Shofar the day before none of these people would have participated in this wonderful commandment. That year was one of the best Rosh HaShanna's in a lot of peoples' lives.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 1364

Content printed with permission from

Chabad.ORG

The Official homepage for worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch movement that promotes Judaism and provides daily Torah lectures and Jewish insights



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

But He Reads the Newspaper in Synagogue!

After the very long interval, I was pleased to receive your letter of June 17th, in which you write about your wedding in a happy and auspicious hour. I was also especially interested to read about your having settled down to a family life based on the foundations of our Torah, which is called the Law of Life.

Judging from the description of your experiences with a sense of humor, I trust that both you and your wife are sincerely determined to live up to the Jewish way of life, which will ensure a happy and harmonious life, both materially and spiritually. The important thing is to start with a firm determination, and then, as our Sages said, "One Mitzvah brings another in its train," and these are the channels and vessels to receive and enjoy G-d's blessings.

You write about meeting a Jew in the course of your travels who comes to the synagogue to help make up a minyan, yet at the same time reads the newspaper. Everyone, or course, reacts to an experience in a way that is closest to him. Thus, for my part, I make the following two extreme observations: First I see in it the extreme Jewish attachment which one finds in every Jew. For here is a person who has wandered off to a remote part of the world, and has become so far removed, not only geographically, but also mentally and intellectually, as to have no concept of what prayer is or what a house of G-d is, etc.; yet one finds in him that Jewish spark, or as the Old Rebbe, the founder of Chabad, expressed it in his Tanya: "The Divine soul which is truly a part of G-d." This Divine soul, which is the inheritance of every Jew, seeks expression as best it can, and in the case of this particular Jew, it seeks expression in at least enabling other Jews to pray congregationally, and he therefore goes out of his way to help them and at the same time to be counted with them.

My other observation, following from the above, is as follows; If, where the odds are so great against Jewish observance, yet a Jew can remain active and conscious of his Jewishness, it can easily be seen what great things could have been accomplished with this particular Jew if, at the proper time, he should have received the right education in his early life, or at least the proper spiritual guidance in his adult life. This consideration surely emphasizes the mutual responsibility which rests upon all Jews, and particularly on those who can help others.

I will not deny that the above is said not in a spirit of philosophizing, but with a view to stimulate your thinking as to your own possibilities in your particular environment, and what the proper attitude should be.

We must never despair of any Jew, and at the same time we must do all we can to take the fullest advantage of our capacities and abilities to strengthen the Jewish consciousness among all Jews with whom we come in contact. For one can never tell how far-reaching such influence can be. To conclude this letter on the happy note of the beginning of your letter relating to your marriage, may I again reiterate my prayerful wishes that you establish and conduct your home on everlasting foundations of the Torah and Mitzvos, and thus enjoy a tally happy and productive life, both materially and spiritually, which go hand in hand together.

I trust both you and your wife will find the enclosed copies of my recent message interesting and useful. Hoping to hear good news from you always.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Why Do Jews Always Get Noticed?

Question: Why do the Jewish people seem to loom so large on the world stage? The numbers don't add up. Here's a nation that comprises less than 0.2% of the world's population, yet we command so much attention you'd think there were billions of us. That's like a room of two thousand people, with one puny guy sitting in the corner whom everyone wants to talk to (or pick on)!

Answer: Jews do strange things sometimes. One example is the widespread practice of "credit combing."

Many Jews have a habit of combing through the credits at the end of a movie, searching for Jewish names. At each discovery they beam with pride: Look! Assistant Gaffer.....Mo Goldstein! Catering Consultant.....Beth Cohen!

This odd practice comes from a very deep place in the Jewish psyche. Jews share a spiritual bond with each other. When we meet Jews anywhere in the world, there is an immediate connection, a kinship, a sense of oneness. We are like one big family.

When Jews are in the news, we take it personally. When Israel is under attack, we feel the pain wherever we are. When a Jew wins a bronze medal in croquet, we all share the victory. And when we see a Jewish name in the movie credits, we get excited.

Maybe other nations do this too. But I don't think so. This profound sense of connection makes the Jewish nation unique among the peoples of the world.

This is the reason why statistics cannot apply to the Jewish people. No Jew is merely an individual. We are a collective soul, a part of something bigger than ourselves. We may be a tiny blip on the census, but we don't function according to normal demographic principles. Our strength is not measured by our numbers, but by our unity.

The destiny of the Jewish people is to be a strong voice of goodness and morality among the family of nations. When we unite with our community and commit ourselves to the shared vision of our people, then we are a formidable presence. Not because we are one billion, but because we are one.

A WORD

from the Director

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.

May we all use out this awesome day to its fullest potential and receive all the desired blessings from the Almighty, for our ourselves and our families; for happiness, prosperity and success.

On behalf of the staff of Lamplighter Weekly, I would like to wish all of our readers with a Shanah Tova U'Mitukah!

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



The Prayerbook of Screams

By Yerachmiel Tilles

The Machzor, the prayerbook for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, has been soaked with tears down through the generations. Even so, one glance at the unique Machzor in the possession of Ze'ev Glick in Jerusalem is enough to guarantee that your heart will begin to pound in reaction to this machzor that so strongly emanates tears and Jewish suffering.

The prayerbook is small, the pages delicate and thin, and the letters are tiny. The binding is wood. The opening page is inscribed with the title "[Machzor] Za'akat Hashevi": "The Captive's Screams [High Holiday Prayer book]". The bottom section of the page bears the words, "Written in a prison camp in Russia, 1944, the fifth year of the fearsome World War, because there was not in our possession a single Machzor with which to pray on the holy days of Divine Favor, to scream out to G-d Al-mighty, all of us together, that He should redeem us immediately and gather our oppressed" [signed] "Mordechai ben R. Chaim-Zvi HaKohen Glick."

Ze'ev Glick holds the precious heirloom in his hands with great care and tells its story.

Before the war his father Benzion together with his uncle R. Mordechai Glick, were living in the town of Oyhal in Hungary. With the outbreak of the war, the two were arrested and dispatched to a labor camp in the Ukraine. In 1942 they were driven by Russian soldiers to Siberia, in what turned out to be a long death march.

Only a small minority survived the rigors and oppression of the journey. Mordechai carried his sick brother, Benzion, on his back most of the way. Benzion by then had shrunk to a mere 36 kilogram (80 lb) skeleton of bones!

When they finally reached the prison camp in Siberia, conditions did not improve much. From the total of 3000 Jews who managed to arrive there, after three months only around 300 were still alive. All the rest had perished from the combination of hard work, illnesses, starvation and the freezing cold.

Mordechai took upon himself the seemingly hopeless task of encouraging his fellow prisoners. One of his "methods" was to compile a four-year calendar, so they could always know when would be Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Yom Tov.

As Rosh HaShana 5705 (Sept. 18 1944) approached, there were zero prayerbooks available. The one request on the tongues of all the captives was to have a Machzor, for how else would they be able to recite the prayers for the Days of Awe. That is when Mordechai resolved to try to write the entire Machzor in longhand by heart!

Immediately arose the problem of how to acquire paper? Mordechai began to withhold part of his already inadequate food rations, and traded the portions daily with the guards in exchange for cigarettes. Then he stripped the papers from around the tobacco and stocked-piled them. When he felt he had enough papers, he began to inscribe on them, in tiny but clear block letters, fully

voweled the text of the Machzor. Just before Rosh HaShana he completed it, including even all the lengthy piyutim that are said only once a year.

After finishing the writing, he managed, to persuade a few soldiers also in exchange for food, to prepare for him two slabs of wood of precise size. These he used to bind the pages, front and back. He carved into them a depiction of the Ten Commandment tablets, and under that a Magen David ("Jewish Star"). He also engraved two hands with fingers spread, so it would be known that the writer was a Kohen.

[Can this not be considered one of the most incredible accomplishments in modern Jewish history? To write out every single Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur prayer by heart, by hand, on the small, thin papers used for rolling cigarettes, in a brief time period, and then to create and engrave wood bindings- - and all under starvation, sleep-deprived tortuous conditions! What's more, in a later year, after they reached freedom, the Machzor was checked, whereupon it was discovered that he had remembered correctly every single word and letter, and even every vowel!]

On Rosh HaShana and on Yom Kippur he led the prayers, using his unique Machzor, surrounded by the wailing of his fellow captives. The other Jewish prisoners answered responsively whenever they could, including all the "Amen"s. Still the myriads of tears greatly outnumbered their words.

Mordechai and Benzion managed to survive the Siberian ordeal. Mordechai, who lost his wife and all of his children in the war, immediately left for Israel, where he remarried. Sadly, he never had more children and passed away relatively young on 21 Sivan 5720 (1960). The Machzor next passed into the possession of his brother, who by then was already living in Israel, where he married and fathered two children. Benzion lived to a ripe old age, passing away on 26 Nissan 5766 (2006). The precious Machzor is now being lovingly preserved by one of his sons, Ze'ev.

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."

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 7 - 8 September	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:46	6:43
Adelaide	5:43	6:39
Brisbane	5:19	6:12
Darwin	6:25	7:14
Gold Coast	5:17	6:11
Perth	5:46	6:40
Sydney	5:23	6:19
Canberra	5:31	6:27
Launceston	5:35	6:35
Auckland	5:47	6:44
Wellington	5:44	6:44
Hobart	5:33	6:34
Byron Bay	5:16	6:10

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS NITZAVIM • 27 ELUL • 7 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	5.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	6.20 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	TEHILLIM	8.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.23 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	FARBRENGEN AFTER DAVENING	
	MINCHA:	5.45 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.50 PM
	MAARIV	6.35 PM