

LampLighter

24 Elul
Nitzavim-Vayelech

946

3 September
5770/2010

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Nitzavim and VaYelech. The Torah portion of Nitzavim is always read on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashana. Indeed, its very first verse reveals its appropriateness: "You are standing this day, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d." "This day" refers to the Day of Judgment, Rosh Hashana. On Rosh Hashana every soul, great and small alike, stands before G-d, as it states, "Your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers...your little ones, your wives...from the hewer of wood to the drawer of water."

Why do we stand before G-d? "So that you may enter the covenant of the L-rd your G-d." When all Jews stand before Him as a complete and unified entity, we become worthy of entering into His covenant on Rosh Hashana.

A covenant is designed to preserve the feeling of love that exists between two people. They establish a covenant at a time when their love is strongest, so that it will never weaken. This bond connects them to each other and ensures that their love will last forever.

So too is it with G-d's love for the Jewish people. His love for us is strongest on Rosh Hashana, as the previous month was devoted to removing our sins.

But how do we arouse G-d's desire to establish a covenant with us? By being united with one another. How are we to accomplish this, given the differences between individuals? This can be understood by the following analogy:

The human body is composed of many different limbs and organs. Some are more important, like the head; others are simpler, like the foot. But the head, no matter how important, needs the feet in order to move. The body achieves perfection only when all its limbs act in harmony.

In the same way, even the most important Jews ("your heads") require the simplest ones ("the drawer of water") in order to comprise a complete entity. And it is this unity that arouses G-d's desire to make a covenant with His people.

Our job is to achieve this unity between "head" and "foot." Every Jew must work on himself until he can recognize his fellow's unique qualities. It is beyond our capacity to judge a person's true worth. Even if one considers himself a "head" and the other fellow a "foot" (as it is human nature to inflate our own self-worth), the "head" still needs the "foot" in order to comprise a complete being.

Let us concern ourselves with correcting our own flaws and not heed the perceived flaws of others. Doing so will ensure that there is no time to look at others' imperfections!

In this manner we will achieve both self-perfection and perfection as a nation, and G-d will grant the entire Jewish people a good and sweet year.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Who Believes in Moshiach?

By Yanki Tauber

Dear Rabbi,

As someone who was raised in the Reform community, and was told as a young child that there is no Messiah and no Heaven... I wonder if I will ever be truly able to believe in Moshiach. It seems that there is a strong influence of what I was taught as a child. Will I ever be able to accept this concept without doubt?

- Susan

Dear Susan,

We are all conditioned by our upbringing to be receptive to certain words and catchphrases, and to be resistant towards another set of words and catchphrases. In the environment in which you grew up, "Moshiach" was an alien, or even negative, term. But these are only words. If you go beyond the words, and think about what they really mean, you will find that their meaning is shared by every community and every family. You will find that you are in fact most receptive to it.

Ask yourself: Do you believe that we can do better? That every human being, deep down, wants to, and can, be better, kinder, more noble, than he/she is? Think about your own behaviour: how many times, in the wake of doing an unkind or otherwise negative thing, have you consoled yourself by saying "That's not the real me"? Well, if you think so, then it stands to reason that other people—perhaps even all people—also think so, doesn't it?

Ask yourself: Are you outraged by the cruelty and evil in our world? Does not this outrage reflect a deep-seated belief that things don't have to be this way? That we—all of us—are capable of better? Because if not, then there's really nothing to get upset about. If the world is evil, then that's just the way things are. But we all know that this is not so. We all know that the world is intrinsically good; hence our frustration and anguish when it doesn't act that way.

Do you think that your life is purposeful? Do you think that there's a reason why you're here? Of course you do! If you didn't, why do you bother getting out of bed in the morning? Why do you bother grappling with all the obstacles, great and small, that life sends your way? And are you the only one who gets out of bed in the morning? Billions of people do it every day! Obviously, they all believe something: they believe that all this is going somewhere, and someday we're going to get there!

For thousands of years Jews have had a word for all this. They called it "Moshiach." Unfortunately, two things happened that made it an alien word for many of us. One thing that happened was that we drifted away from the knowledge and wisdom that our grandparents have been carrying with them for 4000 years, so that we forgot what many of the words really meant. And even before that happened, the word "Moshiach" or "Messiah" was wielded by a faith which sprang from ours, and then decided to slaughter us and persecute us so as to convince us to join them. So the word lost its meaning, on the one hand, and gained a negative meaning, on the other.

So don't think about the word. Think about what you believe, what you know deep down to be true.



Small Talk

By Yitta Halberstam & Judith Leventhal

In Israel, where fertile land is at a premium and there are no fields for grazing cattle, beef is a scarce commodity and must be imported from South America. Much of Israel's beef comes in fact from Paraguay, and it was to that country that three Israeli rabbi-butchers regularly travelled. They worked there in an enormous slaughterhouse that allowed them to slaughter cattle according to Jewish law, thus providing Israel's citizens with kosher meat. They had worked in the same slaughterhouse for three years, and despite the hazards of the place — its sheer size, the treacherous machinery, the formidable proportions of the cattle — they felt safe.

One day, however, something untoward happened. Inspecting some meat inside an enormous freezer, the rabbis were startled by the sound of a thunderous clang as the massive freezer door suddenly slammed shut behind them, imprisoning them inside.

They stared at each other in horror. They shouted for help. They pounded vigorously on the door. But no one responded. Neither their voices nor their noisy efforts seemed to be reaching a single ear.

"Surely someone will pass by soon and hear our banging and thumping," one rabbi reassured the others.

"Of course!," another answered heartily. "Someone is bound to find us soon enough."

But no one did.

Hours passed. The rabbis had shouted and thumped and pounded endlessly, but not a soul had heard their cries.

Overcome by lack of oxygen and the freezing temperatures, the rabbis grew weak. Their voices became fainter as their energy slowly seeped away. Their initial optimism faded. Checking their watches, they realized it was closing time at the massive plant. With this realization, all hope died.

They talked sorrowfully about the wives and children they would be leaving behind. They pulled out the miniature Psalms they always carried in their pockets and began to prepare for the worst. A strange calm descended on them. They had already

accepted their fate.

Outside the slaughterhouse, Emilio, the manager, was grappling with the padlock as he prepared to secure the building for the night. As was his custom, prior to locking up, he had walked through the plant to ensure that there were no stragglers left behind and seeing none he shut the facility down. Walking toward the parking lot he passed the security guard. Emilio was surprised to see Golya, the security guard, standing at his usual post.

"Golya!" he exclaimed, "Weren't you supposed to be starting your vacation today?"

"Indeed I was, sir," Golya replied, "but at the last minute, my temporary replacement called in sick. Personnel asked if I could do them a favour and stay one more day. The new guy will start tomorrow instead, and then I'm off!"

"Well, have a good one!" Emilio said heartily, as he waved good-bye and headed to his car.

"Sir!" the guard called after him uneasily, "you're not leaving for the night, are you?" Emilio was startled by the query. Golya had never questioned him like this before.

"Why, yes, Golya," he replied. "Of course I am locking up for the night. It's way past closing time."

"But Sir," Golya said anxiously, "I'm quite sure that there are some people inside."

"What are you're talking about, Golya?" Emilio said. "I checked the plant myself, as I always do, every night. Everyone's gone."

"Please, Sir, I'm quite sure. Please check again."

Emilio thought that Golya was acting strangely, but he was a conscientious, dependable man who had never given him pause or trouble. To humour him, Emilio backtracked to the slaughterhouse and checked it thoroughly a second time. And once again, he saw nothing and no one.

Returning to the security checkpoint, Emilio reassured Golya, "Everything's fine. There's no one inside."

Golya, usually a timid man, was uncharacteristically forceful.

"Everything's not fine, Sir. I am sure there are some people inside. Please check again."

Emilio studied Golya with interest. Golya had never been so strong or assertive before, not in all the years he had known him. His behaviour was so odd.

"Please, Sir!" Golya begged.

Once again, Emilio returned to the slaughterhouse, walked through it carefully, and reassured himself that despite Golya's misgivings, nothing was amiss.

But such assurances did not soothe the by-now-intractable Golya.

"I am telling you there are people inside!" he insisted loudly.

Emilio was getting annoyed. What was the matter with the security guard? "Look, Golya, this is getting ridiculous! I've checked three times."

"Then let me go with you, Sir, and help you check again!" Golya pressed.

Golya was acting so strangely that Emilio was at a loss as to what to do. Finally, he succumbed to Golya's pleas. "Okay, come along," he said.

Golya's search was more thorough than Emilio's. He inspected closets, checked the floors, hunched down next to massive machines to see if someone was trapped underneath. The manager was utterly baffled by the security guard's strange behaviour. Was he out of his mind?

Then they advanced toward the freezer, which Emilio has bypassed before.

"That's it!" shouted Golya with conviction as he flung open the door in triumph. Inside, blue and unconscious, lay the three rabbis.

"But how did you know?" Emilio asked Golya later, long after the excitement had subsided and the rabbis had been rushed to the hospital, where they were resuscitated.

Golya explained, "These rabbis have been coming here for three years. Every time they come, they come over to talk with me. When they arrive in the morning, they always stop and say; 'Hi, Golya, good morning, how are you, how's your family, how's work going, have a good day, see you later.' When they leave in the evening, it's the same thing. They always stop for a few last words. 'So, Golya,' they say, 'how did your day go? Anything exciting happen? What's for supper?' and so on. They always make me feel like I'm important, like I count. And they've been doing this for three years straight. And even if I'm gone from my post for a minute just as they are about to leave, they wait until I'm back to say goodbye. All these years, it's never happened once that they didn't make sure to wish me good night before they left the plant."

"Sir," Golya continued, "when you came out of the building and locked up for the night, I was worried. 'Golya,' I said to myself, 'for three years those rabbis have stopped to say goodnight to you without fail. Why should tonight be different?' So I knew that something must be terribly wrong," he concluded, "and that they must be trapped somewhere inside."

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone (03) 9525 8190
Email: lamplighter_weekly@hotmail.com

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

ISSUE 946

MOSHIACH MATTERS

What is a person to do to be spared the pangs of Moshiach? Let him engage in Torah [study] and acts of loving-kindness!"

(Sanhedrin 98b)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



In the days of Selichoth, 5716 [1956]

To My Brethren, Everywhere

G-d bless you all,

Greeting and Blessing:

As the old year draws to a close and the New Year draws near, every person draws up a "balance-sheet" for the year gone by, which guides him in his resolution for the forthcoming year.

In order that such a "balance-sheet," and the resolutions based on it, be as close to the truth as possible, one must be wary of overestimating one's virtues and accomplishments. But neither should one exaggerate one's deficiencies and failings, for a depressing mood, not to say despondency, G-d forbid, is one of the serious obstacles on the road to self-improvement.

It is possible, however, that even without exaggeration the "balance-sheet" may reveal that the liabilities' side is quite substantial, perhaps even outweighing the assets' side. But even in such a case there should be no room for despondency. For together with the feeling of sincere repentance and a firm resolution to change for the better-which must be the necessary outcome of such self-searching, there is an encouraging feature in the general conduct of man, which should be borne in mind at this time. Every positive and good action- positive and good in accordance with the definitions of our Torah, the Law of Life-is indestructible and eternal, being connected with, and stemming from, the Divine "spark" that is in man, the Neshama (soul), which is eternal; while any negative and destructive action, being connected with, and stemming from, the Nefesh Habahamis (animal soul) and evil inclination in man, which are essentially limited and transient, is likewise of a temporary and transient nature, and can and must be corrected and completely wiped out through sincere and adequate repentance.

Bearing this in mind, every one, regardless of what his personal "balance-sheet" reveals, will find encouragement and renewed hope in the future, knowing that his good deeds in the past year are eternal, as is the light and benefit which they have brought into his own life, into his family and all our people, since all Jews are closely related and form one whole.

In light of the above, moreover, this helpful feeling is further enhanced in that it is of a universal nature. All good actions unite to make this world as a whole progressively better. Even when a religious and moral relapse seems very much in evidence, with many yet to become wiser and more religious, the world as a whole is essentially becoming more purified with every passing year, every day and every minute, for no instant passes without many good deeds.

No matter what the state of affairs seems to be at any given moment, eventually the good must triumph and the evil be eradicated, as this is the avowed will of the Creator and Master of the Universe. Eventually everyone must repent, and G-d "who forgives abundantly" will accept repentance, "for none shall be rejected by Him."

Through sincere repentance for the past and good deeds in the present and future, everyone has the ability to make the coming year, a year of very great accomplishments indeed, and G-d, "who desires repentance," helps to carry out such determined resolutions.

And on the scale of Divine justice on the forthcoming Rosh Hashanah, such determination will ensure still further the repenter's acquittal and his being inscribed for a happy and pleasant new year.

With the blessing of Kesivo VaChasimo Toivo [may you be inscribed and sealed for good],

A WORD from the Director

This Shabbat is an auspicious one. It is the Shabbat before Rosh Hashana, and therefore the last Shabbat of this year, 5770. The date of this Shabbat is the 25th of Elul.

The 25th of Elul is the date of the first day of creation of the world. The creation of the world is mentioned in the beginning of chapter five of Ethics of the Fathers and at the end of chapter six. We complete our study of Ethics for this year by studying both of these chapters this Shabbat.

The fifth chapter begins with a description of creation, as it says, "The world was created by ten utterances." The sixth chapter ends with the whole purpose of creation: "Everything which the Holy One, blessed be He, created, was created for His glory."

From this we realize two things. First, we have a task set before us. Each and every one of us was created for the purpose of glorifying and sanctifying G-d. We do this by observing His Torah and Mitzvot in a public and open way.

The verse doesn't just say that man was created for this purpose, but "everything which He created" was created for this purpose. Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chasidic movement once stated that we can learn a lesson on how to serve G-d from everything we encounter. When we learn from every situation in which we find ourselves, then not only will we, but also our surroundings will be elevated because we have served our purpose on earth. By teaching us a lesson in Divine Service, everyone and everything around us will have played a part in the glorification of G-d.

As the year draws to a close, let us resolve in the coming year to open our eyes, look around us, and reveal the hidden lessons that are all around us, and at the time let us pray fervently for the time when all G-dliness is revealed, with the coming of our righteous Moshiach. May it be speedily in our days.

J. I. Gutnick

Selichot

Selichot is a series of penitential prayers and liturgy which are recited on select sombre days throughout the year.

With the approach of a new year, our preparations for the High Holidays move into highest gear. Several days before Rosh Hashanah we begin to recite Selichot.

According to Ashkenazi custom, the first Selichot are recited this Saturday night after midnight Halachic time. Following the first midnight service, Selichot is recited daily before the Shacharit prayers until Rosh Hashanah (aside from the Sunday morning immediately after the 1st Selichot, which is covered by the midnight Selichot of the night beforehand).

It is important to attend synagogue for Selichot, as its text contains several important passages which may only be said in the presence of a Minyan (quorum of ten Jewish men).

Sephardim recite Selichot throughout the entire month of Elul.

Annulment of Vows

After the morning prayers, on the day before Rosh Hashanah it is customary to perform a ceremony

known as *Hatarat Nedarim* ("the annulment of vows") to repeal certain vows which one has taken upon oneself so that one can begin the Day of Judgment free from the sin of unfulfilled vows.

Many communities have the custom of doing so before an assembly of ten individuals. The one who made the vow recites a declaration stating that he had possibly accepted vows upon himself, but had he known that he would be unable to fulfil them, he would never have accepted them upon himself. The person is then told three times that his vows are repealed.

It has become customary to recite the formula that is printed in the prayer books, for that formula describes in detail the various types of vows and the manner in which they can be repealed.

It is not customary for women to do *Hatarat Nedarim*.

In Sephardic communities, it is customary to repeal one's vows twice each year: forty days before Rosh Hashanah, on the 19th of Av; and forty days before Yom Kippur, on the 1st of Elul.

It Happened Once...



The Chassidic community in Poland was in a state of shock. The great Chassidic master, Rabbi Moshe of Lelov, had decided to ascend and settle in the Holy Land. How could they possibly go on without his leadership?

To his closest disciples the Rebbe revealed that when he was a small boy, his father, Rabbi David of Lelov, had said to him: "I did not merit to see the Holy Land, but you must go there. Through your divine service which you will perform there, you will succeed in bringing Moshiach sooner and hastening the Redemption."

The Rebbe passed through many towns and villages on his way, accompanied by his Chassidim. At the town of Sadigur, he stopped to say his farewell to the famed master, Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin. When the Ruzhiner Rebbe heard of Rabbi Moshe's plans to journey to the Holy Land, he begged him to wait and allow him to go along. But Rabbi Moshe was impatient to continue his journey. "My white beard is unwilling to allow any postponement," he replied; and so he continued his journey alone.

From time to time, when the retinue stopped, Rabbi Moshe delivered discourses of Chassidic teachings. He expressed his intentions to his disciples, telling them that upon his arrival in Jerusalem he would, "first go to the *Kotel* (Western Wall) and sound the *Shofar* so that all the supernal worlds will tremble. I am also bringing with me the Kiddush cup which belonged to my teacher and Rebbe, the "Seer" of Lublin. This cup is filled with great holiness which will enable me to work many wonders. I will refuse to move from that spot until the Moshiach comes!"

Rabbi Moshe continued his journey until he reached the seaport. There he bid a final farewell to his disciples and, together with his family, boarded a vessel bound for the Holy Land. After a long voyage, they reached the longed-for shores of the Holy Land. Proceeding to Jerusalem, they reached the gates of the Holy City.

No sooner did they approach the city gates when the precious goblet which had belonged to the "Seer" slipped from Rabbi Moshe's sack and shattered on the stones.

They tried to continue their journey, but Rabbi Moshe was suddenly overcome with a severe illness. They had no choice but to break their trip until he recovered. But the Chassidic master's health continued to deteriorate. In a few short days, Rabbi Moshe felt that he would not live much longer. He entreated his family to quickly carry him to the *Kotel*, and this they did, fearing that his end was, indeed, approaching.

But as they hurriedly carried the *Tzaddik* toward the *Kotel* and were about to reach the final turn, they were attacked by Arabs hurling stones down from the surrounding houses, and were lucky to escape with their lives.

Rabbi Moshe of Lelov passed from this world 72 days after his arrival in the Holy Land, without having realized his fondest dream and without having succeeded in bringing the Redemption, for it was ordained by Heaven that the time for Moshiach's arrival had not yet come.

As a member of the Machne Israel Special Development Fund — a special fund established to build new Chabad centres around the world, Mr. George Rohr had the privilege to meet the Lubavitcher Rebbe on one occasion just after Rosh Hashanah. Mr. Rohr thought that instead of asking the Rebbe for something, he would give the Rebbe a present of his own. A short time before Rosh Hashanah, he had been instrumental in setting up a beginners' service at

his *shul* in Manhattan. On Rosh Hashanah, 120 Jews attended this new service. Mr. Rohr decided to announce this to the Rebbe and was sure the Rebbe would receive much *nachas* from this good news. When his turn to meet the Rebbe arrived, he confidently strode up to the Rebbe and shared with him his good news:

"Thank G-d, this Rosh Hashanah we set up a beginners' service in our *shul* and had 120 Jews with no Jewish background participate!"

Until that point the Rebbe had a broad smile on his face, but when Mr. Rohr told him the news the Rebbe's face dropped, and Mr. Rohr searched his words for anything he may have said that had upset the Rebbe.

"What?" said the Rebbe.

Mr. Rohr repeated, "...120 Jews with no Jewish background."

"No Jewish background?" asked the Rebbe. "Go and tell those Jews that they are all children of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov..."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Our father Abraham was tested with ten tests, and he withstood them all to show how great was our father, Abraham's love [for G-d]. (Ethics 5:3)

Abraham is described as "our father." Just as a father bequeaths his estate to his descendants, Abraham bequeathed his spiritual legacy to the entire Jewish people. His spiritual legacy empowers each of us, endowing us with the strength to withstand the challenges we face in our divine service. (*Sichot Shabbat Parshat Chukat, 5737*)

The Eve of Rosh Hashana

As a young boy, the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, asked his father, the Rebbe Rashab, what he was supposed to be doing on the day before Rosh Hashana.

"We recite Psalms the whole day long and feel remorse for our misdeeds of the past year, so that by the time evening falls and the New Year begins, we are free of all our bad habits," his father replied.

G-d will circumcise your heart... in order that you may live (Deut. 30:6)

When G-d will circumcise your heart, the pleasure and delight that you will take in Torah and Mitzvot will be as keenly felt as the pleasures of the physical body; you will love the Torah as much as you value your very life. (*Ohel Yaakov*)

Teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths (Deut. 31:19)

Do not think that you have completely fulfilled your obligation by writing a Torah scroll (or having one written) at the same time your children are being educated in a non-Jewish environment. The main purpose of writing a Sefer Torah is to actually teach it to your children - "put it in their mouths." (*Avnei Ezel*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH

25 ELUL • 4 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:42 PM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:20 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	TEHILIM	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LAST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:28 AM
	MINCHA:	5:40 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:39 PM
	SLICHOS:	12:20 AM
WEEKDAYS:	SLICHOS:	8:40 AM
	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	MAARIV:	6:35 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 3 SEPTEMBER 2010



Begins	Ends
5:42	6:39
5:39	6:36
5:17	6:10
6:25	7:14
5:15	6:08
5:43	6:38
5:20	6:15
5:27	6:23
5:30	6:30
5:43	6:40
5:39	6:39

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.