Points to Ponder

Nitzavim 5782

**אַתֶּ֨ם נִצָּבִ֤ים You are all Nitzavim (Standing) (29:9)** - What is the difference between a Nitzav and an Omed? Moreover, didn’t the people SEE that they were all standing? What did Moshe add by telling them Atem Nitzavim? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi** explained that the idea of Hitayatzut (standing at attention) as opposed to Omed refers to a status wherein everyone present stands at the ready to perform a particular mission together. Each person in the job dedicates himself or herself to that job fully. Here the job is to place one’s entire being at the service of Hashem or the idea of “Erin Od Milevado”.

**מֵֽחֹטֵ֣ב עֵצֶ֔יךָ עַ֖ד שֹׁאֵ֥ב מֵימֶֽיךָ From the woodchoppers to the water carriers (29:10)** - Why the distinction between the 2? Aren’t these references to people at the same stage of life? **The Shivim Panim L’torah** notes that the axe never thinks he is above the chopper who wields him and the bucket never thinks he is beneath the one drawing the water. The same lesson is important for the Jewish leadership — it needs to not think of itself as too far above or too far beneath the people to be with them.

**כִּי֩ אֶת־אֲשֶׁ֨ר יֶשְׁנ֜וֹ פֹּ֗ה עִמָּ֨נוּ֙ עֹמֵ֣ד הַיּ֔וֹם For those who are here today and even for those who are not standing here today (29:14)** - How can there be a Bris created if part of some of the people (namely those not yet born — who lack a Guf) be obligated in a Bris here**? Chida** explains that within each Guf of a person is his parents’ Guf. Since the ancestors were at Har Sinai, our bodies are included as well. Thus, says Chida, when a parent takes on a Hiddur Mitzva or practice, technically so should the children. Children are the outgrowth of their parents. **Rav Yisrael Reisman quoted Rav Chaim Kanievsky** who explained that therefore when one learns in memory of a parent, s/he does not need to mention the parent’s name since it is understood. The **Mishna Berurah** makes this point in regard to Yizkor donations. Thus, children should strive to keep to their parents’ practices in Mitzva performance.

**הַנִּ֨סְתָּרֹ֔ת לַֽה אֱלֹק֑ינוּ The HIDDEN is for Hashem, our G-d, but the REVEALED is for us and our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah(29:28)** - On a simple level, this pasuk refers to the mutual responsibility that all Jews have for one another regarding the performance of mitzvot**. Rav Moshe Stav** added that there is an additional level of explanation – a revelation of why it is that Hashem gave us the Torah only to see us misuse it and deserve punishment accordingly. He notes that it seems to the human eye that the world is run exclusively according to the laws of reward and punishment. When Bnei Yisrael act as they are supposed to, they are blessed with good things, whereas when they sin there is Hester Panim. However, even during times of Hester Panim, there is a higher order from the Ultimate Planner that guarantees that the world will reach its final perfection in some way or another. Even those tragedies which seem to us as punishment and suffering, or those things which seem extraneous or peripheral, will turn out to have been means of bringing the world to its final perfection. That is the Possuk’s intention here too. The hidden Hand that guides all of history is G-dly, and we merely have a faint awareness of it. However, "the REVEALED," i.e., observing the mitzvot and learning Torah, even though we may not see the immediate purpose in them, is in our hands to live by. In the end of days, we will see that everything was under G-d's guiding Hand.

**וְהָיָה֩ כִֽי־יָבֹ֨אוּ עָלֶ֜יךָ כָּל־הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֗לֶּה הַבְּרָכָה֙ וְהַקְּלָלָ֔ה And it will be when the Beracha and Klala come and you will return to Hashem (30:1) - Rav Schachter** explained to us that the Torah is identifying the concept of Moshiach in this Possuk. The Ramban explains that one who denies Moshiach is not only denying the words of the Neviim but also the words of Moshe. How? Rav Schachter explained to us that Hashem does not make miracles for no reason. The creation of the world was a miracle. That world makes no sense and hasn’t since day #1 when Kayin killed Hevel. However, we believe that one day there will be an explanation of purpose to all of the creation and all of the subsequent history. That day will be at the days of Moshiach.

**לֹ֥א בַשָּׁמַ֖יִם הִ֑וא  It is not in Heaven (30:12) - Rashi** explains that if Torah were to be in heaven you would need to scale the heavens to find it. In other words, there are no excuses not to study Torah to the best of our abilities and to extend ourselves as much as humanly possible. **Rav Baruch Sorotzkin once told his son Rav Yitzchok** that when he was in such pain, that was the time to study Torah. One who goes to the limits to study Torah today will certainly get to continue his Torah study when the limits are constrained in the future.

**וּבָֽחַרְתָּ֙ בַּֽחַיִּ֔ים  And you will choose life (30:19) - Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky** compared this choice to a worker who did some work and was owed $100. The Householder offered him fifty lottery tickets valued at $2 a piece. Instead of selling them, the worker played the lottery and lost everything. He had nothing, no money and no prize. He complained to the householder who told him that there was no reason to waste one’s time on games of chance. In this world the only way we pay for things is life. We need to use common sense to enjoy life to its entirety. Using life wisely to invest in amassing Torah and mitzvos will determine what will happen when our time is up.

**Haftara**

**לֹא־יֵֽאָמֵר֩ לָ֨ךְ ע֜וֹד עֲזוּבָ֗ה וּלְאַרְצֵךְ֙ לֹא־יֵֽאָמֵ֥ר עוֹד֙ שְׁמָמָ֔ה They will never say she is forsaken and her land will never be called desolate (Yeshayahu 62:4) - Rav Schwab** explains that the Novi is not merely telling us that there will never be another Churban. He trying to get across the idea that in the future, there will be no need to recall that there was a Galus either. The new relationship, like a young marriage, will exist without history of pain and trauma.