

Parshas Nitzavim

This week's Parsha, Nitzavim ("Standing"), is of the final speeches of Moshe on his final day, giving strength and guidance to the Jews. The Parsha begins by listing all the different "types" of Jews, in terms of their perceived socioeconomic level. Meaning it doesn't list from your most pious to the most disconnected, it goes from your leaders, women, children, elders, wood choppers, and water carriers.

The first level of judgment a person may have of their neighbour is judging them by their "status." Still, by the Torah putting everyone in one posuk, Hashem is saying that in His eyes, everyone who enters the covenant with Him is equal. This means that everyone can equally connect with Hashem regardless of their perceived status. This is important because our connection to one another and to Hashem ought not to be predicated on a perceived status. Furthermore, if you think you are on a "lower" level, or you're not as successful as someone else, this doesn't negate your requirement and ability to connect to Hashem. The Rebbe explains further that our success is linked to our being united, meaning all the different types of "Jews" (based on their socioeconomic status) will succeed as a united front.

One of the reasons united Jews will guarantee success can be explained by the metaphor of a light in a dark place.

Imagine a 1,000,000 square foot pitch black warehouse. Now picture yourself standing in the middle, and you light a match. Anyone on the periphery will be able to see the tiniest light, but the light is ineffective at dispelling all the darkness. Now, bunch together a bunch of candles, or lightbulbs, and the light source becomes stronger and begins to push the darkness. But to fully light the warehouse, you must light many lights to remove all the darkness. If each Jewish soul is a light, and it is alone in a 'dark warehouse', although the light is perceived and visible, it can only accomplish what one light can achieve. Now, if more and more Jews come together, united, and link arms, so to speak, each person's light will continue to push away the darkness and remove all the darkness. The darkness of the warehouse is the Golus and helem we live in, each one of us, which contains the essence of Hashem in us, is the light. When we are banded together, we can dispel the darkness of Golus. The darkness is evident in our enemies and the increasing antisemitism. The scary part isn't what they're saying, it's that it may cause, for even a second, that a Jew should lose pride, or retreat, then they are succeeding. The work is great in combating this external trigger; however, it isn't simple to stick one's head in the sand and ignore it. But to combat that darkness, we must be standing before Hashem, equal, with equal access to Hashem, and we will succeed, especially when we love our fellow Jew.

The message of Moshe was so strong, in 29:13 the posuk says “and not with you alone and I forming this covenant, and swearing this oath, but with those who are standing here with us today, before Hashem, and with those not here with us today...” This is a direct sign to YOU, the Jew who reads this posuk today, all these years later. Moshe is talking to you and me, and every one of us. As Rashi explains (29:14), Moshe’s message was to inform even the future generations. Gur Aryeh asks how this bris can be made with future unborn people, to which he answers that Moshe, as an authority, can obligate future generations. But the answer is deeper, since the posuk references those that are not here, as well as Moshe is speaking to our Neshamos, that according to Midrash, were all standing at Har Sinai by the giving of the Torah, this means that even our Neshama was being told this, and obligated in the covenant.

Now Nitzavim makes sense to be the Shabbos before Rosh Hashana, when on Rosh Hashana we will all stand together before Hashem, and renew the crowning of Hashem as our King of Kings, and us as his people (as we were chosen to be as said in the Parsha). And as the Parsha says 30:7, all the curses will be put on our enemies, who hate you and pursue you. And we will be blessed.

May this year bring blessings for all of us on a personal and general level, and may we welcome the ultimate blessing that we

were promised so long ago, the coming of Mashiach. May you all be inscribed for a good, healthy, prosperous year.

Good Shabbos.