



Parshas Nitzavim & Vayelech 2023, covenant of unity

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Yahrzeit of Shlomo Ben Edward. May his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna. May all those who need experience a complete and speedy recovery with G-d's help.

Our Torah portions is always read on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah, for it has some of the most fundamental principles in all Judaism. We begin with Moshe Rabbeinu gathering the people he led out of Egypt one final time. He emphasizes that we are all identical and equal in the eyes of G-d, our heavenly Father.

He reiterates the covenant that G-d made with our forefathers that we are His people for eternity, and remains so till today. (29:13-14) *"I make this covenant with its sanctions, not with you alone. But with those who are standing here with us today before G-d, and with those who are not here with us."* Moshe then calls heaven and earth witnesses as he pleads with the nations to choose G-d, His Torah, and a blessed life.

However, a question comes to mind: G-d tells Moshe that there will be a time when the nation will defy Him by serving other G-d's, causing Him to break His covenant with us. In the heat of the moment, G-d will let our enemies rise up and conquer us C" V.

He tells Moshe to write down this "song" as witness for the Jewish people. (31:18-19) *"I will hide My face on that day, because of all the evil they have done in turning to other G-d's. So write for yourselves this song, and teach it to the children."*

Place it into their mouths so that this song will be for Me as a witness for the Jewish nation." Why does G-d refer to gloomy prediction as a song?

Rashi, Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading Torah commentator, answers this question with a simple explanation. He writes that the "song" G-d refers to is the next Torah portion, Haazinu, known as Shiras Haazinu. The first Chabad Rebbe, Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, writes that it is a known custom to learn Parshas Haazinu by heart and recite each day for success and a long life.

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He quotes Rashi's earlier interpretation of the words (31:17): *"I will hide my face from them."* Rashi writes **כְּמוֹ שֶׁאֵינִי רוֹאֶה בְּצָרָתָם** - **"it's like I don't see their pain."**

The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes Rashi's use of the words "כְּמוֹ - it's like" is specific and definite. It is only LIKE G-d has abandoned the Jewish nation. It is only LIKE G-d doesn't see the pain of His people. Because G-d never abandoned the Jewish people, nor will He ever forsake the nation He chose to be His representative here on earth.

In the happiest times or the opposite, G-d is directly involved and amid His people. Although we may not be aware of His presence, which is the intent, our Creator and Father in heaven is intricately involved and engaged with every aspect of our lives. The concealment is only there to inspire us to re-engage, reconnect and restore our relationship with our maker.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that these words are like a song meant to uplift us in dire circumstances. When the concealment is persistent, when the disguise is intense, these words are the tune and melody for our salvation.

We know that our covenant is strong as long as we sing this song and shout these words. As long as we teach these words to our children, we know that G-d's promise to us is unbroken and intact. *"So write for yourselves this song, and teach it to the children of Israel. Place it into their mouths, so that this song will be for Me as a witness for the Jewish nation."*

This lesson is ever more relevant as Jews worldwide join those already saying Selichos, the communal prayer of atonement late Motzei Shabbos. The feelings in days before our day of judgment may be slightly intimidating, and our emotions may be running high as we reflect on the past year's actions.

But as long as we stand united as Moshe instructed, we can be confident that we will overcome all and merit to see the ultimate redemption with the coming of Moshiach!

This call to action of unity and connection is as relevant and appropriate for physical everyday lives as it is for our spiritual existence. In our daily interactions with others, we have the opportunity to foster unity through acts of kindness, compassion, and understanding.

These small gestures, like a helping hand or a listening ear, create an environment where we all thrive. When our direction is clear, and the path to our G-dly potential is unmistakable and ready to be achieved.

**"A single candle can illuminate a room,
but a community of candles can light up the world."**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*