



### Wembley Synagogue

נצבים וילך

#### Insights from the commentators into the Sidrot of Nitzavim and Veyelech

אתם נצבים היום - You are standing today." (29:9) It is customary on *Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim* to begin reciting *Selichot*. Is there a hint for this in the Torah? The words אתם נצבים היום "*Atem nitzavim hayom*" — "You are standing today" — have the numerical value of 694, which is the same as that of the words לעמוד לסליחות *-la'amod l'selichot* — "To rise for *Selichot*." (Source: Vedibarta Bam)  
(In the event that *Rosh Hashanah* falls on Monday or Tuesday, we begin saying selichot the previous week.)

מחטב עציך עד שאב מימך -From the hewer of your wood to the water-carrier (29:10). Everybody was present that day, from the woodcutter to the water carrier. Is this the correct sequence? Should it not be worded, "From your leadership all the way down to your woodchoppers?" One would think that the woodchopper and water carrier are basically on an equal level. *Shivim Panim LaTorah* suggests the following idea. When the axe is raised up over the head of the woodchopper, the "axe" would never consider that it is higher or more distinguished than the woodchopper, because the woodchopper is the one who is raising it up. Likewise, when the pail is lowered into a well, would the water-carrier even for a moment think that he is on a higher plateau than the pail? After all, if he would not have lowered the pail, it would have been on the same elevation as he. This analogy may be applied to our leadership. The leaders should never feel they are on a higher level than the people whom they serve, because, without the people who selected them as their leaders, they would be no more distinguished than the common person. No leader should ever look down upon any person, because ultimately the leader is responsible for the development of the people he serves. If they do not ascend, it is because he is a poor leader. Leaders have an enormous responsibility. That is why they have been selected for this position. If the leaders fail in their responsibility, if they do not succeed in elevating their community both spiritually and morally, they not only do not deserve their position, they are actually depriving the community of their due. They should take a lesson from the woodcutter and water-carrier. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

ראה נתתי לפניך היום את החיים ואת הטוב.... ובחרת בחיים  
See, I have placed before you today the life and the goodness... and you shall choose life (30:15,19) In these verses, Moshe is advising the children of Israel on the way that they should lead their lives once he leaves them. It appears that this is meant to be a map of how to lead one's life on a continuing basis. It is interesting to note the word "today" in this verse. On a daily basis we must consciously and actively choose a proper course for life. (Source: Darash Moshe)

ויילך משה - Moshe went. (31:1) It was Moshe's last few hours as a mortal and he "walked." This is the end of his life. The beginning of the Jewish "movement" opens with Hashem's instruction to Avraham, "Lech Lecha," go for /to yourself.(Bereishis 12:1) Interestingly, the Torah begins with "Lech Lecha" - going - and ends with "Vayelech Moshe" - Moshe going. The concept of halichah, going/ walking, implies a means to an end. One walks somewhere. The walking is the means by which he arrives. It is not a goal in itself - or is it? Avraham is told to "go;" Moshe on his last day is "going." It is as if Moshe is continuing Avraham's lech lecha and does so until his death. Is "going" a Jewish concept? In the ethical discourses of Bet Shalom Mordechai the notion is submitted that the Torah demands of us "halichah" - that we "go." The actual halichah is an end in itself. We are commanded to move - not to arrive. The results of our moving, the consequences of our endeavours should not be the focus of our thoughts. Our function is to do - Hashem will see to the results. We are to be "holech b'derachav," go in His ways. The results are for Hashem to determine. We only listen - and go. We are rewarded for the work and effort - not the result.

היום אני בן מאה ועשרים שנה -I am one hundred and twenty years old today. (31:2) This day was the seventh day of *Adar* and Rashi writes, "This day my days and my years are completed. On this day I was born and on this day I will die."

The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 13b) says that when Haman was looking for a suitable day to annihilate the Jewish people, he was happy when the lots he cast fell on the month of *Adar* because he knew that Moshe died on the seventh of *Adar*. He did not know, however, that Moshe was also born on that day. If he knew the day Moshe died, why didn't he also know the day he was born? The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 72b) says that before a *tzaddik* leaves this earthly world, a new *tzaddik* is born who will replace him. The *Zohar* (*Bamidbar* 273a) says that there are sparks of Moshe in every generation, and according to the *Arizal*, they are embodied in that generation's leader. Haman actually knew that Moshe was born on the seventh of *Adar*; however, since he died on the seventh of *Adar*, he considered this "a cut-off period" for *Klal Yisrael*. He did not know that when one *tzaddik* leaves this world, a new *tzaddik* — a new Moshe — is born to replace him and that *Klal Yisrael* will be victorious over all their oppressors in his merit.

אָתְּ הָעָם הַאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂים וְהַטָּף Gather together the people – the men, the women and the small children (31:12) In this Sidra we learn about the commandment of *Hakhel*, for which the entire Jewish nation was required to assemble in the Bet Hamikdash to hear parts of Devarim – Deuteronomy read by the king.

Rashi quotes the Rabbis comment that the men came to study, the women to listen and the children were there so that those who brought them would be rewarded. At first, this seems difficult to understand. Young children can be noisy and disruptive, and they would probably prevent their parents from being able to listen closely and concentrate. Along these lines Rabbi Nosson Adler asks why the parents had to go through the trouble of bringing their little ones to Jerusalem. Wouldn't it have been better to leave them at home so that the parents could fulfil the mitzvah undisturbed? He answers that the reward for bringing the children to *Hakhel* was greater than any loss or difficulty it entailed. When a child is placed in an atmosphere of holiness, it creates an everlasting impression in his young heart and brings him closer to G-d. The value of such an experience is incalculable. (Source: Something to Say)

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיֹּאמֶר לְפָנֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל - Moshe summoned Yehoshua and said to him before the eyes of all Yisrael, "Be strong and courageous." (31:17) The Meshech Chochmah explains that while the Jewish leader is required "not to let his heart become haughty over his fellows," (Devarim 17:20) when it involves carrying out his function as king/leader, he must act with force. This is consistent with Chazal's dictum that a king who forgives/disregards his honour is not forgiven. In other words, the king does not have it within his power to absolve his position. This is what Moshe told Yehoshua. "L'eiynei kol Yisrael" - When you are before the people - then you must be strong. A leader must be compelling, or he will have no one to lead. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

**Why do we not bless the coming month of Tishri?**

"*Rosh Chodesh* ... will be on ... which comes to us for good." (*Siddur*)

It is customary to bless the coming month on the last *Shabbat* of the preceding month. Why do we not bless the month of *Tishrei* on the last *Shabbat* of *Elul*?

The *Maggid* of *Mezritch* said in the name of his Rebbe, the Ba'al Shem Tov, that Hashem Himself blesses the month of *Tishrei* and this gives us strength to bless the other eleven months of the year.

*Rosh Chodesh Tishrei* falls on *Rosh Hashanah*, which is the day when Hashem judges the Jewish people. It is against our interest that the Satan knows when *Rosh Hashanah* occurs, and by not publicly blessing *Rosh Chodesh Tishrei*, we hope to keep it secret so that Satan will not know when to come before the Heavenly tribunal to speak evil against the Jews. For this reason, *Rosh Hashanah* is referred to as the "hidden" festival, as the *pasuk* states: "*Tiku bachodesh shofar* — Blow the *shofar* on the new moon — *bakeseh leyom chageinu* — on the covered up [*'bakeseh'* — related to *'kisui,'* 'covering'] i.e. hidden day — which was appointed for our festival" (Psalms 81:4) (Source: Vedibarta Bam)

**Shabbat Shalom**



**Shabbat starts 7.19pm**



**Shabbat ends: 8.19pm**

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is produced by Chazan Anthony Wolfson  
 Online at: [http://www.wembleysynagogue.org/html/sedra\\_notes.html](http://www.wembleysynagogue.org/html/sedra_notes.html)