

CHABAD  
  
RESEARCH UNIT

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שבת..... *for Friday night*..... קדש

Friday 19 September 2014 - 24 Elul 5774  
Sedra Nitzavim-Vayelech

### HEALTHY DYNAMIC

**O**UR LIVES AS INDIVIDUALS OFTEN DISPLAY TWO QUITE DIFFERENT FEATURES. ONE IS DYNAMISM, movement, progress, discovery and change. The second feature, seemingly the opposite, yet also very important, is the attempt to strengthen one's position, to consolidate, to attempt to be secure and firm, immovable. The combination of these two contrasting qualities creates a healthy dynamic. One moves forward and grows – but not at the expense of what one has already gained. There is the thrust towards expansion and also a concern for consolidation.

These two qualities are expressed by the names of the double Sedra<sup>1</sup> which is read this Shabbat, the Shabbat before the New Year, Rosh Hashanah. The first Sedra is called *Nitzavim*, which means 'standing firm'. In its opening words, Moses tells the Jewish people "you are all *standing firm* here today". The second Sedra is called *Vayelech*, which means "he went", referring to Moses: "Moses *went* and said these words to the Jewish people".

These names signifying standing firm and moving forward have particular relevance on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah.



In Loving Memory of Mrs Jeanne Gewolb-Sostrin  
(Yenta bas Devora) ע"ה - 15 Tevet 5772  
Dedicated by her Son Dr Roger Gewolb שי'

JUDAISM FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD  
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While the double theme of consolidation and advance can be applied to many aspects of human endeavour, it has special relevance for the spiritual life of a Jewish man or woman. Let us consider this in terms of the three general realms of Jewish expression: Torah study, Prayer and Mitzvot (good deeds).

Torah study combines both a fixed, firm dimension, and also an inner dynamic. There is the fixed text of the Torah Scroll and the other books of the Bible, the Written Torah. Yet this is discussed and explored by seemingly endless books of teachings and commentaries by great Sages, who in every epoch provide guidance relevant to the challenges of that particular time. So, on the one hand Torah is constant, on the other it is growing.

Prayer too has a 'fixed' quality and also a personal dynamic. The fixed prayer is the text in the Prayerbook. Many parts of it are exactly the same every day of the year, whether an ordinary weekday or Yom Kippur. Then come special prayers, unique to certain days. Even more, there is the individual way in which a man or woman may approach the printed text, with their own unique feeling.

Finally in the realm of Mitzvot, the Commandments of Judaism, there is the fixed structure of the ideal Jewish lifestyle: Shabbat observance, kashrut, Tefilin for men, lighting candles for women, and so on. And there is also the personal way in which one approaches this, taking certain points on board in one's daily life, emphasising some details more than others, gradually increasing in observance and at the same time consolidating what one has already achieved<sup>2</sup>.

All this provides a healthy dynamic for our inner Jewish lives. Thinking about this is a good preparation for Rosh Hashanah, starting Wednesday evening (24 September), when we ask G-d to bless us in a corresponding way, including both consolidation and growth, granting us and the whole Jewish people a healthy, peaceful, prosperous and joyful New Year, with peace in Israel and worldwide.

1. Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20; 31:1-30. 2. Based freely on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol.29, 174-8.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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*SEDRA NITZAVIM-VAYELECH*

***IT'S EASY... SO YOU CAN DO IT!***

Josh was busy playing with his cars on the floor of his room. It was late Sunday morning at home. His parents were away till lunch and his sister Emily was babysitting.

He zoomed his cars up and down the carpeted floor, watching in fascination as they made marks on it. "Vroom vroom," he said out loud, shooting another car across his room. He winced as it hit the wall.

He was so immersed in his game that he didn't notice the door open. Only when his older sister called his name did he look up from the floor.

"Josh, it's time for you to say the Shema," Emily said, stepping into the room. "It's getting late. Remember, at your birthday party you said you were going to start saying the Shema every morning."

"Oh Emily, I'll do it soon. Look at the cars flying down the carpet. See the marks they make? Isn't it totally awesome?"

"Yes, it is." Emily watched him push him another car and then said again, "but still it's time for the Shema." "Soon, soon," Josh mumbled, intent on his game.

"Now, Josh!" "But Emily it's so hard for me to say the Shema. You know I don't read Hebrew very well."

“But Josh... It’s a really good thing to do... You’re saying that G-d is one, and that you love G-d, and all good things like that...” Emily fixed her large grey eyes on her younger brother. Josh bit his lip. “But it’s so hard for me.”

“You know something, Josh?” Emily said thoughtfully. “Last week in school I learnt one of the phrases in this week’s Sedra, Nitzavim. You know what it says in there?”

Josh looked up from his cars. “What?” he asked, his curiosity piqued.

“It is very easy for you to serve G-d, in your mouth and your heart to do it,” Emily quoted.

“Um... What does that mean?” Josh looked baffled.

“Well, first it’s saying it’s easy to serve G-d...”

“I don’t think it’s so easy. I mean, like it’s not so easy for me to say the Shema...”

“Well, our teacher said that’s why it says ‘to do it’, I mean, it’s not really so hard is it, if you just decide you’re going to *do it*? Let’s say you take a break from playing with the cars....”

“Okay, okay, I’m going to say it now.” Josh took a Prayer book, put his hand over his eyes for the opening line, and said the first paragraph of the Shema in Hebrew.

“Wow, that was really good” said Emily. Josh smiled at her. “It felt good,” he said.

“That’s why it says, ‘in your mouth and your heart’. You start off just saying it, and then your heart feels good. That’s what our teacher explained..”

But Josh didn’t hear, he was back playing with the cars. “Vrooom...!!”

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