

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel,
including the fallen soldiers of the IDF

בס"ד

20 SEPTEMBER 2025 | 27 ELUL 5785

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DAF HASHAVUA

נִצְּאִימ | NITZAVIM

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 7.51pm
Birmingham: 7.58pm
Bournemouth: 8.00pm
Cardiff: 8.05pm
Dublin: 8.17pm
Edinburgh: 8.07pm
Glasgow: 8.13pm
Hull: 7.58pm
Leeds: 7.59pm
Liverpool: 8.06pm
Manchester: 8.01pm
Nottingham: 7.59pm
Sheffield: 8.01pm
Southend: 7.47pm
Southport: 8.08pm
Jerusalem: 7.15pm

**Rosh Hashanah begins on
Monday night and ends
on Wednesday night**



*"It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven and get it for us, so that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross over the sea and get it for us, so that we may hear it and do it?'"
(Devarim 30:12–13)*

**נִצְּאִיִּם
NITZAVIM**

8th Sidra in:

**דֵּבָרִים
DEVARIM**

By Numbers:

**30 VERSES
553 WORDS
2,123 LETTERS**

Headlines:

**PROMISE OF
OUR EVENTUAL
REDEMPTION**

NITZAVIM:

Artscroll p.1086
Hertz p.878
Soncino p.1138

HAFTARAH:

Artscroll p.1202
Hertz p.883
Soncino p.1145

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 29:9-11

On the last day of his life, Moshe gathers every member of the nation, from the heads of the tribes and the elders to the very young children.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 29:12-14

Moshe enters them into a covenant with God, that they will be “a people to Him and He will be a God to them”, which He promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. This covenant will be binding for future generations.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 29:15-28

Moshe warns them against idolatry, which they had seen during the Egyptian exile. Forsaking the covenant will provoke God's wrath and result in the Land being destroyed and the nation exiled.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 30:1-6

Moshe says to the people: “If you do stray and are exiled, you will return to God with all your heart and all your soul”. God will have mercy upon the people, releasing them from their captivity and bringing them in from wherever they have been dispersed. He will open the hearts of the nation to love Him unequivocally.

***Point to Consider:** What lesson is derived from way the Torah phrases how God will “return our captivity”? (see Rashi to 30:3)*

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 30:7-10

After Israel's return to God, His wrath will be unleashed upon those enemies who persecuted her. God will bless the nation like He blessed their forefathers, in “the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your animals and the fruit of your Land”.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 30:11-14

The Torah is not hidden, nor is it so far away that it is inaccessible – it is not “in the heavens”, nor is it “across the sea”; rather it is “very close” to us.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 30:15-20

God has placed “life and good, death and evil” in front of the people, who are urged to “choose life”. That means loving God and walking in His ways. Heaven and Earth are called to bear witness to this responsibility and its consequences.

HAFTARAH (YESHAYA 61:10-63:9)

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the last of the ‘seven haftarat of consolation’ read after Tisha B'Av. The redemption will come, when Israel will be like “a bride who bedecks herself in jewellery”. The nations of the world will recognise Israel's splendour. Though sullied by the blood stains of the struggles of exile, the nation should always be aware that God loves them and is guarding them. Eventually, Israel will be known as “the holy people, the redeemed of God”.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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Sacred distinctions



RABBI TOBY WEINIGER

St John's Wood
United Synagogue

Parashat Nitzavim opens with a powerful moment of unity: “You are all standing together today before Hashem, your God...” (*Devarim* 29:9). Yet this unity is immediately followed by distinctions: leaders, tribes, elders, children, converts, woodcutters and water-drawers. The Torah celebrates the value of communal solidarity, while differentiating between different groups of people.

The theme of making distinctions lies at the heart of Judaism. From the laws of *kashrut* – which call on us to distinguish between the pure and impure, the permissible and the forbidden – to the sanctity of Shabbat, Jewish

Teshuvah is one of the most extraordinary gifts of Jewish life: the chance to reset and begin anew.

life is shaped by the discipline of distinction, and Jewish learning trains us to discern and separate. Each week, we conclude Shabbat with Havdalah, marking the boundaries between the sacred and the ordinary, light and darkness, Israel and the nations. To live with this awareness is to live attuned to the choices that define a life of meaning.

One of God's very first actions when creating the world is to distinguish: “*Vayavdel Elokim bein ha'or uvein hachoshech*” – “God separated between light and darkness” (*Bereishit* 1:4). Creation begins not with blending, but with clarity. To be created *b'tzelem Elokim* (in God's image) means we too are called to separate between 'light' and 'darkness' and to live with moral focus.

Moshe (Moses) reminds us of a crucial distinction we must internalise: “I have placed before you life and death... choose life.” Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk (1843–1936) offers a powerful interpretation. Earlier in the Torah, our choices were framed in terms of blessing and curse. Now, Moshe raises the stakes. Why the shift to life and death? The answer lies in the introduction of *teshuvah*

in our *parasha*, the commandment (and opportunity!) to return and repent.

With *teshuvah*, the landscape changes; we no longer have to be bound by our past. The possibility of return, repair and renewal means our choices carry even greater moral weight. *Teshuvah* is one of the most extraordinary gifts of Jewish life: the chance to reset and begin anew. That is why Moshe now speaks not simply of blessing or curse but of life and death. In the presence of *teshuvah*, he urges: “Choose life”- not mere survival, but a life of intention, courage, and the willingness to start again.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the *parasha* of Nitzavim reminds us of the fact that *teshuvah* begins with an honest distinction: between who we are and who we are meant to become.

May we all merit to choose well – and choose life. *Shana Tova U'Metuka*.



Don't go it alone

BY: **REBBETZEN SHULI LISS**

Highgate Synagogue

Have you ever tried to quit something?

Maybe sugar. Or scrolling. Or shouting at the kids. You start strong: motivated, full of intention. But a few days in, the voice creeps in: "No one knows. It's not a big deal if I slip today..."

That is where the power of accountability comes in. In Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), one of the most effective support tools is the sponsor system. Each person is paired with someone a bit further along the path, who checks in regularly. If a person is feeling tempted, they are encouraged to make an outreach call to their sponsor. The purpose is not just support – it is to build a system where one is not alone with their struggles. They have let someone else in.

Why does this work? Because we are social beings. We care deeply about how we are perceived. When no one knows our goals, it is easier to let them go. But when we have shared them – even with one other person – we are more likely to stay committed.

In Rabbi Keleman's character

development course (see part 1 of this series), we were encouraged to set up a buddy and check in weekly on how the charting was going. This way, we had the accountability and motivation to fill in that chart.

In *Pirkei Avot* (1:6), it says "*Aseh lecha rav, u'kneh lecha chaver*" – "Make for yourself a teacher and acquire for yourself a friend." A teacher helps guide us; a friend helps us stay on track. It is very hard to change in isolation. When we involve others, we create a small, invisible contract: "I said I'd try to do this. Someone else knows. I want to show up." This is not about announcing our spiritual plans on social media. But choosing a partner, friend or family member to check in with regularly to help us keep focussed on our goals.

There is also something else that happens when we involve others: our goals become more real. Saying it out loud moves it from wishful thinking to something active. It is not just "one day I will," but "I've started."

(As our words are powerful, it is preferable to say "I'm working

on" rather than "I will," for making a promise means we may have to keep it. One of the first prayers we say on *Kol Nidrei* night is to annul our vows. We do not want to add more promises to have to annul!)

And when we feel stuck?

Having someone else there can give us the encouragement we cannot always give ourselves. We grow best in the framework of a community. That is how we are designed. And we are blessed with wonderful communities who want to grow and change.

As we complete this series, I hope you have found something useful to help you in your quest to come to the High Holidays prepared with a working plan for change. May God answer all our prayers for the good and bless all of *Am Yisrael* with good health and peace.

It is very hard to change in isolation. When we involve others, we create a small, invisible contract: "I said I'd try to do this. Someone else knows. I want to show up."



Simon Wiesenthal ז"ל

1908-2005



**RABBI GIDEON
SYLVESTER**

US Israel Rabbi

"The souls of six million Jews are lining up to greet him and to thank him." This was the constant refrain of the eulogisers for Simon Wiesenthal, whom I heard when I was privileged to attend his funeral in September 2005. It was an arresting image for the man described by *The Guardian* newspaper as "the Holocaust survivor who did more than any single individual to bring Nazi war criminals to justice."¹

Wiesenthal was born in 1908 in Buchach, Galicia, later Ukraine, a city with a large Jewish population. He suffered loss early in life as his father was killed in action in World War I and his brother died from a fall in 1923. Nevertheless, the determined young Wiesenthal graduated as an engineer, moved to Lvov and married Cyla Müller in 1936.

With the outbreak of World War II, Lvov came under Russian occupation, falling to the Germans in 1941. Many Jews were sent straight to their deaths, while Wiesenthal, along with 80,000 other Jews, was forced into a ghetto. There he suffered poverty, hunger and forced labour before being deported to a series of concentration camps.

Eighty-nine members of Simon Wiesenthal's family were murdered

in the Holocaust. When liberation came, Wiesenthal dedicated his life to bringing the perpetrators to justice, first as an official of the American War Crimes department, then through his own Centre in Vienna.

Tracking down the criminals and prosecuting them entailed major challenges. The Nazis destroyed much of the evidence; gas chambers were demolished and documents destroyed. Leading Nazis then prepared to escape justice. Rudolph Hoess, commandant of Auschwitz, disguised himself as a sailor and then set up as a simple farmer, while Franz Stangl, the commandant of Treblinka, made his way to the Vatican, where a cardinal arranged escape routes for him and fellow war criminals to South America.

Moreover, the Allies devoted little energy to War Crimes trials, with their focus shifting from the evils of Nazism to rebuilding their countries and preventing the spread of Communism. There were no resources to bring to trial the millions of people who had played roles in rounding up Jews, starving them in ghettos, transporting them to death camps and murdering them.

Even when trials took place, survivors who had suffered so much were shocked to find themselves unable to meet the requirements of the court room. They were expected to name the perpetrators, but they were never told the names of their concentration camps' guards. They were required to supply the

"The souls of six million Jews are lining up to greet him and to thank him."

dates and times of crimes, but in the camps, their watches were confiscated and they had no access to calendars or newspapers.

Simon Wiesenthal would not allow Jewish blood to be spilled with impunity. He persistently gathered evidence, tracked down criminals and brought them to justice.

At the same time, Wiesenthal also protected and supported Germans who had behaved honourably. He even invited his Nazi overseer to his daughter's wedding because this man had treated him decently.

Simon Wiesenthal's greatest fear was that the Holocaust would be forgotten. We must never allow that to happen. His *yahrzeit*, which fell last week, 16 Elul, calls on us to remember him, his battles for justice and the crimes he did so much to expose.



Simon Wiesenthal. Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

¹ *The Guardian*, 23 September 2005, www.theguardian.com/world/2005/sep/23/secondworldwar.israel

Standing Together: Community, Safety and Responsibility



**CLAUDIA
KITSBERG**

US Director of
Safeguarding
and Welfare

"You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord, your God, your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, every man of Israel, your small children, your women, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water drawer, to enter into the covenant of the Lord, your God." (Devarim 29:9-11)

Parashat Nitzavim opens with one of the Torah's most inclusive visions of community. Moshe (Moses) addresses the entire people: leaders and followers, natives and strangers, adults and children, emphasising that everyone has a place in the covenant. This expansive welcome is reflected in our communities today.

Just as Moshe gathered the entire community without distinction, our synagogues open their doors wide. We welcome those seeking spiritual connection, community or exploring their heritage. Our shuls are community centres where friendships bloom, where we share our *simchas*, and where Jewish life unfolds in all its richness. Children congregate throughout the building, friends gather for kiddush, and the whole place buzzes with energy.

Yet *Parashat Nitzavim* teaches us something important about responsibility within community.

When Moshe speaks to "all of you," he does not diminish individual accountability, he actually heightens it. Every person, from the tribal head to the water drawer, stands individually before God whilst simultaneously being part of something larger.

This balance between communal belonging and personal responsibility offers real guidance for navigating our synagogue communities today. Just as we teach our children to be aware and careful when visiting any public space, the same thoughtful awareness applies in our shuls. This is not about fear or suspicion, it is about the responsibility that comes with being part of an open community.

The renewal of the covenant in *Nitzavim* emphasises that we are responsible not only for ourselves but for one another. For parents, this means many things including remaining engaged with your children's experience in shul. Just as you naturally keep track of your children in any public setting, this same caring attention applies in our synagogues. Yes, shul feels like home, but it is also a public space where many people come and go.

Your children are your responsibility, not the community's. When they are running around the building, interacting with others, or exploring different areas, you need to know where they are and what they are doing. We need to teach our children to be aware of their surroundings. When children know their parents

are engaged and attentive, they feel secure to explore, learn and grow. When parents model not just warmth towards others but also appropriate caution, they teach their children essential life skills. When communities embrace both genuine hospitality and reasonable precautions, they create spaces where everyone can be comfortable.

Near the end of the parasha, Moshe presents the ultimate choice: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. And you shall choose life" (*Devarim* 30:19). This is not just about individual choices, it is about the choices we make as communities. We choose life when we create shuls that welcome everyone whilst maintaining appropriate boundaries. We choose blessing when we teach our children to greet others with genuine warmth while staying mindful of their environment.

As we approach the High Holy Days, *Parashat Nitzavim* reminds us that standing together as a community doesn't mean abandoning individual responsibilities. Rather, it means embracing them more fully. When parents remain engaged and attentive, when children learn to be both welcoming and aware, and when communities balance openness with wisdom, we create the kind of space that Moshe envisioned, where everyone has a place, and everyone contributes to the safety and sanctity of the whole.

Standing up and stepping in



**DAVID
NIELSEN**

Head of Marketing at
the United Synagogue

As the Israelites prepare to enter the Land of Israel, Moshe (Moses) gathers the entire nation and declares:

"You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders and your officers... your children..." (*Devarim* 29:9-10)

What's striking about this verse is its inclusivity - leaders, elders, men and women, and notably, the youth. Moshe isn't just addressing the future of the Jewish people - he's charging the next generation with responsibility *now*. Young people are not sidelined; they stand at the heart of the covenant, already part of the spiritual mission.

Later in our parasha, Moshe declares:

"I have placed life and death before you... you shall choose life, so that you will live, you and your offspring..." (*Devarim* 30:19)

But what does it mean to "choose life"?

Rabbi Dr Norman Lamm z"l (1927-2020) highlights an interesting dispute in the Jerusalem Talmud: Rabbi Yishmael says that "life" refers to teaching your children a trade or craft - a livelihood. Rabbi Akiva says it refers to teaching your child to swim or row - practical, life-preserving activities.

Whilst these opposing interpretations may seem surprisingly pedestrian and lacking in spirituality, both are deep Torah values. "Life" is not abstract - it's what we do *in* the world that matters: taking responsibility, working, adapting, swimming with, or often against, the tide.

Rabbi Lamm writes, "It is only when one struggles in the currents of life... that he can value the gift of life that the Lord above gives him."

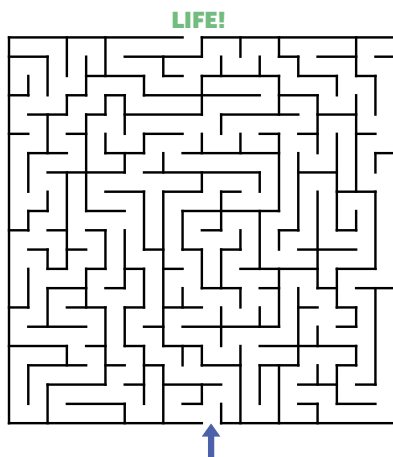
At Tribe, we strive to empower young people to jump in - leading, inspiring, giving and connecting with their community. That's what it means to stand as part of the Jewish people: to be counted *now*, not later.

When we embrace responsibility and seize opportunities in our youth, we build the foundations that will support us throughout life.

As Rabbi Sacks z"l taught, the best way to stay young is "never to forget the 'devotion of our youth', the defining experiences that made us who we are, the dreams we had long ago of how we might change the world to make it a better, fairer, more spiritually beautiful place."

As we approach the new year, may all of us - young and old - *choose life* by throwing ourselves into it fully.

Choose Life Maze





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

NITZAVIM: NO SAIL!

THE SEA IS TELLING US 'NOPE, NOT TODAY!'

BUT IT'S NOT A DAY OFF. WE NEED TO PREPARE FOR OUR NEXT EXPEDITION.

YOU CALL THIS DOWNTIME? MY FINGERS WOULD O-FISH-ALLY LIKE TO DISAGREE.

TIME TO GET THESE HOOKS LOOKING SHARP!

WHY AREN'T YOU FISHING?

THE SEA'S TOO ROUGH FOR BOATS TODAY. THAT MEANS IT'S TIME TO MEND OUR NETS, SHARPEN OUR TOOLS AND DO ALL OUR PREP AND REPAIR WORK.

IN THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA, MOSHE (MOSES)** TELLS THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** THAT THEY'RE STANDING TOGETHER, READY FOR THE FUTURE - EVEN IF THE JOURNEY AHEAD MAY NOT ALWAYS BE CALM SEAS.

NEED TO STAY ASHORE? TIME TO GET YOUR HEART AND ACTIONS IN SHIP-SHAPE BEFORE THE NEXT BIG VOYAGE.

WHETHER IT'S FISHING NETS, OR **MITZVAH** MUSCLES — YOUR WAITING TIME IS YOUR SECRET SUPERPOWER. INVEST IN YOURSELF, YOUR TOOLS OR EXPERIENCES.

STORMS PASS, NETS MEND. WE'RE READY TO SAIL!

A LULL OR A SETBACK ISN'T JUST A TIME TO WAIT IT OUT. IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRUSH UP YOUR SKILLS, SO THAT WHEN IT'S TIME FOR THE NEXT JOURNEY, YOU'RE READY TO ROLL.

USE YOUR WAITING TIME WELL AND YOUR NEXT JOURNEY WILL BE SWELL!

CAST YOUR BEST LINE - THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR YOUR NEXT BIG CATCH!

Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Writer: Shira Chalk Cartoonist: Paul Solomon

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tribe
www.tribeuk.com

Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.