

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Nitzavim - Vayelech

For the week ending 23 Elul 5756
6 & 7 September 1996

Parsha Questions

NITZAVIM

1. What is the connection between the verse "Atem nitzavim" and the curses in the previous *parsha*?
2. Who are the wood-choppers and water-carriers?
3. Why can Hashem never 'swap' the Jewish people for another nation?
4. One who ignores the Torah's warnings "adds drunkenness to thirst (29:18)." What does this mean?
5. What two cities were destroyed along with S'dom and Amorah?
6. "The hidden things are for Hashem, our G-d, and the revealed things are for us...." What does this mean?
7. According to Rashi, how will the day of the ingathering of the exiles be 'great and difficult'?
8. Where is the Torah 'not to be found'? Where is it to be found?
9. When and where did the Jewish People become culpable for each other's sins (*areivim zeh lazeh*)?
10. How do the earth and sky remind us to keep the mitzvos?

VAYELECH

1. Moshe said, "I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in...." How do we know that this does NOT refer to physical inability?
2. Which of Moshe's statements to Yehoshua was later contradicted by Hashem's command?
3. Why does the Torah (31:10) refer to the Sukkos of the eighth year as though it occurred during the *Shemita* year?
4. Why does the Torah command that babies be brought to hear the Torah being read?
5. What does it mean that Hashem 'hides His face' from the Jewish People?
6. What function does the song Ha'azinu serve?
7. Which verse promises that the Torah will never be totally forgotten from the Jewish People?
8. What is the difference of opinion regarding the placing of the Torah scroll which Moshe gave the Levi'im?
9. On the day of Moshe's death, he didn't gather the people by blowing trumpets as he normally would have. Why not?
10. Moshe said "For I know that after my death you will act corruptly...(31:29)," but, in fact, this didn't occur until after Yehoshua's death. What does this teach us?



A covenant was made between Hashem and "those standing here with us today — in front of Hashem, our G-d — and those NOT here with us today (i.e., future generations)." How can future generations be obligated by a covenant which they never entered into?

I Did Not Know That!

The first letters of the words '*Mi Ya'aleh Lanu Hashamaimah*' — who will go up to the heavens for us? — spell '*mila*' (circumcision). The last letters spell Hashem's name. *Bris Mila* prepares a person for his heavenly climb towards G-dliness.

Ba'al Haturim (30:12)

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Recommended Reading List

Ramban

29:18	Refusing the Covenant
29:28	Accidental Sins
31:1	Bidding Farewell
31:2	Loss of Knowledge

Sforno

29:18	Denying the Curse
30:6	Cleaving to Hashem
30:9-10	Our Own Merit
31:18	Hiding of Hashem

Sefer Hachinuch

612	The Gathering
613	Writing a <i>Sefer Torah</i> ??

Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

NITZAVIM

- 29:12 - The Jewish People asked, "Who can survive such curses?" Moshe comforted them, saying, "You've done a lot to anger Hashem, and yet — '*atem nitzavim*' — Hashem didn't destroy you ... you're still standing before Him."
- 29:10 - Canaanites who joined the Jewish People under false pretenses.
- 29:12 - Because Hashem swore to their ancestors that He would never do so.
- 29:18 - He causes Hashem to reckon his unintentional sins alongside his intentional ones, punishing him for all.
- 29:22 - Admah and Tsevoyim.
- 29:28 - There is collective culpability only for 'open' sins, but not for 'hidden' ones.
- 30: 3 - It will be as if Hashem needs to take each individual by the hand and lead him out of exile.
- 30:12-15 - The Torah is not found in heaven nor across the ocean. Rather, it is "...very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to do it."
- 30:28 - When they crossed the Jordan and accepted the oath on Mt. Eval and Mt. Grizim.
- 30:19 - The earth and heavenly bodies — although receiving neither reward nor punishment — always 'obey' Hashem's will. How much more should we — who stand to receive reward or punishment — obey Hashem.

VAYELECH

- 31:2 - Because verse 34:7 says "His (Moshe's) eye never dimmed, and his (youthful) moisture never departed."
- 31:7 - Moshe told Yehoshua to share his leadership with the Elders. Hashem later commanded Yehoshua to rule alone.
- 31:10 - Because the halachos of the seventh year (*Shemita*) still apply to the harvest.
- 31:12 - To give reward to those who bring them.
- 31:17 - He ignores their distress.
- 31:21 - It warns what will befall the Jewish People if they abandon Torah.
- 31:21 - "...For it (the Torah) will not be forgotten from the mouth of their offspring...."
- 31:26 - Whether it was placed outside but adjacent to the Ark, or inside, next to the Tablets.
- 31:28 - Blowing the trumpets was an expression of Moshe's dominion, and "There is no dominion on the day of death. (Koheles 8)
- 31:29 - That a person's student is as dear to him as himself — As long as Yehoshua was alive, it was as though Moshe himself were alive.

Bonus

A:

The souls of all future generations — although not physically "*here with us today*" — exist nevertheless "*in front of Hashem, our G-d.*" These yet unborn souls entered the covenant, along with the rest of the Jewish People.

Kli Yakar