# Assembly Notes

# PARSHAS NITZAVIM-VAYELECH 5784

## Assembly Theme: The Inner Light Brightens the Outer Life

Parshas Nitzavim is read the Shabbos before Rosh Hashana every year. (This year, together with Vayelech). This is the preparation for all the Yomtovim of Tishrei, and for all the year to come.

Nitzavim begins by saying how the entire Jewish People stand firm and strong. **Everyone** is together - כולכם. The only way to true unity is by rising above our own personal situation. Unity comes through feeling one's innermost Neshama, because on that level we really are one.

But the Torah immediately continues and defines ten different types of people: Heads, tribes, elders, officers, men, children, women, etc. Each category has a particular, **individual** identity.

The Torah is telling us: take your inner Neshama and bring its light to shine in your everyday life. It is vital to be what you are, and to bring that deep spiritual power into everything that you do.

The Mitzvah of Rosh Hashana is Shofar. The power of the simple sounds of the Shofar express the inner cry of our Neshama. We accept the Kingship of Hashem from the bottom of our heart and we daven for a good year in all physical matters. We also daven that everything in our life should be connected and guided by the inner spirit of the Neshama.

Yom Kippur is the day of unity when the Yechidah, the deepest aspect of our Neshama is revealed. This is reflected in the Achdus of Sukkos, when the sukkah embraces everyone together, and then the unity of the four kinds, Esrog, Lulav, Hadassim and Arovos. Yet, they remain four distinct types because the deepest unity must be expressed in everyone's unique identity.

This year has been challenging for all of us, especially our brothers and sisters in Israel. Around the world, there are also many people who have lost their way, spiritually and morally. Our response must be to promote Achdus, True unity from the depth of our Neshama and expressed in our actions. Being more Jewish, doing more Mitzvos. This will bring Moshiach sooner and the Light of Hashem will shine across the world.

(Based on Sicha 5742 and Likutei Sichos vol 19)

STORY OF THE REBBE

Chassidim in all generations tried to be by their Rebbe in the month of Tishrei, especially for Rosh Hashana. Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Raichik was a top Chossid, a holy man. He was a Chossid of the Frierdikke Rebbe in Poland and the USA, and then of the Rebbe. He was sent as a Shliach to California in the 1940s. At that time, Orthodox Judaism was very limited in California; today it thrives, including hundreds of Chabad Houses.

Rabbi Raichik would come to New York every year for Tishrei. In 1949, he met the Rebbe in the street during Sukkos. The Rebbe was the son in law of the Frierdikke Rebbe and ran Chabad activities around the country and around the world. The Rebbe asked him why he was in New York and not in California. Rabbi Raichik replied: I asked the Rebbe (your father in law) and he allowed me to come and gave me a Brocho for this trip. The Rebbe wished him well.

Then the Frierdikke Rebbe passed away. Of course, Rabbi Raichik wanted to come to the Rebbe (our Rebbe) for Tishrei. He was apprehensive, thinking that the Rebbe would tell him to remain in Los Angeles. He asked, and the Rebbe said come to New York for one half of Tishrei: either Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur or Sukkos and Simchas Torah.

Rabbi Raichik went to his Mashpia Reb Shmuel Levitin for advice on which half to choose. Rabbi Levitin was known as a very wise Chossid. He advised that he should come for the first half, because the Rebbe maybe would then let you stay the whole month. So he came for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; and the Rebbe did not tell him to stay.

On the night of Shemini Atzeres most Chassidishe Shuls dance with the Torah, but most non Chassidic Shuls only dance the second night, Simchas Torah . In Los Angeles there were no Shuls with Hakofos on the first night, but Reb Shmuel Dovid was a great Chossid and he was desperate to be able to dance with the Torah together with someone else.

He asked a man to please stay behind for a half hour or an hour to dance Hakofos. The man declined, saying that he wanted to go home to his wife. Rabbi Raichik persisted, and the the man came up with an idea. He said that he and his wife had no children after years of marriage and if Rabbi Raichik promises (not just a blessing , a promise) that they would have a child this year, he would remain and dance with him. Rabbi Raichik promised and they danced and danced together with the Torah for an hour. That year, this couple were indeed blessed with a beautiful child.

Rabbi Raichik's son (who related this story to me) had discovered this event in some papers. He asked his father if the story was actually true. His father confirmed that it was true. Then said the son "Tatty, this means that you are a miracle worker!" His father responded: "It was not a miracle. I knew that if a Jew really, really, wants to do a Mitzvah Hashem will remove every obstacle. And I really desperately wanted to dance with the Torah that night. The only way that I could fulfil this Mitzvah properly was if I assured that man that he and his wife would have a child. I knew that Hashem would do the rest."

After that year, Rabbi Raichik spent the whole month of Tishrei in New York,continuing to do so for the next forty years, with the permission and Brocha of the Rebbe.

גוט שבת!

Kesivah Vechasimah Tovah