



Nitzavim

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:9 - 30:20

As Moses' "career" as the leader of the Jewish People was entering its final days, the tribal heads, elders, officers, ordinary Israelites, and all their families were assembled before G-d and Moses to enter into a new covenant. This was a covenant that would involve all future generations as well. Therefore, as we read this section, we should imagine ourselves as standing there, binding ourselves to the covenant as did our ancestors.

Moses speaks of a future rebellion against G-d's covenant and describes the evils that will then befall the Israelites. After time, however, the people will repent and G-d will restore them back to the Land in blessing. It is interesting to note that this section deals with the concept of Teshuvah (repentance), and return to the ways of G-d. No matter how far Israel may stray, we may always return, and G-d will receive us. It is for that reason that Parshat Nitzavim is always the Torah reading for the Shabbat that precedes Rosh Hashanah. Moses explains to the people that they have a choice between life and prosperity, or death and adversity, and implores them to choose wisely.

Moses reminds the people that the Torah is neither in the heavens nor beyond the sea, but rather near the people, and within their abilities. The laws and observances might seem daunting, but the people had the power to fulfill the commandments that G-d had set before them.

"I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life, that you may live, you and offspring, to love the Lord thy G-d, to hearken to his voice, and to cleave to him. For thereby you will have life and long endure upon the land that the Lord your G-d swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them" (30:19)



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