

## Bringing the Farbrengen Home

### WE ARE INDEED ONE PEOPLE

by Tzipah Wertheimer

Nitzavim is always read the week before Rosh Hashana. No matter when the holidays fall out. (It can be read in September or August).

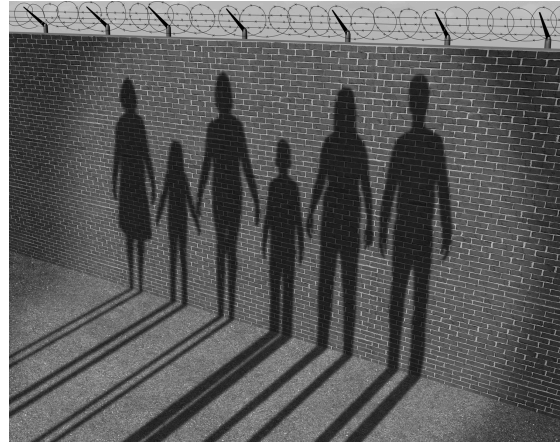
As Moshe Rabeinu addressed the entire nation, it begins with the words, "You are all standing this day before the Lord..." Moshe Rabeinu goes on to make his final speech as he instructs the nation on the rewards for keeping the Mitzvot the possibility of exile for abandoning the Torah way.

The details of his talk are vast but it's fascinating to note that the entire nation was addressed at once - in unison. Young and old, tribal leaders and followers, smart and dull and so on - every demographic was included collectively.

The juxtaposition of this Torah portion to Rosh Hashanah reflects the attitude that we must adopt as we approach the holy day.

Rosh Hashanah is a time to delete our cookies - so to speak. It's a time to drop distinctions, ranks, branches, affiliations and etc. and instead focus on the community as a whole.

The Jewish people are compared to a body; which is more important your head or your leg? The truth is that you need both in order to be a healthy full functioning person. There is no point ranking the importance of various limbs the best way to be healthy is to focus on the whole body.




In a similar vein we must take a step back and regard everyone as an equally important part of our whole community.

One of the things we are commanded to do this time of year is to give Tzedaka. Tzedaka is often translated as charity. While this is a convenient English translation, the word charity does not accurately reflect the true meaning of Tzedaka. Tzedaka is related to the Hebrew word Tzedek which means justice and the true meaning of Tzedaka is just that.

Hashem gives a person money so that they can distribute it to those in need. The distribution of the money is the *only* reason the person was given those means. According to the Torah a person is obligated to give 10% of their earnings to Tzedaka - which means the money is not theirs to spend it's earmarked for others. Giving Tzedaka is doing what is just - it's doing exactly what you are meant to be doing. Giving charity is a whole different story.

Charity implies that a person is giving to one less fortunate out of the kindness of their heart - which is of course optional. Charity is based on the distinctions of rich and poor - the rich person bends down to help the poor. They are two different classes.

Tzedaka is more like a universal tax- a universal obligation. It's very nature is hinged on the fact that we are indeed one people. 

### Just Me שו"ת A Question


**Q: Why are the 39 Melachos (forbidden work) on Shabbos derived from work that was done in the Mishkan?**

**A:** All physical activity has a spiritual side to it, and this is hinted to in the fact that the 39 forbidden activities of Shabbos are derived from the construction of the Mishkan (as per Shabbos 49b).

Why specifically the *Mishkan* and not the *Beis Mikdash*, which was a permanent structure?

Even though it was a temporary structure, the Mishkan was more spiritual in certain respects:

1. The Beis Mikdash was built by King Shlomo and was funded by many people, Jews and gentiles. The Mishkan was constructed exclusively using Jewish funds, indicating that it's an exclusively Jewish project of a high, spiritual purpose.
2. The Mishkan was in the desert, when the Jewish people were on an elevated spiritual level, and less involved in material affairs (i.e., they were sustained by *manna*, got water from the well of Miriam, and their clothing grew with them (Ta'anis 9a).

The Mishkan was the most spiritual manifestation of the physical, and therefore it is the best source for the derivation of the 39 categories of forbidden work on Shabbos -- hinting that every physical thing we do, is actually spiritual. 

**כתיבה וחתימה טובה**  
**לשנה טובה ומתוקה**

## Who Am I Kidding?

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Thousands of people from around the world used to write letters to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Addressed to 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, the letters were written by people of all stripes, seeking counsel in many different areas. The Rebbe would respond with words of encouragement, sage advice and positive thinking.

One type of letter was unique: Prior to some of the holidays, the Rebbe would pen a "General Letter," addressed to "The Sons and Daughters of Israel, wherever they may be." I am no historian, but I don't think that since Moses there has ever been a Jewish leader who addressed the entire Jewish people in such a manner.

Please permit me to share with you, in my own words, a paraphrase of an excerpt of a letter written days before Rosh Hashana 1974.

Every year, it's the same thing. Rosh Hashana approaches, I resolve to be a better person, to be more organized, to be nicer to my wife, more caring, to study more Torah, give more charity, pick my socks up off the floor, and do the mitzvot (commandments) more joyously.

And the next year, I make the same resolutions all over again.

Come on! Whom am I kidding? As I stand in synagogue on Rosh Hashana (beginning this year on Monday evening), resolving to change for the good, the thought inevitably enters my mind: Didn't I say this last year?

So whom am I kidding?



The answer can be found in the name of this week's Torah portion, Nitzavim (which is always read before, and in preparation for, Rosh Hashana).

Hebrew, like other languages, has synonyms. How does one say "standing" in Hebrew? Well, the common way to say it is עומדים (omdim).

A synonym for standing is Nitzavim. Yet Nitzavim doesn't just mean plain ole regular standing. It means standing firm and strong. It implies that one is standing on unshakable ground.

And that is the key to my Rosh Hashana resolutions: Regardless of what I did (or didn't do) last year, Nitzavim tells me to completely disregard last year! Each one of us has the ability to make this year different. This year we can truly be more connected, healthier, nicer, more joyous -- and may the Almighty fulfill all of our heart's desires for the good!

May we all be blessed with a sweet New Year! 🕊️

### HAYOM YOM

27 Elul

From the holy teachings of the Alter Rebbe: "Israel, one nation on the earth." The nation of Israel, even in the earthly world, is bound up with the one G-d. G-d transforms the spiritual into something material; Israel transforms the material into something spiritual.

## Chassidic Story

### The search for a 'Baal Tokeyah'

The holy, mystical sage known as the Baal Shem Tov lived in Russian and Ukraine in the 1700's.

One year he sought to find a new person for the tremendous task of blowing the shofar on the holiest days of the year – Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur.

The call of the shofar mimics the deep guttural cry of a newborn and is understood to be a symbol of the yearning of the congregation to come close to their Creator. The one who blows the shofar is tasked with the awesome responsibility of presenting the spiritual desires of the community to The One Above. It is no small feat.

A venerable, pious man offered his services. "I meditate on the deepest mystical teachings when I blow into the ram's horn," he explained. The Baal Shem Tov wasn't satisfied. Another great scholar offered, "I meditate on the oneness of creation when I blast the shofar." The Baal Shem Tov kept searching.

Finally a modest, simple man came forward.

"What are your thoughts, when blowing the Shofar?", the Baal Shem Tov asked.

"I'm not a learned sage, he replied, I don't know any of the deep teachings. All I know, he said, is that I have 4 daughters at home. They all need to get married. When I blow the Shofar, I pray to G-d that I will have the means to provide for my family and marry off my daughters," said the simple man. The Baal Shem Tov was satisfied. 🕊️

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*in the zechus of a  
refuah shleimah for*

**Avraham HaKohen ben Leah**

Sponsored by:

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*in memory of his Bubbie*

**Bracha Chana bas Yechiel**

on her 25<sup>th</sup> yahrzeit, 13 Elul

**6:39 pm Candle Lighting**  
**6:45pm Mincha & Kabbalas Shabbos**  
**8:00am Tehillim**  
**9:00am Chassidus**  
**10:00am Davening**  
**6:25pm Mincha & Shiur**  
**7:36pm Maariv & Shabbos Ends**