

נִצְבִּים

NITZAVIM/YOU ARE STANDING

Devarim/Deuteronomy 29:10-30:20

The Israelites have reached the end of their 40-year journey in the wilderness. Now they find themselves “standing” in the Presence of יהוה, about to enter into “covenant” with Him!

Devarim/Deuteronomy 29:10 " All of you stand today before יהוה your Elohim: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, ¹¹ "your little ones and your wives -- also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water -- ¹² "that you may enter into covenant with יהוה your Elohim, and into His oath, which יהוה your Elohim makes with you today

Notice that they all “stood” together in **unity** – their “**leaders and elders, wives and their young.**” Even the “**stranger**” in their camp “stood” on equal footing with the rest of them. Every one of these people entered into the covenant together as “**Israel.**” Even with the different character traits of 12 tribes, they will enter the Land as “**one**” people, just as they were delivered from Egypt as “**one.**” They had received the Torah united as “**one.**” They will build the Temple as “**one**” people. And in the future, they will be restored as “**one.**”

After 40 years of trials and preparation, one can only imagine the excitement of being declared a “**people for Himself**” ... a people who would inherit the Land promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’acov. That precious Land was in full view as they “stood” before יהוה their Elohim:

Devarim 29:13 "that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be Elohim to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’acov.

The concept and the depth of “standing” can be seen in **Psalm 119**:

Psalm 119:89 Your Word, O יהוה, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

This very special moment also transcended time, including all future persons who would come together “in unity”, “standing” reverently before יהוה, Elohim of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’acov:

Devarim 29:15 "but with *him* who stands here with us today before יהוה our Elohim, as well as with him who is not here with us today



How is “unity” defined? For different people and different groups “unity” may have a variety of meanings. It usually means having something in common, whether it is a purpose, a goal, a land or an interest. The common goal for Israel was to love and serve their Master and to fulfil His commandments.

As we approach the upcoming holidays, “unity” is also the key to communal repentance. The Creator is looking for His people to “unite” as one, and who connects in the bonds of brotherly love.

To enter into covenant as “one” means that every individual makes a commitment to one another. Every member of the nation has some unique gift that is necessary for the whole to function as a body. In fact, together we are a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now Yah has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*? ²⁰ But now indeed *there are* **many members, yet one body**. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³ And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable *parts* have no need. But Yah composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, ²⁵ that **there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.**

The nation of Israel began as a family of “brothers.” The restoration of all of Israel begins with love for our “brother”:

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love Adonai," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love Adonai whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that **he who loves Adonai must love his brother also.**

Yeshua passionately prayed for the “oneness” of His followers:

John 17:11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, **that they may be one** as *We are*... ²⁰ " I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ "**that they all may be one**, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Remember in the parable of the prodigal son how happy the father was for his wayward son to come home? Well, there really never was a happy ending to that story. At the end of the story, the older brother was still at odds with the younger. We read the story and long for their reconciliation. For the two-stick brothers to reunite. How does the Father feel when brothers remain disconnected? Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells a parable:

“There were two brothers who both moved away from home at a young age and lived two separate lives with very little contact between each other. One brother (we’ll call him

Reuven) was rather wealthy and the other (Shimon) was not. Shimon lost his job and everything began to go wrong. He had nowhere to turn but remembered his brother, Reuven. Shimon went to Reuven's office to ask him for some help. Reuven, however, who was in the middle of a meeting, told his secretary that he had no brother and to send him away. A little while later, Reuven and Shimon's father was lying on his deathbed. To Reuven's shock, Reuven was being ignored by his father. When Reuven inquired why he was being ignored, his father replied, 'if my son, Shimon does not have a brother, how can you, Reuven, possibly be my son?'"

In this season, we ask Elohim to judge us with mercy like a father judges his son. We can only receive such mercy if we can forgive and have love for one other.

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Psalm 133:1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for **brothers to dwell together in unity!**



Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Messiah forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Adonai rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in **one body**; and be thankful.

In **Devarim 30**, Moshe tells us that the Torah “**is not too mysterious for us, nor is it far off.**” It is not beyond our reach. Studying the Torah as community is really what has kept the Jewish people alive and together as “**one**” through the centuries:

Devarim 30:10 "if you obey the voice of יהוה your Elohim, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Torah, *and* if you turn to יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹¹ " For this commandment which I command you today **is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.** ¹² "It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear

it and do it?' ¹³ "Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'

It would have been amazing if the Israelite tribes would have maintained “**unity**” and been obedient to the covenant. Sadly, in **Parashat Nitzavim**, Moshe was forced to warn them about what would happen if they did not take this commitment to heart and live up to their responsibility:

Devarim 29:18 "so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from יהוה our Elohim, to go *and* **serve the gods of these nations**, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; ¹⁹ "and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart' -- as though the drunkard could be included with the sober. ²⁰ " יהוה would not spare him; for then the anger of יהוה and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and יהוה would blot out his name from under heaven. ²¹ "And יהוה would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Torah, ²² "so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which יהוה has laid on it: ²³ 'The whole land *is* brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which יהוה overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' ²⁴ "All nations would say, 'Why has יהוה done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' ²⁵ "Then *people* would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of יהוה Elohim of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; ²⁶ 'for they went and **served other gods and worshiped them**, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. ²⁷ 'Then the anger of יהוה was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. ²⁸ 'And יהוה uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.'

The Israelites DID forsake יהוה and His covenant, and they DID “**serve the gods of other nations.**” Yet, יהוה will have mercy on them and bring them back to this very Land that at this moment they stand in view of.

Devarim 30:1 “Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where יהוה your Elohim drives you, ² “and you return to יהוה your Elohim and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ “that יהוה your Elohim will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where יהוה your Elohim

has scattered you. ⁴ **"If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there יהוה your Elohim will gather you, and from there He will bring you.** ⁵ "Then יהוה your **Elohim will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.** He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

Matthew 24:29 " Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ "And **He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

As a part of the Amidah prayer, three times a day, observant Jews have been praying these words for 2,000 years:

For the gathering of exiles: Sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the ensign to gather our exiles, and gather us from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are you, Oh Lord, who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.



May that prayer be answered and in our day! Amen!

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle